

**THE CHURCH OF ST. JAMES  
OR GREAT CHURCH  
AT THE HAGUE**



**STROLLING  
THROUGH  
HISTORY**

## The building

As far back as the 13th century a small chapel of ease that belonged to the parish church of Monster occupied the site of the present church. It is thought that this chapel became a parish church in its own right in 1276. Around the middle of the 14th century a larger building was erected. The Church of St James, as it stands today, actually dates from the 15th century. The hexagonal tower was built between 1420 and 1424. The nave and its wide side aisles were finished in 1456. The chancel was finished around 1492. After the great fire of 1539 both church and tower were restored in their former shape. A crown-like superstructure in early Renaissance style was placed on the steeple.

The exterior of the edifice is characterized by: the curious hexagonal tower, the nave with its plain peaked gables and the lofty chancel with its ambulatory and its jutting roof, crowned with a miniature steeple. As for the interior, the stately nave presents a captivating contrast with the loftier chancel. The nave is entirely roofed over with wooden barrel vaulting and supported by three massive pillars on either side. Flanking it at the north and south are three wide chapels with a

*Aerial view of the Church of St. James, 1972*

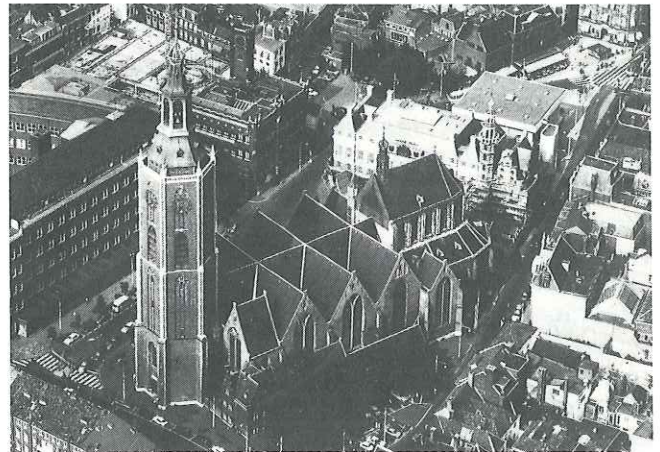


Foto cover

*The Great Church seen from the south.*

*Drawing by J.E. Lafarque, 1761*

height equal to that of the middle aisle and, like the latter, with wooden barrel vaulting. The chancel is a splendid example of what is called 'late Brabant Gothic', witness its slender columns and their capitals decorated with double wreaths of leaves. The clerestory of the chancel is also vaulted with wood. The chancel is surrounded by an ambulatory with stone groined vaults. On either side of the chancel entrance are chapels with wooden barrel vaulting. The wainscoting and paintings on the wooden vaulting in the nave date from the 19th and 20th century when restoration work was carried out. Previously the wooden structure of the vaulting had been visible from the church. The wooden vaulting of the middle section of the chancel was installed during the restoration carried out between 1912 and 1920.

During the 19th and 20th century the church was restored four times. Of these restorations the last two were the most important. From 1912 to 1920 restoration work was carried out under the supervision of the renowned architect P.J.H. Cuypers. From 1951 to 1962 the church was once more seen in scaffolding. This time the work was carried out by the architect Ph. Bolt. The tower whose Renaissance superstructure had been replaced by a cast-iron Neogothic spire in 1861 was given a new crown in 1956, a loose imitation of the 16th century one. The tower has a height of 92.5 metres and carries a vane in the shape of a stork instead of the usual cock.

During the last restoration the interior of the church was adapted to contemporary liturgical demands. The pulpit, which used to be against one of the pillars in the south of the nave was moved to the south column at the entrance to the chancel. The 19th century pews, which were placed in squares around the pulpit, were replaced by chairs facing the chancel. The floor of the nave was made to slope towards the chancel. The 18th century chancel screen was removed and its sections placed elsewhere in the church.

## A walk round the church

1 In the second bay of the south side aisle and in the bay facing it in the north side aisle the escutcheons of the Knights of the Golden Fleece are to be found. They commemorate the ninth chapter of this Order convened by Philip of Burgundy in the Church of St. James on 2nd May, 1456.

