

The Art Market in the Southern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century

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has never had the slightest intention of doing full justice, in an almost sociological way, to the variety and range of 'art' in our time.

The Tate believe that they should be up to the minute in what they buy. And here they do have a point although they failed to make it. Instead of invoking the incomprehensibility of Constable – and surely the analogy Constable/Andre was a little far-fetched? – they would have received a more sympathetic hearing from a well-educated audience, had they cited the case of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which over decades courageously acquired all the latest confections, with the result that, although no doubt saddled with much junk, they have achieved two valuable objectives: first, they have documented the imaginative productions of our century, in a way that will prove of inestimable value to historians, whatever our grandchildren may come to think of some of their acquisitions *qua* art, more effectively than any other institution; secondly, as a result they now have in their possession some considerable works of art, acquired as it were by chance along with the

rest, and at a time when prices were relatively low.

But having conceded the Tate a point they never made, we may still question whether it is their job to be up to the minute with their purchases. They show no desire to document our time, so they have not *this* excuse for blankets and bricks. The situation has radically changed since the 1930's. Now that the *avant garde* has become respectable, there are plenty of places where the latest thing can be seen, at Arts Council Exhibitions, at the ICA, in dealers' galleries. There is no longer the same need nowadays to risk freezing in a permanent, public collection a mass of effective and showy work which may well be regarded in a few decades as trash. More potent still is the view that, in the management of public collecting in England in 1976, the old criteria of personal conviction and taste, based on the interaction of sensibility and experience, have no substitute. Even if this may mean that we shall allow some prize to slip through our fingers, surely this is to be preferred to the spectacle of a 'Rip van With-it' who views every turn in the whirligig of style with a wild surmise?

LORNE CAMPBELL

The Art Market in the Southern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century

A study of almost any aspect of early Netherlandish art should begin with a lament that the documentary evidence available is sufficient to support only the vaguest of general statements. Paradoxically, what documentary evidence is available has been insufficiently exploited by art historians, and this neglect applies particularly to a group of legal documents concerning the organization of artistic production: guild regulations and records of lawsuits involving artists.¹ Such documents are often unbelievably prolix,

sometimes irritatingly laconic and almost always obscure in their wording, and may be fully interpreted only by someone who is both a skilled economic historian and a practised linguist well versed in the terminology and workings of fifteenth-century legal systems. Sadly I can claim to be neither; but I hope to be able to draw from this material some indications of how the art market functioned. While my principal concern is with painting and painters, I have found it convenient to touch on tapestry, sculpture and manuscript illumination, for which the evidence is often less sparse. As the fifteenth century is an arbitrary chronological division, I have discussed early sixteenth-century evidence when it may cast light on fifteenth-century practice. My main object, however, is to exploit the published documentary evidence in an effort to show how pictures were sold and bought in the southern provinces of the Burgundian Netherlands during the fifteenth century.

1. The Sources of Demand

In all probability the principal Netherlandish employer of painters was the Burgundian court, which retained a varying number of artists as court painters and which also intermittently provided temporary work for a great many painters.² Both the permanently and temporarily employed

The following abbreviations are used in the footnotes:

A.R.B. = Académie royale des sciences, des lettres et des beaux-arts de Belgique,

A.S.E.B. = *Annales de la Société d'Emulation pour l'étude de l'histoire et des antiquités de la Flandre* | *Handelingen van het Genootschap gesticht onder de benaming 'Société d'Emulation' te Brugge*,

B.C.R.H. = *Compte rendu des séances de la Commission royale d'histoire, ou Recueil de ses Bulletins*,

B.N.B. = *Biographie nationale de Belgique*,

I.A.D.N.B. = *Inventaire sommaire des archives départementales antérieures à 1790, Nord, Archives civiles, série B*, ed. A. LE GLAY, C. DEHAISNES, J. FINOT, etc., 10 vols., Lille [1863–1906],

M.G.O.G. = *Maatschappij van geschied- en oudheidkunde te Gent*,

R.B.A.H.A. = *Revue belge d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art*,

VAN EVEN = E. VAN EVEN, 'Monographie de l'ancienne école de peinture de Louvain', *Messenger des sciences historiques* [1866], pp.1–55, 241–338; [1867], pp.261–315, 439–97; [1868], pp.454–86; [1869], pp.44–86, 147–95, 277–341.

¹ As far as I am aware, only two studies have been devoted to the organization of artistic production: E. BAES: *La peinture flamande et son enseignement sous le régime des confréries de St-Luc* (Mémoires couronnés et mémoires des savants étrangers publiés par l'A.R.B., LIV, fasc. 6), Brussels [1882]; and H. FLOERKE: *Studien zur niederländischen Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte, Die Formen des Kunsthandels, das Atelier und die Sammler in den Niederlanden vom 15. – 18. Jahrhundert*, Munich and Leipzig [1905]. Neither author devoted much space to the fifteenth century, and Baes mingled flights of imagination with discussions of documents without citing in any systematic way the published sources on which he was drawing. Floerke relied heavily on the material assembled by Baes, and presented it more

methodically. Both authors, however, made extensive use of the notorious Ghent documents which are now known to be forgeries, and quite a considerable amount of documentary evidence was overlooked by Baes or has been published since his book was written.

² See the extracts from the Burgundian archives concerning works of art and artists collected and published by L. DE LABORDE: *Les ducs de Bourgogne, Seconde*

painters seem usually to have been engaged on decorative work: banners for ceremonies and military expeditions, and decorations for banquets, theatrical entertainments and funerals. Though some rooms in the Burgundian palaces were elaborately decorated with paintings – like the ‘Jason Chamber’ at the Castle of Hesdin, described by Caxton³ – tapestries were still the most favoured form of wall decoration, just as metalwork was the most favoured form of small scale ornament. The Burgundian collections of tapestries and metalwork were probably unrivalled, but the Burgundian accounts contain very few payments for pictures and the Burgundian inventories contain exceedingly few mentions of pictures.⁴

Churches, convents, hospitals and episcopal palaces were obviously decorated with religious paintings and sometimes with portraits, of ecclesiastics or of the ruling princes. Some of these were commissioned by the church authorities,⁵ but perhaps most were the gifts of individual clerics, of pious laymen or of confraternities.⁶ The civic authorities occasionally commissioned religious paintings and, more rarely, portraits, to decorate the chapels and assembly halls of civic buildings, and *Last Judgements* or *Scenes of Justice* for their court rooms. More commonly and more regularly, they employed painters to provide decorations for the great annual processions which took place at Tournai, Malines, Louvain,

Bruges and elsewhere, and for theatrical entertainments; or to design sculptures and tapestries.⁷

The patronage of individuals is much less well documented, for now we must turn from the evidence of accounts and relatively informative inventories to that of wills and the occasional starkly concise inventories compiled for use in certain legal transactions.

The aristocrat Marguerite de Lannoy, Dame de Santes, whose will is dated 1460, clearly owned a small number of religious paintings. Evidently she did not think very highly of them, for she bequeathed them mainly to the wives of members of her household; while her noble relatives received manuscripts or jewellery.⁸ Almost nothing, however, is known of the activities of the Netherlandish nobles as patrons of painting. More can be ascertained of the tastes of high-ranking ecclesiastics such as the Canons of Cambrai Cathedral, whose wills and executors’ accounts are preserved together and several of whom owned pictures. One was the composer Guillaume Dufay, who died in 1474 and who owned a portrait of the King of France, a painting of an unspecified subject, another of the *Crucifixion* and a fourth of the dance called the *Moresca*.⁹ Pierre van der Meulen, Dean of St Paul’s at Liège, who died in 1459, bequeathed to the Treasury of his church: *tabulam parnam in qua pulchre et magistraliter depicta est turris Babel, quam caram habeo*.¹⁰ (This incidentally, is a unique instance of a fifteenth-century Netherlander expressing his opinion of a picture). In 1486, the Provost of Berclau, a village near Béthune, bequeathed to his church *effigies suae gentis numerosae*.¹¹

Moving down the social scale, we come to the prosperous townspeople, many of whom appear to have owned pictures. Cornelis Haveloes, an official of the Chambre des Comptes at Brussels, who died in 1505, owned ten religious paintings, including a triptych of the Virgin and Child with Haveloes himself as donor, which was to be placed beside his grave at Sainte-Gudule. He also had pictures of the Nine Heroes, *eenen ouden man ende een jonc wyf*, and two paintings on cloth of *amoureuheyden*.¹² Investigations of the wills of citizens of Tournai¹³ and of the inventories of the effects of deceased

partie, *Prewes*, 3 vols., Paris [1849–52], I and II. For the period after 1477, not covered by De Laborde, and for much supplementary information, see the unwieldy *I.A.D.N.B.*, I, IV, VII and VIII.

³ J. MUNRO, ed.: *The History of Jason, translated from the French of Raoul Le Fevre by William Caxton, c.1477* (Early English Text Society, Extra Series, No.CXI), London [1913], p.2.

⁴ See the inventory of 1420 and the drafts for an inventory which was never completed, of c.1458 and c.1467, published in DE LABORDE, *op. cit.*, II, pp.235–78 and 1–202; and the extracts from inventories of 1404, 1424 and 1477 published by GACHARD: *Rapport le Ministre de l’Intérieur sur les documents concernant l’histoire de la Belgique qui existent dans les dépôts littéraires de Dijon et Paris*, I, *Archives de Dijon*, Brussels [1843], pp.98–104.

⁵ See, for example, the extracts from the accounts of the church of Our Lady at Antwerp published in the footnotes to P. ROMBOUTS and T. VAN LERUS: *Les Liggeren at autres archives historiques de la gilde anversoise de Saint Luc*, I, Antwerp and The Hague [1864–76], *passim*; the extracts from the accounts of various ecclesiastical institutions of Cambrai published in J. HOUDOY: *Histoire artistique de la Cathédrale de Cambrai* (Mémoires de la Société des sciences, de l’agriculture et des arts de Lille, 4^e sér. VII), Lille [1880]; the accounts of the Hôpital Comtesse at Lille published in *Inventaire analytique et chronologique des archives hospitalières de la ville de Lille*, I, Lille [1871]; E. VANDERSTRAETEN: ‘Artistes belges du XV^e, XVI^e et XVII^e siècles mentionnés dans les archives de l’Hôpital Notre-Dame à Audenarde’, *Annales de l’Académie d’archéologie de Belgique* IX [1852], pp.368–90; the extracts from the accounts of the Abbey of Tongerlo in W. VAN SPILBEECK: *De voormalige abdijkerk van Tongerlo en hare kunstschaten*, Antwerp [1883]; and the extracts from the accounts of various Tournai churches published in A. DE LA GRANGE and L. CLOQUET: *Etudes sur l’art à Tournai et sur les anciens artistes de cette ville*, 2 vols. (Mémoires de la Société historique et littéraire de Tournai, XX, XXI), Tournai [1887–88], *passim*, and E. SOIL: ‘L’église Saint-Brice à Tournai’, *Annales de la Société historique et archéologique de Tournai* n.s. XIII [1908], pp.73–638.

