Law, Commerce, and the Rise of New Imagery in Antwerp, 1500-1600

by

Robert Alexander Mayhew

Department of Art, Art History and Visual Studies
Duke University

Date:_______________________

Approved:

___________________________
Hans Van Miegroet, Supervisor

___________________________
Neil De Marchi

___________________________
Thomas Robisheaux

___________________________
Filip Vermeylen

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

Marinus Van Reymerswaele’s painting of 1542, *The Lawyer’s Office*, was a completely new type of image in the history of art. It shows a lawyer and his assistant behind a desk strewn with briefs, wax seals and money. A complex set of historical circumstances at the interface of art, economics, and legal history in sixteenth century Antwerp explain this painting’s appearance and significance. In the beginning of the sixteenth century, Antwerp became a locus of unprecedented artistic production caused by the dramatic growth of its mercantile population, its highly organized commercial infrastructure, and its competitive business atmosphere. These developments stimulated a new sophistication in the art market and an energetic approach to acquiring and collecting, supported by publicly-funded venues to mass-market paintings. Over the course of the sixteenth century, artists invented new subjects to meet public demand. Many of these were radically new. One of these artists, Marinus Van Reymerswaele (1490–1546) made distinctive paintings of lawyers, bankers, and moneychangers which relate to fundamental changes in the legal and commercial infrastructure in the sixteenth century. In just one generation, the Habsburg authority centralized the political and legal landscape in the Netherlands. As the prized economic and cultural center of Habsburg territories, Antwerp was transformed.

This dissertation links the development of consumption practices and the rise of new pictorial subjects introduced in Antwerp with the changing business and legal climate of the city during the sixteenth century. Through an investigation of unpublished home inventories recorded between 1528 and 1588, it clarifies the acquisition preferences of the Antwerp public at large, considering
both changing preferences for panel and linen paintings as well as for novel and traditional images alike. This reassessment of painting consumption reveals a starkly more conservative approach to buying images than previously assumed, underscoring the rarity of everyday life subjects in Antwerp domestic spaces. As a painter operating within this market, Marinus van Reymerswaele invented a new brand of painting -- the new old master painting -- that not only addressed broad social concerns sparked by Habsburg political, mercantile, and legal reforms, but also built on long-established Netherlandish visual traditions. As the sixteenth century drew to a close, his paintings became more desired by collectors but lost their topicality as memories of Antwerp’s political anxieties faded into the past.
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Introduction

This dissertation is about disciplinary intersection and historical reconstruction. It addresses specific problems and assumptions concerning the nature of images, painting, reception, and culture in the sixteenth century in Antwerp, a city whose meteoric rise to European economic dominance signified a fundamental shift toward modernity. Although the city’s growth during this period has been considered its Golden Age, the century was fraught with challenges that tested the resilience of its financial markets and mercantile activities. As they struggled for control, the city and its Habsburg overlords engaged in a constant tug of war between local autonomy and federal oversight. Nonetheless, its mercantile traditions and networks allowed Antwerp to maintain a stabilized, productive commercial center known for its innovative ability.

Within the business of the visual arts in Antwerp, the expansion of public outlets for the sale of artworks signaled a dramatic shift from the primary to secondary market segments as well as a change in the demand for art. Working within this competitive environment, artists explored new means to produce and distribute artwork quickly and cheaply. Surges in the numbers of immigrant artists, combined with larger distribution networks, meant that artists developed creative means to meet local and foreign demand. Marinus Van Reymerswaele (1490? – c. 1546) was one such artist. His work visualized the changing place of the artist as well as problematic transitions within the sixteenth-century marketplace. In this project, his paintings of lawyers, moneychangers, and tax collectors will be viewed as a conceptual frame within which to analyze the
development of particular image types and their connections to societal changes. In the most basic terms, this work will be an empirical study of why these specific images were introduced in Antwerp at this particular historical juncture.

Encased in the center of these historical and pictorial issues is Marinus Van Reymerswaele’s *Lawyer’s Office* (fig. 1), which today hangs in The New Orleans Museum of Art.¹ The panel, one of several versions painted between 1542 and 1545, shows a lawyer and his clerk sitting in a crowded workspace. Disorganized stacks of files, loose papers, and notarized documents surround them, and coins are spread on the desk before them. From the other side of the desk, several men ranging from young to old, perhaps clients, are speaking to the lawyer. Today, the subject may appear to be a familiar caricature of greed; however, when the artist invented this scene, not only was it a completely new subject in the history of art, it was a subject informed both directly and minutely by a multiplicity of historical and social circumstances particular to life in Antwerp in the mid-sixteenth century.

From this point of origin, this project asks a basic question: What compelled the artist to invent this image? Answers are found in economic, legal, and art historical issues. Not only did these factors influence the artist’s choice of subject, but when considered through this variety of viewpoints, *The Lawyer’s Office* also performs as a monumental example of Antwerp’s unique cultural

¹ Numerous versions exist. The New Orleans Museum of Art, (1545) inv. no. 1972; oil on panel, 102.5 x 123.5 cm. Another, dated 1542, hangs in the Altepinakothek in Munich, inv. no. 718; oil on panel, 103 x 120 cm. Two other versions also exist in private collections in Europe, while another is held at the Snite Museum of Art at the University of Notre Dame (South Bend, IN, USA; c. 1550; oil on panel, inv no. 1954.005; 103 x 120 cm). This painting is believed to be a copy of the one owned by Kortrijk painter Bernard de Rijckere, documented in 1590. See Henri Hymans, "Communications et Lectures: Marin le Zélandais, de Reymerswaal; par Henri Hymans," *Bulletins de l’Académie Royale des Sciences, des Lettres, et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique* 53 (1884), 200.
enterprise. Thus, the painting is not merely a unique subject but rather
something far more significant: a means to understand one artist’s professional
strategy, the competitive market atmosphere in which he labored, and Antwerp’s
crucial role in Europe’s transition to modernity during the sixteenth century.²

Before the *Lawyer’s Office*, no other contemporary artist included such
specific references to actual events or legal civil processes, and certainly not what
such things might entail for the town of Reimerswaal, the Schelde River villages
in Zeeland, or even the region of Antwerp. However, *Lawyer’s Office* brings these
narratives squarely into focus. In his 1972 article on this painting, Adolf
Monballieu provided a fruitful access to the handwritten notations scrawled upon
the papers in the office, upon which the artist transcribed the events of an actual
trial regarding a dispute over the ownership of a large salt refinery at the now-
submerged city of Reimerswaal.³

The case involved a gentleman by the name of Cornelis Van der Maere and
the heirs of a salt works located in Reimerswaal, then the second-largest city in
Zeeland. Vander Maere, a respected official in Reimerswaal, was one of the

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² In this context I appropriate the use of modernity in terms of the development of a modern
money market based on credit, as described by Herman Van Der Wee, *The Growth of the
Antwerp Market and the European Economy (Fourteenth-Sixteenth Centuries)* (The Hague:
Nijhoff, 1963), II: 360–364; and Fernand Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce. Civilization and
Capitalism, 15th-18th Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 25–28; and Immanuel
Wallerstein, *The Capitalist World-Economy: Essays*, Studies in Modern Capitalism (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 1979), 37–48. A wider discussion of modernity, its birth in the
sixteenth century, and pernicious developments is found in Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The
³ Adolph Monballieu, "The Lawyer’s Office by Marinus Van Reymerswael in the New Orleans
Museum of Art," *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* (1972),
102–141.
town’s appointed orphan-masters. Upon the death of the owner of the salt works, Anthonis Willem Brouwensz, in 1526, Van der Maere oversaw the facility’s operations and served as the guardian of the dead man’s five underage children. Because the children, as minors, lacked legal capacity to own land, the local lower court, the Alderman’s Court at Reimerswaal, auctioned the salt works at a judicial sale. Van der Maere bought a share of the property but later refused to pay for it, demanding instead that the court first transfer the title to him. After an unsuccessful suit to secure the title, Van der Maere eventually paid for and received the deed. However, he remained unsatisfied and again brought a suit—this time challenging the accuracy of the land survey. In 1527 he took his claim to the local Alderman’s Court and lost. In 1529 he appealed to the district authority, the Court of Holland, where he was unsuccessful once again. Undeterred, he took his claim to the Grand Council [Grote Raad] of Mechelen, the highest court in the land, which also denied his appeal. After this failure, Van der Maere at last complied by paying his first installment for the property, but later he defaulted on those that remained.

Ten years later, in 1535, Van der Maere’s name arose again in connection with the salt works. After Brouwensz’s eldest daughter, who by then owned a portion of the salt works, passed away intestate, the ownership of the works passed to her half-brother, who then transferred his ownership to another of Brouwensz’s sons, Frans Anthonisz. Frans, now legally entitled to force Van der Maere’s obligation to pay in full for his share, approached Van der Maere to

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4 Ibid., 112.
5 Monballieu, 107.
6 Ibid., 108.
collect payment. Not only did Van der Maere refuse, he brought another suit against Anthonisz in the Alderman’s court and the Court of Holland, both of which ruled in Frans’ favor and ordered Van der Maere to pay.\(^7\)

The artist placed the dates of this final appeal, as well as the Seal of the Grand Council of Mechelen, which prominently shows Charles V’s crest, in the left foreground.\(^8\) However, the inclusion of handwritten notes that explicitly refer to Van der Maere’s lawsuits is not the only clue given to the viewer: the most important document is displayed at the center of the painting. A creased bundle of papers hangs just below the shelf on the back wall; this worn manuscript is what was called a *relief d’appel*, in this case one issued by the Grand Coucil of Mechelen (fig. 2). It was an official notification intended for the judge and Frans Anthonisz, the winner of the previous district suit. The top document is a copy of an official order that would have been sent back to the Council of Holland in the Hague from the Grand Council of Mechelen. It reads:

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Copy without the title
Charles by the Grace of God (Holy Roman Emperor)
Ever increaser of the reign...
The first process server and sergeant
At arms requested here with this matter, greetings,
We have received the humble supplication
Of Cornelis vander Maere, citizen of our Town of Reymerswaele, containing how
The Plaintiff brought a suit before the [...] Of Our Court of Holland against Frans Anthonisz. On behalf of himself ... Of money which Frans Anthonisz. maintained was owing to him by the plaintiff from a Salt-works, in which matter it has been proceeded Thus far before our aforementioned council of Holland
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\(^7\) Monballieu, 109.
\(^8\) This will be addressed Chapter 5.
Which has pronounced sentence to the disadvantage of the Plaintiff and to the advantage of Frans Anthonisz [...]

This document, placed at the very center of the painting, details a final decision that was reached as late as 1538—the result of some ten years’ litigation.

With a detailed arrangement of dated summaries, judgments, individual names, and even the Emperor’s seal, the artist made a considerable effort to depict a microhistory of litigation surrounding the salt works in Reimerswaal. His meticulous depiction raise the question of why he would bother to detail such a complicated course of events. These precise details, in their *trompe l’oeil* veneer of authenticity, demand the viewer’s close inspection. Taken all together, they open a discussion of how and why the artist chose this subject, who would buy this painting, and what this subject meant to viewers in mid-century Antwerp.

This project, as one such discussion, investigates hitherto unexplored aspects of artistic, economic, political, and legal history that affected, if not precipitated, the invention of images never before seen in art. As the central case study of this project, the work of Marinus Van Reymerswaele, an artist who has regrettably received little scholarly attention outside of the problematic art historical narrative on Antwerp Mannerism, will be used as an analytical frame through which to understand the larger commercial atmosphere surrounding the

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9 Monballieu, 134. The text reads: *Copie zond(er) den tytel / Kaele byder gratien gods Roomsch keyser/ allyt vermeerder sryes ...Den eersten ons(en) duerwaerder offte saerge(n)T / van wapene(n) hier op versoht, salute. Wy / hebben ontfanghen die oetmoedige supplicacie / van Cornelis vander Maere, poorter ons(er) stede Rey(merswa)ele inhoudende hoe date die (?) suppliant process ghehad heft voer die / van ons(en) Raede van Hollant jegens frans / anthonisz. Voer hem selven [...] ter cause / van pen(nighen) die frans anthonisz. sustineert / hem te come(n) vand(en) suppliant van en / soutkeete. In welche saecke es vore (ons(en) / voirs. Raide van hollant zo verde gep(r)oced(eert) / datter sentencie gepronu(n)cieert es tot / achterdeele van(en) suppliant en(de) tot voordo(eel) / van frans anthonisz. [...]
business of art. In addition to depictions of his lawyer’s office, Van Reymerswaele’s paintings of bankers and tax collectors also provide additional opportunities to understand the nature of specialization as a set of responses to the considerable demand for paintings made in and around Antwerp.

But the paintings illuminate larger social and financial concerns as well. As Antwerp’s dynamic business atmosphere continued to grow, the city became a proving ground for artistic experimentation. In addition, Antwerp was the primary tax base for the Hapsburg government; as such it bore the brunt of centralization policies that included a complete overhaul of the empire’s financial and judicial systems. These issues will be brought into conversation with an analysis of new imagery in an effort to explicate why such imagery was invented. This research will also be placed within the larger context of painting production and consumption, in order to illustrate both the physical and pictorial dynamics of painting as both object and career in Antwerp.

These issues will be addressed in three primary components. Part I, which comprises chapters 1 and 2, addresses the city’s commercial and demographic growth and its supremacy as an international port fostered an unprecedented commercialization of the art market. Chapter 1 describes Antwerp’s economic climate, particularly its art markets and paintings production. A growing artist population operating within expanded sale opportunities produced much novelty and innovation, for example on-spec and serialized production. These factors distinguish Antwerp from any other city in the sixteenth century, and made it

\[^{10}\text{See most recently the exhibition catalogue: Peter Van den Brink, Maximiliaan P.J. Martens, and Nico Van Hout, eds., \textit{Extravagant! A Forgotten Chapter of Antwerp Painting, 1500-1530} (Schoten: BAI, 2005).}\]
first among other commercial and artistic centers of the seventeenth century and later. Nonetheless, no quantitative analysis exists of the number of artists who actually lived in Antwerp or of their estimated total production of paintings.

In order to produce such an analysis I have drawn upon several economic studies on artistic production in the Dutch Republic as models, including the analytical structures developed by Van der Woude and J. Michael Montias, which I have applied to the Saint Luke Guild registers. This method will provide plausible production rates and estimated labor time per painting in the first half of the sixteenth century and, by extension, the estimated production rates of paintings in Antwerp between 1500 and 1600. I also compare these production rates per decade with the changing frequency of subjects over time, which allows the mapping of public taste and demand. Unlike most art historical scholarship, this quantitative methodology considers both known and anonymous artists as well as extant and non-extant paintings. It also provides an important revision of a widely held assumption: that the imagery of sixteenth-century painting in Antwerp was primarily tied to the moral and religious iconography of the Reformation.

Chapter 2 addresses painting consumption in Antwerp. It foregrounds the importance of both small and large collections of paintings as well as the types of images found within them. This research, derived entirely from published and unpublished archival inventories, creates a broad illustration of painting consumption. In addition, it comprises the largest known collection of sixteenth-

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century inventories. These inventories, gauged by number of paintings, their supports, and their subjects when possible, reveal numerous transformations of the art market over the course of the sixteenth century. Although many derivations of traditional religious imagery continued in robust proportions throughout the century, novel images of everyday life—which are generally taken as the quintessential images of sixteenth-century Antwerp—were in fact quite rare in most homes. While this revision appears to disrupt the current understanding of popular painting of the sixteenth century, the paucity of everyday life images in mainstream collections underscores the extremely specialized nature of images such as those created by Marinus Van Reymerswaele.

Whereas Part I explores the economic atmosphere and consumer practices within the art market, Part II focuses on artistic strategy and imagery. Chapter 3 examines the work of Marinus Van Reymerswaele and also the ways that paintings reveal the responses of an artist working in 1540s Antwerp to an increasingly sophisticated public’s demand for artworks. Despite the increasing openness of buyers to novelty Van Reymerswaele went back to the same four subjects again and again throughout his career: lawyers, bankers, moneychangers, and Saint Jerome. Moreover, he painted only in oils on oak panel, these being the era’s most expensive and labor-intensive materials, and eschewed widely available materials with lower costs, such as linen and canvas. These choices indicate that his specialized brand of paintings was aimed at a high-end collector’s market. He also loaded his paintings with new topical details, including legible documents relating to actual court cases and individuals. I will
argue that this was part of a deliberately fifteenth-century Eyckian representational strategy in execution and presentation.

Van Reymerswaele’s paintings garnered considerable fame during his lifetime; he was even hailed as a painter of the “the new manner” by Karel Van Mander. Curiously, art historians today see these works as “outmoded,” “archaic” and “old fashioned” for the sixteenth century. I argue that Van Reymerswaele is more accurately described as an innovator who combined modern subjects in an antiek [fifteenth century] manner, thus creating a new category of painter: the New Old Master.

