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## The artistic relations between Flanders and Spain in the 16th Century: an approach to the Flemish painting trade

### ABSTRACT

This paper discusses different ways of trading between Flanders and Spain in relation to paintings in the sixteenth century. The importance of local fairs as markets providing luxury objects is well known both in Flanders and in the Spanish territories. Perhaps less well known is the role of Flemish artists workshops in transmitting new models and compositions, and why these remained in use for longer than others. The article gives examples of strong networks among painters and merchants throughout the century. These agents could also be artists, or Spanish merchants with ties in Flanders. The artists become dealers; they would typically sell works by their business partners not only on the art markets but also in their own workshops. They worked in the local trade, and specifically sought to acquire Flemish paintings, while becoming specialists in those products.

At the same time, high quality Flemish paintings arrived in Spain through commissions. This form of import was more targeted than fairs and merchants and was promoted directly to the painters. Wealthy patrons looked for intermediaries to deliver specific requirements.

Such commissions were received by important workshops and masters with a higher grade of quality. As the agent, the intermediary had to take care of the commission from the outset to the arrival of the painting in Spain. Such duties included the provision of detailed instructions and arrangement of shipping to a final destination. These agents used to be Spanish natives long settled in Flanders, who were fluent in the language and knew the local trade. Unfortunately, very little correspondence about the commissions has been preserved, and it is only the Flemish paintings and altarpieces preserved in Spanish chapels and churches which provide information about their workshop or patron.

Last, not least it is necessary to mention the Iconoclasm revolt as a reason why many high quality paintings arrived in Spain at the end of the century and the beginning of the following. The Flemish and Spanish artistic trade in the sixteenth century is a complex subject, and it is necessary to understand the networks to realize why there are more paintings from some workshops and schools than others in different Spanish territories.

One of the first aspects that is relevant for understanding in a discussion about Flemish Painting in Spain is the reason why this type of painting was so successful in the Iberian Peninsula. In the sixteenth century, Spanish painting workshops were generally busy with important commissions from churches, cathedrals, convents or nobility.<sup>1</sup> Big altarpieces were ordered and the workshops sometimes needed to subcontract other masters and workshops to finish the commission on time.<sup>2</sup> In a different development at the end of the fifteenth century in Spain, people close to the new spiritual movement that grew in Europe, the *Devotio Moderna*, began to request paintings and images for personal use in their homes, but it was not easy for them to find this type of object in local workshops. To begin with, Spanish local workshops could not respond quickly to the demand because they were not adapted to this market and their methods of work were not suitable for moving paintings easily, especially if they were made on a table.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, small Flemish paintings were sold in Spain in order to meet customer requirements. Besides, as Collar de Cáceres pointed out, the Spanish painting workshops adopted a less detailed style than the Flemings, resulting in paintings that were less suitable to be viewed at close distance than the Flemish ones.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, Flemish paintings were more pleasing in small interior spaces, and Flemish religious paintings that had been made in small sizes with a commercial purpose since the beginning of the fifteenth century were in an advantageous position for the market. In fact, the strong commercial ties, which the Flemings had nurtured with Spain since the fifteenth century,<sup>5</sup> were developed further by the

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- 1 On Spanish workshops in the sixteenth century: Juan José Martín González, *La vida de los artistas en Castilla la Vieja y León*, in *Revista de Archivos y Bibliotecas*, (1959), 432; Julián Gallego, *El pintor, de artesano a artista*, (Granada: 1976), 84-85; José Manuel Serrera, Vasco Pereira, un pintor portugués en la Sevilla del último tercio del siglo XVI, in *Archivo Hispalense*, LXX, 213, (1987), 219-227; L. Vasallo Torranzo and I. Fiz Fuentes, Organización y método de trabajo de entallador de pinturas de mediados del siglo XVI. El caso toresano, in *Boletín del Museo de Instituto Camón Aznar*, 91, (2003), 313-326.
  - 2 The problems with this kind of contract are explained in: J. C. Pascual de Cruz, *Lorenzo de Ávila. Una ilusión renacentista*, (Zamora: Instituto de estudios zamoranos, Florián de Ocampo, 2012), 87-93; Eloy González Martínez, La subcontratación de la obra de arte y los problemas en la investigación histórico-artística. El caso de León Picardo, in *Philostrato. Revista de Historia y Arte*, 2 (2017), 5-20. Available at: <<http://philostrato.revistahistoriayarte.es/index.php/moll/article/view/philostrato.2017.06>>. (Date accessed: 24 May 2019). doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.25293/philostrato.2017.06>.
  - 3 It is convenient to remember that the Spanish constructions of the wooden panels were thicker than Flemish, becoming the Spanish paintings heavier. J-A. Glatigny, *Tecnicque de construction des panneaux flamands*, in *La pintura europea en tabla. Siglos XV, XVI y XVII*, (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 2010), 42-47; Tamara Alba González-Fanjul, *La construcción de los soportes pictóricos de madera en Castilla. Siglos XV y XVI*, (Madrid: Tesis doctoral inédita, Universidad Complutense, 2015), 115-121. Nevertheless, small altarpieces or *retablos* were made in a small standard size in the fifteenth century, but there does not seem to have been a sort mass production for open markets. Fabian Mañas, *Pintura gótica aragonesa*, (Zaragoza: 1979), 33.
  - 4 Fernando Collar de Cáceres, *Pinturas y pintores del norte en la España del siglo XVI. Presencia e influencia*, in *La pintura europea sobre tabla siglos XV, XVI y XVII*, (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 2010), 34.
  - 5 J. Marechal, *La colonie espagnole de Bruges du XIVE au XVIe siècle*, in *Revue du Nord*, XXXV, (1953), 5-40; L. Campbell, *The Art Market in the Southern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century*, in *The Burlington Magazine*, 118, (1976), 188-198; J. C. Wilson, *The Participation of Painters in the Bruges "pandt" market, 1512-1550*, in *The Burlington Magazine*, 125, (1983), 476-479; D. Ewing, *Marketing art in Antwerp, 1460-1560: Our Lady's Pand*, in *The Art Bulletin*, 72, (1990), 558-584; M. W. Ainsworth, *The Business of Art: Patrons, Clients and Art Markets*, in *From Van Eyck to Bruegel: early Netherlandish Painting in the*

local workshops to provide Spaniards with Flemish religious paintings. The effect was immediate: commerce became continuous for those products based on strong demand, rather than quality, and local painting workshops began to imitate those foreign representations that arrived in Spain in order to supply their clients with cheaper works.<sup>6</sup>

This massive and widespread import was aimed at local commerce and was carried out by merchants with close relations with Flanders and with regular connections between both countries importing all manner of goods.<sup>7</sup> The small religious paintings, or “*Andachtsbilder*”, were intended for devotion and were sold in open markets.<sup>8</sup> For example, in December 1534, Adrian Hus, a dealer settled in Antwerp, sent to Juan Garcia, his partner in Medina del Campo (Valladolid), a lot of combs, dishes, maps and mirrors, and among these goods there were also:

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*Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, 1998, 23-38; W. Thomas & E. Stols, Flandes y Castilla: dos siglos de caminos paralelos, in *Vlaanderen en Castilla y León*, (Antwerpen: Europalia, 1995), 24-43; T. Álvarez, Artistic Enterprise and Spanish Patronage: The Art Market during the Reign of Isabel of Castile (1474-1594), in *North et Ormrod*, 1998, 49-50; Maximiliaan P.J. Martens, Some aspects of the origins of the art market in 15th century Bruges, in *Marchés de l'Art*, 1400-1800, 3, (1998), 157-158; T. H. Borchert, La mobilité des artistes. Aspects du transfert culturel à la veille des Temps modernes, in *Le siècle de Van Eyck 1430-1530. Le monde méditerranéen et les primitifs flamands*, Cat. Exp., Bruges, 2002, 43 ; M. T. Álvarez, *The Art Market in Renaissance Spain: From Flanders to Castille*, (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, Diss. Ph. D., 2003), 95-106; I. Redondo Parés, El mercado artístico entre Flandes y Castilla (1474-1504): estados de la cuestión y perspectivas de estudio, in *Perspectivas actuales, horizontes insólitos. Dinámicas y aportaciones teóricas en Historia del Arte*, (Logroño: Aguja de Palacio ediciones, 2018), 283-301.

- 6 This explains why there are a lot of paintings with models following Roger van der Weyden or Dieric Bouts painted by the Spanish school of painting in the sixteenth century. Didier Martens, Un eco castellano de la Madonna del trono arqueado de Dieric Bouts, in *Archivo Español de Arte*, 266, (1994), 50-159; D. Martens, Metamorfosis hispanas de una composición de Dieric Bouts, in *Goya*, 262, (1998), 2-12; D. Martens, Una huella de Rogier van der Weyden en la obra de Bernat de Aras, pintor vecino de la ciudad de Huesca, in *Archivo Español de Arte*, 231, (2008), 1-16; D. Martens, Los primitivos flamencos y la recepción de sus propuestas en el reino de Castilla, in *Boletín de la Institución Fernán González*, (2013/1), pp. 119-150; D. Martens, Un triptyque Brugeois de la Renaissance à Castrojeriz (Burgos) et l'Influence de la Madonna au Chanoine van der Paele en Castille, in *Quintana*, 12, (2013), pp. 21-36; D. Martens, Les primitifs flamands et leur réception dans la peinture castillane de la fin du Mogen Âge, in *Late Gothic Painting in the Crown of Aragon and the Hispanic Kingdoms*, A. Velasco, F. Fité (eds.), (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2018), 264-296 [DOI 10.1163/9789004363847\_008].
- 7 This has been studied in depth by Denucé, Montias or Vermeylen. Some of their classical studies on the issue are: Joseph Denucé, *Exportation d'oeuvres d'art au 17e siècle a Anvers. La firme Forchondt*, (The Hague: 1931); W. Brulez, De diaspora der Anterperse kooplui op het einde van de 16e eeuw, *Bijdragen voor de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 15, (1960), 279-306; E. Duverger, *Nieuwe gegevens betreffende de kunsthandel van Mattijs Musson en Maria Fourmenois te Antwerpen tussen 1633 en 1681*, (Ghent: 1969); E. Stols, *De Spaanse Brabanders of the handelsbetrekkingen der Zuidelijke Nederlanden met de Iberisch wereld*, 2 vols., (Brussels, 1971); Filip Vermeylen, *Painting for the market. Commercialization of art in Antwerp's Golden Age*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 28-33; M. de Marchi, H. van Miegroet, *Moving pictures: intra-European trade in images, 16th-18th centuries*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008).
- 8 Erwin Panofsky, Imago pietatis. Ein Beitrag zur Typengeschichte des “Schmerzensmanns” und der “Maria Mediatrix”, in *Festschrift für Max J. Friedländer zum 60 Geburtstag*, (Leipzig, 1927), 261-308; Sixten Ringbom, *Icon to Narrative. The Rise of the Dramatic Close-up in Fifteenth Century Devotional Painting*, Abo, 1965.

Two dozens of big canvases, by a skilled hand, with stories of the Petrarca's Triumphs, which are six pieces; other six paintings by a very skilled hand, in small tables with a measure of a fold paper, painted by a very good Master who lives in Antwerp. Twelve small closed pieces of devotion, painted by a very skilled hand [Master], until a half fold sheet.<sup>9</sup>

The documentation known to date gives information about the type of object imported, what subjects or stories in paintings were in demand in Spain, and also, which merchants maintained links with the Iberian Peninsula. The latter generally had a special compromise agreement with particular Flemish workshops, especially in Bruges and Antwerp.<sup>10</sup> In Bruges, the relation between the painter Ambrosius Benson (ca. 1490-1550) and the merchants Sancho de Santander,<sup>11</sup> who was living between Bruges and Bilbao,<sup>12</sup> and Lucas de Castro<sup>13</sup> is well known. Also, a painter of the same generation as Benson, Adriaen Provost,<sup>14</sup> had a close working relationship with Guiot de Beaugrant, Bruges sculptor and dealer, who was settled in Bilbao since 1533. One year before his trip into