⁶ See, for example, H. LORIQUET: ‘Journal des travaux d’art exécutés dans l’abbaye de Saint-Vaast par l’abbé Jean du Clercq (1429–1461)’, *Mémoires de la Commission départementale des monuments historiques du Pas-de-Calais* I [1889–95], pp.57–92; the Mémoires of Catherine de Saint-Genois, Abbess of Flines (1436–82), published in E. HAUTCOEUR: *Cartulaire de l’Abbaye de Flines*, 2 vols., Lille [1873], II, pp.91–23; the 1537 inventory of the Carmelite Convent of Sion at Bruges, which gives the provenances of many of the pictures listed (published by W. H. J. WEALE: ‘Le couvent des soeurs de Notre-Dame dit de Sion, à Bruges’, *Le Beffroi* III [1866–70], pp.46–53, 76–93); and the 1451 statutes of the Confraternity of the Puy-Notre-Dame at Amiens, by which it was ordained that every year the master of the Confraternity should present a picture to Amiens Cathedral (published in A. BRUEIL: ‘La confrérie de Notre-Dame du Puy, d’Amiens’, *Mémoires de la Société des antiquaires de Picardie* 2^e sér. III [1854], pp.489–662, p.611).

⁷ See the extracts from the civic accounts of Bruges in L. GILLIODTS-VAN SEVEREN: *Inventaire des archives de la ville de Bruges*, 7 vols., Bruges [1871–78], III–VI; from the accounts of the Franc of Bruges in W. H. J. WEALE: ‘Le Palais du Franc à Bruges’, *Le Beffroi* IV [1872–76], pp.46–92, 216–37; from the Ghent accounts in E. DE BUSSCHER: ‘Recherches sur les anciens peintres gantois’, *Messenger des sciences historiques* [1859], pp.105–271; from the Lille accounts in J. HOUDOY: *La Halle échevinale de la ville de Lille 1235–1664*, Lille and Paris [1870]; from the Louvain accounts in VAN EVEN, *passim*; from the Malines accounts in E. NEEFFS: ‘La peinture et la sculpture à Malines’, *Messenger des sciences historiques* [1871], pp.345–65, 447–73; [1872], pp.12–47, 216–36, 268–300; from the Tournai accounts in DE LA GRANGE and CLOQUET, *op. cit.*, *passim*; and from the Ypres accounts in A. VANDENPEEREBOOM: *Yprians*, 7 vols., Bruges [1878–83], I, II and V.

⁸ The will was published in B. DE LANNOY: *Hugues de Lannoy, le bon Seigneur de Santes*, Brussels [1957], pp.281–95.

⁹ Dufay’s will was published in HOUDOY, *op. cit.* (note 5 above), pp.409–15. See also the executors’ accounts, p.268.

¹⁰ O.-J. THIMISTER: *Essai historique sur l’église de Saint-Paul, Liège* [1867], pp.273–77.

¹¹ CHANOINE VAN DRIVAL: *Nécrologe de l’Abbaye de St-Vaast*, Arras [1878], pp.68–70.

¹² SCHAYES: ‘Extrait des comptes et inventaire de la maison mortuaire de Corneille Haveloes’, *B.C.R.H.* II [1838], pp.150–66.

¹³ A. DE LA GRANGE: ‘Choix de testaments tournaisiens antérieurs au XVI^e siècle’, *Annales de la Société historique et archéologique de Tournai* n.s. II [1897], pp.5–365.

citizens of Douai¹⁴ and Louvain¹⁵ show that it was relatively usual to own a picture – pictures on cloth being slightly more common than panel paintings, which were more expensive – and not unusual to own several paintings. An inventory of the contents of the Inn of the Wild Man at Louvain, compiled in 1489, shows that it contained at least nineteen devotional paintings, including two triptychs.¹⁶

The less prosperous, it is assumed, would have been content with woodcuts; but it is known that in 1520 a ‘poor woman’ of Bruges gave a water-colour painting of the *Mass of Pope Gregory* to the Convent of Sion.¹⁷

It is quite impossible to judge the importance of the middle and lower classes as patrons of painting, but it must not be overlooked and may have been very significant. Equally, the importance of the export market must not be under-rated, for there is good evidence that Netherlandish pictures of subjects sacred and profane were exported in quantities to parts of Italy.¹⁸ The numbers of Netherlandish religious paintings in Spain, and of carved and painted altar-pieces in Scandinavia and Central Europe indicate that there was a thriving export trade to the south and east; while England and Scotland also provided enthusiastic markets for Netherlandish works of art.¹⁹ The tapestries of Arras, and later of Tournai, Lille and Brussels, were of course in constant demand all over Europe, and by the mid-sixteenth century the value of tapestry exports is estimated as 4.5% of the total value of Netherlandish exports.²⁰ There was also a local export trade to supply, as far as the Guilds permitted. In a lawsuit of 1457, the illuminators of Bruges, accused by the painters of importing detached miniatures, denied the charge and claimed that, on the contrary, they daily exported large quantities of miniatures done at Bruges to Ghent, Ypres, Antwerp and elsewhere.²¹

2. The Sources of Supply

In 1567 the Italian commentator Lodovico Guicciardini wrote with astonished admiration of the multitude of

painters then working in the Netherlands.²² From the available documents, particularly the few surviving guild lists,²³ it appears that the situation was no different in the fifteenth century. Among these large numbers of painters, only a very few seem to have been in permanent salaried employment. There were the court painters, who generally held the salaried post of *varlet de chambre*; and there were the civic painters of Ypres, Malines, Louvain, Antwerp and Brussels, whose positions appear to have entitled them only to token annual emoluments.²⁴ Other painters pursued a secondary occupation. The Louvain painter Aernout Raet was also a baker, and in 1450 gave up painting altogether to devote himself to his bakery.²⁵ Between 1478 and 1485 the Ghent painter Lieven van den Bossche was employed as concierge at the meeting house of the Confraternity of St George, not only acting as doorkeeper but also catering for and waiting at entertainments given there by members of the Confraternity.²⁶ Both Lieven and another Ghent painter, Willem de Ritsere, seem to have owned taverns.²⁷ At Valenciennes in 1509, Jehan Dubus was both *fromegier et peintre*.²⁸ Nicaise de Cambrai, a painter of Douai, organised entertainments for the Burgundian court: *jeux de personnaiges* and *dances de morisques* at Brussels in 1440,²⁹ and *certain jeu, histoire et moralité sur le fait de la dance macabre* at Bruges in 1449.³⁰ These were possibly exceptional cases. Most of the large numbers of painters then practising were probably dependant for their livings almost entirely on selling their work. They could not live by teaching, for, though apprentices paid fees to their masters, these were not particularly high, and the masters usually had to feed and lodge the apprentices.³¹

²² L. GUICCIARDINI: *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi*, Antwerp [1567], p.97.

²³ Fifteenth-century guild lists survive for Antwerp from 1453 (ROMBOUTS and VAN LERIEU, *op. cit.* (note 5 above), pp.1–55); for Bruges from 1453 (C. VANDEN HAUTE: *La Corporation des peintres de Bruges*, Bruges [1913], pp.3 ff.; see also the guild obituary on pp.196 ff.); and for Tournai from 1423 (DE LA GRANGE and CLOQUET, *op. cit.* (note 5 above), II, pp.70–72, 76–78, etc.). Investigation of the archives of other towns has allowed the compilation of long, but presumably incomplete, lists of painters working there: see, for Ghent, DE BUSSCHER, *op. cit.* (note 7 above), *passim*, and v. VAN DER HAEGHEN: *Mémoire sur des documents faux relatifs aux anciens peintres, sculpteurs et graveurs gantois* (Mémoires couronnés et autres mémoires publiés par l’A.R.B., collection in 8°, LVIII, fasc. 9), Brussels [1899], pp.40–43, 46–47, 51–61; for Lille, M. VANDALLE: ‘L’école de peinture lilloise des XIV^e, XV^e et XVI^e siècles a-t-elle existé?’, *Revue du Nord* XVII [1931], pp.283–301, and J.-M. SOYEZ and J. GARDELLES: ‘L’activité artistique à Lille dans la première moitié du XV^e siècle’, *Revue du Nord* LII [1970], pp.455–61; for Louvain, VAN EVEN, *passim*; for Malines, NEEFFS, *op. cit.* (note 7 above), *passim*. For Brussels, less complete lists may be compiled from A. PINGHART: *Archives des arts, sciences et lettres*, Première série, II, Ghent [1863], pp.149–51, 155–56, E. FRANKIGNOULLE: ‘Notes pour servir à l’histoire de l’art en Brabant’, *Annales de la Société royale d’archéologie de Bruxelles* XXXIX [1935] pp.13–204, and C. MATHIEU: ‘Le métier des peintres à Bruxelles aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles’, in *Bruxelles au XV^eme siècle*, Brussels [1953], pp.219–35.

²⁴ See, for example, the documents of 1400 and 1401 concerning the civic painters of Ypres, published by I. DIEGERICK: ‘Jacques Cavael et France vander Wichterne’, *A.S.E.B.* 2^e sér. IX [1851–54] pp.283–87.

²⁵ VAN EVEN [1866], p.28.

²⁶ G. HULIN: ‘Notice sur deux peintres gantois du XV^e siècle: Liévin van den Bossche et Willem van Lombeke alias de Ritsere’, *Bulletijn der M.G.O.G.* XVI [1908], pp.52–64, p.53.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.54, 63–64.

²⁸ DE LA FONS-MELICOCQ: ‘Artistes reçus bourgeois de Valenciennes’, *Revue universelle des arts* X [1859], pp.230–34, p.232.

²⁹ *I.A.D.N.B.*, IV, p.147.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.184; on Nicaise de Cambrai, see A. PREUX: ‘Anciens artistes douaisiens’, *Souvenirs de la Flandre wallonne* II [1862], pp.23–33, pp.25–27.

³¹ See the contracts of apprenticeship involving Boudewijn van Lebbeke at Courtrai in 1383 (P. DEBRABANDERE, *Geschiedenis van de schilderkunst te Kortrijk*, Courtrai [1963], p.14) and Gheeraert Horenbault at Ghent in 1498 and 1502 (V. VAN DER HAEGHEN: ‘Notes sur l’atelier de Gérard Horenbault’, *Bulletijn der*

¹⁴ A. ASSELIN and C. DEHAISNES: ‘L’art à Douai dans la vie privée des bourgeois du XIII^e au XVI^e siècle’, *Mémoires lus à la Sorbonne dans les séances extraordinaires du Comité impérial des travaux historiques et des Sociétés savantes* [23rd–26th April 1867], *Archéologie*, pp.219–33.

¹⁵ VAN EVEN [1867], pp.446–47, etc.

¹⁶ VAN EVEN [1867], p.446 note.