Chapter 4 explores imagery expressive of the exuberance and pitfalls of the financial atmosphere of the sixteenth century. Money stands at the center of commerce in all ages, and commerce was Antwerp’s life-blood. Over the course of the century, the attendant joys and fears associated with money became a more frequent topic of public debate and a more common subject both textually and visually. The visual permutations considered in this project show the complex meanings of images connected with wealth, greed, prosperity, and even shifting monetary policies for a public attuned to buying paintings.

Part III explores political, financial, and legal controversies that brought about Van Reymerswaele’s radically new imagery. One of the major catalysts of the shift from the medieval to the modern world was the creation of a single

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standardized legal authority, administered from multiple local political and judicial entities. Chapter 5 explores this transformation of the legal system and how it was forcefully imposed upon the Netherlands by the Habsburg régime. In the proud city of Antwerp, this swift change meant an instant loss of autonomy and identity. No longer were noblemen or aldermen chief legal authorities; they were replaced by academically trained jurists within the highest echelons of power. The appearance of lawyer paintings in the 1540s, such as those by Van Reymerswaele, corresponds to this shift.

Chapter 6 examines the teleological issues surrounding the images of, and the production of images of, lawyers and bankers in the sixteenth century and beyond. Principal in this discussion is Pieter Bruegel the Younger’s Village Lawyer of 1608, which actively brought the subject into the popular visual vernacular while subordinating the topicality of Marinus’s imagery. As the sixteenth century passed into the seventeenth, this visual appropriation crystallized the meaning of this subject into a universally appealing theme. Nevertheless, even as Marinus’s pictorial models persisted their resonance became gradually more opaque as the seventeenth century drew to a close. Eventually the subject died out altogether.

In general, developing my understanding of this rich, lost artistic and cultural milieu has required a keen critical awareness of diverse political, social, and economic histories, in addition to my own exploration into new territories of art history. These forays have come about largely as a result of my fascination with Van Reymerswaele’s paintings and the frustration that their opacity can produce. Their sweeping implications have directed my attention to broader
historical circumstances. Thus I seek to bring previously discrete disciplinary
territories into concert with one another through the nexus of a single artifact.

I hope that this study will prove useful as a methodological tool for
understanding history and historical thought. The art of the sixteenth century has
for too long been a casualty languishing between the Renaissance and Modern
eras. Recent scholars of Early Modern Europe have successfully found ways to
address the transitional nature of the sixteenth century. But art historians,
especially those working on the sixteenth century, have tended to be less
revisionist in their preferences and interpretations. Therefore, the
interdisciplinary nature of this project, as well as its methodological implications,
function as interventionary gestures into the historiography of sixteenth-century
art as well as a vertical study of several crucial decades in Antwerp’s history.
PART I

Painting in Antwerp 1500–1600: A Visual Milieu
Chapter One

Why Antwerp?

1.1 Introduction

One of the most difficult issues with a study of the market for paintings in the sixteenth century is the scarce amount of documentary evidence for the period before 1550. Until now, most of the remaining inventories—especially large ones—were recorded roughly between 1560 and 1590.¹ The crucial era between the turn of the sixteenth century and the middle of the sixteenth century was not only the most important for Antwerp’s development as a commercial power but also a period of great development for the Antwerp art market. This dissertation intends to remedy these deficiencies, at least in part. The span of 1530–1550, a most volatile period in the development of Antwerp painting, was possibly one of the most important periods of Western Art, given its nexus of economic networks, social change, the development of a regulatory environment, and later, the emergence of professional art dealers. These factors made art collecting possible for the public at large for the first time. Accordingly, this chapter presents an overview of Antwerp’s rise to economic dominance and how its commercial traditions and infrastructure fostered the development of its painting industry.

Ongoing scholarly interest in the development of the art markets of Europe during the Early Modern period has privileged some histories. Although

¹ See, for example, Denucé’s published list of inventories: Jan Denucé, De Antwerpsche "Konstkamers." Inventarissen van Kunstverzamelingen te Antwerpen in de 16e en 17e Eeuwen, Bronnen voor de Geschiedenis van de Vlaamsche Kunst, 2 (Amsterdam: De Spiegel, 1932), which lists only eight inventories for the entire sixteenth century, all dated after 1567.
recent work has addressed the complexity of the art market in Antwerp with much success, it has been difficult to link economic studies with art historical ones. Recent studies on sixteenth-century collections in Antwerp, the image-makers guild of Saint Luke, as well as public sales outlets such as Our Lady’s Pand and the Schilderspand, have made it more possible to understand how an individual artist operated within his or her local context. Despite the increased breadth of economic studies on Antwerp painting, however, no systematic study has yet been done on the whole of the Antwerp production of paintings—especially before iconoclasm, when the production levels of painting in Antwerp were at their highest.

1.2 Traditions of Mercantilism

The principal reasons for Antwerp’s rise are well known. At the end of the fifteenth century, a number of political moves, including overprotective demands

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on the part of the city’s guilds as well as the banishment of foreign resident merchants by Maximilian of Habsburg in 1491, brought Bruges’s financial hegemony to an end. Unfortunately for Bruges, Antwerp had sided with Maximilian; many foreign merchants moved eastward to set up shop in the city on the Schelde. After the subsequent loss of the local Burgundian court, Antwerp began to usurp the city’s preeminent role in business and trade.4

Antwerp’s principal assets were its fairs and its geography. Even in the beginning of the fifteenth century, Antwerp’s role was already secure as a market town where most anything could be bought. The biannual Brabant fairs, shared with Bergen-op-Zoom, lasted for six weeks each year. The fairs in Bergen were the Koudmarkt (winter) market which lasted until just after Pentecost and the Paasmmarkt, which began before Good Friday and lasted until just before Pentecost. In Antwerp, the Sinksenmarkt was held in May and the Bamismarkt was held in August.5 The fairs were important not because of the availability of goods, but because guild restrictions were suspended during this six-week period. This meant that guilds did not have a monopoly on their commercial goods during the fair. People could sell at the fairs whether or not they were citizens [poorters] of Antwerp, a feature that attracted buyers from afar.6

Furthermore, the city’s location deep within Brabant, combined with the city’s easy access to the sea via the River Schelde, meant that city bestrode

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6 Van Houtte, 175.
favorable overland routes from German lands and water routes from England, the Mediterranean, and the Baltic. However, this mass proximity to shipping routes meant that Bruges depended on its canal network, which had to be actively maintained for its commercial well-being.

1.3 Antwerp’s Rise to Commercial Dominance, 1500–1550

Antwerp was well on its way to becoming an economic powerhouse by 1500 because many of its key factors were already in place. The city, with a population of about 40,000, was becoming wealthy in a large part because of its fairs. Because Bruges and the cloth cities of Flanders had been boycotting English wool since the mid-fourteenth century, it was the only place in the Low Countries where English wool could be bought. This availability brought foreigners to Antwerp for about six weeks twice a year, an influx that diversified its population and economic draw. The free market had arrived, in its most basic sense, and Antwerp, as Braudel described, “awoke at the visible top of the world.”

Its fortunate geographic placement and progressive attitudes about trade allowed the city to become a major distribution center for important commodities

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7 On German trade and the Hanse, see Donald J. Harreld, *High Germans in the Low Countries: German Merchants and Commerce in Golden Age Antwerp* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).
8 This number stood at 47,000 in 1496. By 1547, the population was 95,000. See Jan Van Roey, "De Bevolking," in *Antwerpen in de XVIdde Eeuw* (Antwerpen: Uitgeverij Mercurius, 1976), 95–108.
including Portuguese spices, Italian silk and velvet, and Central European copper. It also became the center for the linen and wool trade and Antwerp manufacturers to begin processing flax into linen. Other new opportunities abounded as the continuing development of trade routes from the Rhineland, as well as the increasing efficiency of industries that produced wine, salt, copper, silver, and brass augmented Antwerp’s reputation as a regional hub and marketplace for goods of all sorts.\(^\text{12}\)

1.3.1 The First Rise, c. 1450–1520

After the Portuguese discovered a sea route to India, and in effect monopolized the spice trade, in 1501 Antwerp became the center of spice distribution into Europe. Portuguese merchants were able to trade German-imported silver purchased in Antwerp for spices in Asia, and then to re-sell the spices in Antwerp. Now the center of multifaceted international trade, Antwerp was able to extend its reach into the realm of Atlantic trade. Goods from the Atlantic coast of France, the Mediterranean, and Africa were all within reach, as well as those from the New World.

In 1508, Antwerp became the de facto center of European trade with the construction of the *Feitoria de Flandes*, a branch of the larger Portuguese institution *Casa da India*, which oversaw the distribution of Portuguese goods.

\(^{12}\) Braudel’s assertion that Antwerp could indeed be considered an *entrepôt* has been questioned by Clé Lesger, who demonstrated that Antwerp was less a monolithic force and more a place at the center of a larger trade network in the Netherlands. The city depended heavily on the deep harbor at Arnemuiden in Zeeland, for example, so that goods on smaller ships from Antwerp could be reloaded onto larger vessels bound for the Baltic and the Iberian Peninsular. Clé Lesger, *The Rise of the Amsterdam Market and Information Exchange: Merchants, Commercial Expansion and Change in the Spatial Economy of the Low Countries*, c. 1550-1630 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 37–48. For a discussion of these commodities, see Wilfrid Brulez, "De Handel," in *Antwerpen in de XVIde Eeuw* (Antwerpen: Uitgeverij Mercurius, 1976), 123.
between Portugal and the East. Also in 1508, local offices of the Fuggers from Augsburg were opened in Antwerp; in 1509, the Welsers of Nuremberg established a local financial center there. These developments placed Antwerp at the center of mercantile and financial activities in Europe, where it remained until the last quarter of the century.

Antwerp’s good fortune was not permanent, of course. An economic slump during the 1520s and 1530s briefly crippled its economy. The Comunero Revolt in Spain in 1520–21 and the Peasant’s Wars in Germany in 1524 disrupted the silver trade. Increased taxation to finance the Habsburg wars in France and Italy (begun with Maximilian and continuing with Charles V) further affected economic and commercial stability. A civil war in Denmark from 1534 to 1536 hobbled overseas trade with the Hanseatic cities of the Baltic, especially Lübeck. In light of these problems, the Portuguese replaced Antwerp with Venice as their key distribution point. The fifteen-year slump in overseas trade caused considerable hardship in Antwerp, including unemployment and even food rationing. But even after the city’s economy recovered, currency manipulations

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16 The Factor eventually closed Antwerp’s Feitoria in 1548. See Materné, 23.

17 Van Der Wee, *Growth II*:144–157 and Vermeylen, 34.
and other failed reactionary financial policies seem to have had longstanding effects.\textsuperscript{18}

1.3.2 The Second Rise, c. 1540–1565

Antwerp began its second great flowering around 1540.\textsuperscript{19} While the rest of the world economy was chiefly based on agriculture, Antwerp had become a leader in the creation of movable goods and their efficient export; the city’s local and regional port network could handle a greater volume than any other city in Europe.\textsuperscript{20} Imported goods contributed to the development of new products and industries in and around Brabant, such as diamond cutting (thanks to Italian and Portuguese trading), weaving, mirror-making, woodcarving, and furniture. These accounted for around two-thirds of the total exports from the port of Antwerp. In addition, immigrant specialists from Spain (for Cordovan leather tooling) and Venice (for glass and mirrors) established local workshops that expanded the city’s industrial capacity.\textsuperscript{21} The number of glaziers registered in the St. Luke Guild was only 12 in the second half of the fifteenth century, but 74 new apprentices

\textsuperscript{18} Paintings of tax collectors and bankers appeared around 1538, just after the economy rebounded. This issue will be elaborated in Chapter 4.
\textsuperscript{19} Ironically, the closing of these Portuguese offices in Antwerp indirectly brought about an end to the financial hardships of the 1540s; the loss of income during the 1520s and 1530s actually opened up new Levantine markets. At the same time, spices brought back from the Levant figured in the resale of English cloth to central and northern Europe. The sale of spices via Antwerp would eventually account for a quarter to a half of all exports out of the city. See Materné, 23.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 23–24 and Van Der Wee, Growth, II:183–198.
\textsuperscript{21} Albert Goris, \textit{Étude sur les colonies marchandes méridionales (portugais, espagnols, italiens) à Anvers de 1488 à 1567; contribution à l'histoire des débuts du capitalisme moderne} (Louvain: Librairie Universitaire, 1925), 433–437.
inscribed between 1500 and 1550. The city also became a center for the making
of musical instruments, copperwork, embroidery and, after 1540, tapestries.\textsuperscript{22}

On top of these developments, the discovery of silver at Potosí in 1545
brought a flood of investment into Antwerp’s economy.\textsuperscript{23} This silver, together
with trade in Spanish domestic products such as wool, oil, and fruits, paid for the
raw materials, ships, and equipment to outfit and control Spanish colonies in the
Americas.\textsuperscript{24} Spanish investment in Antwerp’s economy was fundamental to
Antwerp’s flowering between 1540 and 1565, but its liquidity also forced new
financial measures that were variously helpful and detrimental.\textsuperscript{25}

Two less-noted but important developments in Antwerp’s economy were
first share-companies and commission trading. Although commonplace today,
the concept of individuals owning a share of a company was entirely new in the
sixteenth century. A merchant who lacked capital could secure his share of an
enterprise by putting up his share of the profits from that enterprise. This radical
concept expanded the economy because it gave greater numbers of investors, and
investors who lacked extensive capital, the ability to participate in ever-growing
commercial activities.\textsuperscript{26} Similarly, trade on commission allowed a merchant to
have goods sold for him in remote locations—an arrangement that relieved him of
the need to station employees at sales venues outside of Antwerp. Instead, he

\textsuperscript{22} See Alfons Thijs, "Antwerp's Luxury Industries: the Pursuit of Profit and Artistic Sensitivity," in
Antwerp, Story of a Metropolis: 16th-17th Century Antwerp, Hessenhuis 25 June-10 October

\textsuperscript{23} While this appeared to be a boon to the economy, currency manipulation and coin debasement
significantly affected the banking industry. These issues are discussed at length in Chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{24} Michael Limburger, "No town in the world provides more advantages': economies of
agglomeration and the golden age of Antwerp " in Urban achievement in Early Modern Europe:
New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 47.

\textsuperscript{25} See Note 19, above.

\textsuperscript{26} Regulatory developments concerning financial exchange are further addressed in Chapter 4.
could employ agents abroad to sell goods for a commission. All of these innovations and opportunities enhanced the city’s appeal to immigrant communities. In fact, only about a fourth of those involved in international trade in Antwerp were actually from the Southern Netherlands, a proportion that indicates the importance of non-local participation in the city’s economy. With such opportunities, it is little wonder that by 1550, Antwerp’s population had risen to 95,000 while the whole of Brabant numbered 170,000.

1.4 The Industry of Painting in Antwerp in 1500

   Antwerp’s commercial environment fostered a robust market for paintings in a full range of media and subjects. Works on panel, canvas, cloth, and linen, all executed with a varying mix of traditional and new materials including linseed oil, tempera, chalk, and watercolor, indicate varying prices. Buyers typically sought affordable paintings that depicted traditional religious images as well as entirely new subjects that included landscapes, scenes from everyday life, still lifes, mythological paintings, and occupational portraits. Nonetheless Antwerp’s commercial infrastructure, together with the flexibility of its guild regulations, rather than any “native” tradition of painting or a local aristocracy to function as

27 Jeroen Puttevils, A servitio de vostri sempre siamo. De effecten van de handel tussen Antwerpen en Italië op de koopmansfamilie Van der Molen (midden zestiende eeuw) (Universiteit van Antwerpen, 2006), 77.
patrons, made it Europe’s preeminent market for painting, sculpture, and
tapestries.\(^{29}\)

Although good business made Antwerp the “mother of the arts” the reality
of art making, as with any other career, was that it provided a means to put food
on the table.\(^{30}\) Of the artists whose names appear in Saint Luke Guild
membership registers [the \textit{Liggeren}], only 5 percent are known to us.\(^{31}\) The rest,
albeit they survive in name only, comprise too large a percentage to ignore.\(^{32}\) For
the vast majority of artists and those involved in artistic training, painting was
primarily a manual labor and not an easy route to financial stability. As Henry
Kamen has observed, for most people, the long sixteenth century was in many
ways an Iron Age rather than the golden one so often evoked.\(^{33}\) During the
economic slump of the 1520s and 1530s, membership in the Guild of Saint Luke
was declining “more and more every day,” as did artists’ incomes; poverty rose so
rapidly that the guild was compelled to establish a poor box for members.\(^{34}\)

\(^{29}\) These issues have been articulated in Neil De Marchi and Hans Van Miegroet, “Rules versus
Play in Early Modern Art Markets,” \textit{Récherches économiques de Louvain – Louvain Economics
Printmaking (Rotterdam: Sound & Vision Interactive, 1998), 27-57; Jean Pierre-Sosson,

\(^{30}\) Arnout Balis, "Antwerp, Foster Mother of the Arts: its Contribution to the Artistic Culture of
Europe in the Seventeenth Century," in \textit{Antwerp, Story of a Metropolis: 16th-17th Century
Antwerp, Hessenhuis 25 June-10 October 1993}, ed. Jan Van der Stock (Gent: Snoeck-Ducaju,
1993), 115.