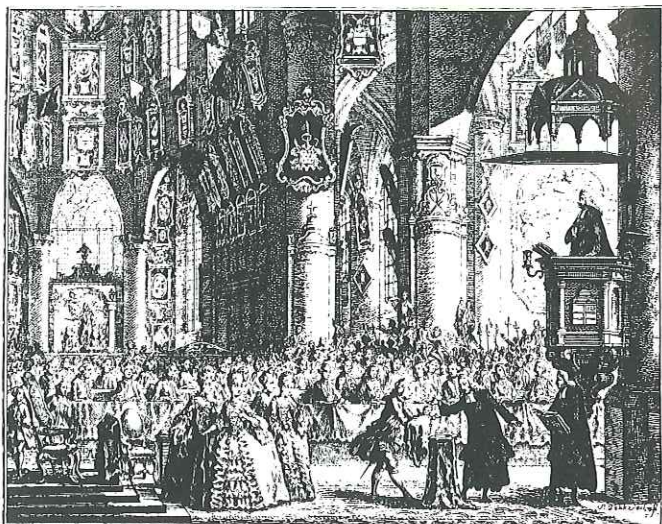
The escutcheons are placed in a Renaissance framework. Balusters separate the panels. The two panels on the east side in both bays show the emblem of the Order and the date 1456. In the great fire of 1539 the original framework was lost, whereas the panels probably remained intact.

2 The monument of Philips, Landgrave of Hessen Philipstal, in the south-west corner of the south transept was erected after his death (1721) by his spouse Catharina Amalia van Solms Laubach. It was designed by Daniel Marot, who has various houses and interiors in The Hague to his name. The black marble tomb with its epitaph rests on a base of freestone. On the tomb is seen the recumbent white marble effigy of the landgrave, in full armour and surrounded by weapons. The effigy of his mourning widow surmounts the triangular composition. It is set in a niche with bold volute-shaped contours and surmounted by lions bearing an escutcheon.

3 In the south transept you will find a stained glass window by Max Nauta, dating from 1929, which commemorates the death of Jan de Bakker by the hands of the Inquisition in 1525.

4 On the south wall of the south transept is the memorial of Barbara van Panhuys, who died in 1638. The stone with its epitaph is surmounted by an open-topped pediment. Below the stone is the family coat-of-arms.

5 The oak pulpit against the south-east column in the crossing was made in 1550, in the same style



*The baptism of King William I.  
Engraving by S. Fokke, 1772*

as that of the Old Church in Delft, which was finished two years earlier. The two pulpits are the most significant artifacts of Renaissance wood carving in this country.

The base of the pulpit in this church shows a typical Renaissance motif, i.e. volutes in the shape of fettered goat-footed female creatures. The pulpit itself, as its Delft example, is decorated with so-called 'inkijkgens': representations in relief of the four Evangelists and John the Baptist preaching, who, because a false perspective has been applied, seem to be standing in long galleries that in fact only have a depth of a few centimetres. On the corners are Corinthian columns whose lower ends are decorated with herms, statues in the form of a square pillar surmounted by a human head. The backrest of the pulpit has a representation of Moses carrying the two tables of the law. The canopy has pediments with heads and a cupola.

6 On the fourth column, seen from the west, in the south ambulatory is the memorial of Maria

Magdalena Maurier, who died in 1620, and her husband, the French envoy Benjamin Aubery Maurier. It consists of a black marble stone with epitaph surrounded by a frame of coloured marble with lobed ornamentation.

7 On the south wall of the ambulatory, more or less facing the Maurier memorial is the plain marble memorial of Johannes Joachim van Rusthof, privy councillor of the Palatinate, who died in 1640. A segmented pediment with coat-of-arms surmounts the epitaph.

*Nave and chancel, a view from the west door, 1981*



8 Of the original stained glass windows only two remain, and they have undergone extensive restoration. One of these stained glass windows is to be found in the ambulatory. It was presented by the emperor Charles V as his contribution towards the restoration of the church after the great fire of 1539 and placed in 1547. The window shows the emperor adoring the Christ child on Mary's lap. A classical edifice with a triumphal arch and columns forms the background. The window, together with other historical glass in the church, is attributed to Dirk Crabeth. He and his brother Wouter made the most important windows in the Church of St. John at Gouda. Over the years the Charles V window was seriously damaged and, in the early 19th century, patched with glass from the other Crabeth window. In 1914 Schouten of Delft carefully restored the window, as far as possible, to its original splendour. The twelve lower sections were added at that time. Below the Charles V window you will see a plain memorial stone, dating from 1857 and bearing the inscription 'Burial place of Constantyn and Christiaan Huygens'. Their family vault, in which they were placed in 1687 and 1696 respectively, is situated in the proximity of this stone.