¹⁷ WEALE, *op. cit.* (note 6 above), p.82.

¹⁸ On the collecting of works by Van Eyck in Italy, see R. WEISS: ‘Jan van Eyck and the Italians’, *Italian Studies* XI [1956], pp.1–15; XII [1957], pp.7–21. On the Medici collection of Netherlandish pictures, see E. K. J. REZNICEK: ‘Enkele gegevens uit de vijftiende eeuw over de Vlaamse schilderkunst in Florence’, in *Miscellanea Jozef Duverger*, 2 vols., Ghent [1968], I, pp.83–91.

¹⁹ For Spain, see, for example, J. K. STEPPE: ‘Vlaamse wandtapijten in Spanje’, *Artes textiles* III [1956], pp.27–66; *idem*, ‘Vlaamse kunstwerken in het bezit van Doña Juana Enriquez’, in *Scrinium Lovaniense: Historische opstellen Etienne van Cauwenbergh* (Université de Louvain, Recueil de travaux d’histoire et de philologie, 4^e sér. XXIV), Louvain [1961], pp.301–30; F. J. SANCHEZ CANTON: *Libros, tapices y cuadros que coleccionó Isabel la Católica*, Madrid [1950]. For Scandinavia, see J. ROOSVAL: ‘Retables d’origine néerlandaise dans les pays nordiques’, *R.B.A.H.A.* III [1933], pp.136–58; *idem*, ‘Les peintures des retables néerlandais en Suède’, *R.B.A.H.A.* IV [1934], pp.311–20. On the export of tapestries to England, see M.-R. THIELEMANS: *Bourgogne et Angleterre, Relations politiques et économiques, 1435–1467* (Université libre de Bruxelles, Travaux de la Faculté de philosophie et lettres, XXX), Brussels [1966], pp.232–33. On Scotland, see C. THOMPSON and L. CAMPBELL: *Hugo van der Goes and the Trinity Panels in Edinburgh*, Edinburgh [1974], pp.53–54.

²⁰ W. BRULEZ: ‘The Balance of Trade in the Netherlands in the middle of the Sixteenth Century’, *Acta historiae neerlandica* IV [1970], pp.20–48, pp.41, 43.

²¹ W. H. J. WEALE: ‘Documents inédits sur les enlumineurs de Bruges’, *Le Beffroi* IV [1872–76], pp.238–337, p.249.

Profit came only when the master sold under his own name work which might have been executed mainly by apprentices. Naturally, not all these painters lived by selling pictures, as many must have spent much of their time on heraldic and decorative work.

Very nearly all these painters were subject to the control of the Painters' Guilds.³² The court painters, like Pierre Coustain at Bruges,³³ and painters employed by the court, like Lieven van Lathem at Ghent,³⁴ could struggle to exempt themselves from this control; and the very few painters who belonged to patrician families and who did not live by their trade might also claim exemption.³⁵ The vast majority, however, had to submit to the Guilds and conform to their regulations, or else face prosecution.

The guilds, while protecting the religious, moral and social interests of all their members by endowing masses for the dead, organising funerals, disciplining or expelling licentious members and establishing funds for the care of the sick and poor, were formed mainly to protect the economic interests of the prosperous master craftsmen.³⁶ The Painters' Guilds were no exception, and their regulations,³⁷

though varying from town to town, pursued the common aims of maintaining monopolies and restricting competition. Only masters of the Guild might practise the craft of painting in their own names. To become a master, it was usually necessary to have or to purchase citizen's rights and to pay a stiff due to the Guild. Masters' sons, however, paid less, and newcomers to the town paid more. This was the most effective way in which the Guilds controlled production. Generally, for example at Bruges, a master might run only one shop and exhibit pictures for sale in only one place,³⁸ while at Mons it was permissible to pay a lower due to run a shop without *fenestres ne monstres sur rue* – that is, without the possibility of displaying pictures for sale.³⁹ The import of pictures from outside the town was restricted by import duties, for example at Louvain,⁴⁰ or even prohibited altogether, for example at Ghent.⁴¹ The painters vigorously defended their privileges against allied crafts, at Bruges restricting the liberty of the illuminators to sell detached miniatures,⁴² and at Brussels forbidding the tapestry weavers to draw or even to emend tapestry cartoons.⁴³ Within the Guild itself, the painters of Bruges could contrive to limit the spheres of competence of the *cleederscrivers*, the painters on cloth.⁴⁴ A powerful guild with outside help might attempt to control competitive production in a neighbouring town. In 1441, the Bruges painters obtained from Philip the Good an edict limiting the number of painters working at Sluys.⁴⁵ Later in the century they undertook a protracted legal battle to have the edict observed.⁴⁶ The Guilds further took measures to control the supply of the raw materials of painting and to keep down their prices. The Guild regulations were sanctioned by the civic authorities, and those who infringed them were prosecuted in the civic courts. The rigour with which these regulations were drawn up and enforced obviously varied, and exemptions could always be granted. The Bruges Guild was possibly the most hysterical in insisting on its privileges, while the Antwerp Guild may have taken a more liberal line.

Some aspects of the aims and attitudes of the Guilds may be illustrated by an extract from a complaint addressed to

M.G.O.G. XXII [1914], pp.26–30). Compare also, for Dijon, the contracts involving Arnoul and Amiot Picornet in 1400 and Henri Bellechose in 1421 and 1424 (GARNIER: 'Notes inédites sur des artistes bourguignons', *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques* [1889], pp.310–18, pp.317–18), and the contracts involving the sculptor Liedenaert Jan Hermansone at Bergen-op-Zoom in 1459 and 1460 (G. ASAERT: 'Documenten voor de geschiedenis van de beeldhouwkunst in Antwerpen in de XV^e eeuw', *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor schone kunsten, Antwerpen* [1972], pp. 43–86, pp. 59–60).

³² Associations of painters, generally in combination with members of other crafts, existed at Brussels by 1306 (MATHIEU, *op. cit.* (note 23 above), pp.222–23), at Ghent from the mid-fourteenth century (VAN DER HAEGHEN, *op. cit.* (note 23 above), pp.33–34), at Bruges by 1358 (D. VAN DE CASTEELE: 'Documents divers de la Société S. Luc, à Bruges. Première partie, Keuren', *A.S.E.B.* 3^e sér. I [1866], pp.5–54, p.5), at Tournai by 1364 (DE LA GRANGE and CLOUET, *op. cit.* (note 5 above), II, pp.65–66), at Antwerp by or from 1382 (J. B. VAN DER STRAELEN, *Jaarboek der vermaerde en kunstryke Gilde van Sint Lucas binnen de stad Antwerpen*, Antwerp [1855], pp.1–4), at Douai by 1431 (C. DEHAISNES: *La vie et l'oeuvre de Jean Bellegambe*, Lille [1892], p.8), at Malines by 1439 (NEEFFS, *op. cit.* (note 7 above) [1871], p.350), at Valenciennes by 1462 (C. DEHAISNES: *Recherches sur le retable de Saint-Bertin*, Lille [1892], pp.133–35), at Mons from or by 1487 (L. DEVILLERS 'Le passé artistique de la ville de Mons', *Annales du Cercle archéologique de Mons* XVI [1880], pp.289–522, pp.404–19), and at Louvain by 1494 (VAN EVEN [1867], p.442).

³³ Lawsuit of 1472: W. H. J. WEALE: 'Inventaire des chartes et documents appartenant aux archives de la Corporation de Saint Luc et Saint Eloi à Bruges', *Le Belfroy* I [1863], pp.112–18, 145–52, 201–22, 290–95; II [1864–65], pp.241–63, pp.205–06.

³⁴ Lawsuit of 1459: J. DUVERGER: 'Hofschilder Lieven van Lathem (ca.1430–1493)', *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor schone kunsten, Antwerpen* [1969], pp.97–104, pp.97–8 note.

³⁵ See the case of the Louvain painter Jan van den Berghe in 1529: VAN EVEN [1867], pp.483–85.

³⁶ On guild organization, see J. HEERS: *Le travail au Moyen-Age*, 2nd ed. (*Que sais-je?*, No.1186), Paris [1968], pp.85–103; S. L. THURUPP: 'The Gilds', in *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, III, Cambridge [1971], pp.230–80.

³⁷ The Antwerp regulations of 1382, 1434, 1442, 1470, 1472 and 1494 were published by VAN DER STRAELEN, *op. cit.* (note 32 above), pp.1–35; the Bruges regulations of 1444, 1479 and 1497 by VAN DE CASTEELE, *op. cit.* (note 32 above), pp.17 ff.; the Louvain regulations of 1494 by VAN EVEN [1867], pp.443–45; the Mons regulations of 1487 by DEVILLERS, *op. cit.* (note 32 above), pp.404–19; and the Tournai regulations of 1480 by A. GOOVAERTS: 'Les ordonnances données en 1480, à Tournai, aux métiers des peintres et des verriers', *B.C.R.H.* 5^e sér. VI [1896], pp.97–182, pp.147–82. The Tournai regulations of 1423/24 were destroyed before they could be published, but are said to have been very similar to those of 1480 (P. ROLLAND: 'Les impératifs historiques de la biographie de Roger', *R.B.A.H.A.* XVIII [1949], pp.145–61, p.152). The Brussels regulations of 1387, the revisions of 1416, 1453 and 1465, and the new regulations of 1474, have not been published, but have been usefully discussed by MATHIEU, *op. cit.* (note 23 above), *passim*.

³⁸ See the records of the lawsuit brought by the Guild against Alaert Claeissins in 1512, published in W. H. J. WEALE: 'Peintres brugeois: les Claeissins', *A.S.E.B.* LXI [1911], pp.26–76, pp.28–9.

³⁹ Regulations of 1487: DEVILLERS, *op. cit.* (note 32 above), p.408.

⁴⁰ Regulations of 1494: VAN EVEN [1867], p.442.

⁴¹ See the record of the lawsuit brought by the Guild against Joos Sammelins in 1514, printed in V. VAN DER HAEGHEN: 'La Corporation des peintres de Gand, Matricule, comptes et documents (16^e–18^e siècles)', *Handelingen der M.G.O.G.* VI [1905–06], pp.164–78.

⁴² Lawsuits of 1426, 1447 and 1457: WEALE, *op. cit.* (note 21 above), pp.239–52. At Antwerp and Ghent, the painters successfully asserted their control over the illuminators (Ghent lawsuits of 1463 in DE BUSSCHER, *op. cit.* (note 7 above), pp.207–10; Antwerp lawsuit of 1462 in VAN DER STRAELEN, *op. cit.* (note 32 above), pp.11–12).

⁴³ Document of 1476, printed in A. WAUTERS: *Les tapisseries bruxelloises*, Brussels [1878], pp.48–49.