\(^{32}\) See Maximiliaan P. J. Martens, "Masters and Servants. Assistants in Antwerp Artists’ Workshop
Ancienne et ses Procédés Copies, Répliques, Pastiches Series: La Dessin sous-jacent et la
Technologie dans la Peinture Colloque XV Bruges, 11-13 Sept 2003}, ed. H and Jacqueline Couver
Verougstraete (Leuven: 2006), 119.

\(^{33}\) Henry Kamen, \textit{The Iron Century. Social Change in Europe 1550-1660} (London: Weidenfeld
and Nicolson, 1971), esp. 3–46.

\(^{34}\) Vermeylen, 34.
However, the potential for bleak economic conditions seems to have been a constant specter, even in times of relative prosperity, that affected the production of paintings throughout the century.35

1.4.1 Making a Living as a Painter in Antwerp: Production

As with any other craft occupation in the early modern period, making a living as a painter was not easy. In Antwerp, however, the opportunities for painters were among the best. Multiple venues in which to buy paintings, combined with the rising number of immigrant painters, fostered a creative and competitive environment that had never been seen—and possibly has not been seen since. Yet, despite ample historical data on the history and economics of the art industry in Antwerp, as well as the considerable body of scholarship on Antwerp painters themselves, it has been difficult to link these two research trajectories. In the remainder of this chapter I will illustrate the competitive atmosphere built by this formidable artist population, in an effort to explore artistic output in terms of the market as a whole.

1.4.2 Antwerp, Bruges, and Immigrant Artists

Assuming that Antwerp’s art market quickly migrated from Bruges after that city’s decline is a gross oversimplification.36 By the 1480s, Antwerp began to accept foreigners as residents, sometimes with the promise attractive benefits

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35 An analysis of risk-averse behavior in the production of painting is addressed in Chapter 6.
which in turn attracted even more foreigners to the city. Antwerp’s average population growth of around 10,000 inhabitants per decade in the sixteenth century allows us to assume that the steady rise in the number of painters mirrored general population increases. The guild of the image-makers had been established in 1382, but did not accept new apprentices until 1453; only in the first decades of the sixteenth century did Antwerp’s population begin to noticeably increase, with most new inhabitants arriving from outside the city. Even Quentin Massys (1466–1530) came from Leuven to Antwerp, where his name first appears as a master in the *Liggeren* in 1491. In fact, between 1450 and 1570 about 67% of the masters in the guild were from outside Antwerp.

1.4.3 Production and the *Panden*

By 1422 Antwerp had a ready-made place to buy paintings, sculptures, and other luxury items. By 1438, the Spaniard Pero Tafur tells us, paintings “of every type” were available in Antwerp. The Dominican *Pand* (known at the time as the *Predikheeren Pand*) which opened in the churchyard of the Dominican Friary (today’s church of Saint Peter and Paul) about 1445, drew so many painters and craftspeople selling luxury items from outside Antwerp that

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37 See note 29, above, and Harreld, 42–44.
41 Ewing, 560.
42 Marnix Gijsen, *Lof van Antwerpen; hoe reizigers Antwerpen zagen, van de XVe tot de XXe eeuw* (Brussel: Standaard-Boekhandel, 1940), 24–27.
their presence outnumbered local painters. The Pand was expanded in 1460 and again in 1479, and was successful until the St. Luke guild withdrew in 1480 over a legal dispute with the Dominicans. (The members of the St. Nicolas guild, including jewelers and tapestry makers, remained until the Dominican Pand was dismantled in 1581.)

The establishment of Our Lady’s Pand just south of the Church of Our Lady in 1460 was likely the principal reason for the painters’s withdrawal from the Dominican Pand. It is not entirely clear whether or not the population at large bought paintings at Our Lady’s Pand, because it was originally conceived as a luxury market, but the debut of other venues for the purchase of paintings such as the second-hand auctions on the Friday Market and later auctions at the mint clearly demonstrate that paintings, expensive or not, were constantly available in Antwerp during the last three or four decades of the fifteenth century. As will be shown in the following chapter, the increasing numbers of paintings in private ownership also confirm this trend.

While the “genesis” of Early Netherlandish painting may have been in Bruges, it was Antwerp that made Netherlandish paintings available to the rest of

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43 See Dora Schlugheit, "De Predikheerenpand en St-Niklaasgilde te Antwerpen (1445-1553)," *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis* 29 (1938), and Ewing, 560.
44 Vermeylen, 21–24.
45 Late-fifteenth-century collectors of paintings were few, especially compared their numbers in the sixteenth century. The shift in taste from collecting paintings (in lieu of tapestries) had just begun among the nobility; the parallel buying habits of the lower classes (non-noble) had not yet developed. Bruno Blondé has pointed out that the lag between the buying habits of the nobility, in terms of subjects, and those of the middle class is about fifteen years. For an example of a public auction at the mint, see Luc Smolderen, "Tableaux de Jérôme Bosch, de Pierre Bruegel l’Ancien et de Frans Floris dispersés en vente publique a la monnaie d’Anvers en 1572," *Rêvue Belge d’Archéologie et d’Histoire de l’Art* 64 (1995), 33–41. On this fundamental shift and the rise of a painting as a commodity, see James Bloom’s important thesis, James J. Bloom, "Why Painting?," in *Mapping Markets for Paintings in Europe 1450-1750*, ed. Neil De Marchi and Hans Van Miegroet (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 17–31.
Europe. The Guild of Saint Like entered into an agreement in 1481 to exclusively sell at Our Lady’s Pand, a later a decree restricting the sale of paintings outside the fairs to Our Lady’s Pand indicates that they were still sold at numerous locations in the city and had been for some time, with growing potential.\(^{46}\) By 1505, the average income of stall rentals at Our Lady’s Pand was three times what it had been for the previous 20 years.\(^{47}\) By 1518, it had grown by 400%. Growth of the painting industry stagnated that year, as the commodity and financial markets began to slowly contract with the onset of exterior economic duress connected to wars, revolts along trade routes abroad, and higher domestic taxes, and would not rebound until the late 1530s.\(^{48}\)

The second flowering of Antwerp’s economy, which began in 1540, was mirrored in the activity of the painting market. Antwerp’s economic recovery began in the wake of numerous wars in France and revolts in Spain and Germany and was reflected in the rise in income of Our Lady’s Pand (from about 60 £ Brabant or 240 guilders in 1540 to about 150 £ Brabant or 600 guilders by 1544). Revenues at the Pand declined after 1544, however, partly in response to the construction of what became the principal venue for the sale of paintings, the eponymously named Schilderspand, in the upper story of the new Exchange. (The Exchange itself had been built in 1531, but no evidence exists of its upper story being used as a sales venue for paintings before 1541.) Eventually the revenues of the Painter’s Pand would pale in comparison to the incomes of Our Lady’s Pand, which included revenue from other costly items sold there,

\(^{46}\) Ewing, 563 and Vermeylen, 26.  
\(^{47}\) Ewing, 565.  
\(^{48}\) Vermeylen, 34 and Ewing, 565.
including altarpieces. The most successful period of the Painter’s Pand was between 1555 and 1582 (in the building was destroyed in 1583). This period coincides with the assembly of the large painting collections discussed in Chapter 2.  

1.5 The Guild and the Market: New Market Segments

Antwerp’s market is historically unique because the expansion of the market for paintings and objets d’art was not generated from the commission nexus. Rather, the development of a deeply segmented on-spec and secondary market fed ever-widening demand on the open market for visual goods, including sculptures, furniture, and paintings. In addition to the Panden, the regulatory environment and structure of the guild further provided for the market’s rapid expansion by encouraging collaboration during apprenticeship. This practice facilitated more rapid production of paintings and more training of specialty painters; the guild’s agreement to sell at Our Lady’s Pand indicates the centrality of its role in the marketing of paintings. During Antwerp’s boom years (1510s–1520s and 1540s–1560s), looser regulation meant a more excited market. Officially, only masters could sell in the fairs or outside of the fairs, but this rule was not enforced, resulting in more artists selling more paintings. In addition, the labor of apprentices could be utilized long-term, as there was neither a standard length for apprenticeships nor a standard requirement for each apprentice to produce a masterpiece at the end of the training period. Even the

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49 For the life of the Schilderspand, including revenues, see Vermeylen, 54.
requirement for dealers to register with the guild lapsed so much that, later in the sixteenth century, possibly as many as 30% failed to do so. This evidence suggests the guild preferred to facilitate the continual production and selling of paintings in the city in lieu of enforcing rules that might inhibit such sales.\textsuperscript{51}

Lax regulation translated to an ever-widening market. The idea of a range of prices and options for both low-end and high-end paintings was already fixed in the marketplace, as it had been in Bruges’ market for illuminated manuscripts.\textsuperscript{52} There, the development of single-sheet illuminations and linen paintings offered a practical, cheaper alternative to bound illuminations and panel paintings.\textsuperscript{53} When the market shifted to Antwerp, these divisions not only remained but broadened. Over the next 30 years, the breadth of the market developed into high-end, low-end, and middling segments determined by an increased variety of visual materials of unequal quality and subjects, and the establishment of standardized venues from which to buy these works.\textsuperscript{54}

Based on inventories and auction records, the high end was on-spec and commission-based; the middle end consisted of mostly on-spec paintings; and the low end provided cheaper works such as cloth paintings and watercolors. Only a small percentage of this spectrum was commission-based, and these

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 193–194.
paintings generally made up the higher end of the market. This structure can be derived from extant price data preserved in four inventories culled from post-mortem inventories and public auctions recorded in 1545, 1558, 1562, and 1572, consisting of 75 paintings altogether. While these four records are indeed a small sample, they are nonetheless a snapshot and suggest clear divisions between the quality of the paintings from cheap to costly. Price variations based on material value (from paper to canvas to panel), combined with the type of sales venue (second-hand auctions or commissions), each point to the development of low-end or high-end markets. They further suggest that the divisions between these market segments became increasingly developed by the 1560s. The prices discussed here have been converted to guilders for simplicity and consistency.

The on-spec and low-end segments of the market can be defined as paintings that cost about 2 guilders or less, based on the average value of 20 paintings auctioned in 1556 at the Friday Market and those confiscated to repay a debt in 1572. Most of these paintings, consisting of panel, linen and canvas, were valued at less than half a guilder, or the equivalent of half a stonemason’s daily summer wage. (The cost of twelve eggs averaged about a tenth of a guilder).

Ibid., 64.

The Mint auction of 1572 was published by Luc Smolderen in 1995. Curiously, no other auctions are known to have taken place at the mint. See Smolderen, On the collecting practices of individuals associated with the Antwerp mint, see Ethan Matt Kavaler, *Pieter Bruegel. Parables of Order and Enterprise* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 51-54. Data collected from a list of 89 printed and painted works sold at a post-mortem auction, public auction at the Mint, and second-hand sales at the Friday Market. See ZA *Familie de Jonge van Ellemeet*, 41; Smolderen, 33–41, and Van der Stock, 113-125.

These prices appear in Appendix 1.

Average daily wage was 22.5 groats in 1545, 45 groats in 1562, and 36 groats in 1572. Van Der Wee, *The Growth of the Antwerp Market and the European Economy (Fourteenth-Sixteenth Centuries)*, 363.
earliest known documented prices date from the 1540s, painting ownership averaged 4.5 paintings per household (based on 104 inventories). It appears that these low-priced paintings were a constant presence on the market in Antwerp, even though many of them were not produced in the city. These paintings were imported from linen-producing cities in Flanders, which were better suited for such production than Antwerp. Kortrijk, for example, was a known source for linen and cloth paintings, as were Oudenaarde and Mechelen. These cities had established traditions in the processing of linens beginning in the fourteenth century. The growing demand for paintings allowed them to establish, at least in part, their reputations for these particular types of low-end paintings, many of which were bound for export out of Antwerp.

Paintings bound for export typically commanded a low price as well. Examination of eight shipments of paintings in 1544 whose values were declared for the hundredth-penny tax reveals that the average worth of one box was about 27 guilders. A box of paintings shipped by the merchant Jeronimo Revolasco to Venice on the August 12 was valued at 30 guilders, which was on the higher end of the painting shipments in that year. We do not know exactly how many paintings were typically shipped in one box, but data from the seventeenth

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59 Inventories collected between 1540 and 1549. See Appendix 3.
61 ARA RK 23361 6r. I thank Jeroen Puttevils for this reference.
century shows a range of 8-12 panel paintings per container. Some shipments list the paintings as a baal [bale], for example a box shipped to Milan by the Affaitadi, the most successful Italian merchant family living in Antwerp, for the sum of 60 guilders. To label such a shipment with a term that normally describes cloth or grain and indicates a heavy load seems unusual to us now, but it likely suggests a box that weighed in the hundreds of pounds. Nevertheless, if an entire crate of paintings is valued at 30 guilders whereas the average cost of a good painting was around the same amount, we can judge that the paintings available at the Pand were likely one tenth of their combined shipping price (2 to 5 guilders each for export-quality, on-spec work). The value of paintings bound for export would grow substantially by the seventeenth century.

The middling segment of the market is more difficult to analyze. We might say that it consisted mostly of non-specialist religious images priced around 3 to 15 guilders, or about 20–50% of a mason’s monthly wage. Subjects for this range ran the gamut of portraits to small New Testament panels and small to medium-sized landscape paintings. The fact that the numbers of such paintings increased steadily until the seventeenth century indicates that these images comprised a formidable market presence. Many middle-end paintings

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64 A document from 1635 shows a crate of six paintings shipped to Seville containing paintings by Frans Francken, each valued at 9 pounds Flemish (54 guilders each, or 324 guilders for the box) and another box of six copies for 3.5 pounds each, (210 guilders for the box). Some clue to the number of paintings contained in a crate has been published by Denucé, *Exportation d’Oeuvres d’Art au 17e Siècle à Anvers: la Firme Forchoudt*.
65 21 out of 75 paintings in the four inventories fall into this range.
66 See ZA *Familie de Jonge van Ellemeet*, 41; Smolderen, 33–41; Van der Stock, 113-125 and SAA *Processen 1503 Inventaris Anthonis Daems*. I thank Jeroen Puttevils for this reference.
could also be found in the Panden, however, where almost any painting, of any type, was offered for sale. Agents were routinely sent to buy affordable, high-quality paintings on display at the Panden.

At the high end of the market, which included commissions by known artists, paintings’ prices ranged from around 15 guilders into the hundreds of guilders. These higher prices were also due to expensive frames, which were always noted in inventories. Four paintings by Pieter Bruegel the Elder auctioned in 1572 fetched an average price of 42 guilders, whereas a painting possibly made by Marten van Heemskerck had been auctioned in 1562, from the estate of a wealthy merchant, for the incredible sum of 168 guilders. Although these estimates are slightly narrow in the size of the data sample, they also provide a workable range of the value and price for paintings during the 1540s–1570s. Unfortunately, no specific evidence about price data before 1545 has been found.

1.6 A Sketch of the Antwerp Painting Scene in the Sixteenth Century

With extant demographic data and population data of registered masters in the Saint Luke guild, it becomes possible to tentatively estimate Antwerp’s total production of paintings in the sixteenth century. The lists of masters recorded in the Liggeren first determines the aggregate population of artists working in Antwerp. From this data, the painting production can then be extrapolated to reveal a provisional understanding of the entire Antwerp art market over the century. When taken as a large-scale contextual construction of the art market, such an analysis yields informed, non-circumstantial evidence.

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67 See ZA Familie de Jonge van Ellemeet, and Smolderen (both 41).
about what a painter living in or around Antwerp faced during his or her career. Estimating the population of painters and their output helps to illuminate numerous relevant factors. First, it creates a picture of the whole artistic marketplace in terms of competition. From there, one can situate individual artists and their visual output to predict their performances, suggest the sizes of their operations, and even surmise their business characters.

1.6.1 Method

The Antwerp Liggeren, the membership registers of the Guild of Saint Luke, make this analysis possible. For this production model to function properly, however, several assumptions must be put forward. In most cases, the Liggeren list the occupation of the guild member: sculptor [beeldsnyder], goldsmith, glazier [glazenmakere], lightmaker [verlichter], joiner or furnituremaker [coffermakere], mirrormaker [spiegelmakere], bookbinder, printer, and painter. Only painters (schilder, doekschilder, lijnwaedschilder, etc.) have been taken into account. Some members listed as glass painters [glassschilder] were listed as painters. Each master who was a painter was

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69 See Note 37, above.

70 Several other professions are also listed, including bookbinders, metalcutters, the curiously named antieksnyder, and popmakere. See Rombouts and Van Lerius, 55–217.