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- 9 (Translated by the author) "2 docenas de lienzos de buena mano grandes de historias [de] los triunfos de Petrarca que son seis piezas del triunfo; 6 piezas de imágenes de muy buena mano de tabla pequeña, de un pliego de papel, de la mano de un buen maestro que hay en Amberes. 12 piezas cerradas de muy buena mano pequeñas que sean buenas devociones de hasta medio pliego de papel". Archivo Histórico de Protocolos de Valladolid, (AHPV), Protocolo legajo 6098, fol. 688, Transcripción in: M. A. Fernández del Hoyo, Sobre el comercio de obras de arte en Castilla en el siglo XVI, in *Boletín del Seminario de Arte*, 61, (1995), 365-366.
- 10 L. Kooijmans, Vriendschap als verzekering 1500-1800, in J. van Gerwen, M. J. D. van Leeuwen (eds.), *Studies over zekerheidsarrangementen. Risico's risicobestrijding en verzekeringen in Nederland vanaf de Middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam-The Hague, 1998), 223-233; B. Dewilde, On Noble Artists and Poor Painters: Networking Artist in Renaissance Bruges, in K. Brosens, L. Kelchtermans, K. van der Stighelen, eds., *Family ties. On art production, kinship patterns and connections (1600-1800)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 85-100. C. Rasterhoff, F. Vermeylen, The Zeeland connection. The art trade between the Northern and Southern Netherlands during the seventeenth century, in N. de Marchi, S. Raux, eds., *Moving pictures. Intra-European trade in images, 16th-18th centuries* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 123-150; Claartje Rasterhoff, Filip Vermeylen, Mediators of trade and taste. Dealing with demand and quality uncertainty in the international art markets of the seventeenth century, *De Zeventiende Eeuw*, 31 (2015), I, 138-158 (DOI 10.18352/dze.10123) (URL: <http://www.de-zeventiende-eeuw.nl>)
- 11 When Ambrosius Benson died, he became Benson's last daughter's tutor, and Benson's son, Guillaume, paid him with two paintings with the subjects of a *Nativity* and a *Deposition* for the money that his father still owed him. George Marlier, *Ambrosius Benson et la peinture à Bruges au Temps de Charles-Quint*, (Damme, 1957), 39. About the Benson's painting in the market see: J. Wilson, *Painting in Bruges at the Close of the Middle Ages. Studies in Society and Visual Culture*, (Pennsylvania, 1998), 181-185.
- 12 Archivo de la Real Audiencia de la Chancillería de Valladolid (ARACHV), Registro de ejecutorias, caja 194, 46. "Ejecutoria del pleito litigado entre Sancho de Santander, vecino de Bilbao (Vizcaya) con Diego Pérez de Arana, vecino de Bilbao, sobre pago de daños y perjuicios por incumplimiento de contrato de fletamento de ciertas mercancías, 26 de octubre de 1504; Archivo General de Simancas (AGS), Cámara de Castilla, CED, 8, 122, 1, "Poder para pleitos de Sancho de Santander, vecino de Bilbao", 28 de mayo de 1502.
- 13 Marlier, *Ambrosius Benson*, 23; A. Bergmans, Enkele gegevens over de activiteiten van de beeldhouwer Guiot de Beaugrant in Bilbao (1533-1549), in *Archivum Artis Lovaniense. Bijdrage tot en Geschiedenis van de Kunst der Nederlanden opdragen aan Prof. Em. Dr. J. K. Steppe*, (1981), 266.
- 14 It is recorded in the Bruges guild at 1528, and in the Antwerpen guild at 1530. W. H. J. Weale, Peintres brugeois. Les Prévost, in *Annales de la Société d'Emulation de Bruges*, LXII, (1912), 144-169; R. A. Parmentier,

Spain, Provost undertook to send to Beaugrant to Bilbao “forty-one paintings over canvases” in four batches during two years in order to be sold in the local market by the sculptor.<sup>15</sup> Bergemans has suggested that this shipment of paintings could be part of a commercial treaty between Provost and Beaugrant, as part of a payment made to the sculptor for the house that Provost had bought him at the Kuiperstraat in Bruges.<sup>16</sup>

Such an arrangement of making a payment in the form of paintings was not unusual among artists. For instance, when Ambrosius Benson bought a house with garden near the Saint-Claire convent from Lucas de Castro, merchant settled in Bruges, one part of the payment was made in cash and the other by “huit tableaux de peinture” [eight paintings].<sup>17</sup> However, even taking into consideration Bergemans’ suggestion about a shipment of paintings sent by Adriaen Provost to Guiot de Beaugrant as payment for Beaugrant’s house in 1532, the commercial relationship between them is likely to have lasted much longer. In fact, Adriaen Provost paid Adriaen Isenbrant for a lot of paintings to be shipped to Beaugrant in Bilbao in 1535.<sup>18</sup> This type of record matches the volume of works painted by the Bruges school at the end of the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth century which are still preserved in Spain, especially by the Isenbrant, Benson and Claeissens workshops.<sup>19</sup>

## The networks

As mentioned above, the Flemish paintings that arrived in Spain were sold not only in local open markets but also in Spanish painting workshops. Painters who sold works by other masters were known as “regatones”<sup>20</sup> and needed a special permit for this activi-

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Bronnen voor de geschiedenis van het Brugsche Schildersmilieu in de XVIe eeuw 20. Adriaan Provoost, in *Belgisch tijdschrift voor oudheidkunde en kunstgeschiedenis*, 11, (1941), 113.

15 Marlier, *Ambrosius Benson*, 59; H. Pauwels, *Le Dictionnaire des Peintres Belges du XIVe siècle a nos jours*, (Bruxelles: 1995), 828.

16 Bergmans, Enkele gegevens, 265.

17 R. A. Parmentier, Bescheiden omtrent Brugsche Schilders van de zestiende eeuw I. Ambrosius Benson, in *Handelingen van het Genootschap voor Geschiedenis/ Annales de la Société d’Emulation te Brugge*, 80, (1937), 97-98, doc. 5.

18 Weale, *Peintres brugeois*, 161, note 2; A. Schouteet, *De Vlaamse Primitieven te Brugge. Bronnen voor de schilderkunst te Brugge tot de dood van Gerard David*, 1, (Brussel: 1989), 277, n° 2.

19 A huge amount of Ambrosius Benson’s production is still in the Segovia province, and this fact made Justi consider that Ambrosius Benson was working there - in his first papers about Benson’s works in 1886, he gave him the name of “Maestro de Segovia”. G. Marlier, *Ambrosius Benson*, 7-9; For paintings of those three workshops and the north of Spain, see: Ana Diéguez-Rodríguez, *La pintura flamenca del siglo XVI en el norte de España: Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria, País Vasco y Navarra*, I, (Santiago de Compostela: Universidad, Ph. D. diss., 2012), 160-166, 181-188, 225-228; Brecht Dewilde, The Production and Marketing of Paintings in Sixteenth-Century Bruges, in *Forgotten Masters. Pieter Pourbus and Bruges Painting from 1525 to 1625*, ed. Anne van Oosterwijk, (Bruges: Groeningemuseum, Snoeck, 2018), 21, 25.

20 Gallego, *El pintor*, 70, note 267; M. J. Muñoz González, *El mercado español de pintura en el siglo XVII*, (Madrid: Fundación del Arte Hispánico, 2008), 30-33.



ty.<sup>21</sup> The commercial success of those compositions in the local trade encouraged Spanish painters to request more. Pedro de Alzo, painter from Navarra, thus bought twenty-eight paintings “made by paintbrush in Flanders” to sell them in the local trade in 1581.<sup>22</sup> In this way, native workshops without a tradition in small devotional paintings found a way to fulfil their clients’ demands.



Fig. 1: Ambrosius Benson Workshop (Monogrammist GB), *Virgin and Child*, ca. 1530-1550 (panel, 88 x 56,5 cm)  
Zaragoza, Museum of Zaragoza  
© Museu of Zaragoza

Furthermore, local painters took the opportunity to copy the popular Flemish compositions, and the workshops thus disseminated Flemish models in the local milieu.<sup>23</sup> But in most cases, this local mass production did not have the same level of quality as the originals,<sup>24</sup> and their purchase was more often made due to an interest in the subject, especially in devotional compositions, than in the painting as such.