⁴⁴ Legal decisions of 1458, 1462 and 1463 in VAN DE CASTEELE, *op. cit.* (note 32 above), pp.28–30, 30–32, 32–33. At Brussels in 1454 and 1455 and at Antwerp in 1478, agreements were reached between the painters and sculptors on their respective parts in the making of altar-pieces (MATHIEU, *op. cit.* (note 23 above), p.224; VAN DER STRAELEN, *op. cit.* (note 32 above), p.24). The Malines painters tried unsuccessfully in 1439 and 1480 to assert their control over the glass painters (NEEFFS, *op. cit.* (note 7 above), 1871, pp.350, 354).

⁴⁵ L. GILLIODTS-VAN SEVEREN: *Inventaire des archives de la ville de Bruges*, V, Bruges [1876], p.248.

⁴⁶ Document of 1485 in WEALE, *op. cit.* (note 33 above), pp.214–20; see also the document of 1487 summarised on p.221.

the civic authorities of Tournai in 1480 by the Tournai Guild of St Luke:

. . . plusieurs gens, tant de dehors comme de dedens ladite ville, sentans qu'il n'y avoit ordonnances et status pour les reprendre, ains qu'il y avoit en autres mestiers, se mesloient journelement de faire et vendre en ladite ville ouvraiges desdicts mestiers de peinture et de voirie, qui estoient faulx, frauduleux et mauvais, au préjudice de la chose publique, ains que plusieurs fois avoit esté trouvé par noz prédécesseurs; et que les maistres et ouvriers desdicts mestiers ou aucuns d'eulx, qui sont bons ouvriers ains leurs femmes et mesnaiges en ladite ville, et contribuans aux charges d'icelle, estoient et sont huiseux (= oisifs), et ne trouvoient que gaignier, et par tant lesdicts peintres et voiriers en leursdicts mestiers estoient grandement préjudiciés, en tant que parci devant et jusques à présent, avoit et a esté souffert apporter, vendre en cestedite ville, ouvraiges de leursdicts mestiers fais en autres villes, ce que on ne leur soufferoit faire ailleurs, si non en franchises festes seullement; et à ceste cause lesdicts mestiers estoient fort intéressés et adommagiés, tellement que ceulx desdicts mestiers ne se pooient et ne peuvent bonnement entretenir ne continuer ledit service divin, ne acomplir les affaires d'iceulx mestiers, lesquelz à present estoient fort diminuez et journelement se diminueoient en prouffit et en bons ouvriers, dont les aultres villes se augmentoient, tant en prouffit que en bons ouvriers . . . disoient finalement que leursdicts mestiers estoient encores plus préjudicié par ce que les drois que on paioit ausdicts mestiers estoient trop petis, en regart aux drois qui esdis mestiers sont, es villes de Paris, Gand, Bruges, Brouxelles et autres villes voisines, pour estre francq maistre de l'un desdicts mestiers, ou l'on paye dix ou douze livres de gros, et une tasse d'argent, et plus . . .⁴⁷

As a result of this complaint, the Guild achieved its purpose – which seems to have been simply to raise its dues.⁴⁸

Such a situation might be expected to have had a paralyzing effect on attempts to traffic in pictures, and to have kept painters confined to their native towns (and local traditions). This was not altogether the case, mainly because the Guild privileges were suspended during the great annual Fairs at Antwerp, Ghent and elsewhere – which therefore provided free markets in works of art as in other commodities – and because certain painters were prosperous enough to move about and to become masters of several Guilds at the same time. The Ghent painter Saladin de Stoevere worked at Ghent, Oudenaarde and Bruges. Eventually settling at Oudenaarde, he also worked for the court at Lille and Bruges.⁴⁹ The Lille painter Huson de le Mote became master at Bruges in 1490 and master at Tournai in 1491, but continued to undertake commissions at Lille.⁵⁰ These are only two of many instances of painters working for patrons in several different towns. By 1468, even the Guilds had come to acknowledge that painters should

look beyond their own towns, and organized annual congresses to be held in different cities where painters from all over the Netherlands would assemble to honour St Luke and to:

*entretenir paix, amour et ferme fraternité entre nous qui usons de l'art et mestier de peinture et attendences d'icelle.*⁵¹

They assembled at Ghent in 1468, at Ypres in 1470 and at Lille in 1472.⁵² Almost nothing is known of these congresses, but presumably they helped to allay the dread of outside competition and to encourage a freer exchange of commissions – and of ideas.

3. The Sale of Works of Art

When a work of art was commissioned, a contract seems generally to have been drawn up which was often registered in the civic courts.⁵³ A contract might contain a detailed description of the work to be executed, like the contract for a sculpted altar-piece of the *Life of Christ* commissioned in 1448 by the Abbess of Flines from the Valenciennes sculptor Ricquart. One of the scenes to be represented was a *Nativity*, which is mentioned as follows:

Item, et par desoubz ledict crucefix, au milieu de ladite table, y aura la fourme de la Gésine Nostre-Dame qui sera ouvrée par la manière qui s'ensyeut: c'est assavoir la manière et forme de la grange et édifice en laquelle Nostre-Seigneur Jhésus nasqui bien et proprement faicte, et en icelle grange faire la manière d'une belle et riche couche entretaillee au quavech (= chevet), et celler deseure d'un chiel en manière d'un renvers venant jusques aux piez du lit, bien et facticement entretaillee, ainsi quant par telle manière que a présent on fait les couches des seigneurs et bourgeois; et à celle couche, au lez par devant, et au bas des piez, faire en manière de gourdines (= rideaux), lesquelles ouveront certains angelos qui pour ce faire y seront fourmez, et icelles gourdines aournées de gouttières et

⁵¹ From a letter of 1468 from the Ghent to the Tournai Guild, published by A. PINCHART: 'Un congrès de peintres en 1468', *Bulletins de l'A.R.B.* 3^e sér. I [1881], pp.360–69, p.363.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp.363–65.

⁵³ Besides those mentioned in the text and in note 61 below, see the contracts or registrations of contracts of Jan de Stoevere for the decoration of a chapel at the Sint Salvatorskerk of Ghent in 1425; of Saladin de Stoevere for the polychroming and painting of an altar-piece for the Friars Minor of Ghent in 1434; of Boudin van Witevelde for an altar-piece for Sint-Denijs-Boekel near Oudenaarde in 1443 and for two altar-pieces for the Fullers of Ghent in 1451; of Nabur Martins for an altar-piece for St Walburga at Oudenaarde in 1443 and for an altar-piece for Ledé, near Ghent, in 1444; of Maerc van Ghistel for an altar-piece for St Martin at Courtrai in 1445; of Cleerbout van Witevelde for the wings of a triptych for Asper, near Ghent, in 1460; of Daniel de Rijke for a picture for Odwijn de Ville in 1468 and for an altar-piece for the Augustinian convent at Ghent in 1469 (all published in DE BUSSCHER, *op. cit.* (note 7 above), pp.244–45, 128–30, 167–68, 169, 171, 173, 267–68, 251–53, 216, 217); of Jan van Molenbeek for the polychroming and painting of an altar-piece for the Abbey of Val-Duc in 1433 (VAN EVEN [1866], p.35); of the sculptor Bertelmeus van Raephorst for an image of the Magdalen in a case with painted wings, for the Infirmary in the Klapdorp at Antwerp in 1471; of Jan de Ledege for the polychroming of an altar-piece for Wakkerzeel in 1477 (both in ASAERT, *op. cit.* (note 31 above), pp.55–56, 56–57); and of Nicaise Barat for the polychroming and painting of an altar-piece for the Church of St Peter at Antoing in 1447 (A. LOUANT: 'Un retable en polychromie et plate peinture de Nicaise Barat', *R.B.A.H.A.* IX [1939], pp.11–19, p.19). A Louvain lawsuit of 1484 involving the painter Pieter van Daelhem concerns a contract to paint for the Church of Binkom a *Tafele van vyf beelden, nae de Tafele van S^{te} Machiels, te Loven* (VAN EVEN [1867], p.456). The only contract for a surviving picture seems to be that of 1464 for Dirk Bouts's polyptych of the *Sacraments*, painted for the Confraternity of the Holy Sacrament at Louvain (published by E. VAN EVEN: 'Le contrat pour l'exécution du triptyque de Thierry Bouts, de la collégiale Saint-Pierre, à Louvain (1464)', *Bulletins de l'A.R.B.* 3^e sér. XXXV [1898], pp.469–79).

⁴⁷ GOOVAERTS, *op. cit.* (note 37 above), pp.148–49.

⁴⁸ ROLLAND, *op. cit.* (note 37 above), p.152.

⁴⁹ Saladin de Stoevere was active at Ghent in 1434 (DE BUSSCHER, *op. cit.* (note 7 above), pp.128–30), at Oudenaarde in 1436/37 (DE LABORDE, *op. cit.* (note 2 above), II, p.396), became a citizen of Bruges in 1445 (R. A. PARMENTIER: *Indices op de Brugsche Poorterboeken*, 2 vols., Bruges [1938], I, pp.408–09), and was back in Oudenaarde in 1452/53 and 1467/68 (DE LABORDE, *op. cit.*, II, p.396). He worked for the court at Lille in 1454 and at Bruges in 1468 (*Ibid.*, I, p.424; II, pp.364, 365).

⁵⁰ Huson de le Mote, born at Lille, became a burgher of Bruges in 1490 (PARMENTIER, *op. cit.*, II, pp.796–97), master of the Bruges Guild in the same year (VANDEN HAUTE, *op. cit.* (note 23 above), p.43), and master of the Tournai Guild in 1491 (DE LA GRANGE and CLOQUET, *op. cit.* (note 5 above), II, p.72). Conceivably, he was the 'Huysoen van Brugge' who became master at Antwerp in 1492 (ROMBOUTS and VAN LERUIS, *op. cit.* (note 5 above), p.44). In 1504/05 and 1508/09 he was paid for pictures for the Hôpital Comtesse at Lille (*Inventaire* . . . (cited in note 5 above), pp.422, 423).

ordonnées de fringes bien et richement; et au pan de la gourdine, du costé senestre, lequel sera entre-ouvert par le milieu, seront faictes les fourmes et manières du buef et de l'asne que par l'ouverture de celle gourdine seront veuz, et par le costé du quavech de ladicte couche, au lez dextre, par devant, sera fourmé la manière d'une quayère appoyoire (= chaise d'appui), de telle façon que on les fait en Brabant et en Flandres et en plusieurs aultres lieux, c'est assavoir hault derrière et entretailée, et sur chascun bout ung angelot; et en celle quayère sera assis l'image de Joseph, lequel en appoyant sur sa crochette fera manière de chauffer ung drappelet à une foyère (brasier) qui sera fourmée devant luy, et sur icelle foyère ara la manière d'une caudière séant sur ung andyer, et sera icelle caudière en manière qu'elle soit plaine d'yauee (d'eau), laquelle eauee sera pour faire ung baing en une cuvelette qui sera ordonné assez près d'icelle caudière au lez vers les piez du lit dessusdict; lequel baing deux angelos ordonneront, dont l'un des angelos fera manière de aler querre (chercher) deux queues d'eauee en la caudière dessusdicte, et l'autre fera manière de ordonner le baing en ladicte cuvelette. Item, au milieu de la couche dessusdicte, sur le lit qui bien et richement sera fourmez, aournez d'oreilliers et couvertures bien et proprement ouvré, sera assise l'imaige de Nostre-Dame, laquelle tiendra son enfant tout droit devant luy, lequel enfant fera manière de aler querre l'offrande des trois roix qu'ilz seront prest et ordonné pour offrir comme cy-après sera dict; icelluy enfant tout nudz, et ladicte ymaige affulée sur se chemise d'un mantel fourrez d'ermes.⁵⁴