71 If his biographer is to be believed, Marinus van Reymerswale was first apprenticed to a glazier when he entered the guild in 1509 to work with Simon van Dale. Under these circumstances, his apprentice “Moryn Claessone, Zeelander” was not counted as a painter in this project. See Rombouts and Van Lerius, 71.
counted as one observation. Therefore, the production numbers advanced here must be considered workshop production rates, rather than individual rates.

To approximate how many painters were working in Antwerp from 1500 to 1600, we first must assume a career duration of 25 years. If, for example, five new masters were accepted in a certain year, these five masters presumably would remain painters in Antwerp for the next 25 years. By this logic, a painter who becomes a master in 1475 would last be counted in 1500. If this formula is applied to every subsequent “class” of new masters, each year’s total number of artists can be interpreted as the sum of the series of overlapping 25-year careers. The results of this formula appear in Table 1.1.

From this data, the aggregate production and number of workshops can be constructed. Specifically, we can establish the output of one workshop by multiplying the average number of paintings made per week by the average career length. A workshop’s annual output can be expressed as: (Number of Masters per Year) x (Number of Paintings Made per Week) x (37.14 Weeks).

Appendix 2 is built from the number of those granted the title of Master by the guild, 1500–1600. Apprentices who did not complete their training, dropped out of training, or never became masters by other means have not been taken into account.


This is based on an average working period of around 260 days, which takes the confessional changes that took place in sixteenth-century Antwerp. As the century became a center of the counterreformation as the century progressed, new rules dictated when the observant Catholic could and could not work. For example, no work was to be performed on Sundays or any other feast day. Nevertheless, the numbers presented here are presented only tentatively, as different work rates have been put forward by Montias and Van Der Woude and, more recently, Richard Spear for Italian painters. He uses a rate of 250 days per year, whereas Montias and Van Der Woude use around 300 days per year. See Van der Woude, 301-302; J.M. Montias, “Estimates of the Number of Dutch Master-Painters, Their Earnings and Their Output in 1650,” Leidschrift 6.
This quotient, multiplied by 25 (years), provides an estimate of the output of a career. Calculating the total of every master’s production will yield the total production of the Antwerp painting market. This formula can be utilized for any number of evidential or theoretical production estimates, regardless of interval (e.g., painting every two weeks, 1 painting per week, or 1.5 paintings per week, etc.). A representative range appears in Table 1.2.

1.6.2 Results

Based on this method, the population of painters in Antwerp was sizeable indeed. According to my findings, the highest number of painters during the sample period is from 1551 to 1573 and averages about 364 painters, with the highest in 1558 at 399 painters. This data indicates that the number of painters working in Antwerp decreased sharply after 1575, when the population levels off at around 150 painters from 1585 to 1600. This decrease corresponds with the Spanish Fury in 1576, the Fall of Antwerp in 1585, and the resultant massive emigration.

(1990), 59-74 and Richard E. Spear and Philip L. Sohm, Painting for Profit: The Economic Lives of Seventeenth-Century Italian Painters (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), 40-41. The working period of artists is undergoing constant revision. Recent estimates lower the yearly working period to around 260 days, which takes into account that confessional changes in sixteenth-century Antwerp, especially as the century became a center of the counterreformation as the century progressed, dictated when the observant Catholic could and could not work. For example, no work was to be performed on Sundays or any other feast day. Nevertheless, the numbers presented here are likely high, and are presented only tentatively.
The appearance of the graph suggests that the painters’ population closely mirrored that of Antwerp. In 1496, at the beginning of the sample period, the city’s population was about 47,000. By 1526, the population had grown to 55,000, but in 1543–44 it numbered about 84,000 people—a dramatic increase. (The city’s population would grow to 105,000 by 1568.) The painters’ population rose steadily from 1500 to about 1522, but after 1522 the guild’s population stagnated and continued to shrink until 1549, corresponding to the external economic difficulties discussed above. The artists’ population rose quickly throughout the 1550s and 1560s; new guild memberships also increased during the same period. This difference should be addressed in terms of two factors: 1) active painters’ responses to market forces and historical events that likely affected their production and/or welfare, and 2) new members recognition.

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76 Source: Rombouts, and Van Lerius, 26–410. See also Appendix 2.
77 See Van Roey, 95–108.
of the potential for growth and viability of careers in painting. This increase also suggests that the shrinking guild recognized the need for new members.

Calculations of the total production of paintings from the period must be done with care to incorporate inherent variations within the output.\textsuperscript{79} Using an average output of .5 paintings per week as a minimum, both one painting and 1.5 paintings per week yield a total production ranging from 481,464 paintings to 1,444,393 for the period of 1500–1600 (see tables 1.2 and 1.3).\textsuperscript{80}

Table 1.2 Estimated Production of Paintings in Antwerp by Rate, 1500–1600\textsuperscript{81}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chart}
\caption{Graph showing estimated production of paintings in Antwerp by rate from 1500 to 1600.}
\end{figure}

\footnotesize
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Year & 0.5 & 1.0 & 1.5 & 1.0 & 1.5 & 1.0 & 1.5 & 1.0 & 1.5 \\
\hline
1500 & 5000 & 10000 & 15000 & 20000 & 25000 & 1600 & 1590 & 1581 & 1572 \\
\hline
1509 & 6000 & 12000 & 18000 & 24000 & 30000 & 1500 & 1510 & 1520 & 1530 \\
\hline
1518 & 7000 & 14000 & 21000 & 28000 & 35000 & 1400 & 1410 & 1420 & 1430 \\
\hline
1527 & 8000 & 16000 & 24000 & 32000 & 40000 & 1300 & 1310 & 1320 & 1330 \\
\hline
1536 & 9000 & 18000 & 27000 & 36000 & 45000 & 1200 & 1210 & 1220 & 1230 \\
\hline
1545 & 10000 & 20000 & 30000 & 40000 & 50000 & 1100 & 1110 & 1120 & 1130 \\
\hline
1554 & 11000 & 22000 & 33000 & 43000 & 53000 & 1000 & 1010 & 1020 & 1030 \\
\hline
1563 & 12000 & 24000 & 36000 & 46000 & 56000 & 900 & 910 & 920 & 930 \\
\hline
1572 & 13000 & 26000 & 39000 & 49000 & 59000 & 800 & 810 & 820 & 830 \\
\hline
1581 & 14000 & 28000 & 42000 & 52000 & 62000 & 700 & 710 & 720 & 730 \\
\hline
1590 & 15000 & 30000 & 45000 & 55000 & 65000 & 600 & 610 & 620 & 630 \\
\hline
160 & 16000 & 32000 & 48000 & 58000 & 68000 & 500 & 510 & 520 & 530 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{79} Ad van der Woude calculated that the average output of an artist was approximately 1.5 paintings per week, but this production rate seems extremely high for Antwerp. Calculations of this type can be slippery, keeping in mind that the final numbers account for the production of paintings some 50 to 100 years later in the Dutch Republic and also that they have been calculated from income records per week per painter as well as the expected price of paintings sold in Amsterdam in the 1660s and 1670s. See Van der Woude, 300–1.

\textsuperscript{80} See Appendix 2 for full data.

\textsuperscript{81} Source: Rombouts and Van Lerius, 26–410.
Table 1.3. Estimated Average Production of Paintings in Antwerp, 1500–1600

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>1.5 paintings per week</th>
<th>1 painting per week</th>
<th>.5 painting per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average production per year</td>
<td>14,589</td>
<td>9,726</td>
<td>4,863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of paintings per rate</td>
<td>1,444,393</td>
<td>962,929</td>
<td>481,464</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One can consider the work of any artist from the period in light of this historical and quantitative information for use as a methodological template. Armed with the knowledge of the general trends in painting production, new guild memberships, and the number of painters in the city at any given time, as well as numbers that indicate the production of paintings, one can closely frame an artistic context. These statistics serve as proxy for detailed information about an artist’s business practices within a larger sphere by comparing an artist’s paintings to the whole context of painting in the city. The next chapter turns from artistic production to public consumption rates as evidenced by paintings found in Antwerp’s private residences.

1.7 Concluding Remarks

The fortunate geographical location of Antwerp, a city that had no local painting traditions nor local aristocracy to rely on for patronage, enabled it to enrich itself through trade. Artists followed suit. This chapter has both outlined the economic variables which allowed the development of the city’s art market and situated its painters with an analysis of the costs of paintings and the estimated production of paintings over the course of the sixteenth century. The
next chapter looks at these issues from the consumption side of the market, through artworks in Antwerp’s domestic spaces and the ongoing development and consumption of new visual media.
Chapter Two

Art Consumption in Antwerp in the Sixteenth Century

2.1 Introduction

Any informed discussion of painting in Antwerp in the sixteenth century will mention that metropolis growth increased the popularity of everyday life scenes and landscapes as well as the concurrent demise of traditional subjects and media. However, a close examination of inventories taken throughout the century offers a very different perspective of the situation: prevalence of traditional imagery (portraits, Christian subjects), consistent demand for panel supports, and the disappearance of cheaper supports such as linen and paper. Non-religious subjects remained rare throughout the century. To illustrate these points, this chapter explores inventoried collections in terms of support and subject matter by studying the number of paintings in Antwerp homes, their subjects, and the materials upon which they were made. This conjectural evaluation, based on available evidence, both maps consumption patterns in a broad range of Antwerp society and presents a critical reassessment of the dominant conceptions of painting traditions in the city.

The findings presented here, based on 365 inventories recorded in private homes dating from 1528 to 1588, is the largest known compilation of sixteenth-century Antwerp inventories. These lists and their accompanying descriptions, culled from a wide range of home sizes and family incomes, present an

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impression of major trends and tastes. While they are by no means a definitive survey, they nonetheless provide an interesting evaluation of visual trends and media. The data derived from this sample, which are surprising, reveal a starkly different reality than the traditional narratives about trends in Antwerp painting by offering an impression of what images people did and did not buy.

Interestingly, only one inventory contained an image of a banker; the vast majority of the paintings portray New Testament images. Other indications that tastes were generally conservative at the end of the century include the continued prominence of old-fashioned supports (i.e., panel painting) throughout the century.

2.2 Method

Although recent studies of painting consumption in sixteenth-century Antwerp houses have been steady and informative, they have also tended to be overly selective and to favor only large collections containing paintings by known artists. As a result, we are much better informed about materials in private houses after the 1560s. In recent years, several examinations of sixteenth-century inventories have been conducted in recent years, with varying agendas. These include Martens and Peeters, Hendrickx, Stappaerts, and Denucé, all of whom investigated slightly overlapping decades. These temporal differences are indicated in Table 2.2. Bert Hendrickx’s wonderful analysis of paintings inside

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city houses is a rich source of material, although it focused exclusively on paintings in the second half of the century, beginning in 1566. Greet Stappaerts (1988) transcribed more than 200 inventories, but only located 16 paintings made before 1560. Her study focused on larger collections only, without analytical depth; her chief interest was in quantifying subject matter in collections. None of these studies considered the significance of panels, linen, or other supports, nor did they explain how and why certain supports were more prevalent than others over the course of the century.

Table 2.1 Dates of Inventories Examined, by Author (Mayhew, Martens and Peters, Hendrickx, Stappaerts, and Denucé)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>MP</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1520s</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1530s</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1540s</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1550s</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1560s</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1570s</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1580s</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although Martens and Peeters examined many of the same inventories, they were unable to present a clear sense of why panels remained in collections at the end of the century. Nor did their research present any records of linen paintings, although before 1550 notaries regularly listed these types of paintings. Consequently, they were unable to offer insights about the ownership of linen paintings and choose instead to focus only on panel and canvas painting. My re-

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examination of these inventories, however, shows that they were present in many homes in Antwerp in the first half of the century.\(^5\)

### Table 2.2 Number of Sample Inventories Per Decade\(^6\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>No. Inventories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1520s</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1530s</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1540s</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1550s</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1560s</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1570s</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1580s</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revisiting these inventories uncovers an astonishing wealth of information. Relatively unstudied debtor’s inventories housed at the Antwerp city archives allow the reconstruction of painting consumption in both large and small collections as far back as the 1520s.\(^7\) These are the oldest records of paintings in domestic spaces yet found in Antwerp; the earliest document is dated 1528.\(^8\) For this survey, a database consisting of 365 inventories was created, containing 2849 paintings recorded between February 1528 and March 1588.

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\(^5\) Martens and Peeters were the first to locate this substantial source for early (pre-1550) inventories, but were not able to offer any conclusive explanation for their findings or consider the presence of linen or paper in home inventories. Maximiliaan P. J. Martens and Natasja Peeters, “Paintings in Antwerp Houses,” in *Mapping Markets for Paintings in Europe*, ed. Neil De Marchi and Hans Van Miegroet (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 35–51.

\(^6\) Source: Ph Rombouts, and Théodore van Lerius, *De Liggeren en andere historische archieven der Antwerpsche Sint Lucasgilde, onder zinspreuk "wi ionsten versaemt"*, 2 vols. (Antwerp: Baggerman, 1872) see also Appendix 3.

\(^7\) The *Vierschaar* documents, although studied, were not published in Martens and Peeters, 35–54 and in Véronique Vandenbossche, "*Item eenen dronckmansstoel.* Een Historisch onderzoek naar de materiële cultuur: boedel-inventaris-onderzoek in de stad Antwerpen 1530-1550, (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2000). See also Carolien De Staelen, *Spulletjes en hun betekenis in een commerciële metropool. Antwerpenaren en un materiële cultuur in de zestiende eeuw* (Universiteit Antwerpen, 2007).

\(^8\) SAA V298 (n.f.). Inventory of the goods of Jan Lodewycks, taken on 18, Feb 1528.
The sources used to create this database were drawn from two types of inventories. The first is the *Vierschaar Ambtman Gerechtelijke Inventarissen* (debtors’ inventories), which are preserved in three books in the archives of Antwerp’s criminal court of law (the *Vierschaar*) and dated from 1532 to 1548. When a creditor sought to collect on an obligation, the clerk would go from room to room in the debtor’s house noting (presumably) all items—even broken furniture—that could be sold. Some inventories were left incomplete and others only listed select items. However, these conditions were not usual and merely suggest that once the value of a debt had been assessed and enough items located to cover it, there was no need to continue the inventory process. Although notaries did not always provide information on the subject of images of paintings they found, they always named the support materials (panel, linen, cloth), as these clearly affected the overall value of the object and by extension, the collection. A few indications of size (large or small) and aesthetic evaluations were noted.

The second type of source comprises records of possessions found within homes at the time of the owners’ death. These records, which are generally more descriptive than the previous type, usually specify the location of the home as well as the late owner’s profession. The earliest record of this type dates from

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10 Presumably the subject of the image contributes less to the total value than the material upon which it was painted.

11 See Nicolaes Mahieu (N1172 234 - 237v).
1545; the latest was recorded in 1588. Most of these notarial documents were made during the 1560s-80s; a few have been selectively published elsewhere.\textsuperscript{12}

Table 2.3 Number of Sample Inventories Collected per Year, 1528–1588

![Graph showing the number of sample inventories collected per year from 1528 to 1588.](image)

Of course there are caveats to using these types of inventories, especially the former, because their purpose was to assess values of and within estates after the owners had fallen into debt or passed away. Both types of sources also present methodological challenges because they were recorded within what may have been different segments of the population. Variance in their sources of origin are also advantageous, however: when placed together they offer insight into a broad spectrum of Antwerp society in the sixteenth century. Tables 2.2 and 2.3 show the number of inventories collected for the database.

\textsuperscript{12} Four of these records were published in Denucé, others were transcribed by Greet Stappaerts and Bert Hendrickx (above) in their unpublished masters theses. Unfortunately, one of the more helpful types of inventories for later periods in Antwerp, the \textit{insolvente boedelskamer} [bankruptcy records], are generally not available for this period.
Evidence is concentrated in the decades before and after the 1550s; unfortunately, information is scarce from the decade of the 1550s itself. Nonetheless, the extant collections permit comparisons between two distinctly different periods of Antwerp’s art market. There are no known inventories of private homes taken in the first two decades of the century. The 365 inventories charted above are helpful to our understanding of early markets for paintings and offer a wealth of evidence on the material culture of everyday life there in the sixteenth century.

This study does not consider the number of rooms covered by each inventory, primarily because this information is inconsistently recorded in much of the pre-1550 data. The main purpose behind my analysis is to understand images and support, rather than to reach conclusions about owners’ social status or income. This project is not intended to map imagery within particular spaces in order to derive a hierarchy of images or their function within domestic spaces, as has been a common focus of recent research. Instead, this project seeks to examine images and supports, and to provide a sketch of painting ownership in the city. Gathering these factors from multiple types of sources made it possible to build a compilation of all known home inventories in Antwerp from the sixteenth century.