Copies of Flemish compositions by other native artists in Spain explain the success of these fifteenth-century Flemish compositions in the Iberian peninsula.<sup>25</sup> While a number of local painters created works based on Flemish models, those copies were perhaps not based directly on fifteenth-century Flemish paintings but rather sixteenth-century Flemish versions. Perhaps it is easier to follow this idea through an example of a painting of the *Virgin and her son* linked to the Bruges School, probably

from Ambrosius Benson’s workshop. (Fig. 1) This model follows a lost version by Van der Weyden that is known through copies.<sup>26</sup> The composition was so successful that the Duke

21 Other examples at the beginning of the seventeenth century: Muñoz González, *El Mercado*, 30-31.

22 M. C. García Gáinza, *Los Oscáriz, una familia de pintores navarros del siglo XVI*, in *Príncipe de Viana*, 114-115, (1969), 11; E. Enciso Viana, *Panorama artístico*, in *Catálogo Monumental Diócesis de Vitoria, Ciudad de Vitoria*, III, (Vitoria: 1971), 50-51.

23 See note 6.

24 Diéguez-Rodríguez, *La pintura flamenca*, I, 122.

25 See note 6.

26 Max J. Friedländer, *Early Netherlandish Painting. Rogier van der Weyden and the Master of Flémalle*, ed. Nicole Veronee-Verhaegen, (Leyden-Brussels: La Connaissance, 1967), 87, n° 121.

of Villahermosa, Martín de Gurrea y Aragón (1525-1581),<sup>27</sup> returned from his journey to Flanders with King Philip II with a similar composition of the *Virgin and her son*. This painting held a special devotional meaning for the Duke of Villahermosa and his family, and his wife asked the Flemish painters under their patronage to copy it in order to give



one devotional painting to each of her children and “to spread in everyone its devotion”.<sup>28</sup> It is likely that the painting cherished by the dukes of Villahermosa was a *Virgin with her son in her arms*, which would have been copied by the Duke’s Flemish painters, Roland de Moys and Pablo Schepers.<sup>29</sup> There are several copies and versions by these masters, for example in the Navarra Museum (inv. no. 1348); in the Museum of Pontevedra<sup>30</sup> (Fig. 2) – a painting with workshop assistance; one on canvas in the Zaragoza Museum, another one in the ancient Mateu collection in Barcelona, and another at the Poblet museum (Tarragona, inv.no. MPO 00030). Consequently, the popular devotional composition could have been promoted through the Villahermosa family well beyond the period

Fig. 2: Flemish painter (Possibly Pablo Schepers or Rolan de Moys), *Virgin and Child*, Second half of the sixteenth century

Pontevedra, Museo Provincial

© Museo Provincial de Pontevedra

27 He was a nobleman with an important role in Philip’s court. He shared Philip’s journey to England when the king married Mary Tudor and when Philip travelled through Flanders. The Duke of Villahermosa had a close relationship with the humanistic circles of the time, especially with Cardinal Granvela. He had a very important collection, and several Flemish painters were working for him in Spain. José Alipio Morejon Ramos, *Nobleza y humanismo. Martín de Gurrea y Aragón. La figura cultural del IV duque de Villahermosa (1526-1581)* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el católico, 2009), 241-285;309-339; Almudena Pérez de Tudela Gabaldón, Adenda a la correspondencia entre el cardenal Granvela y el duque de Villahermosa (1560-1574), in *Boletín del Seminario de Arte y Arqueología*, 82, (2016), 33-50.

28 (Translated by the author) “para propagar en todos su devoción”. T. Muniesa, *Vida de la V. y Exma. Sra. D. Luisa de Borja y Aragón. Condesa de Ribagorza, duquesa de Villahermosa*, 1691 (ed. Madrid, 1876), 158; R. P. Jaime Nonell, *La Santa Duquesa. Vida y Virtudes de la venerable y excelentísima señora doña Luisa de Borja y Aragón. Condesa de Ribagorza y duquesa de Villahermosa* (Madrid, 1892), 194-195; Juan Carlos Lozano López, Flandes y la pintura en Aragón en los siglos XVI y XVII, en *Aragón y Flandes. Un encuentro artístico (siglos XV-XVII)*, Universidad de Zaragoza, 2015, 108.

29 On these paintings by Roland de Moys and Pablo Schepers for the dukes: Diéguez-Rodríguez, *La pintura flamenca*, I, 53-56.

30 María Ángeles Tilve Jar, *Do Renacemento o Neoclasicismo*, in *75 obras para 75 anos* (Pontevedra, 2003), 71, 73.

when the original was painted, which explains why a composition proved so popular in Spain.<sup>31</sup>

While local painting workshops functioned as agents for foreign painters, the Flemish compositions had another important channel of circulation: the big annual open air markets in Medina del Campo and Tordesillas (Valladolid), where all sorts of merchandise from all over Europe was displayed.<sup>32</sup> These fairs took place twice a year over fifty days, but at the end of sixteenth century, the city of Medina del Campo requested the king for a fair lasting for more than a year.<sup>33</sup> This fact confirms the reputation of those markets as places where huge amounts of goods arrived and the volume of business that took place there.

Among the paintings chosen for markets, devotional compositions such as *Virgin and Child*; the *Holy Family*; the *Crucifixion* and the *Deposition* were usually most in demand, considering the examples still preserved in Spain.<sup>34</sup> These models were requested, firstly, because they were familiar, and secondly, because a popular model was a guarantee for success in its distribution. Thus, copyist-painters regarded it as more profitable to repeat earlier compositions for the Spanish trade than to invent new ones, because those models had established success in the local markets.<sup>35</sup>

At the same time, another form of import concerning very high quality paintings and commissions developed. This type of trade was more targeted than fairs, and it was based on commissions placed directly with painters. It is known as the “route of noble import”.<sup>36</sup> It does not have a direct relation to aristocratic society, but well-off clients used to play an important role since they could afford those commissions. A commission could be sent directly to the painter by a patron, agent, friend or merchant chosen by the client, to whom he or she would have given detailed requests about the iconographical programme, measurements of the painting or even which specific painter was wanted.

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31 J.A. Morejón Ramos, *Nobleza y humanismo*, 441-442.

32 About the fairs: B. Yun Casalilla, *Ferias y mercados. Indicadores y coyuntura comercial en la vertiente norte del Duero. Siglos XVI-XVII*, in *Informaciones históricas*, 4, (1983), pp. 51-97; F. H. Abed Al- Hussein, *Las ferias de Medina y el comercio de la lana 1514-1573*, in *Historia de Medina del Campo y su tierra*, II, (1986), pp. 13-23; Thomas and Stols, *Flandes y Castilla*, 33-36; Álvarez, *The art market*, 135-157; A. Rojo Vega, *Guía de mercaderes y mercaderías en las ferias de Medina del Campo. Siglo XVI*, (Medina del Campo, 2004).