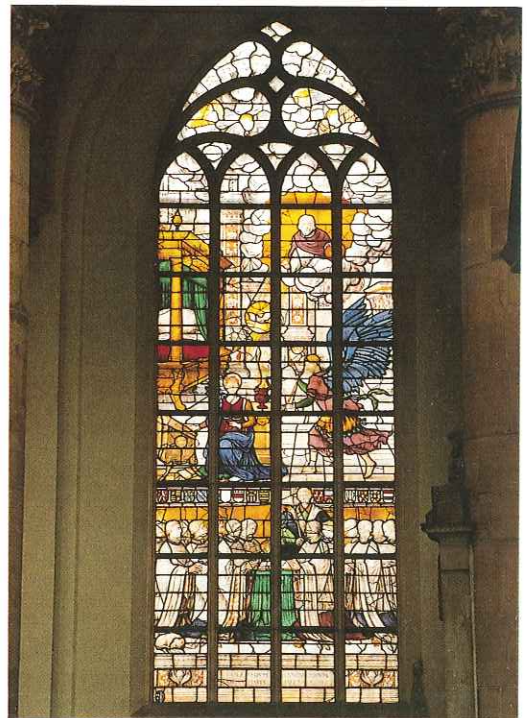
9 Against the wall in the third bay of the north ambulatory, seen from the west, is the monument of Cornelis Nobelaer, lord of Grisoirt, and his spouse Anna van der Wiele. This memorial, dated 1617, and built in the style of Hendrick de Keyser consists of a sculptured sandstone gate, surmounted by a stone with epitaph and flanking volutes. An open-topped pediment with obelisk surmounts the structure.

Above this monument you will see the second Crabeth window, presented in 1541 by the canons of 'Maria ten Hove' (Mary at Court), whose chapel was in the 'Binnenhof' (Inner Court). It represents the annunciation by the angel Gabriel, with God the Father watching from the clouds. Mary is seated at a reading desk in front of a fourposter bed carved in

rich Renaissance style, the angel is hastening towards her and the Holy Ghost in the shape of a dove is hovering above her. The lower panels represent the canons in liturgical vestments. This window, the remaining fragments of which were used to patch the Charles V window, was also restored by glass painter Jan Schouten in 1916.

10 Against the fourth column of the north chancel is the epitaph of Theodorus Graswinckel Jz. who died at Mechlin in 1666. The monument, which was made by Rombout Verhulst in 1670, consists of a black marble stone in a profiled white marble frame with the family coat-of-arms. Surmounting it is

*The window presented by the canons of 'Maria ten Hove', 1981*



a medallion with the portrait of this illustrious jurist. The two chapels at the north and south of the ambulatory are screened off with sections of the wrought-iron chancel screen, which was originally placed in 1770 to separate the chancel from the nave until it was removed during the recent restoration.

11 The east wall of what used to be the lady Chapel (north) bears the large memorial of the Van Hougendorp family in a freestone frame in Louis XV style, surmounted by the family coat-of-arms. As appears from the detailed epitaph, members of this family were placed in the vault under this chapel from 1632 to 1785.

12 The escutcheon of Philip of Burgundy, which used to be in the chancel with the escutcheons of the Knights of the Golden Fleece, has been mounted on the north column at the entrance of the chancel since 1878. The wooden frame, made after the fire of 1539 as were those of the other escutcheons, is a beautiful example of early Renaissance carving. Columns on either side of the painted panel support an entablature with pediment. The finely carved decorations include virtually the entire treasure of Renaissance motifs, such as acanthus leaves, cherubs, masks and dolphins.

13 In the chancel on the site formerly occupied by the high altar is the imposing monument of admiral Jacob van Wassenaer Obdam, who fell in the battle of Lowestoft in 1665. The mausoleum, made by Bartholomeus Eggers from a design by the painter Cornelis Monincs of The Hague, was finished in 1667. The white marble effigy of the admiral, standing and fully armoured, is flanked by a squire and two children. It is placed on a high base under a baldachin supported by four columns. Behind his effigy is Fame, blowing a trumpet and seated on an eagle. Three sides of the base show in relief the battles in which the admiral distinguished himself. On the

four corners stand marble allegorical female figures: Fortitude, Prudence, Vigilance and Fidelity. The sculptor's signature can be found on the base.