While notarial records helpfully illustrate visual and material culture during the early modern period, one must also expect a fair amount of

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13 See Hendrickx, above.
14 Owners’ occupations are known in some inventories, which allows inferences about their social status and/or income. These are noted below.
indeterminacy in the data and inaccuracy on the part of the notary or clerk.\textsuperscript{15} Terminology, especially language describing emerging media, is unfixed in these documents and remained so throughout the century. Notaries and their clerks were often inconsistent in their descriptions, at times using terms interchangeably.\textsuperscript{16} For example, a painting could be described as a \textit{tafereel} or the diminutive \textit{tafereeltken, paneel, berdeken, stucxken,} and later \textit{schilderij}. At times these words could have even referred to canvas (\textit{cleet} or \textit{doec}) paintings. The chimney-pieces listed in earlier inventories were almost always cloth or linen paintings, which could withstand fireplace-generated heat better than wood (which would have dried and warped quickly). However, clerks were also likely to list a “\textit{tafereel voer tschouwe}” as well as \textit{beert} as a chimney-piece.\textsuperscript{17}

Our understanding of the subjects of these paintings also presents hermeneutical problems. The exact meaning of \textit{beeld(t)} has been interpreted as a sculpture, but is more likely a painted image. Often the phrase that appears is \textit{beeldt picturatis}, which when taken literally could be a “pictured image.”\textsuperscript{18} The term “crucifix” appears frequently in the inventories, which can refer to either a sculpted crucifix, a painting of a crucifix, or a crucifixion. The word is normally clarified by the scribe: “a crucifix on canvas with a frame,” a

\textsuperscript{16} See inventories of Hendrick Van Beeringen, 14 Oct 1581. (N3640 f48r-57v); Catalyne Hack (N3640 f46-46v); and Elisabeth Van Gansepoel (N1172 304r-316r).
\textsuperscript{17} See Vincent Symoenszoon, recorded 12 December 1533 (V255 f109r - 111v).
\textsuperscript{18} Twenty-eight inventories contain the words \textit{beeldt picturatis}. The last record with this description dates from 1547 (Kaerls de Leeges, V257 f95v-96v).
“panel with a crucifix,” or a “wooden crucifix.” Descrepances, while rare, must be taken into account.

2.3 How Many Paintings Were in Antwerp Houses?

Recent research has made helpful inroads into mapping patterns of consumption within Antwerp’s social classes. In the study of painting ownership, however, our knowledge is based primarily on evidence from the latter decades of the sixteenth century. Scholars have generally relied on Denucé’s helpful but limited Antwerpse ‘Konstkamers,’ which isolated only eight collections for the entire sixteenth century. Selectively published by Denucé, each contained paintings and work by a known artist, and were typically large. All the owners, who were extremely wealthy, included an advisor to Philip II and several prosperous merchants. As a result, inventories from the first half of the sixteenth century (before the 1560s) remain completely elusive. This compilation of sources presents a broader impression of the buying habits of the at-large population of the city over the course of the century.

Despite the rising number of paintings being produced throughout the century, the average number of paintings for each household in the sample that contained paintings was about 4.5 (about 3% listed no paintings; see table 2.4). Over the course of the century, this number rises to about 8 paintings (an average

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19 “een crucifix [sic ] op doeck in ramen” (Inventory of Jan Lodewyx, 18 Feb 1528; SAA V298 nf); “een tafereel met een crucifix” (Bernaert de Croeck, 24 Aug 1531; GF 27); “een houten crucifix” (Inventory of Daens Jonchonds 29 July 1532; V 255 56r - 57r).

20 These are: Michiel Van der Heyden (1552), Nicolaas Jongelinck (1565), Margareta Boge (1574), Geerard Grameye (1580), Jan Van Kessel (1583), Hypolito Michaeli (1585), Guillaume Van Brecht (1585), and Peter du Moulin (1588).

21 See Denucé, Stappaerts, and Hendrickx, above.
of 4.5 paintings before 1550 and an average of 10.8 paintings after 1550). The
several large collections (more than 25 paintings) are found in the second half of
the century, especially in the 1560s when Antwerp’s strength as a commercial
power was at its apogee. Large Antwerp collections from the latter half of the
sixteenth century have been discussed elsewhere, but can now be compared to
the average number of paintings in all Antwerp homes throughout the century.

The table below displays these numbers graphically, as a five-year running
average. The fluctuating averages closely mirror the economic fortunes of
Antwerp outlined in Chapter 1. The initial major boom of the century’s first two
decades were followed by a downturn in the 1530s; by the early to middle 1540s,
the city’s financial fortunes had recovered enough for a full-on boom in the 1550s
and 1560s. Based on this information alone, painting ownership might be
viewed as a barometer of the financial well-being of Antwerp society.

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22 These larger collections are usually those first published by Denucé, namely Nicholas Jongelinck in 1565 (see Denucé, 5).
2.4 Some Notable Inventories in Detail

This chapter is built around inventories of paintings taken throughout the sixteenth century; the analysis of this data requires caution. Before a close examination of domestic spaces can take place, we must first address how the inherent linguistic problems in the documents might affect our interpretation of painting consumption in the early sixteenth century.

2.4.1 Defining Artistic Consumption

When the full range of ownership is defined as encompassing few or many paintings, the description of every owner as a “collector” is quickly recognized as both inadequate and inaccurate. A collector may seek out certain objects because of their distinct qualities, rarity, or excellence, but specifically detecting these

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24 Source: Database, Appendix 3.
parameters from sixteenth-century inventories is, of course, impossible. The nature of painting ownership remains relatively constant in most Antwerp homes during this period; subjects found in one home are generally similar to those in other homes. Therefore the word “collection” is used, but cautiously.

Paintings in houses served both practical and commemorative functions. People bought paintings for much the same reasons as we buy images today: as a means to decorate an interior and as consumables. Portraits in domestic spaces communicated the wish to be associated with the depicted individual or individuals (whether these were family members or royalty), whereas devotional imagery had a more practical function. The inventories suggest that paintings were generally not objects to be collected in the modern sense, and therefore were ubiquitous.

Nevertheless, about 30% of these inventories can be interpreted as descriptions of a true collection, and proper collectors can be quickly identified because of the other objects in their homes. For example, Adriaen Hertzen (1532) owned many books, tapestries, and other luxury objects, which suggests his acquisition of art objects became an enterprise of personal pleasure rather than a practical exercise to acquire wall decoration. Details give the sense that such individuals bought paintings according to an underlying logic, evidenced perhaps

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25 They certainly do not display the metaphorical attributes that were deemed necessary for a proper collection in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.  
26 If only 14 of these inventories contain no paintings at all, we can infer that the remaining 351 individuals would probably not have considered themselves “collectors.”  
by the appearance of numerous examples of the same subject, a diversified collection of many subjects, or numerous works by particular individuals. Whatever the case, owners of more paintings were more likely to be collectors proper and the characteristics of what they bought become clearer as the century progressed.28

2.4.2 Homes with Fewer than Ten Paintings

The house inventory of Geert Rooman Willemsse, made in June 1530, is typical of houses with fewer than 10 paintings in that it contains two panels (one of Saint Anne, the other of an unknown subject) as well as a linen painting of Christ carrying the cross.29 The paintings were located in the main floor, possibly in the principal room. A crucifix was noted in the neercamere.

We know a bit more about Bernaert de Croeck, a harness maker whose inventory was taken in 1530 at his death.30 Because he had sold his house to a goldsmith on the Lepelstraat in 1509, we might reasonably place him solidly among Antwerp’s middle class.31 His collection contained seven panels depicting New Testament subjects. The panels of Saint Christopher, the Virgin, his namesake Saint Bernard, and the Three Magi (a frequent subject in Antwerp), all hung in his shop on the ground floor of his house. In the rooms above hung two

28 See Rooses and Denucé (1883–1920) I:133. In a 1567 letter, Christopher Plantin noted that collectors were willing to pay up to two, three or four times the normal price for prints made from plates by Albrecht Dürer. See also Jan van der Stock, Printing Images in Antwerp: the Introduction of Printmaking in a city, Fifteenth Century to 1585, Studies in Prints and Printmaking (Rotterdam: Sound & Vision Interactive, 1998), 114.
29 SAA V298 (n. f.).
30 SAA GF27.
31 SAA SR134 f 160v. He lived in the seventh ward, which was in one of the poorer areas of town. See An Kint, The Community of Commerce. Social Relations in Sixteenth Century Antwerp, (Columbia University, 1996), 126.
paintings of crucifixes, as well as a small painting of Saint Sebastian. His collection was larger than most in the first half of the century and was entirely comprised of panel painting, which is rare.

The inventory of Andries Salamier, which was recorded on 19 Nov 1532, shows that he owned three paintings framed by satin curtains of both blue and red satin, that depicted John the Baptist, Lot, and Lazarus. Another painting of the Virgin was enclosed in two doors. We will read this as typical for a collection of 7 paintings. On the whole, of the 15 observations over the entire sample of paintings with curtains, 13 were from before 1548 (the last was a widow’s inventory from 1585). Eighty percent of these were from collections of fewer than 10 paintings, which suggests that the owners of smaller collections of paintings had more conservative taste and were less able to afford paintings with wooden doors.

The paintings in the home of M. Laureys Betten, recorded on 21 March 1542, also tells us much about what was available to the average painting consumer. Among his paintings were three of the same subject, Adoration of the Magi; these included a panel with doors, a framed canvas, and a wood panel without frame or doors. These three Magi scenes, along with an image of the Walloon Saint Hubert and a painting of Jesus and Mary, occupied only three rooms in Betten’s house. The inventory, of course, does not address why he

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32 SAA V255 f 34v-38v.
33 SAA V256 f 120v-122v.
34 *inde neercamere...tafereel vanden iii conigen met ii deuren.
  eleyn tafereel met ii deuren ons heere en ons vrouwe...
  groot tafereel van st hubrecht voer tschouwe...
  noch i tafereel vande iii conigen op doeck in ramen... (f 120v).
would buy three paintings of the same subject and hang two in the same room. One possible reason is that Antwerp buyers gradually became more interested in using a painting to fill an available wall space. For Betten, subject may have been less important than size and/or decorative function, a possibility that conforms to the standard collecting practices that emerged later in the century.\footnote{Less likely is that, because the Magi image was so widely produced in Antwerp, Betten favored the Magi subject as a specialist “collector” today might favor multiple versions of the same image.}

That the particulars of Mr. Betten’s inventory were noted in 1542 may not have been coincidental. The opening of the \textit{Schilderspand} in the upper story of the new Exchange in 1541/1542, which made paintings more available and their purchase more convenient than ever before, may well have resulted in a changed approach to the consumption of paintings.\footnote{Vermeylen, 53.} A comparison of inventories across the century does indicate that the years 1540–1545 marked the beginning of the trend of covering one’s walls with paintings, a fashion that eventually culminated in the \textit{bricolage} of the early part of the seventeenth century and the subsequent development of gallery paintings.\footnote{See Filipczak, above.}

Two additional issues should be noted. First, the Magi (featured in three of Mr. Betten’s paintings) is a subject that has become synonymous with mercantile culture and painting production in Antwerp in the first half of the sixteenth century (see section 2.5.1).\footnote{Dan Ewing, “Magi and Merchants. The Force behind the Antwerp Mannerist Adoration Pictures,” \textit{Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen}, no. 5 (2004), 275–300.} Second, the fact that these particular paintings were made on three different supports tells us not only about the shifting availability of supports within the marketplace, but also about an emerging trend in which
owners perhaps valued the subject more than its support or medium. Although Betten’s occupation remains unknown, given the fact that he assembled three images of the Magi it could be inferred that he was a merchant.

Several more trends become evident from studying these small inventories. One is the presence of devotional paintings with curtains. Paintings in the home of Jan Lodewyckx, recorded in June 1530, were all covered by satin curtains; in the earlier half of the century this practice had been widespread in both large and small dwellings. Many paintings throughout the sample are listed “met gordynen” [with curtains], a feature that has been visually preserved only through certain seventeenth-century still lives and other paintings that depict trompe l’oeil curtains painted over interior scenes. Curtains acted as a devotional device for secular as well as religious images, to hide them when not in use; the very presence of curtains emphasized the precious nature of an image. Curtains were possibly a less expensive version of wooden doors, which served the same function. Unfortunately, details fail to provide enough evidence to draw clear general conclusions. No demonstrable trends are therefore discernable from owners of fewer than 10 paintings, other than that the presence of paintings shows that they had become regular features in Antwerp homes.

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39 Of the nine paintings owned by Jozef van Doiren (22 Jan 1556), three are of the same subject (Adoration of the Magi). See SAA V298.
40 The frequency of Magi images decreased after 1550. See Ewing, 277.
41 V298 (n.f.) The exact date of the inventory is not recorded.
42 This practice diminished in frequency over the course of the century, but was still recorded as late as 1583. See the collections of Jans Boon (1565, SAA V298 (n.f.) and Maria Boelen (1583, SAA N1478 (n.f.).
2.4.3 Finding Order: Homes with More than Ten Paintings

Only 15 of the 105 inventories from before 1550 contain more than 10 paintings; their average is 16.25 paintings. Among these are the collections of Hendrick Hollander (1532), Adriaen Hertzen (1532), and Rutgeerts van der Hapt (1545). These are the most interesting, perhaps the most telling, and are the most high-end, the latter at least probably based on the occupations of their owners (a lawyer, an ex-burgomaster, and a titled aristocrat). Not only are these large collections, containing the most diverse subjects, but all were part of larger collecting enterprises on the part of their owners, who also assembled books and luxury objects in their homes.

Hendrick Hollander was a lawyer whose inventory was taken on 28 May 1532. His collection of 11 paintings, while not extensive, was large compared to most other collections in the early part of the sample. As in many homes during the 1530s, his largest subject group were six biblical scenes. They included an Annunciation, the Magdalene, the Last Supper, Absolom, and a Rosier. Additionally, he owned a Prodigal Son image, which despite its biblical character could very well have been a de facto everyday life scene (such subjects gradually became more prevalent in the sample). He also owned three portraits, two of

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43 A list of these inventories appears in Appendix 3.
44 SAA V255 f 174v–176r.
46 SAA Familiepaperien, varia.
47 SAA V255, f 174v–176.
48 “ii gescildert cleen in ramen deen vanden absolon ende dander i Rosier,” SAA V255 fr75r. This is the only noted instance in the entire sample of the particular Old Testament subject of Absolom, which might have shown the protagonist’s death by impalement or hanging. The Absolom subject may suggest that Hollander had Jewish roots, but this image, together with a Prodigal Son could possibly refer to a familial tragedy. The Rosier is possibly Our Lady of the Rosary.
himself and one of the Emperor, and a painted coat of arms. His collection included cloth as well as panels. No unexpected subjects appear among his 11 paintings. The collection consists of entirely of portraits, religious imagery, plus the one coat of arms.

This collection, like others, consists of what have been considered “cheap” materials, although one would expect it to be filled with more expensive panels given the owner’s occupation. Indeed, only three of the 11 paintings are on panels, despite the fact that panel is believed to have been the predominant material in the first half of the century. Wealthier individuals may have chosen the new medium of canvas as it became more widely available, but this is difficult to verify. However, the higher number of panels later in the century in smaller collections suggests that during Hollander’s time, the wealthy were already disassociating themselves from past traditions and the less wealthy had begun to imitate their buying practices.

The group of paintings found in the homes of Adriaen Hertzen, who was inner-burgomaster of Antwerp in 1527, 1529, and 1530, is similar to those of Hollander, but on a much larger scale. Hertzen’s record, which lists the inventories at his three homes in Antwerp, Hoboken, and Lillo, were made in February and March 1532 and totaled 133 art objects: 67 books, 21 tapestries, six

49 Depending on the type of inventory, portraits could be a problematic subject category; their less-recyclable nature made them less valuable in the sixteenth century. Images of royalty, of course, were an exception. However, if the individual in a painting was known to the clerk, or to the public at large, then the value of the portrait could be greater, and noted accordingly. Such is the case here, because one of the portraits was of Charles V.
50 Martens and Peeters, "Paintings in Antwerp Houses." 44. SAA V298 (n.f.).
prints, and 28 sculptures or statuettes \([\text{beeldekens}]\).\textsuperscript{51} According to the notarial record, he owned 65 paintings on linen, canvas, and panel and several prints (58% panel, 22% canvas, 14% paper, and 5% linen). Paintings hung in many rooms of his large house but most often in the \(\text{voercamere}\), the principal salon at the front of the house.

Although notaries did not always specify the subjects of paintings, they always mentioned whether a painting was hung above a fireplace, as such was the favored location for the largest and most expensive works. Of the paintings mentioned above Hertzen’s eight hearths, five were panels, two canvas, and one linen. Above one hearth hung a linen of the Marriage of the Queen of Sheba, a subject found in no other inventory.\textsuperscript{52} Although it may seem odd that an owner would place a linen painting in such an esteemed location, linen (and, later, canvas) seem to be the favored supports above fireplaces. That Hertzen hung only linen paintings in his summer house in Lillo seems more logical, given their lower value and greater portability.