Alternatively, a contract might state that the work to be executed was to be similar to an existing work. In 1444, the Ghent painter Nabur Martins contracted to execute for a burgess of Ghent a *Last Judgement* 'comparable in its execution and in its figures to the picture of the *Judgement* hanging in the hall of the Bakers' Guild' (*noch so goed van weercke ende pourtraituren dan tavereel es vanden Jugemente hanghende inde backershuus, in de camere*).⁵⁵ Sometimes, however, not even the subject was mentioned when the contract was registered. There was invariably a deadline, an agreement on the price and the means of its payment, and a statement of the penalties to be incurred by the artist if he broke the terms of the contract. The penalties, usually fines, were sometimes extremely severe. Occasionally the artist was asked to guarantee the permanence of the work to be executed.⁵⁶ He might, nevertheless, complain of underpayment. The painter Jehan Beugier in 1483 addressed a petition to the magistrates of Amiens:

par laquelle il disoit que, puis nagaires, par marchié fait, il avoit fait et peint aucuns ymages en l'église et hostel de St-Ladre appartenans à ladicte ville, en quoy faisant, en considération au pris qu'il en avoit marchandé, il avoit eu grant perte et damage.

The magistrates authorized a supplementary payment.⁵⁷

The following contract was drawn up in 1474 between the Tournai painter Philippe Truffin and the church authorities of Warchin, a village near Tournai:

Phelippe Truffin, peintre, a confessé avoir marchandé et emprins de faire aux curé et paroisiens de l'église et paroisse de Warchin, sur le pouvoir de

⁵⁴ The contract was published by A. PINCHART, *Archives des arts, sciences et lettres*, Première série, I, Ghent [1860], pp.43-47, and also by HAUTCOEUR, *op. cit.* (note 6 above), II, pp.915-20.

⁵⁵ DE BUSSCHER, *op. cit.* (note 7 above), p.174 note.

⁵⁶ Thus in 1456 the Ghent painter Cleerbout van Witevelde, contracting to retouch an altar-piece for the Church of Wachtebeke, guaranteed his work for 20 years (DE BUSSCHER, *op. cit.*, pp.178-79).

⁵⁷ G. DURAND: *Inventaire sommaire des archives communales . . . Ville d'Amiens*, IV, série CC, Amiens [1901], p.240.

cestedictie ville (de Tournai), une table d'autel contenant la grandeur de l'autel de ladicte église, et pour asseir et servir à icellui autel, avec deux coulombes et deux anges, laquelle table doit estre et telle semblable et non moins, tant de taille, de dorure et estoffure comme de pourtraiture, autrement que celle appartenant aux canonniens de ladicte ville estant en l'église Sainte-Catherine d'icelle ville, excepté que es huisseries per-dedens seront faictes deux ystoires de la passion de Nostre-Seigneur, et pardehors quatre ymaiges telz que lesdis paroisiens voudront, ou lieu de l'Ystore saint Antonne qui est en ladicte table des canonniens; à livrer ladicte table, coulombes et anges tout parfait et achevé en cestedictie cité en-dedens le jour de Pentecouste prouchain venant, pour et moyennant le pris et somme de vij livres de gros, que lesdis curé et paroisiens en donnent et ont païé audit Phelippe, et dont desjà ilz luy ont baillié et délivré la somme de ij livres de gros, dont il se tient content, et le surplus se doit payer est assavoir: à la livraison de ladicte table, ij livres de gros, et dedens ung an prouchain après, les ij aultres livres de gros; et à tout ledit marchié fournir et à emplir par la manière dicte ledit Phelippe s'est obligié en corps et biens, etc., sur v solz tournois de peine.⁵⁸

In 1476 the church authorities complained that Truffin had broken his contract, because his work was not so good as the contract had specified. This difference was submitted to the arbitration of four assessors, two chosen by each side. Unfortunately no record has survived of their decision.⁵⁹

Lawsuits over the breaking of contracts generally started because the artist failed to keep to his deadline; but disputes could also arise over the quality of the work – as in the instance of Truffin's altar-piece, over payments, or over the extent of the artist's own participation in the execution of the work. One of the most interesting of these lawsuits was brought before the Bruges magistrates in 1520 by the Guild of Fullers and Shearers against the painter Aelbrecht Cornelis. According to the record of the court, the defendant had undertaken and promised, on 19th November 1517, to paint within two years a triptych for the altar of the Guild at S. Jacob representing the nine choirs of angels, according to a text translated from Latin into Flemish. The price agreed was 30 *livres de gros*, with the express stipulation that the defendant himself, with his own hand, should execute well and with artistry all the nudes and principal parts of the picture. Besides the facts that the defendant had received 2 *livres* towards payment, and that he had failed to deliver the picture within the time specified, he had – which was still worse – subcontracted the work to another for the sum of 8 *livres*.⁶⁰

Subcontracting seems to have been quite usual practice and was often foreseen in the original contract. At Bruges and Ghent it was not exceptional to find two painters jointly contracting to execute one picture.⁶¹ At Lille in 1510, Pierre

⁵⁸ A. PINCHART: 'Archives des arts, des sciences et des lettres §94', *Messenger des sciences historiques* [1868], pp.308-55, pp.315-16.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.315-16.

⁶⁰ W. H. J. WEALE: 'Albert Cornelis, Hiérarchie des anges', *Le Beffroi* I [1863], pp.1-22, pp.18-19. See also the somewhat similar case of 1470 involving Cornelis Bollaert, mentioned in J.-P. SORSON: 'Une approche des structures économiques d'un métier d'art: La Corporation des peintres et selliers de Bruges', *Revue des archéologues et historiens d'art de Louvain* III [1970], pp.91-100, p.92.

⁶¹ See the contracts of Willem van Axpoele and Jan Martins for a series of *Counts of Flanders* in the Schepenhuis at Ghent (1419); of Jan van Coudenberghe and Maerc van Ghistel for an altar-piece for Ruiselede (1430); of Boudin van Witevelde and Jan de Stoevere for an altar-piece for the Abbey of Nieuwenbosche at Ghent (1443); and of Lieven van den Bossche and Gheerolf van der Moortele for an altar-piece for Evergem (1461) (all in DE BUSSCHER

du Hem contracted to polychrome parts of an altar-piece for the Hôpital Comtesse, and agreed that the painted parts should be executed by Jehan de Gand:

*ou d'ung aultre, moïennant que ladicte paincture ne soit mendre que de le main dudit Jehan de Gand.*⁶²

At Namur, the painter Christophe de Hongrie, having contracted to paint an altar-piece for the church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste, renegotiated his contract in 1540, insisted on a higher price and blithely promised to have the wings painted by Bernard van Orley in Brussels. No painter, he claimed, was *pair les poindre semblablement* – but he failed to mention whether Van Orley had agreed to this transaction, or indeed whether he knew Van Orley.⁶³ There is also the interesting instance of the tapestries of *Gideon*, commissioned by Philip the Good in 1448 from two weavers of Tournai. Their contact stated that they:

*sont tenus . . . de faire faire par Bauduin de Bailleul ou par autre meilleur peintre qu'ilz pourront finer, tous les patrons des histores et devises qui sur ce leur ont esté pourparlez et devisées de par mondit seigneur.*⁶⁴

The execution of a commission was sometimes supervised by the patron. When in 1425 the Ghent magistrates visited Hubert van Eyck's studio,⁶⁵ when in 1432 the burgomasters and some of the magistrates of Bruges visited Jan van Eyck's studio,⁶⁶ and when in 1433 Philip the Good visited Jan van Eyck's studio in his palace,⁶⁷ they were presumably inspecting the progress of works which they had commissioned.

It seems highly improbable that a contract was drawn up and registered every time a commission was placed. Private arrangements were assuredly made, and in such instances the artist would sometimes have had to send in an invoice when the work was completed.

In 1465 the Lille painter Jehan Pillot had finished several paintings for the central Burgundian accounting office, the *Chambre des Comptes* at Lille. His invoice begins as follows:

supplie humblement vostre obéissant serviteur Jehan Pillot, peintre, comme il soit ainsi que par l'ordonnance et commandement de vous mes dits seigneurs, ledit suppliant ait nagaires fait et assouffy plusieurs ouvrages de son dit mestier au porge devant de la Chambre des dits comptes, desquels la déclaration s'ensuict:

Et premiers, ung tableau auquel est la mort adjournant ung chascun pour venir rendre compte des biens que Dieu donne à ung chascun;

item, ung autre tableau ouquel est Nostre Seigneur tenant son jugement, accompagné des XII apostles et ung chascun résuscitans pour rendre son compte devant le grant tribunal . . .

The next items concern alterations made at the request of

op. cit. (note 7 above), pp.145–46, 254–55, 168–69, 195). At Bruges in 1455, Arnoud van Nockenbrouck and Jan de Muenic contracted jointly to paint an altar-piece for the church of Westcapelle (sossou, *op. cit.*, p.92); and Christian van den Brande and Jan Raes were paid in 1463 for the joint execution of a picture in the Chapel of the Palace of the Franc (w. h. j. weale: 'Le Palais du Franc à Bruges', *Le Beffroi* IV [1872–76], pp.46–92, p.77).

⁶² *Inventaire analytique . . .* (cited in note 5 above), p.423.

⁶³ F. COURTROY: 'Quelques métiers d'art à Namur du XV^e au XVIII^e siècle', *Annales de la Société archéologique de Namur* XXXVIII [1927], pp.289–329, p.323.

⁶⁴ *I.A.D.N.B.*, IV, p.192.