33 Biblioteca Nacional de España (BNE), Sala Cervantes, *Papeles varios de topografía española*, I, fols. 101-105v. “Informe de Francisco Morejón y Fernando de Frías Ceballos sobre las ferias de Medina del Campo”, MSS/ 18225. Biblioteca Digital Hispánica, *Papeles varios de topografía española*, I, MSS/MICRO/2001, pp. 136-142, Available at: <http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000135625&page=1> (Accessed on 26 May 2019).

34 A. Diéguez-Rodríguez, *Pintura flamenca*, I, 122-128.

35 N. de Marchi & H. J. Van Migroet, *Art, Value, and Market Practices in the Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century*, in *Art Bulletin*, 76, 3, (1994), 455; A. Diéguez-Rodríguez, *La pintura flamenca*, I, 64.

36 J. Milicua, *Observatorio de ángeles*, in *Archivo Español de Arte*, 121, (1958), 12-13, note 27; E. Stols, *Spaanse Brabanse of de Handelsbetrekkingen der Zuidelijke Nederlanden met de Iberische Wereld, 1598-1648*, (Brussels: 1971), 167.



In other cases, an agent bought paintings requested according to their sizes and subjects among the stock in the workshops of the city. Such agents acting as intermediates between patron and painter, looking for specific paintings with regard to both quality and subject, were mostly of Spanish origin and had settled in Flanders many years before. They knew the language and the local trade very well, so they could easily find exactly what the patron wanted. Benito Arias Montano (1527-1598) is a typical example of an agent working in this way for Spaniards in Antwerp. A humanist with a close relation to the court, he had come to the city in order to check the *Polyglot Holy Bible* that King Philip II had commissioned from the Plantin-Moretus printing press. Letters sent by Arias Montano to the lawyer Juan de Ovando from Antwerp to Madrid in 1570 show that he had arranged the purchase of several landscapes on canvas for Ovando, according to instructions given by the lawyer in a letter received on 4 August 1569: “a half dozen canvases with landscapes for a room, with few figures, if [it is] possible painted by a skilled painter, or request for them if it was not possible to find a good one [painter]”.<sup>37</sup> Ovando was not the only patron that Arias Montano worked for. In a letter dated 27 February 1573, Arias explained that he had requested on behalf of Señor Velasco “twenty four canvases, which cost forty-two *placas* each, which became more than sixty, according to the instructions given: twelve works of devotion and twelve with poesies in nice landscapes”.<sup>38</sup> In other cases, Arias Montano made suggestions to his patrons, as he explained in a letter for Gabriel de Zayas, secretary of the Spanish king, that he had seen ten canvases with the *Labours of Hercules* by Frans Floris in the house of Nicolas Jongheling, which might be of interest to the king, since he knew that Philip II had seen them during his journey through Flanders.<sup>39</sup>

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37 (Translated by the autor) “Media docena de lienzos de paisajes para un estudio, de pocos y pequeñas figuras, si se hallasen de mano buena y regocijada y si no mandarlos hacer”. Arias Montano is replying in 1570 that: “en lo tocante a los lienzos pintados holgaría saber de qué precio los quiere Vmd, porque conforme al precio es la perfección dellos. Haylos de un tamaño, de tres hasta once florines. Los que tiene el Sr. Don Luis Manrique, parte son de cinco, parte de seis florines, y son de buena mano y el maestro es mi amigo se pueden ver de cerca y de lejos, los de menos precio parecen bien de lejos. Yo tengo uno que por dicha hube en nueve florines, que no lo habría por diez y ocho si pidiese otro tal”. [On the painted canvases, it would be very useful to know how much money do you want to spend, because the price depends on the perfection of the paintings. The size and the price are different. Over three (size) are eleven florins. Mr. Luis Manrique has some of five (size) and cost six florins, and they were painted by a skill hand, and the Master is a good friend of mine, and you can see them close or far. But if you spend less money the paintings are fine just only to see them from far away. I have a painting that costed nine florins, and there is no one better for ten]. Francisco J. Sánchez Cantón, *Fuentes literarias para la Historia del Arte Español*, V, (Madrid: 1941), 344-345.

38 [“a cuarenta y dos placas la pieza, que valdrán más de a sesenta, según la forma que les ha dado: los doce de cosas de devoción y los doce de poesías con bellos paisajes”]. Colección de Documentos Inéditos para la Historia de España, (CODOIN), XLI, Madrid, 1863, in Sánchez Cantón, *Fuentes literarias*, 345-346.

39 Sánchez Cantón, *Fuentes literarias*, V, (Madrid, 1941), 345-346; Carl van de Velde, The Labours of Hercules, a lost series of paintings by Frans Floris, in *The Burlington Magazine*, 107, 744 (1965), 114-123. However, Philip II did not remember having seen these canvases in Brussels, as he explained to friar Francisco de Villalba on 17 April, 1571: “Cuanto a los Lienços que están en Brusselas delos trabajos de Hercules dize su Md que el no se acuerda de haver los Visto, mas que ha de tener aca La traça dellos, que La vera y que V. m. La acuerde dello en Madrid, para que el provea Lo que conviene”. Plantin-Moretus Archief, Antwerpen, Arch-122, fol. 446.

Other intermediaries held important positions in the urban life of a city. This was the case for Pedro de Porres in Bruges.<sup>40</sup> He was one of the city's Spanish consuls in the middle of the sixteenth century.<sup>41</sup> On 5 February 1547, he signed a contract with the Bruges painter Joost Zoetaert for five large canvases with scenes of the *Passion of Christ* in order to send them to Spain.<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately, there is no more information in the contract about who commissioned the canvases and for where. Dewilde suggests that they were sent to Spain for a large altarpiece,<sup>43</sup> but taking the measures of the canvases and their subjects into consideration, it is more likely that they were painted on a small scale as *Tüchlein* in order to cover the interior of the churches during the Lent and Easter weeks.<sup>44</sup> In fact, there are seven *Tüchlein* in the Holy Spirit nunnery in Toro (Zamora) painted in the style of the Bruges school in the sixteenth century, with topics which match the Zoetaert contract. It would be tempting to think that these are the Zoetaert's canvases.<sup>45</sup>

This type of contract and commission using intermediaries was most likely very common. Unfortunately, the examples of Arias Montano and Pedro de Porres are only two of the few that are documented. Most often, requirements of the contract are unknown and we have only the commissioned works of art to learn more about the master or workshop which painted them or about the patron, relying on clues like the family coat of

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40 He is likely have passed away around 1557-1558, shortly before his wife who died on 11 May 1558. Their children gave this piece of information to the Spaans Consulaat in Bruges when they requested his protection as orphans. Betsabé Caunedo del Potro, Margarita Sánchez Martín, Menores y huérfanos en la comunidad castellana de Brujas. Una primera aproximación a su estudio, in *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, III, 11, (1998), 42, 48.