Other subjects in Hertzen’s collection include images of the Magdalene, Our Lady, Saint Christopher, Christ, and the Lamentation. Only one painting mentioned in the inventory would reasonably be considered an everyday-life subject: a “rich miser” \([\text{rycken vrecke}]\) in the kitchen.\textsuperscript{53} (This is the only image recorded before 1581 of a financial subject, an issue addressed later in this study.)

\textsuperscript{51} Most likely this term refers to small, carved figures, but, as discussed in section 2.2, these have also been interpreted as small paintings as well. See Hendrickx, 61.

\textsuperscript{52} On this iconography, see Vera K. Ostoia and Nobuko Kajitani, “Two Riddles of the Queen of Sheba” Metropolitan Museum Journal 6, (1972), 73-103.

Other images in the same room were a head of Saint John, a map of Germany (*oostland*), and a Marian devotional image.\(^5^4\) This collection suggests that Hertzen chose to spend money not on new types of images but rather on older, more traditional visual goods that displayed his wealth more clearly and conventionally. No landscapes or peasant scenes were found.\(^5^5\) The remaining three images were altarpieces and tabernacles. Hertzen’s carved altarpieces were all gilded.\(^5^6\) In addition he owned 21 tapestries, indicating that the early sixteenth century consumption model was still strong in high-end collections, whereas the favored medium of tapestries continued to linger in private collections. By the end of the century, they would mostly disappear from homes.

The collection of Rutgeerts Vander Hapt, a jeweler who was prosperous enough to have acquired a noble title, is probably the most interesting of the four discussed here because it further disrupts assumptions about who collected linen paintings and who collected panel paintings.\(^5^7\) His inventory, taken in 1545, lists 17 paintings, nine of which were linen [*lywaet*]. In the principal *voercamere*, Vander Hapt had four panel paintings: one of Saint Hubert on linen, one by a painter called Henrick Butens of the “Holy Cross,” one of the *Ecce Homo*, and

\(^5^4\) The Head of Saint John could be an image similar to those made by Quentin Massys, as suggested by Martens and Peeters (ibid., 354).

\(^5^5\) This is the earliest evidence of ownership of the subject, which may indicate that the painting was one of the prototypes by Quentin Massys.

\(^5^6\) It is also an interesting correlation to the production of altarpieces in Antwerp, which during the first quarter of the century were produced a dizzying rate; they declined in popularity around 1530. See Lynn F. Jacobs, "The Marketing and Standardization of South Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces: Limits on the Role of the Patron," *The Art Bulletin* 71, no. 2 (1989), 208–229 and her book *Early Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces, 1380-1550: Medieval Tastes and Mass Marketing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

one of Our Lady on linen.58 Other linen paintings located in what appears to have been a storage room [stofcamere] include the Magi and another painting of a crucifix(ion?) on linen59; three more linens in the room “above the large room” were of Saint Francis, Saint Jerome, and a woman with a parrot. Another linen depicting Saint John was in the kitchen. The panel paintings in the collection were all New Testament and devotional images, including the Ecce Homo, the Magdelene, two of Our Lady, and two of Christ, as well as another crucifix. Two other curious images also appear: “old” panels of Saint Gregory and the Virgin, referred to as the “Mother of God” [moeder godts].

Vander Hapt’s ownership of linen paintings allows us to infer that these were probably not seen as “cheap” paintings, even by 1545, nor did they negatively reflect upon his social class at any time. Linens were priced lower than wooden panels, but Vander Hapt’s collection suggests that no stigma was attached to the ownership of cheap paintings, even if the owner was interested in acquiring social prestige through the purchase of a title.60 This and several other examples suggest that people evaluated paintings according to their subjects, rather than the price of the supports.61 Linen paintings were especially valued for

58 This artist could be a certain Henneken Buycxken, apprenticed to Jan van Wueluwe in 1523. See Rombouts and Van Lerius, 101.
59 The word “crucifix” is routinely mentioned in the documents as a painting (see discussion above). Although it may appear odd, Butens’s inventory probably describes a painting of a crucifix (“tafereel van een crucifix op lywaet”), because elsewhere in the inventory is a painting of a “depiction of a crucifixion” or a “crucifix” itself: “Item een tafereel [...] geconterfeyt is vanden heyligen cruys.”
60 Linen spanned all social and financial boundaries. The infamous developer Gilbert Van Schoonbeke owned five linen paintings as well as a watercolor painting of Christ and the Elders. See SAA IB40.
61 The fact that half of his collection was linen seems to indicate the same notion of extrinsic value in linen paintings bought for Italian collections.
their wide variety of iconographies, rather than their individual quality. Vander Hapt’s linens run the gamut: his paintings included the aforementioned saints (Hubert, Gregory, Francis, Jerome, and John) as well as two images of the Virgin, the Crucifix, the woman with a parrot (which may have been an image of everyday life, depending on its composition) and the ever-popular Adoration of the Magi.

A closer look at some of these diversified collections helps us to understand the shifting approach to the consumption of paintings from 1550 through the last quarter of the century. One exceptional inventory from this period, dated 24 June 1552, comes from a certain Michiel van der Heyden and his widow, Margriete Salomons. Van der Heyden was a nobleman whose collection reflected his expensive tastes by including 43 paintings of diverse subjects by well-known painters. He was one of the earliest documented owners of both a Massys and a Bosch. It is possible that Van der Heyden owned an autographed


63 Accordingly, factors other than the painting medium must be taken into account. The most important of these are size and color. Size was noted occasionally by the notaries, (kleyn and groot) although we have no real indication of how big the paintings were. Color, on the other hand, was not only a hallmark of paintings sold in Antwerp in the 1530s and 1540s it was even mentioned as a selling point for certain collectors. The relationship between Antwerp’s linen and cloth industry and increased possibilities for vibrant colors as the painting industry improved finds a parallel in local interest in the decorative, if fantastic, costumes in Antwerp paintings of the 1520s and 1530s. As Frederick Van Der Molen, head of one of the largest linen merchant firms in Antwerp, noted: “It is the color, not the quality, that sells.” See Florence Edler, ”The Van Der Molen, Commission Merchants of Antwerp: Trade with Italy 1538-44,” in Medieval and Historiographical Essays in Honor of James Westfall Thompson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), 254, n. 20. For a discussion of the parallels between the color schemes and costumes that prefigure Antwerp painting of the period, see the two discussions in Annick Born, “Antwerp Mannerism: a Fashionable Style?” in Jaarboek van Het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen (2004/5), 21–45; and Yao Fen You, “Antwerp Mannerism and the fabricating of fashion” in the same volume, 141–157.

64 Geneologisch Fonds Nr. 50 (published in Denucé, Konstkamers), 1.
linen painting; if so, its presence would have corresponded perfectly with the increased popularity of “old-fashioned” Boschian imagery in the second half of the sixteenth century. The clerk did not record the subject of Bosch’s painting, but he did transcribe Massys’s signature on another painting from 1512. Van der Heyden’s collection is quite interesting for art historians (it was transcribed and published by Denucé in 1932), but in no way represents anything typical about the average buyer in Antwerp, who could not afford a Massys or a Bosch, let alone both. His other paintings included two landscapes, 12 portraits, seven Old Testament subjects, 14 New Testament scenes, and six mythological scenes. The diversity in his collection is notable; almost no others for 15 years showed this kind of selectivity in the display of paintings.

Another of the larger collections is that of Michiel Bredesteyn the Elder, whose inventory was taken on 20 Sept 1574 at his large 24-room house on the Minderbroedersstraat, not far from the Dominican Pand. He owned 56 paintings (the average in the sample was 10.9 from 1550 to 1588) of various subjects and media, including four everyday life scenes, seven portraits, six landscapes, three mythological scenes including a canvas by Frans Floris, six each of New and Old Testament scenes, and several maps of Mercator. He also owned eight works on paper, including one image of an alchemist. Although this

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65 This development will be discussed in Chapter 3.
66 See Denucé, above.
67 This collection may be the core collection of Katelyne Van der Heyden from 8 Oct 1574. In this particular inventory, the notary listed an astounding 120 paintings but unfortunately did not provide a single detail of their subjects. See SAA N1329 f 199.
68 SAA N465 f32r - 61v. Bredesteyn, (see above) was a surgeon who lived on the Minderbroedersstraat. (See SAA SR264, Register HSII f314: “1557/8; 31 januari: Bredesteyn and his wife “Katlijne Symoens verkopen aan P.d.W. een rente van 24 car. gln.”) Bredesteyn’s estate passed to his son but was plundered during the Spanish Fury in 1578. See SAA Rekwestboek 1577-78, f 206v.
collection is understandably seen as unique in terms of its size, by the latter half of the century its composition in terms of subject became more typical.

The 1574 inventory of Hector van Egmont, a notary who lived a stone’s throw from the Stock Exchange on the Korte Klarenstraat, makes an interesting comparison.\(^6\) His collection of 22 pictures was not outstandingly large but among them was at least one image of each type of subject (myth, portrait, everyday life, Old Testament, New Testament, and landscape, including several maps and eight framed paintings on paper.) Egmont lived in a modestly sized, 6-room house in the financial center of town. Despite its differences in size and materials, Egmont’s collection shows the same popular preference for diverse subject matter. The paper images, although not very valuable, likely served a specific need for subject diversity.\(^7\)

2.5 General Observations on Image Types in Antwerp Houses

The above studies of both smaller and larger collections indicate an overwhelming majority of religious scenes, especially from the New Testament. As previously noted, these included images of the Virgin, the Saints, and most importantly for Antwerp, the Three Magi. By 1530–1535, however, some new diversity had entered the gamut. Religious scenes continued to dominate, but portraits and landscape assumed equal presence in the collections. Everyday life paintings were present but remained at very low numbers, a trend that continued throughout the century. For the purposes of clarity, I use the term “everyday life”

\(^6\) SAA N465 f 4-8r.
\(^7\) The clerk did not record the subject of the paper paintings, only that they were hung within black frames.
instead of the term “genre scene” to describe peasant scenes, interior scenes, and other pedestrian images. The term “genre” will be used here to define subject types (landscape, devotional image, everyday life, portrait, etc.).

The largest collections contained a variety of subjects and media that would become ever wider as the century progressed. Whereas at the beginning of the sample (the late 1520s), New Testament scenes (e.g. devotional imagery and adoration scenes) comprised 80% of the visual content in collections, by the end of the sample (and the end of Antwerp’s financial predominance) only 12% of the subjects in collections were from the New Testament. At the end of the century, Old Testament imagery rose in frequency while portraiture remained at a relatively constant percentage. These ratios indicate two periods in which the most diversified subjects appeared in the inventories: 1540–1545 and 1565–1575.

Table 2.5 compares what was found in homes in the 1530s with the variety of images found by the 1580s. The first set of data shows the centrality of religious themes (both New and Old Testament) and portraiture. By the end of the sample, each subject category (Old Testament, New Testament, portraiture, everyday life, landscape, and mythology) were found more or less equally among all collections.
In addition to the limited number of subjects, the number of collections with more than 20 paintings between 1528 and 1550 amounts to only one, whereas the number of large collections (more than 20 paintings) grows to 20. The single collection of more than 20 paintings belonged to the aforementioned ex-burgomaster Adriaen Hertzen. Although the subjects of his paintings were found in only about 50% of the collections examined for this project, he owned no landscapes and only one everyday life painting. This lack of diversity, despite the large size of his collection (62 paintings), typifies the early period.

These factors changed dramatically in the 1540s. Table 2.6 shows how the market developed over the course of the 60-year sample. The period of January 1540 until December 1544, consisting of 75 inventories, shows a remarkable increase in subjects. During this five-year period, everyday life images amounted to 3% of the whole; with an increase in landscapes, these two subjects comprised an average 15% of all collections sampled in these years—an unprecedented proportion. The pronounced decrease in religious imagery is also notable. These
shifts in proportion within collections reveal that, as the century progressed, people were buying an ever-widening variety of subjects. This pronounced widening of subject matter may have occurred in the 1540s because of the recovery of Antwerp’s financial markets, as well as the shift from seasonal fairs to permanent sales venues; both of these conditions would have enhanced market competition and the public’s hunger for visual novelty.71 Furthermore, growing competition from other media (prints and bookmaking, woven tapestries) that found permanent homes in Antwerp during this decade, was likely a primary factor within a veritable frenzy of visual production. The Guild of Saint Luke, which had struggled in the 1520s and ’30s, showed a positive recovery after 1540 and grew until the 1580s.72

As the century progressed, particularly after 1565, new images such as landscapes and everyday life scenes made collections more diverse.73 Two additional developments probably contributed to this shift. First, the removal of artworks from churches in the years around the iconoclasm of 1566 may have caused a brief increase in demand for sculptures and paintings.74 The corresponding shift in production, combined with growth of organized sales venues at Our Lady’s Pand and especially at the Schilderspand, contributed to the rise of the collector proper—who amassed decorative objects, books and other

71 Chapters 3 and 4 discuss these issues at length.
72 Vermeylen, 36.
fine materials along with paintings. Among these were Michiel van der Heyden (1552), the well-known collector of Bruegel Niklaas Jongelinck (1565), and others such as Margareta Boge (1572), Katalyne Van der Heyden (1574), and Michiel Bredesteyn the Elder (1574). The period 1565–1575 is also known for the prevalence of copies, notably those by Bosch and the revival of Bosch-type images that had flooded the market.

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77 The prevalence of copies corresponds with an increased demand for antique (fifteenth-century Old Master) paintings, a phenomenon discussed in the following chapter. For the reproductions of Bosch, see the well-known observations of Felipe de Guevara from 1574, printed posthumously in 1788 (Felipe de Guevara and Antonio Ponz, *Comentarios de la pintura* (Madrid: Don G. Ortega, Hijos de Ibarra y Compañía, 1788)). See also Nancy Corwin, *The Fire Landscape. Its Sources and its Development from Bosch through Jan Bruegel I, with Special Emphasis on the Mid-Sixteenth Century Bosch “Revival.”* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1976).
Table 2.6 Percentage of Subjects in Sample Collections, 1528–1588

Table 2.7. Subjects in Sample Collections, 1540–1545

It is precisely because of the emergent collector’s market and the need to acquire certain artists that the market of copies—especially of Bosch—flourished.
New variations in subject and medium show that collectors were concerned primarily with displaying a cross-section of subjects (e.g., images) rather than with displaying wealth for its own sake.

2.5.1 New Religious Images

Among the new types of images that appeared in Antwerp, the prevalence of religious images, especially New Testament ones, do not necessarily suggest conservative taste on the part of owners. In addition to more old-fashioned images and/or devotional pictures of Our Lady and Christ, there was a great preponderance of images of the Magi. A survey of every inventory from before 1550 shows that the Magi appear in 46 collections (sometimes two or three times in a single inventory). Dan Ewing, who tentatively linked the presence of the Adoration of the Three Magi in Antwerp collections to the city's mercantile activity, especially in the 1520s and 1530s, reminds us that Adoration of the Magi scenes may have been the subject of up to 40% of the total painting production for the period.\textsuperscript{78} The Magi was a new image, having been introduced into the city between 1490 and 1500, and as such was tailored for the local market of merchants, travelers, and transients. The subject became less prevalent in paintings after 1550 (appearing in only 10 out of 194 collections), which suggests that the image may have lost its topicality.\textsuperscript{79} More likely, as the marketplace became more crowded with images developed in the 1540s, fashions shifted from

\textsuperscript{78} Ewing, “Magi and Merchants,” 277.
\textsuperscript{79} This refers to collections in which the subject is named. Additional inventories, especially from before 1550, may have contained Adoration of the Magi scenes that were unrecorded by the clerks. Later in the century, inventories tended to be more descriptive and complete.
the allegory of mercantilism evoked by the traveling magi to a more literal representation of merchants and goods sellers, as depicted in paintings by Beuckelaer and Aertsen in the 1540s and 1550s.

Another notable subject was Saint Jerome. Although saints per se were not a new type of image, depiction of a specific saint in an interior was radically new. Inventories regularly listed Jerome, who after the Magdalene was the second most frequently depicted saint in the sample. His popularity has been interpreted as evidence of the growing importance of bible study in Antwerp and has also been linked to the religious turmoil of the mid-1560s. This date seems somewhat late, however, when one considers that people began buying paintings of Saint Jerome for their homes in the 1540s. His image is more thoroughly discussed in Chapter 3.

2.5.2 New Images of Everyday Life and Landscapes

What we see by looking at these inventories is the continuing prevalence of religious subjects in paintings. Topical subjects such as occupational portraits, moralizing imagery, market scenes, tax collectors, bankers, and lawyers have often taken center stage as the most important legacy of Antwerp painting, but—as these inventories prove—they comprised, in fact, only a small part of the overall production of paintings in Antwerp.80

The earliest instance among these inventories of an individual owning an everyday life scene appears in Adriaen Hertzen’s inventory of 1532. He owned a painting of a rich old man, which can reasonably be interpreted as the miser image popularized by Massys. Thus Hertzen’s ownership is indeed remarkable; because the image was not widely produced until years later. The next everyday life image appears 11 years later, on 15 Oct 1543, in the home of Laurens Noeyer. Noeyer owned a statuette of Our Lady and four paintings: the Three Magi, the Annunciation, and a two-piece panel depicting “three poor peasants.” Cornelis de Ram, who had a sizeable collection of 15 paintings, also owned a painting of a peasant, which was one of only two subjects specifically named by the clerk on 16 Feb 1544. The first picture of a market scene that was documented, in 1547, was in the home of V. Hertsen. Evidently it was special to the owner, who hung it as a chimney piece. Although he owned just five other paintings, the diversity of his collection renders it atypical for the time.