⁶⁵ w. h. j. weale: *Hubert and John van Eyck*, London [1908], p.xxix.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.xxxviii.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.xxxix.

the *gens des comptes*, the lettering of inscriptions, which had been specially composed by the chronicler Chastellain, and other decorative work. The document closes:

*pour tous lesquelz ouvrages, dessusdis fais et assouffis par ledit suppliant le mieulx qu'il a peu faire, icelui suppliant requiert à vous mesdits seigneurs, à lui estre ordonné et taxé la somme de VIII livres de gros et lui semble le avoir bien gaignié et déservi, et néanmoins il se submet et raporte à votre bonne discrétion et ordonnance.*⁶⁸

Probably only a small proportion of pictures were commissioned. Most, perhaps, were chosen by the patron from the artist's or a dealer's stock. In the more highly evolved tapestry industry, sales outlets seem to have been almost monopolised by merchants who put up the capital, acquired a stock of tapestries and cartoons, and kept the weavers in their employ. Clients probably chose tapestries from the merchants' stocks, or selected cartoons from stock which were then sent to be woven.⁶⁹ Philip the Good's *Gideon* tapestries, which he ordered direct from the weavers and for which cartoons were specially made, must have been an exceptional case.⁷⁰ The method of payment for these tapestries was unusually complex, with advances and instalments paid at three-monthly intervals; because, as the documents state, the weavers were not well off, *point puissans ne fondez*.⁷¹ Bauduin de Bailleul, the painter of the cartoons, had to come from Arras to Bruges and make a long stay there to show his designs to the Duke.⁷² After the tapestries had been delivered, the Duke took the unusual step of buying the cartoons from the weavers.⁷³ This was perhaps equivalent to buying the copyright.

Though painting was a less highly organized craft, which required much less outlay of capital, painters presumably worked on the same principles as the tapestry merchants but acted as their own retailers. The care with which the guild regulations defined the right to exhibit work for sale indicates that this was an important privilege, and that painters relied on their shop windows to attract clients more than on the spread of their reputations. Clients might buy from the stock in the shop;⁷⁴ or, like the buyers of tapestries, they might presumably choose from a stock of patterns, one of which would be repeated for them.⁷⁵ That painters kept

⁶⁸ *I.A.D.N.B.*, I, i, p.116.

⁶⁹ In 1396, Louis of Orléans went to Arras to choose tapestries (DE LABORDE, *op. cit.* (note 2 above), III, p.128). For an interesting case of the re-use of the same cartoon on three occasions, see the exhibition catalogue *Chefs-d'oeuvre de la tapisserie du XIV^e au XVI^e siècle*, Grand Palais, Paris [1973], pp.87–91.

⁷⁰ A. PINCHART: *Histoire de la tapisserie dans les Flandres* (J. GUIFFREY, E. MÜNTZ and A. PINCHART: *Histoire générale de la tapisserie*, Troisième partie), Paris [1878–85], pp.74–75; P. SAINTENOY: *Les arts et les artistes à la cour de Bruxelles* (A.R.B., Classe des beaux-arts, Mémoires, collection in 4^o, 2^e sér. V, fasc. 1), Brussels [1934], pp.53–56.

⁷¹ SAINTENOY, *op. cit.*, p.55.

⁷² DE LABORDE, *op. cit.* (note 2 above), I, p.394.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, I, p.437.

⁷⁴ Thus in 1444 the Ghent painter Claes van der Meersch sold an expensive altar-piece for the Church of Temse (DE BUSSCHER, *op. cit.* (note 7 above), p.158); and altar-pieces were sold at Antwerp by Katlijne van der Stockt for the Church of Rumst in 1436, by Denijs de Roede for the Church of Millegem (1436/39), by Aerd Tsheraerts for the Church of Zandhoven (1460) and for the Church of Heinkenszand (1464), etc. (ASAERT, *op. cit.* (note 31 above), pp.47, 47–48, 49, 52, etc.).

⁷⁵ This is suggested by the existence of large numbers of replicas of certain compositions (see, for example, the instructively long lists in D. DE VOS: 'De Madonna-en-Kindtypologie bij Rogier van der Weyden', *Jahrbuch der Berliner*

stocks of both paintings and patterns is demonstrated by the will of the Brussels painter Vrancke van der Stockt, made in 1489.⁷⁶ He bequeathed to his sons Machiel and Bernaert, both of whom were also painters, all his unfinished pictures (*alle begost werck dat niet bynae volmaect en es, het sy groote tafelen oft cleyn tafelen ocht tavereelkens*) as well as his patterns and drawings (*alle bewerpen . . . het sy patroonen oft anders dat op pappier gemaect es*). His finished pictures, however, he bequeathed to his wife, who was evidently intended to sell them.⁷⁷ Vrancke himself had inherited in 1444 from his father, the painter Jan van der Stockt, *octodecim instrumenta, dicta tavereele, tam magna quam perva* – which presumably represented Jan's stock of pictures.⁷⁸ Like Vrancke van der Stockt, Dirk Bouts in 1475 bequeathed to his sons:

*omnes tabulas et ymagines nondum perfectas neque completas. Perfectas vero vel quasi perfectas legavit prefate Elisabeth, uxori sue.*⁷⁹

Like members of other crafts, painters tended to congregate in the same streets and quarters of a town, and by this means must have attracted more business than neighbouring competition drove away. At Brussels, most painters had their premises on the *Steinwech*,⁸⁰ while at Louvain many were to be found along the *Hoelstraet*.⁸¹ A chronicle relates that at Antwerp in 1460 premises known as *Onser Liever Vrouwen Pand* were erected near the Church of Our Lady:

*voer Boecken, schilderijen, Beeldesnyers ende scrynwerck te coope te sitten.*⁸²

The Antwerp and Brussels Painters' Guilds also rented from the Dominican convent at Antwerp premises where their members could set up stalls,⁸³ but, after disputes with the convent in 1479 and 1480,⁸⁴ the two Guilds sold their rights to these premises in 1481 to the Antwerp Confraternity of St Nicholas.⁸⁵ Meanwhile they concluded an agreement with the Church of Our Lady by which their members became entitled to rent, at fixed rates, stalls in *Onser Liever Vrouwen Pand*.⁸⁶ In 1484, they obtained from the Antwerp administration a decree prohibiting the sale of paintings and images during the Antwerp Fairs anywhere but in the *Pand*.⁸⁷

Museen XIII [1971], pp.60–161), and particularly by the interesting case of two virtually identical panels of the *Virgin and Child* at Brussels and in the Busch-Reisinger Museum, Cambridge, Mass. The first bears the arms of the Bruges apothecary Martin Reyngout; while the second has in the same position the coat of arms of the Van der Burch family of Furnes (see G. VAN DEN BERGEN-PANTENS: 'L'héraldique au service de l'étude d'un tableau des Musées royaux', *Bulletin des Musées royaux des beaux-arts* [1966], pp.243–46).

⁷⁶ P. J. GOETSCHALCKX: 'Vier ongekende schilders der XV^e eeuw', *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis bijzonderlijk van het aloude Hertogdom Brabant II* [1903], pp.239–53, pp.245–49.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.247.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.240.

⁷⁹ VAN EVEN [1869], p.333.

⁸⁰ MATHIEU, *op. cit.* (note 23 above), p.231.

⁸¹ VAN EVEN, *passim*.

⁸² W. VAN HEYST: *Het boek der tyden in 't korte*, ed. I. LE LONG, Amsterdam [1753], p.208.

⁸³ D. SCHLUGLEIT: 'De Predikheerenpand en St-Niklaasgilde te Antwerpen (1445–1553)', *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis* (gesticht door wijlen P. J. Goetschalckx) XXIX [1938], pp.99–119, pp.100–01.

⁸⁴ F. J. VAN DEN BRANDEN: 'Het "Register vanden dachvaerden" (vervolg)', *Antwerpsch Archiefblad XXI*, (s.d.) pp.1–293, pp.171, 175–76.

⁸⁵ SCHLUGLEIT, *op. cit.*, pp.101–02.

⁸⁶ VAN DER STRAELLEN, *op. cit.* (note 32 above), pp.25–28.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.29. On the *Pand*, see also F. PRIMIS: 'De kunstenaars in O.L.V. Pand te Antwerpen in 1534', *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis XXIX* [1938], pp.296–300.

Painters occasionally bartered their work. In 1489 the Louvain painter Roelof van Velpen was paying half his rent in deliveries of pictures.⁸⁸ At Bruges in the early 1530's the painter Ambrosius Benson bought a house and garden from a Spanish merchant. The price was 31 *livres de gros*, of which Benson paid 15 *livres* in cash. The remaining 16 *livres* he promised to pay in pictures – eight pictures worth 2 *livres* each. When they were delivered, the Spaniard claimed that they were worth only 1 *livre 8 sols* each, but the Painters' Guild, called in to arbitrate, determined that they were indeed worth the full 2 *livres* each.⁸⁹

It seems that an artist might on occasion exhibit his work in a public building in the hope of making a sale. In 1464 one Willem Goesteline, born at Brussels, then living at Geraardsbergen, exhibited for sale at the Church of St Nicholas in Ghent a sculpted altar-piece of the *Nativity* which was bought by one Jan Ganshoorre.⁹⁰ No other fifteenth-century instance of the practice seems to be known; and it is not clear whether the seller Goesteline was the sculptor, or merely the owner, of the altar-piece.

Artists might further employ agents to secure commissions or sales. Their wives, who are sometimes cited in their husbands' contracts and who occasionally took over the running of the business when their husbands died,⁹¹ may often have acted as agents. In 1436 the wife of the Brussels painter Jan van der Stockt negotiated the sale of an altar-piece at Antwerp.⁹² Jan's daughter Catherine in 1441 became a burgher of Bruges in order to set up as a painter there,⁹³ and may have obtained commissions for her father at Bruges.

A less orthodox means of selling works of art was by lottery. In the second half of the fifteenth century, lotteries came to be an increasingly popular form of fund raising, and the prizes frequently included pieces of silversmiths' work.⁹⁴ No fifteenth-century case of pictures being given as prizes seems to be known, but the great picture lottery held at Malines in 1560 by the painter Claude Dorizi was certainly not without precedent. The printed advertisement for this lottery informs us that tickets, price 3 *patards*, were on sale from 1st April 1559 until 29th July 1560. The draw was on 30th July 1560, and *le hault et superieur Pris* was billed as:

*une sumptueuse, grande et artificielle piece de peinture à huyle, contenant l'histoire de Susanne, enrichie d'une triumpante bordure dorée de fin or, environ de six piedz de hault, et huit et demy de large, ensemble estimez à 220 florins.*⁹⁵

⁸⁸ VAN EVEN [1867], p.460.

⁸⁹ R. A. PARMENTIER: 'Beschieden omtrent Brugsche schilders van de 16^e eeuw, I. Ambrosius Benson', *A.S.E.B. LXXX* [1937], pp.89–129, pp.97–98.

⁹⁰ C.-L. DIERICX: *Mémoires sur la ville de Gand*, 2 vols., Ghent [1814–15], II, p.110 note 3.

⁹¹ In a Tournai lawsuit of 1508 involving the painter Jean Le Bacre and concerning an altar-piece for the Chapel of St Martin at Saint-Amand, Jean appeared with his wife *autorisée en ceste partie de sondit mary* (DE LA GRANGE and CLOQUET, *op. cit.* (note 5 above), II, pp.246–47). A *wedewe Snellaerts* was trafficking in pictures at Antwerp in 1480 (VAN DEN BRANDEN, *op. cit.* (note 84 above), p.175; on the Antwerp painters named Snellaert, see G. HULIN DE LOO: 'Snellaert (Jan)', in *B.N.B. XXIII*, Brussels [1921–24], cols. 20–24).