41 SA Brujas, Spaans consulaat, Ayuntamientos, 1548-1568 (II A3) f. 13r; Louis Sicking, "Los grupos de interés marítimo de la Península Ibérica en la ciudad de Amberes: la gestión de riesgos y la navegación en el siglo XVI" in *Gentes de mar en la ciudad atlántica medieval*, coord.. Jesús Ángel Solórzano Telechea, Michel Bochaca, Amélia Aguau Andrade, (Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 2012), 177.

42 "(...) Quel dicho Joos Soutart a de pintar çinco panos de lienços de tela nueva e suerte e fina, segund conviene, a la tal obra e pintura, aquí de yuso declarada, los quales cinco panos a de ser pintados de muy buenas colores perfiçion desta suerte siguiente (...) el uno, como Christo llebaba la cruz a cuestas, acompañado de mucha compañía de gente, así armada como otramente, y, en el otro, como esta en la cruz entre dos ladroenes, así vien acompañado de mucha gente de armeria, e los otros autos disçirnientes a las tales dos historias (...) Y otros dos lienços en que en el uno ha de estar pintado el prendimiento, con mucha gente de armeria y, en el otro, el exçe homo así vien acompañado de mucha gente de armeria, y pintados en ellos las historias(...) y el quinto lienço a de ser del disçendimiento de la cruz con las historias a la dicha historia discerniente (...)". SAB, Spaanse Consulaat, Pedro de Paredes, 1547, fol. 4v. A. Schouteet, Documenten in verband met de Brugse schilders uit de XVIe eeuw, in *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Oudheidkunde en Kunstgeschiedenis/Revue Belge d'Archéologie et d'histoire de l'art*, XXXV, (1965), n° 3-4, 187.

43 Dewilde reads panels in the document instead of canvases. B. Dewilde, *The Production and Marketing*, 22.

44 On the use of the *Tüchlein*: Diane Wolfthal, *The Beginning of Netherlandish Canvas Painting 1400-1530*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1989), 23; and especially in Spain: M. Merino de Cáceres, Velos litúrgicos penitenciales de los siglos XVI y XVII en Segovia, in *Estudios Segovianos*, XXVI, (1975), 49-101.

45 On this possibility: A. Diéguez-Rodríguez, Revistiendo la arquitectura que viste la arquitectura. Una aproximación a las sargas de la Pasión de influencia flamenca del siglo XVI en España. Los ejemplos de Oña y Toro, in *Vistiendo la arquitectura. XXII Congreso Naciola de Historia del Arte* (Universidad de Burgos: CEHA, Burgos 2019), 785-790.

arms or an inscription on the surface of the painting. Some examples in Spain are the *Los Gallo Altarpiece* in Castrojeriz (Burgos),<sup>46</sup> linked to the Ambrosius Benson workshop, or the *Saint Bartholomew Altarpiece* in Santoña (Cantabria), painted by Pieter I Claeissens.<sup>47</sup> This last altarpiece bears an inscription on the *Saint Jerome and Saint Sebastian* panels that reveals who painted the retable: Pieter I Claeissens, and the location of the workshop: in Bruges, on Oude Sack street.<sup>48</sup> However, there is no record of the identity of



Fig. 3: Pieter I Claeissens, *Saint Jerome Triptych*, second half of 16th century  
Spain, private collection  
(Author's photograph)

the patron. We can guess that the commission may have come from a member of the Setien del Hoyo family, since the altarpiece was placed in their chapel within the Santoña church.<sup>49</sup> The coat of arms of the family is on the wall of the chapel with the following

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- 46 Didier Martens, Une Oeuvre Métisse de la Renaissance Brugeoise. Le retable des Gallo en l'eglise Saint-Jean de Castrojeriz, in *Actes des VIIIe Congrès de l'Association des Cercles Francophones d'Histoire et d'Archeologie de Belgique* (Louvain-la-Neuve: D' Ottignies, 26-28 août, 2004, (2007), 760.
- 47 Elisa Bermejo, Pieter Claeissens I. Retablo de Santoña, in *Las tablas flamencas en la ruta jacobea* (San Sebastián: 1999), 338-341; M. A. Aramburu-Zabala, La iglesia de Santa María de Puerto en Santoña, in *Monte Buciero*, 5, (2000), 14; Anne van Oosterwijk, St. Bartholomew Altarpiece. Pieter I Claeissens, in *Forgotten Masters*, 165.
- 48 About the misunderstanding name of the painter: Elisa Bermejo, Un retablo flamenco en la iglesia de Santa María de Puerto en Santoña, in *Archivo Español de Arte*, 49, (1976), 1-16; Didier Martens, A la búsqueda de un pintor brujense el Renacimiento ¿Quién es Moraulus?, in *Archivo Español de Arte*, LXXVII, 306, (2004), 117-128.
- 49 Aramburu-Zabala, La iglesia de Santa María, 18. It is likely that the Claeissens' workshop was also given the complete design for the altarpiece, including the models for the sculpture and the architecture. In fact, evidences of this practice in the Claeissens workshop are known. Weale transcribed a document where Antoon Claeissens was paid in 1609 for the design [patroon] of a retable in order to send to Spain.

inscription: “This chapel was ordered to be built by Juan García del Hoyo and Mencía Sánchez de Maeda, his wife. It was finished in 1538”.<sup>50</sup> It would be feasible to consider that the altarpiece was commanded in Bruges between 1538 and 1561, and subsequently set into the chapel, however, the contract between patron and painter is unknown.

The unusual inscription over the Santoña altarpiece is considered by Martens as a way of promoting the workshop abroad,<sup>51</sup> a means of sourcing potential clients who may like to have something similar. The altarpiece gives the address where they would have to send their request, making the altarpiece an effective advertisement of the Bruges school of painting. In fact, the Santoña retable is not the only one with this type of inscription. Colijn de Cotter signed the right-hand wing of his *Throne of Grace* at the Louvre Museum as “Colijn de Coter m’a peint à Bruxelles dans la region du Brabant”;<sup>52</sup> and Gommaer van Erenbroeck, a painter working in Antwerp from 1519 to 1553, signed in Spanish a group of paintings to be sent to Las Palmas in Gran Canaria, explaining that they were painted by Gommaer from Anvers: “mea echo gumart de Enveres + 154[.]”.<sup>53</sup> If these inscriptions had a commercial purpose, or, as Anne van Oosterwijk suggested, if they were linked to the engravings’ formulas,<sup>54</sup> we cannot say with certainty. It is true that marking their place of origin as in Flanders could be useful for new agents or art dealers who may have wanted to order a painting to meet the taste of specific patrons. Most of those intermediaries tended to order paintings from the same workshop or painter with whom they had worked before.