The image of the Prodigal Son (e.g., Jan van Hemessen’s *Prodigal Son* of 1536) can also be seen as a painting depicting everyday life. In this painting and others like it, the subject is ostensibly a New Testament image, but given

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81 See above, SAA V298 (n.f.).
82 SAA V257 14v-16r.
83 SAA V257 27v-30v.
84 SAA V257 91v-93v. Hertsen does not appear to be connected with Adriaen Hertzen, whose inventory was taken 15 years previously.
85 “tafereel van een maert kundken voer tschouwe ... tafereel voer tschouwe op doecok van poertye een tafereel van joseph en maria een tafereel van olye verwe van Lucretia stuck schilderye op doecok van cayn en abel tresour met ii sloten daerop een tafereel van olye verwe”
Antwerp’s geography and visual traditions, it can easily be interpreted as a scene drawn from everyday life. In 1541, Frans de Rel owned a large painting of this subject that hung over his chimney, a position that marked it as one of the most important paintings in his collection. De Rel owned 10 paintings of various subjects; the subjects in this group indicate that he was more interested than most other buyers in new genres of images. His unique collection included a painting of “Hell,” likely a Boschian fire landscape, as well as a panel painting of the Virgin, a panel painting of Saint Francis, a canvas Lamentation, and a canvas painting of Death. In the entire sample, a total of eight inventories contained an image of the Prodigal Son, including that of Augustijn Raps, whose collection of eight paintings included four images of the subject.

The inventories surveyed herein compel some stark observations about images related to financial themes. For example, no image of the Calling of Saint Matthew appears at all and only twice do we find images of goldweighers, tax collectors, or moneychangers. These two comprise one painting van den wissel (1581) and another of a tollenaer (1582). In the entire sample of 2679 paintings, a very small minority were everyday life images or even landscapes, and all but one of these appear in inventories taken after 1552 (see Table 2.6).

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87 SAA V 256 66v-67r.
88 In addition to De Rel, these are in the collection of an anonymous owner (1544, SAA V257 32v - 35r); Augustin Raps (1574, SAA N3637 f 22-23v, 34-34v); Herman Wagenmakers (1576, SAA N465 f 161-174v); Damiaan Lems, (1576, SAA N3638, f 26-27v, 48-48v); Gijsbrecht van Best (1580, SAA N172 f123r - 129v); and Christyne Tymmermans (1581, SAA N3640 f40-42v, 63-64v). For Raps, see SAA N3637 f 22-23v.
89 See Van Mander’s biography of Marinus van Reymerswaele (...eenen Toelenaar sittende in zijn cantoor”), 1:187.
90 Inventory of Jan Goubau de Oude, taken 31 August–7 September 1581 (N1477 (n.f.)) and Elisabeth van Gansepoel, widow of Jan de Clerck (3 May 1582, N1172 f 304r-316r). These inventories will be discussed further in Chapter 3, Section 3.7.
Table 2.8. Percentage of Everyday Life and Landscape Paintings in Sample Houses, 1528–1588

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Everyday Life</th>
<th>&lt;10 Paintings</th>
<th>&gt;10 Paintings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are several possible explanations for this phenomenon. Choice of subject may be a heuristic issue, as our results can only be as good as the information we can gather. If the clerk did not record the subject (and a full 20% of the subjects remain unknown), images of everyday life may well have resided in this group of paintings but were simply not recorded as such. It is well to recall that because most of these inventories are debtors’ records, these debtors were likely to have been other wealthy collectors who owned many paintings that escaped the archives entirely. As landscapes and everyday life paintings began to show up more regularly in the larger collections of the latter half of the century (see table 2.8), we can confidently assume that everyday life paintings by Jan van Hemessen, for example (whose paintings were relatively costly by the 1540s) were held in financially solvent homes. Therefore, few paintings of this type would appear in the inventories.92

2.5.3 The Permanence of Pictorial Models

That the so-called “Antwerp Mannerists” flooded the on-spec market between 1515 and 1530 with religious imagery is well known. Therefore it would

91 Source: Database.
be logical to assume that people owned more religious images than any other subject. Although they are now considered the hallmarks of the painting traditions of the Antwerp market, everyday life paintings were not frequently bought by the vast majority of consumers. Despite several exceptions, they were simply too avant garde and unappealing to the public at large. Among the paintings from all the inventories collected, before 1560 there were only nine everyday life paintings and 20 landscapes. After this date, these numbers rose to 101 and 87, respectively. This increase indicates that only by the latter half of the century did they become collectible. In any case, they generally appear in the largest collections. Despite the modern conception of painting in sixteenth-century Antwerp, for most of that time landscapes and everyday life scenes were not part of the general public’s visual horizon.

For example, the 1552 collection of Michiel vander Heyden, a nobleman who owned what is thought to be one of the largest collections recorded, placed little emphasis on landscape or still life paintings. He owned 62 paintings, among them two works by Bosch and one by Massys. He owned 12 portraits, 14 New Testament scenes, seven Old Testament scenes, and six mythological images. Despite these numbers and the variety they communicate, he only owned two landscapes and two everyday life paintings. A much later inventory of the

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93 Among larger collections, 82 of the 86 everyday life paintings appear after 1560. In smaller collections, 19 out of a total of 23 everyday life paintings appear after 1560.
94 See Denucé, De Antwerpse Kunstkamers, op cit. and his Exportation d’Oeuvres d’Art au 17e Siècle à Anvers: la Firme Forchoud (Antwerp: De Sikkel, 1931).
95 SAA GF 50.
96 The curiously noted “Een groote kaerte van papiere op een rame gemaect van lantschappen” and, in a child’s bedroom: “Een geschildert tafereel olje verwe met personagien ende landscappen ende met een speel huys daer inne.”
merchant Jacques de Lengaingne from 1583 shows similar tendencies. Of 52 paintings, only two were everyday life paintings and only three were landscapes. In the largest 10 collections among all inventories, with an average of 43 paintings, the average number of everyday life paintings was only four. Among these, the average number of landscapes was merely two. Among every collection of 10 or more paintings, the average number of everyday life scenes was one.

These paintings appeared in specialist collections; no consistent patterns of ownership can be inferred. According to available documentary information, collectors simply did not express a preference for either subject. Even Niklaas Jongelinck (1565), who owned a number of Bruegels and had a large collection of 13 everyday life scenes, owned only one landscape. The primary owners of everyday life paintings were those with large collections; in only one instance did the owner possess more than two images of each subject. Owners preferred one or the other, never both. Among the largest collections of everyday life paintings was that of Herman Wagenmakers, who died on 12 January 1576. In his collection of 27 paintings, six were everyday life paintings. The notary, in an unusually detailed inventory, provided the subject for all of these paintings, among them an “onwyse maegden” [unwise maiden], a mussel-seller, an alchemist, and an intriguing Bruegelesque painting of the “verkeerde weerelt”

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97 SAA N 1173 f 176 e.v.
98 Although one or more of Bruegel’s paintings might be considered landscapes by today’s standards, it is curious that the clerk named a “landscape” among the other Bruegels in Jongelinck’s collection. See Buchanan, “Nicholas Jongelinck” above and SAA Stadsprotocollen 1563-1570 VIII, no. 1551.
99 SAA N 465 f 161-174v. Wagenmakers, a merchant, was wealthy and his family was connected with some of the most powerful families of Antwerp. His brother married into the family of Peter Gillis (1486–1533), the humanist magistrate of Antwerp whose portrait was painted by Quentin Massys.
[broken world] which may be an image of *Dulle Griet*. The clerk named no landscape paintings, however. Of the eight paintings owned by Franchoys Bulteel (1583), three were landscapes. Similarly, the widow of Nicolas Mahieu (1582) owned only six paintings, of which three were “small” landscapes. The remaining works in these collections were all devotional and New Testament images.

Other instances of ownership of everyday life paintings were infrequent. Perhaps the “everyday life” genre was hidden to some degree in the documents that describe a Carrying of the Cross, The Prodigal Son, or a St Jerome; the latter of which could even be interpreted as a landscape, if it is St. Jerome in the Wilderness, or as an everyday life scene if the saint is depicted in an office. The intricacies of language and painting lead us to ask when exactly a painting of a saint in a landscape became a landscape with a saint. Perhaps it is much more fruitful to delineate dominant subjects in terms of dominant visual characteristics, rather than subjects? From this perspective, the image can be defined by the mere presence of visual characteristics; many paintings had multiple characteristics. Which single characteristic was the most dominant in a particular painting is indeed a matter of debate. Such questions, albeit hugely challenging, are germane to the problem of analyzing the consumption of paintings based on archival documents. Thus we can confirm that these new images formed a very small proportion within the much larger market of paintings that evolved over the course of the sixteenth century.

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100 (07 Feb 1583) SAA N1173 f15 v. He also owned a kitchen scene.
101 “*twee cleyn lantschapkens*” and “*een cleyn tafereelken lantschap*”, SAA N1172 f 234-237v.
102 For a discussion of this issue see Silver, *Peasant Scenes and Landscapes*, 26–52, esp. 26–30.
2.6  Panel, Linen, Canvas, and Cloth Paintings

In addition to reviews of paintings’ subject matter, a review of their supports helps to clarify the nature of popular consumption practices. The availability of paintings and visual products was widespread in Antwerp from the 1480s onward; by 1550, the market for paintings seemed to be in a constant state of development and fluctuation. A look at paintings in terms of their supports (panel, linen, canvas, and cloth) illustrates the dynamic nature of consumption during the city’s first phase of its economic boom.

2.6.1  Linen Paintings

The frequency of linen paintings in these early inventories can be seen as a barometer of the development of the collectors’ market in Antwerp. In the emerging markets of the 1530s and 1540s, the equilibrium structures that designated the boundaries of high-end collections and low-end collections were not yet delineated. By the 1570s and 1580s, and especially by the seventeenth century, these dynamics had become established. Larger inventories containing known artists’ works and the general absence of linen paintings suggest that by 1550 linens had already peaked as the principal support medium of low-end collections, and that wealthier collectors avoided them altogether.

Table 2.9 shows 171 pre-1550 inventories (768 paintings) organized according to their supports (linen, panel, and canvas). Although the inventories contain small degree of interpretive indeterminacy, a general illustration of the relative numbers of support allows some preliminary observations. As might be expected, panel paintings are the most frequent medium, comprising 63% of the
total number of paintings in the sample. The presence of linen, canvas, and paper are all strong. The data shows that 12% of the paintings in collections were on linen, 23% were on canvas, and 5% were on paper (these would have been printed first and colored later, by hand). For the purposes of this research, maps are included as paper media because their role as objects to be hung on walls of homes was essentially the same as the role of oil or watercolor paintings. The presence of cheaper paintings, as indicated by the materials upon which they were painted, are noted as either canvas [doec] or cloth [cleet]. In many collections, these cloth and canvas paintings outnumbered panels.¹⁰³

Table 2.9. Paintings by Support per Year in Inventories before 1550¹⁰⁴

![Bar chart showing the percentage of paintings by support per year in inventories before 1550.](image)

¹⁰³ See SAA V255 f 114v-116r, home of Jans van Lents (9 July 1530), who had 2 panels, 6 canvases, and one linen painting; SAA V256 f 109r-111v, Cornelis de Vos (20 Dec 1541), who owned 3 panels, 7 canvases, and 6 linens. See also SAA V255 f 10v-14v; V255 f 142r-157r; V256 f 69v-71r; V257 f 70v-72r; N465 f 17r-21v; N1172 f 327r; N2702 f 175; N2875 f 169; N3635 f 31r-45v; and N3637 f 19r-21v.

¹⁰⁴ Source: Database.
During Antwerp’s major periods of growth (roughly 1500–1525 and 1540–1585), the presence of paintings in city homes shows several remarkable developments.\textsuperscript{105} Collections before 1550 do not indicate less preference for panels, even with the increased availability and cheaper prices of canvas. It has been suggested that linen and cloth paintings were collected because of their relatively lower prices compared to panels; however, these cheaper supports were present in most homes, regardless of the social status (or presumable income) of their owners.\textsuperscript{106} Accordingly, it has been assumed that those of little means would be the primary consumers of linen and paper imagery. This assumption is based in part upon the fact that collecting practices followed traditions established by the Burgundian court, whose members took no interest in collecting paper or cloth paintings. This lack of interest could be seen as an indication that even the lower costs of such paintings did not sway these buyers from their proclivity for conspicuously high-priced luxury goods. But this is not the case. It would be a mistake to assume that the typical sixteenth-century owner of paintings in Antwerp had the same attitudes about consumption as the Burgundians in Bruges.\textsuperscript{107} In fact, before the disappearance of linen and cloth paintings from Antwerp homes around 1550, no evidence indicates that buyers valued these supports any less than panels. Instead, there seem to have been no clear criteria for differentiation.\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{105} Vermeylen, 28, 35-108.
\textsuperscript{107} See Bloom, 28.
\textsuperscript{108} In the well-known Medici inventories of 1492, Netherlandish cloth paintings comprised one-third of all paintings and were consistently valued the same or higher than their Italian
Linen paintings were found in 16% of the homes represented in the 365 inventories and formed the majority of paintings in six homes. Linens appeared in 26% of all pre-1550 inventories and in only 7% after 1550. They comprised 4% of the total number of the 2849 paintings recorded. This lack of linen paintings reflects the fact that very few painters accepted as masters in the Guild of Saint Luke were linen painters (only 22 were registered in the guild between 1500 and 1550). With the exception of the years 1560 and 1577, no new linen painters were accepted into the guild in Antwerp after 1553.

The decline in linen painting ownership coincided with an exuberant rise in the production of linen paintings in Mechelen, which replaced its artistic output of luxury products exclusively with cheap cloth and linen paintings. In Mechelen, cheap watercolor linens made in an estimated 129 workshops produced as many as 16,000 to 23,000 paintings per year in 1555 and 1564. Most if not all of these paintings were sold in Antwerp. Opportunities for painters in Mechelen were so plentiful that dealers lured apprentices away from their counterparts. The Medici inventories have been used as evidence of why Antwerp buyers bought as many linen paintings as they did (i.e., because they were basing their behaviors on Burgundian models, who had modeled their behavior after Italian examples). This inherited consumer practice may apply to the small number of extremely wealthy merchants or nobility, but it cannot explain the practice among the entire public. Only 3.5% of the inventories sampled for this project contained no paintings. Moreover, little evidence implies that individuals who owned 4–8 paintings concerned themselves with the display practices of Italian aristocracy. Rather, the preponderance of linen, cloth, and paper paintings and prints in homes—especially before the 1550s—suggests that a hierarchy of media determined by inherent value cannot be applied to the majority of Antwerp “collections.” Then as now, people bought images to place on their walls quite independently of any contemporary cultural constructions of what a collection should be. As a result, Antwerp consumers demonstrated less adventurous attitudes in their displays. Also see Nutall, 129.

Linen appeared in 46 of 172 pre-1550 inventories and 14 of 194 inventories after 1550.

Rombouts and Van Lerius. passim.

The numbers here should not be considered precise, but merely illustrative of substantial output. See Neil De Marchi and Hans Van Miegroet, “The Antwerp-Mechelen Production and Export Complex,” In His Milieu. Essays on Netherlandish Art in Memory of John Michael Montias. Amy Golahny et al., eds. (Amsterdam, 2006), 137.
exclusive agreements with workshops to perform extra labor.\textsuperscript{112} Anecdotal evidence shows that large-volume dealers like Jan Van Kessel, who was the administrator of the \textit{Schilderspand} in Antwerp and owned 650+ paintings (along with 59 loose prints and several bundles of other prints) at the time of his death, was a dealer of Mechelen linens.\textsuperscript{113}

However, the above does not explain why such a scant amount of linen paintings appeared in Antwerp inventories while production rates were so high. Based on the evidence, the dwindling presence of linen paintings in Antwerp homes beginning in the late 1540s indicates a shift from local production for local consumption toward an exclusively export market, engineered with the cooperation of Antwerp dealers and Mechelen painters. Because linen paintings were made more frequently during the fifteenth century, we might expect this trend to have continued into the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{114} That only 22 linen painters were listed in the Antwerp \textit{Liggeren} by 1550, however, indicates that the market may have collapsed. Nonetheless, the establishment of the Mechelen painters’ guild around 1540 (most of which were linen painters) is a fantastic example of how dealers, traders, and artists were able to capitalize on Antwerp’s favored role as a trading city. Dealers quickly formed the basis of the seventeenth century’s

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 137 and Adolf Monballieu, “Documenten...II. Het rekwest van 1562 en het probleem van de 51 of 150 ateliers,” \textit{Handelingen van de Koninklijke Kring voor Oudheidkunde, Letteren en Kunst van Mechelen} 75 (1971), 75.