⁹² ASAERT, *op. cit.* (note 31 above), p.47.

⁹³ R. A. PARMENTIER: *Indices op de Brugsche Poorterboeken*, 2 vols., Bruges [1938], I, pp.408–09.

⁹⁴ See L. GILLIODTS-VAN SEVEREN: 'La loterie à Bruges', *La Flandre I* [1867–68], pp.5–26, 80–92, 160–95; II [1868–69], pp.408–73; III [1869–70], pp.5–110.

⁹⁵ H. H. CORDEMAN: 'Une loterie de tableaux et d'objets d'art à Malines en

There were also public sales, generally of the property of a deceased person. The effects of the painter Philippe Truffin, including many pictures, were sold by his executors at Tournai in 1506;⁹⁶ pictures appeared frequently in sales at Douai;⁹⁷ and at Antwerp in 1478 the public sale of tapestries confiscated by the creditors of Chancellor Hugonet after his execution attracted buyers of the highest rank, including the Dowager Duchess of Burgundy, Margaret of York.⁹⁸ The Antwerp Guild of St Luke claimed the privilege, challenged by the old clothes dealers in 1504 and 1508, of holding auctions of the belongings of deceased members of the Guild.⁹⁹

It remains to discuss the importance of the great annual Fairs as markets for works of art. As the guild privileges were suspended during the Fairs, this was the only time when pictures might be freely imported from outside. But much of the business of the local artists seems to have been transacted at the Fairs. The respected, though often impecunious, Ghent painter Daniel de Rijke obviously counted on doing good business at the Ghent Fair, for in 1462 he bought a gold signet, promising to pay at the time of the next Fair.¹⁰⁰

In the sixteenth century (the fifteenth-century records have not survived) competition was acute among the painters of Ghent and Bruges for the best stalls at the Fairs.¹⁰¹ A Spanish traveller, Pero Tafur, visiting one of the Fairs of Antwerp in 1438, wrote that 'pictures of every kind' were on sale at the Franciscan convent (*en un monasterio de Sant Francisco se vende todo lo de pintura*);¹⁰² and when in 1466 the Medici wanted Netherlandish pictures to decorate their Palace in Florence, their Bruges agent went to the Antwerp Fair to buy them.¹⁰³ In the 1480's the Antwerp and Brussels Painters' Guilds arranged that all works of art sold at the Antwerp Fairs should be sold from their premises in *Onser Liever Vrouwen Pand*.¹⁰⁴ The number of commissions and sales secured by Antwerp and Brussels artists at the Antwerp Fairs gives some indication of their importance as markets.¹⁰⁵

4. Dealers and the Export Trade

The activities of dealers in works of art are shrouded in

mystery. The guild regulations would seemingly have made their existence unthinkable, yet their existence is recorded throughout the fifteenth century. Somehow, they must have found ways of circumventing the guild regulations and their restrictions on the sale of works of art. At Arras in 1432, the Abbot of Saint-Vaast bought thirteen alabaster statues from *ung marchand d'Allemagne*.¹⁰⁶ He seems to have been something more than a glorified peddler, for the statues bought from him became the centrepiece of an elaborate altar-piece, of which the wings were painted by Jacques Daret and which the Abbot was anxious to show off to visiting Cardinals and other dignitaries during the Peace Congress of Arras in 1435.¹⁰⁷ At Amiens in 1456, the civic authorities purchased from *Baudin Elles, marchand de ymages du pays d'Alemagne*, a painting on cloth of the *Crucifixion*, to be used as a protective covering for a picture recently commissioned from Simon Marmion.¹⁰⁸ A picture dealer, Claes van Holland, *coopman van schilderien*, is cited in a Louvain document of 1460, when he brought a lawsuit against a painter in his employ.¹⁰⁹ Liévin de Bus, *marchand d'images*, born at Ghent, became a burgher of Valenciennes in 1509.¹¹⁰ Dealers came eventually to be received into the Antwerp Guild of St Luke: Jan Meduwael, *beeldvercoopere*, became master of the Guild in 1518.¹¹¹ At least two print dealers were members of the Bruges Guild of Illuminators in the second half of the fifteenth century,¹¹² and in 1472 a print dealer at Louvain who had supplied a painter with 'prints and images' and had not been paid, brought an action to recover his debt.¹¹³

There were those who dealt in works of art on the side, but whose principal occupation had little to do with painting. In 1426 a blacksmith sold to the magistrates of Lille an elaborate and expensive triptych to decorate the new chapel of their assembly hall;¹¹⁴ and in 1498 a cleric sold to the magistrates of Mons a framed picture of the *Judgement of Cambyses*.¹¹⁵ Generally, however, the principal dealers may have been the painters themselves. In 1464 the Ghent painter Daniel de Rijke bought, from different sources, an altar-piece and a small picture;¹¹⁶ in 1481 the Louvain painter Jan Stevens was commissioning pictures from an Antwerp painter, Lauwerys de Witte;¹¹⁷ in 1534 at Bruges the painter Ysenbrandt was commissioning several small pictures from another Bruges painter, Jan van Eekele;¹¹⁸ and

1559', *Bulletin du Cercle archéologique, littéraire et artistique de Malines* II [1891], pp.343-63: the passage quoted occurs on p.348. See also the licence to hold the lottery, printed in PINCHART, *op. cit.* (note 58 above), pp.322-23.

⁹⁶ DE LA GRANGE and CLOQUET, *op. cit.* (note 5 above), II, p.263.

⁹⁷ ASSELIN and DEHAISNES, *op. cit.* (note 14 above), *passim*.

⁹⁸ PINCHART, *op. cit.* (note 70 above), pp.71-72.

⁹⁹ VAN DER STRAELEN, *op. cit.* (note 32 above), pp.36-37.

¹⁰⁰ DE BUSSCHER, *op. cit.* (note 7 above), p.197 note 2; see also V. VAN DER HAEGHEN: 'Ryke (Daneel de)', in *B.N.B.*, XX, Brussels [1908-10], cols. 669-72, col. 670.

¹⁰¹ See, for example, W. H. J. WEALE: 'Albert Cornelis', *Le Beffroi* I [1863], pp. 1-22, p.2; *idem*, 'Peintres brugeois: les Claiessins', *A.S.E.B.* LXI [1911], pp.26-76, p.27; VAN DER HAEGHEN, *op. cit.* (note 41 above), pp.332-46. On fairs, see J.-A. VAN HOUTTE: 'Les foires dans la Belgique ancienne', *Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin*, V, *La foire*, Brussels [1953], pp.175-205.

¹⁰² M. JIMÉNEZ DE LA ESPADA, ed.: *Andanças é viajes de Pero Tafur (1435-1439)* (Colección de libros españoles raros ó curiosos, VIII), Madrid [1874], p.259.

¹⁰³ R. DE ROOVER: *The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank* (Harvard Studies in Business History, XXI), Cambridge, Mass. [1963], pp.144, 435 note 15. On the Antwerp Fairs, see H. VAN DER WEE: *The Growth of the Antwerp Market and the European Economy*, 3 vols. (Université de Louvain, Recueil de travaux d'histoire et de philologie, 4^e sér. fascs. 28-30), Louvain [1963], II, pp.18-28 37-41, 73-83, etc.

¹⁰⁴ See note 87 above.

¹⁰⁵ See ASAERT, *op. cit.* (note 31 above), *passim*.

¹⁰⁶ LORIQUET, *op. cit.* (note 6 above), pp.69-70.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.69-72; A. DE LE TAVERNE, *Journal de la paix d'Arras*, ed. I. COLLART, Paris [1651], p.12.

¹⁰⁸ DURAND, *op. cit.* (note 57 above), p.214.

¹⁰⁹ VAN EVEN [1866], p.264.

¹¹⁰ DE LA FONS-MELICOCQ, *op. cit.* (note 28 above), p.232.

¹¹¹ ROMBOUTS and VAN LERUIS, *op. cit.* (note 5 above), p.89.

¹¹² Pieter van Middemblic, *prentvercoopere* (1481/82-94) and Maertin van Axele, *de prenter copere* (1490-92): see WEALE, *op. cit.* (note 21 above), pp.307-25, 320-22.

¹¹³ VAN EVEN [1866], pp.287-88.

¹¹⁴ J. HOUDOY: *La Halle échevinale de la ville de Lille 1235-1664*, Lille and Paris [1870], p.49.

¹¹⁵ DEVILLERS, *op. cit.* (note 32 above), pp.450-51.

¹¹⁶ V. VAN DER HAEGHEN: 'Ryke (Daneel de)', in *B.N.B.* XX, Brussels [1908-10], cols. 669-72, col. 670.

¹¹⁷ VAN EVEN [1867], pp.453-54.

¹¹⁸ R. A. PARMENTIER: 'Bronnen voor de geschiedenis van het Brugsche schildersmilieu in de XVI^e eeuw (vervolg), IX, Adriaan Isenbrandt', *R.B.A.H.A.* IX [1939], pp.229-65, p.236.

in 1519, again at Bruges, Ambrosius Benson had to bring an action against Gerard David to recover two coffers containing pictures and a pattern book which David had taken from him.¹¹⁹ Assuredly these painters were not buying, commissioning or illegally seizing pictures for their own diversion, but were intending to resell them. Indeed, in a Ghent lawsuit of 1514, the painter Joos Sammelins, accused by the Painters' Guild of illegally importing pictures to sell at Ghent, could claim that the painter's profession consisted not only in painting pictures but also in dealing in them. He further stated that he was performing great services to the city, for he was obliged to go, at great expense, to Antwerp, Malines and elsewhere to look for pictures such as the Ghent painters could not or would not produce, but which were in demand at Ghent. Not to allow the people of Ghent to satisfy this demand at home would have been injurious to the Ghent painters and would have lost them custom to other towns. Such ingenious arguments did not impress the Ghent magistrates, who fined Sammelins and confiscated the illegally imported pictures.¹²⁰

Almost nothing is known of the clientèle of these dealers, and perhaps they may have sold mainly for export. Yet Sammelins claimed to supply the local market, and painters acting as dealers could probably have passed off with ease all the pictures in their shops as their own or their apprentices'. Prosecutions under the guild regulations prohibiting the import of pictures do not seem to have been common occurrences, and cases like that of Sammelins were perhaps exceptional. Sammelins, in any event, had already been involved in legal wrangles with the Ghent Guild, and may have been being victimized.¹²¹

The workings of the export trade, like the activities of the dealers, are clouded in almost total obscurity. In 1445 a Van Eyck was procured for Alfonso V of Aragon through a Valencian merchant who had contacts at Bruges.¹²² The administration of Valencia in 1494 bought a Netherlandish triptych of the *Last Judgement* from the mercader Johan del Anell.¹²³ The Este and the Medici acquired pictures from their agents in the Netherlands, who in this way acted as dealers;¹²⁴ while the Bruges branch of the Medici bank regularly placed commissions for tapestries, generally at Lille, for the Medici and their Italian clients.¹²⁵ The Lyons branch of the Medici bank may have played a significant part in the diffusion of Netherlandish tapestries in the south east of France and in Savoy.¹²⁶ Italian merchants seem to have sent Netherlandish works of art to Italy in the normal course of international trade. In 1460, Lorenzo degli

Strozzi, then at Bruges, sent to his mother in Florence several Netherlandish pictures, all of religious subjects except one of a peacock. She kept a *Holy Face*, but the rest she was to resell and she intended to make a handsome profit.¹²⁷ By the sixteenth century, Netherlandish pictures were available for sale in Italy in alarming quantities. In 1535 Mattheo de Nasar offered 300 Flemish pictures to the Duke of Mantua, who bought 120 of them.¹²⁸ It is not clear whether the Netherlandish end of this export trade was in the hands of Italian merchants acting as dealers, but it seems probable that the Italians may have acquired the paintings – especially in such vast quantities – from Netherlandish dealers rather than direct from the painters.