In any case, this promotion of the Bruges School and especially of the Claeissens workshop in Spain had an effect, and it is still easy to find not only paintings made by his workshop in the north of Spain but also records about lost paintings requested from them for clients based in Spanish territory. Martín González de Andía commissioned the

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[“Betael mr. Anthuenis Claissins, voor t’patroon te shilderen van een autaeer cleet om naer Spaningen te zenden”] W. H. J. Weale, *Peintres brugeois- Les Claeissens*, in *Annales de la Société d’Emulation de Bruges*, LXI, (1911), 68, note 3.

50 “Esta capilla fizo Juan García del Hoyo Septiem e Mencía Sánchez de Maeda su mujer. Acabose año de 1538”.

51 Martens, *A la búsqueda*, 128.

52 “Colijn de Coter painted me in Brussel in the Brabante regio”. J. Maquet-Tombu, *Colyn de Coter, peintre Bruxellois, Bruxelles*, 1937, 20-24; J. Maquet-Tombu, *Aitour de la Descente de Croix de Roger*, in *Bulletin de la Société Royale d’Archéologie de Bruxelles* (1949), 11-15; O. L. Maire, *Triptyque de Colin de Coter offert par une Bruxelloise à l’église Saint-Denis de Saint-Omer*, in *Cahiers Bruxellois*, 11 (2) (1957), 1-9; C. Périer-d’Ieteren, *Colyn de Coter et la technique picturale des peintres flamands du XVe siècle* (Bruxelles: 1985), 55, 60-65.

53 A. Diéguez-Rodríguez, *Gommaer de Amberes (activo 1519-1553) y Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Las pinturas que guarda la Casa-Museo de Colón*, in C. Rodríguez Morales, ed., *Homenaje a la profesora Constanza Negrín Delgado* (La Laguna: Instituto de Estudios Canarios, 2014), 172-182.

54 A. van Oosterwijk, *Adjustment of a triptych by Pieter I Claeissens: an exceptional situation or common practice?*, in M. A. Ainsworth, ed., *Workshop practice in Early Netherlandish Painting: case studies from Van Eyck through Gossart* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), 122-132.



*Triptych of the nave of the Church* for the Torrecilla de Cameros church in La Rioja.<sup>55</sup> This is an exceptional work because it is still in the place for which was made, but mostly, paintings are removed from their original context, and it is difficult to know for whom and for where they were requested. A lot of Flemish altarpieces and triptychs were divided, sometimes because of a fire or another disaster destroyed part of the painting and sometimes because the fragments were more commercial to sell. In other cases, a



Fig. 4: Pieter I, Pieter II Claeissens and workshop  
Resurrection, second half of 16th century  
Burgos, cathedral  
©Catedral de Burgos

change in taste was the reason why triptychs and altarpieces were removed in favour of newer ones, with the earlier ones sold and thus returning to the trade many more times after their commissions. Therefore, art historians have a very difficult task in proving the original provenance of a painting and who could have been their patron. The examples of the *Saint Ursula* painting at the Museum of Fine Arts in Oviedo, the *Triptych of Saint Jerome* in a private collection in Spain (Fig. 3), or the *Resurrection of Christ* in the Burgos cathedral (Fig. 4), are cases in point because they are removed from their context and, apart from knowing who was the painter or workshop,<sup>56</sup> it is very difficult to guess their patron and their provenance.

Yet sometimes, we are fortunate in finding clues of previous provenance and the particular size of a painting which matches the remainder of the panels preserved. This happened with *God in Glory* (Fig. 5), a curious painting by Jan van Hemessen and his workshop that appeared recently in the art trade in Catalonia. The painting came from the ancient Dukes of Montpensier collection in Seville, a place close to Ayamonte, where an ancient main altarpiece with paintings by Jan van Hemessen is still preserved in the parish church.<sup>57</sup> The retable was dismantled at the beginning of the twentieth century, and part of the paintings were still

55 Elisa Bermejo, Anónimo. Atribuido a Antoon Claeissens. Tríptico de la Nave de la iglesia, in *Las tablas flamencas*, 278-279.

56 All of them are related to Pieter I Claeissens and his workshop.

57 Most likely this painting is the crowning element of the Ayamonte altarpiece. Its location was unknown until it appeared in the Catalonia art trade without any indication of its provenance except that it was in the Dukes of Mompensier collection in San Telmo Palace in Seville. (La Suite subastas, Barcelona, 18 Feb-



kept in the church while others disappeared.<sup>58</sup> One of the latter ones could have been the *God in Glory*, which fits in well with the upper end of the altarpiece in style and iconographic programme.

To return to the Flemish painting trade in Spain and the two above-mentioned commercial avenues – one massive for the open markets, and the other more specifically related to commissions – there is another trade route in between that could be called the channel of “ready-made paintings”.<sup>59</sup> It is linked to triptychs where only the central scene was painted, usually with a religious subject, and the two wings were left blank so that the client could decide how he or she wanted to complete the triptych. Sometimes, inscriptions or coats of arms of the family were chosen, other times portraits or special devotional subject linked to the family. Important examples can be found in the north of Spain, as the *Holy Family Triptych* by the Master of the Models of Pieter Coecke at the Diocesan Museum of Vitoria-Gasteiz, where the wings were painted with the patrons’ portraits by a Spanish painter.

The Flemish workshops used this format to advance common requests in devotional items. These “ready-made” triptychs were on display in workshops but also in open air markets. It is curious that there are no examples of “ready-made triptychs” by the Bruges school but only by that of Antwerp. An initial conclusion would be that the strong and close relationship among Spanish agents, dealers and painters in Bruges contributed to direct commissions, something that was not yet established in Antwerpen at the beginning of the sixteenth century.



Fig. 5: Jan van Hemessen and workshop, *God in Glory*, ca. 1530-1540  
(Author’s photograph)

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ruary 2016, lot 13). The style of the painting is close to Van Hemessen and his workshop, as are the rest of the paintings in the Saint Salvador church at Ayamonte.

58 M. Díaz Padrón, Una Deposición inédita de Jan van Hemessen en el Museo de Bellas Artes de Sevilla, in *Boletín del Museo de Instituto Camón Aznar*, XV, (1984), 27-31; M. J. Carrasco Terriza, *Jan van Hemessen y el retablo de Salvador de Ayamonte (Huelva)*, Discurso de recepción como académico numerario, 2001, (Huelva: Academia de las Ciencias, Artes y Letras, 2003).

59 “Pintura preparadas”, Diéguez-Rodríguez, *La pintura flamenca*, I, 70-71.

Finally, another forgotten aspect should be pointed out which is essential to understand the arrival of a large amount of quality paintings in Spain: the iconoclasm revolt in 1565-1566.<sup>60</sup> During these events, the upheaval in Flanders benefited the sales of works of art from Flemish churches and convents to other countries, Spain among them.