14 Against the wall of the north transept are the magistrates' stalls, a rich example of baroque wood carving. The canopy is supported by finely carved consoles and fruit clusters. As appears from a date in one of the panels, it was made in 1647. The left part, an extension made in 1884, is an accurate copy in the original style. Above these stalls for the government is the monument of Barbara Duyck, who died in 1628. This memorial, as does the one of Cornelis Nobelaer, shows Hendrick de Keyser's influence.

15 At the end of the north side aisle, in the west wall, is the perfectly preserved tombstone, made of freestone, of Gherard van Randenrode van der Aa, dated 1600. It used to be in the former sanctuary beside the mausoleum of Van Wassenaer Obdam. In 1795, when the Dutch patriots removed the coats-of-arms from the tombstones, this stone escaped defacement, because the descendants had the presence of mind to turn it upside down. The deceased is shown recumbent and in full armour. Above him is his coat-of-arms, surrounded by acanthus leaves and surmounted by a helmet. On either side are his eight quarters. The church possesses a great number of mainly 17th century tombstones. They can be found in the side aisles and, in particular, in the ambulatory. Six boards in Renaissance style are to be found in the side aisles and the south transept. They probably date from 1591 and show the text from Deuteronomy 20, 1-31 (Moses' speech).

The organ against the west wall of the nave was installed in 1971. It was built by Messrs. Metzler und Söhne of Dietikon-Zürich and replaced the organ made in 1882 by J.Fr. Witte of Utrecht. The case in

baroque-inspired style rests on a gallery supported by composite columns of marbled wood (composite columns combine the angular Ionic volutes with the acanthus-circled bell of the Corinthian order).

16 Flanking the second bay of the nave at the south side is the 15th century chapel of the Van Assendelft family. It is an oblong space with cross vaulting. The monument in Renaissance style in the north-east corner next to the entrance was made after the fire of 1539. An arched niche contains the freestone tomb on which repose the damaged alabaster effigies of the lord of Assendelft († 1486) and his spouse Beatrix van Daelem († 1492). The niche is flanked by alabaster columns and above the couple appears the family coat-of-arms, surrounded by acanthus leaves. The sixteen quarters of the couple are depicted on the sides of the niche. Both the composition and the quality of the figures show a marked resemblance to the contemporary monument of Frederik van Renesse and Anna van Hamelen in the Great Church of Breda.

The chapel and the monument were restored in 1963. Noteworthy in this chapel are three memorial stones (1494, 1530 and 1583) of members of the Van Assendelft family and a tall carved Louis XV chimney breast (dated 1760), which was installed when the chapel was converted into a vestry. The chimney painting, formerly part of a chimney breast in the mayor's room of the shooting range of St. Sebastian, was presented by the municipal museum of The Hague. It represents the Flight to Egypt and was painted by the Flemish painter Thomas Willeboirts, also called Bosschaert, who lived from 1614 to 1654. This chapel also contains a Louis XV cabinet organ surmounted by statues, dating from about 1770.

In the tower are three large bells and a carillon consisting of 51 bells. The largest bell is the Jhesus, cast by Jaspard and Jan Moer in 1541 and weighing

*The tower seen from the south-east, 1964*



6500 kilograms. The second largest bell dates from 1647 and weighs 3300 kilograms. It was cast by Coenraet Wegewart. The third bell was cast in 1956 by Messrs. Eijsbouts at Asten and weighs 2360 kilograms. The St. James bell, cast in 1570 by Henrick van Trier and weighing 3150 kilograms, now forms part of the carillon, as does the Salvator (650 kilograms), dating from 1547. The carillon was cast in 1686 by the Antwerp bell foundry of Melchior de Haze. Messrs. Eijsbouts restored the carillon and provided additions between 1951 and 1956.

## **Colofon**

This brochure was published in 1983 by the 'Stichting Grote Kerk' at The Hague with the financial support of the 'Frans Mortelmanstichting'.

Acknowledgements:

The Municipal Archives

The Municipal Bureau of Monuments (text)

The Town Planning Department and the Municipal Archives (photos)

A.P. van Engeldorp Gastelaars and I. Rivers (translation)

By buying this brochure you support the work of the 'Stichting Grote Kerk' for the maintenance and proper use of the Church of St. James.

Additional support: account no. 245.621.806 Pierson, Heldring and Pierson NV. (giro account no. of this bank: 1844)

Printed by Sijthoff Handelsdrukkerijen, Rijswijk



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