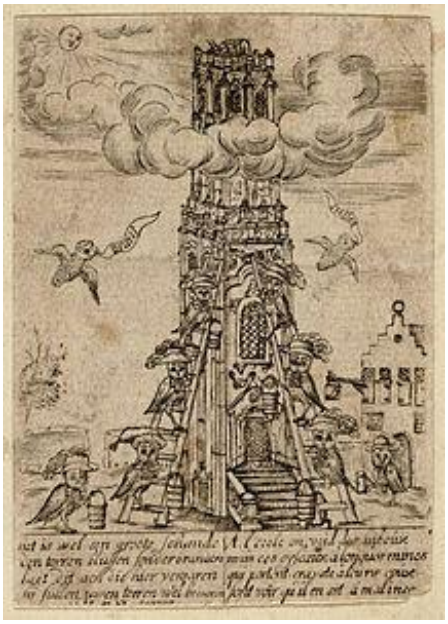
Moon Extinguishers



On the night of January 27th/28th 1687 St Rumbold's Tower was shrouded in mist. A none too sober tippler emerged from an inn on the Grote Markt. He suddenly saw that the tower was on fire and immediately raised the alarm.

The whole city was thrown into confusion, the alarm bell was sounded and the city council led by the burgomaster lost no time in organizing the fire-fighting operation. Buckets of water went from hand to hand in a chain up the tower stairway, but even before they reached the top, the moon slipped through the haze and the glow disappeared...

Little had the brave citizens realized that the reddish misty glow they were trying to extinguish was the moon!

Of course the people of Mechelen tried to keep the incident quiet, but the news soon spread abroad, earning the people of Mechelen the nickname Maneblussers (Moon Extinguishers) – a nickname they bear to this day.

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