

TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH!

We are living in turbulent times.

But in bygone centuries it was always like this. Year in, year out, people's health was vulnerable, in the same way as we feel vulnerable now.

A book about 18th century drinking customs points to the Greek king Pyrrhus (319/8 -272 BC) who never prayed for riches but only for good health: the idea being that if you aren't healthy, you're not in a position to enjoy anything, not even enormous wealth.

The book argues that the Ancients' awareness of the importance of good health underpinned not only people's customary greetings of one another, but also the toasts they proposed.

In the 17th and 18th centuries toasting was still a popular custom around the world and today, too, people of all nations raise their glasses to one another's health: *to your good health, santé, Gesundheit, salute, salud, Wáshe zdarówje* and in Dutch *gezondheid*.

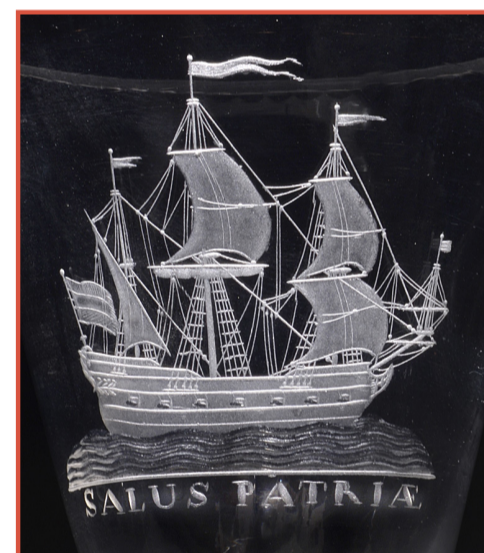


The first toast to be proposed at Dutch dinner parties in the 18th century was always to the health of those present, first a toast to the assembled company and then to each individual present. Subsequently the guests would drink to the health of absent spouses, followed by a toast to absent friends.

Friendship was considered one of life's greatest supports, as the engraved mottos on glasses of the time attest. One such motto reads: *'Wie vriendschap uit dit leven sluit, die bandt de zon de wereld uit'* or: Those who shut out friendship from this life, ban the sun from the world. Another engraving reads *Vriendschap dierbaar zout, dat alles in het leven houdt*, which roughly translates as 'Friendship is the precious salt that keeps all alive.'

In the window display alongside you can see glasses depicting clasped hands as a symbol of friendship and unity. On one of the glasses, which bears the toast **VRINTSCHAP**, the friendship is sealed by a third hand, the hand of God.

In the 17th and 18th centuries the Dutch not only drank to the good health of one another, but also that things might go well. It was customary to always propose a toast to the fatherland and its government. Here the Netherlands is aptly depicted as a ship, accompanied by the motto **SALUS PATRIAE**.



In difficult times people would raise a glass to wish one another courage. Here you can see a glass depicting the motto **APRES L'ORAGE, LE BEAU TEMPS**: after rain comes sunshine.

A TOAST TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH, YOUR AND OUR COUNTRY AND THE WORLD!