In 1529 François I of France bought from the Antwerp dealer Jehan Duboys nine pictures for his *cabinet du Louvre*. The price was 169 *livres* 18 *sols tournois*:

73 *livres* 16 *sols tourn.*, pour troys tableaux en toile, esquels sont figurez, assavoir: en l'un les fantosmes de saint Anthoine, en l'autre une dance de paisans, et en l'autre ung homme faisant ung rubec de sa bouche.
28 *livres* 14 *sols* pour deux tableaux de la Passion, faicts à l'huile.
67 *livres* 8 *sols* pour quatre [sic] autres tableaux aussi faicts à l'huile, en l'un des quels sont portraits deux effans eux baisant ensemble; en ung autre, ung enfant tenant une teste de mort; et en l'autre une dame d'honneur à la mode de Flandres, portant une chandelle en son poing et ung pot en l'autre.¹²⁹

While most of the pictures sold by dealers and for export were undoubtedly by living painters, the dealers also supplied a market in old pictures. At least occasionally, a church would sell an altar-piece. In 1528/29 the church authorities of St Giles at Bruges had an old altar-piece valued by two painters. It was then sold to the *cleederscriver* and dealer Pieter Voghelare, who paid in instalments over the next three years.¹³⁰ Meanwhile a new altar-piece had been commissioned from Jan Provoost.¹³¹

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to describe. Certain conclusions, however, can be drawn which have some relevance to the stylistic investigation of early Netherlandish painting. Though a much greater quantity of documentary evidence exists than is usually suspected, there is still not enough evidence to support many generalisations on the subject of the South Netherlandish art market. The almost total lack of documented pictures is obviously the severest hindrance to research on this as on any other aspect of early Netherlandish painting. Even if the evidence were more abundant, it would be futile to attempt to apply any but the broadest generalisations to an area so vast and diverse as the Southern

¹¹⁹ R. A. PARMENTIER: 'Beschieden omtrent Brugsche schilders van de 16^e eeuw, I. Ambrosius Benson', *A.S.E.B.* LXXX [1937], pp.89–129, pp.92–94.

¹²⁰ VAN DER HAEGHEN, *op. cit.* (note 41 above), pp.164–78.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp.149–52; see also V. VAN DER HAEGHEN: 'Les peintres Sammelins' *Bulletijn der M.G.O.G.* XIX [1911], pp.55–79.

¹²² WEISS, *op. cit.* (note 18 above) [1956], pp.11, 15.

¹²³ J. LAVALLEYE: *Les primitifs flamands, II. Répertoire . . . 1, Collections d'Espagne*, I, Antwerp [1953], p.36.

¹²⁴ In 1450 and 1451 the Este arranged payments to Rogier van der Weyden through Paolo de Porio in Brussels: see J. A. CROWE and G. B. CAVALCASELLE: *The Early Flemish Painters*, 2nd ed., London [1872], p.208 note 3.

¹²⁵ A. GRUNZWEIG: *Correspondance de la filiale de Bruges des Medici*, I (Commission royale d'histoire), Brussels [1931], *passim*.

¹²⁶ S. SCHNEEBALG-PERELMAN: 'Le rôle de la banque des Medicis dans la diffusion des tapisseries flamandes', *R.B.A.H.A.* XXXVIII [1969], pp.19–41.

¹²⁷ C. GUASTI, ed.: *Lettere di una gentildonna fiorentina del secolo XV*, Florence [1877], pp.223–26, 229–31.

¹²⁸ A. LUZIO: *La galleria dei Gonzaga*, Milan [1913], p.30.

¹²⁹ L. CIMBER and F. DANJOU, *Archives curieuses de l'histoire de France*, 1^{ère} série III, Paris [1835], pp.81–82. Jehan Duboys is perhaps the painter Jan de Booze, master at Antwerp in 1519 (ROMBOUTS and VAN LERINS, *op. cit.* (note 5 above), p.92).

¹³⁰ W. H. J. WEALE: 'Comptes de la fabrique de l'église de Saint-Gilles à Bruges (suite)', *La Flandre* II [1868–69], pp.51–75, 144–52, 199–220, pp.202, 59. For Pieter Voghelare, see VANDEN HAUTE, *op. cit.* (note 23 above), p.36.

¹³¹ W. H. J. WEALE: 'Peintres brugeois: les Prévost', *A.S.E.B.* LXII [1912], pp.144–69, p.151.

Netherlands and to a period so long as a century. It can be stated with some confidence that the art market was quite highly organized, and that the commercialisation of artistic production, often considered characteristic of the early sixteenth century, was well under way in the fifteenth century. While it is impossible to produce even approximate statistics, it seems more than probable that only relatively few pictures were commissioned, and that this proportion was in constant decline. It is not exceptional to find two painters collaborating on one commission, and collaboration between workshops on pictures which were not commis-

sioned may have been common practice. Collaboration invites specialisation, which would also have been encouraged by the existence of dealers. The Guilds were beginning to relax some of their monopolies and controls on production, and were coming to accept the existence of dealers. Though it is not possible to assess the importance of the dealers or the development of the Fairs of Antwerp as great centralized markets in works of art, such factors must have combined, with the efforts of the painters themselves at their annual congresses, to encourage an erosion of narrowly localized traditions.

HUGH BRIGSTOCKE

A date for G. C. Procaccini's 'Apotheosis of St Carlo' in Dublin

A letter from the Roman artist Antonio Mariani to Cardinal Federico Borromeo, dated 24 7bre 1628, and published by L. Beltrami in 1909, in his introduction to a new edition of Federico Borromeo's *Musaeum*,¹ provides valuable evidence, hitherto overlooked, for dating the completion of G. C. Procaccini's vast picture of *The Apotheosis of St Carlo Borromeo*, now in Dublin (Fig.2), to the years 1624/25.

Beltrami published the letter (reprinted as an appendix, p.203) to illustrate an aspect of Federico's activity as a collector and patron: his efforts to obtain copies for his museum, from Mariani and others, of pictures by earlier masters such as Raphael, Luini, Correggio, and Gaudenzio Ferrari. It is clear from Mariani's letter that he had received a complaint from the Cardinal about his alleged failure to imitate correctly the manner of Michelangelo and Raphael. Although Mariani is diplomatic enough to admit his shortcomings, he then ripostes with a well-aimed attack on the contemporary Milanese style of painting and points out that such Milanese pictures as had been seen recently in Rome had been condemned for their '*contorni più del naturale*'. As an example – and it is at this point that the letter becomes relevant to the Dublin picture – he cites a picture of St Carlo and St Michael by an unspecified Milanese artist which had been commissioned, but then rejected, by Gaspar Mola in Rome. '*. . . un quadro d'un S. Carlo, e S. Michele, et altre figure fatte per fierezza, e mandato celo e poi rifiutato, il qual quadro hoggi di è in S Carlo di Roma, quale ce l'ha messo il sudetto Gaspar Mola . . .*' The date of Mola's commission is not known, but since he did not apparently reach Rome until late 1624 or early 1625 it is unlikely that the picture described by Mariani was sent to him there before that date.² Even allowing for delays in delivery, this evidence strongly suggests that the painting was not finished earlier than 1624. And if I am correct in believing that the picture described by Mariani is the *Apotheosis of St Carlo* by G. C. Procaccini,

now in Dublin, it must also have been completed no later than 14th November 1625 when Giulio Cesare died, since it is not listed in the inventory of his studio made on 19th November 1625.³

Carandente has already shown that the Dublin picture by G. C. Procaccini was in the church of S. Maria Traspontina in Rome by 1673 when it was acquired by Maratta who had been commissioned to paint a copy of reduced size.⁴ The necessary evidence for identifying this picture with the picture of the same subject seen by Mariani in the church of S. Carlo, Rome, by 1628, is to be found in G. Mola's two testaments, dated 1631 and 1640, which have been published by Bertolotti.⁵ In the 1631 will Mola expresses the wish that his picture of St Carlo (the artist's name is not given) should be transferred from the Hospital of San Carlo al Corso to S. Maria Traspontina. '*Voglio anco che il suddetto Hospitale di San Carlo paghi scudi 50 l'anno o rassegni 10 luoghi di monti alla chiesa della Traspontina in Borgo alla quale anco debba consegnare la mia tavola di San Carlo, se di gia non sara da me consegnata, per adornare l'altare di San Carlo in detta chiesa, e voglio che li Padri pro tempore di detta Chiesa siano tenuti in perpetuo celebrare una messa . . .*' By 1640 the transfer of the picture had already taken place, but by this time Mola had again changed his plans, and expresses the wish that the picture, now attributed for the first time to G. C. Procaccini, should be given back to the church of San Carlo al Corso and replaced in S. Maria Traspontina with another, together with a new marble altar. '*Che si faccia detto altare di marmo ed altre pietre mischie et si spenda sino alla somma di scudi mille e non voglio che vi stia la ancona che vi e adesso di S. Carlo e S. Michele per essere troppo grande, ma che questa sia data a S. Carlo del Corso e la mettano all'altare grande et e di mano di Giulio Cesare Procaccini, et caso non sia messa all'altare grande sia dell'heredita insieme con gli altri*

¹ L. BELTRAMI: *Il museo del Cardinale Federico Borromeo*. (Preface to translation of Federico Borromeo's *Musaeum* by L. Gasselli) [1909], pp.ix-x.

² See A. BERTOLOTTI: *Artisti Lombardi a Roma nei secoli xv, xvi, xvii* [1881], II, pp.191-92.

³ This inventory was discovered by N. Pevsner in the Archivio di Stato, Milan, Filza 27634, but remains unpublished. My transcription of this inventory will be printed in a forthcoming article in the *Berliner Jahrbuch*.

⁴ Cf. G. CARANDENTE in *Attività della Soprintendenza alle Gallerie del Lazio*, Rome [1969], where Maratta's copy is reproduced.

⁵ A. BERTOLOTTI, *op. cit.*, II, p.204 f.