Paintings which were thought to have been destroyed by iconoclasts, were in fact just



Fig. 6: Michiel Coxcie, *Calvary*  
Valladolid, Cathedral  
(Author´s photograph)

removed safely to different Spanish locations. It is true that an important percentage of paintings was lost, but others were sold for commercial gain. Works of the finest quality arrived in Spanish churches and collections at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. In fact, Musson, the well-known artistic merchant in the seventeenth century took up trading in important sixteenth-century Flemish paintings<sup>61</sup> thanks to the Iconoclasm movement. Van Mander recorded that Thomas Werry, another art dealer in Brussels, had bought Coxcie's Calvary in the Alseberg church in order to sell it to Cardinal Granvela, who sent it to the Spanish king Philip II.<sup>62</sup> Most likely, this is the painting which is now in the Valladolid cathedral, as Ollero Butler suggested.<sup>63</sup> (Fig. 6) Therefore, it is more accurate to speak of "relocated"

60 Th. W. Kloek, W. Halsema-Kubes & R. J. Baarsen, *Art before the Iconoclasm. Northern Netherlandish Art 1525-1580*, (Ámsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1986); K. Jonckheere & R. Suykerbuyk, eds. *Iconoclasm. Painting in the Netherlands between 1566 and 1585* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012).

61 J. Denucé, *Na Peter Puwel Rubens. Documenten uit den Kunsthandel te Antwerpen in de XVIIe eeuw van Matthijs Musson* (Antwerpen, 1949), 22-23; N. de Marchi y H. J. Van Miegroet, Exploring markets for Netherlandish Paintings in Spain and Nueva España, in *Art for the market 1500-1700. Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, 50 (1999), 100.

62 K. van Mander, *Het Schilderboek*, Alkmaar, 1604, fol. 258v., in Hessel Miedema, ed., *Karel van Mander. The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters*, I (Doornspijk, 1994), 293.

63 J. Ollero Butler, Miguel Coxcie y su obra en España, in *Archivo Español de Arte*, 189 (1975), 189.

works than destroyed ones. Another example is the *Triptych of Descent of the Cross* by the Master of the Legend of Saint Lucy that is now on display at the Groeningemuseum in Bruges. The triptych came from the nunnery of Saint-Clare in Lekeitio (Vizcaya), where it had been at least since the seventeenth century.<sup>64</sup> Another triptych removed from its original location was Anthonis Blocklandt's *Pentecost Triptych*, which came from the Saint Gertrud church at Utrecht to the Franciscan convent at Zaráuz (Guipuzcoa) at the beginning of the seventeenth century.<sup>65</sup> In the case of Adriaenz Key's *Pentecost Triptych*, its owner and patron, Antonio del Río, Lord of Cleydael and Aartselaar in Flanders, decided to send it to Spain in order to protect it from the Iconoclasm revolt. The triptych was placed in the family chapel at the Trinity convent church in Burgos, where Ponz was able to see it at the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>66</sup> Unfortunately, only the wings of this triptych are now preserved at the Louvre museum (inv. no. RF216, RF217), and the current location of the central panel is unknown.

## Conclusions

The shipment of paintings from Flanders to Spain usually took place by sea, because it was faster than overland routes which had to cross France, stopping in different French open markets as Lille, Ruan, Paris, and Burdeos. The maritime route also allowed to avoid the military conflicts among countries, and it was safer for the goods. The most important ports on the Cantabric coast were Laredo, Castro Urdiales, Santoña, Portugalete, Bilbao and San Sebastián, from where Flemish goods spread out to the open markets in Spain. Other maritime routes to Spain became more important during the sixteenth century, as did the Lisboa and Seville harbors.<sup>67</sup> It is significant that works from the Bruges school of painting were more likely to arrive via the Cantabric coast while the Antwerp painting school enjoyed greater distribution in the south of the peninsula. In the course of the century, the artistic trade moved to Seville, because of its position as the starting point for voyages to America.<sup>68</sup>

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64 A. Diéguez-Rodríguez, El ámbito religioso flamenco y los grupos de poder: el ejemplo del desaparecido convento franciscano de Brujas, *Librosdelacorte.es*, 3, 7, (2015), 9-10. (Available at: <https://revistas.uam.es/librosdelacorte/article/view/2391/2499>) (Consulted on May 26, 2019).

65 A. Diéguez-Rodríguez, Anthonis Blocklandt van Monfoort at Zarautz (Guipúzcoa). The Pentecost triptych of the Church of Saint Gertrude in Utrecht, in *Oud Holland*, 130-1/2, (2017), 10-11.

66 Antonio Ponz, *Viaje de España*, XII, (Madrid, 1788), 85. On the wings are the patrons portraits of Antonio del Río, his wife and sons. Margarita Estella, Noticias documentales sobre ¿Moro o Key? Y sobre el Caravaggio, en *Archivo Español de Arte*, 69, (1996), 345-349.

67 V. Medrano Fernández, El comercio terrestre castellano-portugués a finales de la Edad Media: infraestructuras de apoyo a la actividad comercial y mercaderes, in *Edad Media. Revista de Historia*, 8, (2007), 331-356; N. Palenzuela Domínguez, Los mercaderes y hombres de negocios burgaleses en tiempos de Isabel la Católica, in H. Casado Alonso & A. García-Baquero, eds., *Comercio y hombres de negocios en Castilla y Europa en tiempos de Isabel la Católica*, (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales, 2007), 332, 340-342, 348.

68 A. García-Baquero González, La Corona de Castilla y la apertura de las rutas atlánticas: la disyuntiva ante la gestión y el control del comercio americano, in Casado Alonso & García-Baquero, *Comercio y hombres*, 353-410.

The commercial relationship between Flanders and Spain during the sixteenth century was very strong, specially through personal relations among dealers, agents and painters, which enabled the arrival of Flemish models in the Iberian peninsula. Whether it was those close relations which promoted a taste for Flemish painting, and especially for the Bruges School in the northern half of Spain, or on the contrary, the clients who decided in favour of models and style, would need further consideration. What is certain, based on the number of paintings preserved in the north of Spain, is that the Bruges School was more successful in the north than in the south, where the Antwerp School of painting was prevalent. This trend changed after the iconoclasm revolt, when a lot of paintings were removed from their original locations. Art dealers, agents and merchants took the opportunity to send large Flemish triptychs and paintings of high quality to Spain, aiming for collectors and buyers with a strong interest in Flemish painting. Those intermediaries knew the tastes of their patrons, and their painting shipments mostly had a precise destination in Spain. Hence the role of the agent and the dealer are crucial in understanding the itinerary of the different schools of Flemish painting to Spain and why some workshops are much more frequently represented than others.

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