\textsuperscript{114} See Catherine Reynolds, “The Functions and Display of Netherlandish Cloth Paintings” in Caroline Villers, ed., \textit{The Fabric of Images. European Paintings on Textile Supports in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries} (London: Archetype Books, 2000), 80–98. In the Medici collection of 142 paintings, 42 were Netherlandish and most were on cloth. See Nutall, 105.
successful market for linen paintings, as documented by the Forchondt, Musson, and Fourmenois family enterprises that eventually operated businesses in Rome, Paris, Frankfurt, and the Iberian Peninsula. This export trend explains in part why most of the surviving linen paintings are outside of the Netherlands today.

2.6.2 Panel vs. Canvas: Some New Observations

Both panel and canvas were widely purchased by the Antwerp public. There seems to be little doubt that panel continued to be the favored medium of both wealthy and non-wealthy consumers through the sixteenth century. We tend to assume that panel lost its importance as cheaper canvas became more available and more widely produced, but an overview of painting ownership shows that this was not the case. The relative similarity between small (nine or fewer paintings) and large groups (10 or more paintings) is remarkable: throughout the century, people in both categories owned proportionally similar amounts of panel, canvas, linen, and paper paintings. From the very beginning of the sample in 1528, people owned more panels than any other support; this trend seems to be a logical continuation from the fifteenth century (see tables 2.10 and 2.11).

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Table 2.10  Average Numbers of Paintings and Supports in Sample Homes with fewer than Ten Paintings
Table 2.11 Average Numbers of Paintings and Supports in Sample Homes (with more than 10 paintings)\textsuperscript{117}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Panels</th>
<th>Canvases</th>
<th>Paper</th>
<th>Linen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1528–1530</td>
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<td>1535–1540</td>
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<td>1565–1570</td>
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<tr>
<td>1575–1580</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the standpoint of smaller collections (fewer than 10 paintings), panel paintings were always important, regardless of their presumed cost. Recent work has shown that between the 1540s and 1560s, lower-income homes (fewer than nine rooms) showed a 15.8% increase in the number of panels and an 18.8% increase in canvases, while larger homes (more than nine rooms) showed a 6.7% decrease in the number of panels and a 3.2% decrease in the number of canvases.\textsuperscript{118} These fluctuations are indeed counterintuitive, given the fact that panels have been understood as proxy for value (i.e., the greater the number of panels, the higher the value of the collection). Because panels dominate almost every inventory, whether large or small, this assumption should be revised.

\textsuperscript{117} Sources: Database.
\textsuperscript{118} Although Martens and Peters also recognized this increase in panels, they were unable to provide a reason. See their essay in De Marchi and Van Miegroet, \textit{Mapping Markets}, 44–45.
Panels did become more affordable, a conclusion based on auction prices from the estate of Ghysbrechts Van Der Molen in 1562 and a public auction held in 1572. The dramatic drop in prices indicates that panel not only remained widely available but also could be had at a lower price, circumstances that possibly led to an increased presence in city homes. A more reliable explanation, however, involves the practice of recycling of older painting on the secondary market whose continual expansion owed much to the emergence of dealers. In any case, the sustained presence of panel paintings, together with the continued interest in New Testament imagery discussed in section 2.4.1 above, indicate a persistent consumer preference for long-established pictorial models.

Several other possible reasons may explain the increased presence of panels. Lower prices might have been the result of new developments in commercial trade in the port of Antwerp, not all of them positive. A renewed expansion in the trade of products from the Baltic between 1562 and 1565 brought an influx of timber used for the production of panels. Increased trade with the German lands and the Baltic necessitated the construction of the massive Hansa House and facilitated the export of luxury visual goods, including tapestries and other objects exclusively made for export markets. Baltic trade was further bolstered after the end of a trade disagreement with the English, who had blocked Hanseatic ships from entering the Schelde. By 1571, when the

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119 Prices are listed in the inventory Ghysbrechts Van Der Molen, ZA, *Familie de Jonge van Ellemeet*, 41 and Smolderen, 38. Credit goes to Jeroen Puttevils for uncovering this inventory. See Appendix 1, document 3.
121 Ibid., 226.
blockade was lifted, an unprecedented number of German ships returned to the Antwerp harbors. With Alva’s increased control of the city, however, domestic commercial activity diminished and even completely stopped at the beginning of 1572, which decreased prices still further. As a result, the combination of new raw materials sold at lower prices to joiners and painters probably facilitated an increased capacity in both the production and consumption of panel paintings.

2.7 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has attempted to clarify some of the major issues involved in the consumption of painting in the sixteenth century in Antwerp. By analyzing the composition of both large and small collections in terms of material supports, media, and subject matter, it becomes apparent that the definition of a “collection” was indeed an unfixed term until just before the fall of Antwerp. This analysis has also emphasized that the interpretation of support materials as proxy for value is not an entirely trustworthy method, because cheap paintings were not necessarily more prevalent in smaller collections. This research can be used to confirm that canvas did not usurp panel as the favored support, despite the perception of lower prices. This conclusion problematizes the thesis that panel paintings were primarily reserved for large commissions in liturgical spaces and for private devotional purposes. The sample suggests they remained the majority support in homes, even as canvas became more available.

122 Ibid., 239.
123 Ibid., 240.
These inventories also reveal much about Antwerp’s early export markets for visual products, including low-cost paintings and paper products. To varying degrees, these two media were generally present in homes before 1550. We know that watercolor on linen painting was a major product sold in Antwerp, yet its infrequent appearance in these 365 inventories confirms that the vast production of Mechelen watercolor linens was purely for an export market. Furthermore, the legal actions on the part of the St. Luke Guild in 1556 to absorb the printers and bookmakers guilds were taken largely in response to a lucrative book trade rather than in response to a viable market in printmaking. Indeed, both of these visual products—linen and paper—were absorbed into other markets and eventually disappeared from domestic spaces.

Both in terms of imagery and in a more general sense, the inventories analyzed for this study confirm that older [antiek] visual traditions from the fifteenth century and traditional religious subjects formed the core of what people bought for their homes. These confirmed trends contradict the modern assumption that the residents of Antwerp increasingly collected landscapes and everyday life scenes as the century progressed. Although these inventories do not indicate which paintings came into homes as a result of the secondary market, it is quite possible that “new images” were not collected by the majority of Antwerpenaars until at least the 1580s. Those who acquired the type assumed to be typical were a rarefied group indeed. It is known that their collected images of moneychangers, tax collectors, and goldweighers exist, but the exact locations of

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124 Rombouts and Van Lerius, 205-206.
these paintings today remains unknown. Their infrequent presence in city collections (two homes only) confirms that the appeal of these images was extremely localized, both geographically and temporally.

As it developed, Antwerp’s art market provided for the acquisition of both traditional and novel images. The rarity of novel images in houses indicates an ever-present tendency toward exclusivity. Artists responded with experimental inventions, some successful and some unsuccessful, that were brought to the market. These inventions, and their multivalent appeal, are the subjects of the next two chapters.
PART II

THE BUSINESS OF PAINTING
Chapter Three
New Old Masters

3.1 Introduction: Marinus Van Reymerswaele as the New Old Master

Among the many artists in sixteenth-century Antwerp, Marinus Van Reymerswaele was neither the most famous nor the most successful. His biography is unclear and his oeuvre is debated. Even his presence in Antwerp has been obscured.¹ We do know, however, how he responded to the transitional dynamics of the painting vocation and the rise of a collector’s market.

Like so many other immigrant artists, Reymerswaele’s distinctive choices indicate a clear sense of what would sell.² He understood that his buyers wanted to position themselves into established visual traditions to display their own bourgeois values. Nonetheless success involved more than being in the right place at the right time. Artists like Marinus van Reymerswaele demonstrated not only a

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¹ Without two sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources, van Reymerswaele may have sunk into oblivion. His first known mention was by the Florentine Ludovico Guicciardini in Lodovico Guicciardini, Descrittione: di tutti i paesi bassi, altrimenti detti Germania inferiore (Anversa: G. Silvio, stampatore regio, 1567). This oft-cited source, which mentions the artist as Marinus de Seeu [Marinus of Zeeland], identified him among those who had died before Guicciardini’s visit to Antwerp in 1566. Second, Karel Van Mander’s account in his 1604 Schilderboeck confirms the artist was a Zeelander who was “well-known in the Netherlands” and as a painter of tax collectors. See Karel Van Mander and Hessel Miedema, The Lives of the illustrious Netherlandish and German painters, from the first edition of the Schilder-boeck (1603-1604): preceded by the lineage, circumstances and place of birth, life and works of Karel van Mander, painter and poet and likewise his death and burial, from the second edition of the Schilder-boeck (1616-1618), 6 vols. (Doornspijk: Davaco, 1994), II:243. Van Mander, with the aid of some nineteenth-century sleuthing, was the first to successfully reconstruct the biography of Marinus van Reymerswaele that we know today. Scholars generally agree that Marinus was mentioned as Marinus de Seeu by van Mander in 1604, and was a son of Claes van Ziericsee, a freemaster in Antwerp in 1475. See Max J. Friedländer, Early Netherlandish Painting, vol. XII (Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1967), 226–227; Adri Mackor, "Marinus van Reymerswale: Banker, Lawyer, and Iconoclast?,” Oud Holland 109, no. 4 (1995), 191–200. Marinus’ entry in the Liggeren as an apprentice is noted as “Moryn Claessone van Zeeland”; see Ph. Rombouts, and Théodore Van Lerius, De Liggeren en andere historische archieven der Antwerpse Sint Lucasgilde, onder zinspreuk "ui ionsten versaemt", 2 vols. (Antwerp: Baggerman, 1872), I:71.

conscious recognition of contemporary preferences but also an understanding of what would motivate future preferences. He appropriated a well-established tradition of images which he translated into a replicable model. In doing so, he adapted to current preferences and added value to the objects he produced. We will look first at these critical terms and how they explain artistic and entrepreneurial activity in Antwerp.

3.2 Practices of Novelty and the Paradox of Antwerp Painting

Although Antwerp’s art markets expanded rapidly and provided the genesis of both everyday life paintings and landscapes, as we have seen in Chapter 2, the majority of imagery and output was rooted in images that were conservative and even derivative. This observation alone is demonstrable proof of a cautious but pragmatic business atmosphere, a description not as paradoxical as it appears. Accurate analysis of both image and action lies in a precise definition of novelty, defined by the OED as “Something new, not previously experienced, unusual, or unfamiliar; a novel thing.” The term takes on a slightly different meaning in art markets, where novelty must “refer to, build upon, and adapt to what is known and familiar.” In other words, in order for a new idea to “take,” it must function within some firmly established framework, whether this is a learned fact or a tradable commodity. The educational process, for example, is most effective when students are able to ground new ideas within a concrete knowledge base they have already acquired.

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The second requirement for authentic novelty is that it must allow for new, replicable developments.\(^5\) In other words, once a new model has been established, it should lend itself to the development of different versions of the same idea. The work of Joachim Patinir, for example (see section 3.3.2), demonstrates this idea of novelty. His works all feature two essential elements: craggy rocks and the predominance of landscape. As long as a painting contains these features, then the novelty of the image is preserved. When later used or adapted by other artists, these visual characteristics continue to capture the novelty of Patinir’s invention.

While novelty is important, an artist must also create an object that continuously captures both economic and cultural value if he or she is to function both successfully and at a sustainable rate. Value comprises an object’s utility, price, and intrinsic worth in addition to labor and production costs. These qualities and factors, which traditionally have been combined to determine value, are in themselves complex. For example, utility as defined by Bentham produces not only “benefit” but also “advantage, pleasure, good or happiness.”\(^6\) As a foundational tenet of marginalist theory, this interpretation of utility foregrounds the cultural value of an object—which in turn resonates within a particular time and place.

Critical to the process of establishing value is not only recognizing preferences but also identifying their sources.\(^7\) The motivations behind the

\(^5\) Ibid., 2.
\(^7\) De Marchi and Van Miegroet, “Introductory Note,” 3.
assembly of collections are best explained by a combination of availability, mimicry, and ability. But particular historical sources for popular images return again and again throughout the sixteenth century; every inventive advancement is firmly rooted in the past. When these images, motifs, and styles are continuously used, they capture additional cultural value.

The New Old Master in sixteenth-century Antwerp was able to capture value in the object and its content, as well as in the exchange. The results of these calculated strategies fomented specialization in the form of new subjects which we know today as landscapes, still lives, or everyday life scenes, and which to us seem quite typical. Over time, collectors learned to associate artists with certain image types and styles, whether these were formal portraiture, devotional images, Italianate images, or even Old Master-type paintings from the fifteenth century. Of these specialized subject types, Old Master paintings in the tradition of Van Eyck, Van der Weyden, and their followers were most desirable, most expensive, and most unavailable to sixteenth-century buyers—and hence, the most valuable.

Painting in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Antwerp can be summarized as a correlation among increased production, increased specialization, and the public’s ever-widening demand for novelty. By the second quarter of the sixteenth century artists had begun to focus on one or two basic

8 The term “genre scene” is herewith avoided; “genre” is synonymous with “subject matter.”
themes or subjects, as a way to establish their brand.\textsuperscript{10} The conceptual approach of Marinus van Reymerswaele’s paintings of lawyers, bankers, and moneychangers mirrors the financial developments within Antwerp itself and is an excellent example of this phenomenon. The ways in which these newly invented image types related to current issues in the world of commerce will be presented in Chapter 4; here I submit that artists were keenly aware of the development of collectors’ tastes in Antwerp’s specific, massive art market.\textsuperscript{11} The tendency to revive older styles, especially within the tradition of “Flemish” painting, has been characterized elsewhere as the search for the “vernacular” as an antithesis to the “Romanist” tradition in Antwerp painting.\textsuperscript{12} My argument rests, however, not on the art-theoretical issue of Flemish identity, but on a tendency in artists to build on the traditions of the past for economic advantage.

As the sixteenth century progressed and the idea of Antwerp’s artistic identity became more evident, people wanted to buy paintings of greater value that connected with established artistic traditions. Of these traditions, the most obvious was identifiable visual characteristics associated with particular known artists. Marinus van Reymerswaele, a part-time banker and lawyer, understood these dynamics and established his own niche in what I label the “New Old


\textsuperscript{11} The scale of permitted and specialized imagery explains why images of tax collectors and bankers were rare in city collections, as shown in Chapter 2.

Master” genre. By doing so, he appealed to local demands for both long-established artistic models and constant novelty. He painted and replicated only five subjects throughout his entire artistic career, four of which concern the relationship between people and money. Van Reymerswaele rendered visual connections between his work and older, expensive paintings in order to evoke the sense of higher monetary value that buyers would assume to be inherent with age. His method of introducing subjects related to contemporary financial concerns in Antwerp while at the same time presenting them in an old-fashioned way resulted in quickly recognizable imagery. It stood at the nexus of past and present in Antwerp’s art market of the 1530s and 1540s. The numbers of replicas, copies, and derivative paintings that were produced, and still circulated decades after his death in 1546, demonstrate the success of his marketing strategy.13

3.3 Artistic Precedents and Stylistic Development

When Marinus entered the guild of Saint Luke in 1509 to work with Simon van Dale (who was also the master of Joos van Cleve), the predominant visual tradition was very much in the context of the late fifteenth century.14 Antwerp did not yet have a strong artistic identity distinctive from the traditions of Bruges, although its reputation as a place to buy art was well known. Devotional paintings were by far the most frequently produced subject. The number of artists in the city, based on the population of free masters, was around 181 individuals (see table 1.1). We know that in the next 5–15 years, the length of time a painting

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14 Rombouts and Van Lerius, 71.
apprenticeship might last, Antwerp would attain its own artistic identity with the popularity and influence of Quentin Massys and of Joachim Patinir. These two artists determined the course of popular painting in Antwerp for the next 40 years.

3.3.1 Revisiting the Past: Traditions in Archaism and their Connection with Demand

In a recently published exchange, Christopher Wood and Alexander Nagel explored the relationships between old and new images in the Early Modern Period. One of their conclusions was that certain images retain a certain iconic resonance across time and stylistic evolutions. For the first half of the sixteenth century, the visual models established by both Patinir and Massys were the most powerfully influential for artists. In the latter half of the century, the lasting influence of Bosch and Bruegel, brought about by the so-called Bosch revival of the middle 1560s, eclipsed the popularity of Patinir and Massys. Between these two dominant poles we find the work of Marinus van Reymerswaele, in a transitional phase between older, established Netherlandish artistic models and new specialist trends that typified the work of Antwerp painters in the latter decades of the sixteenth century. His revival of older Netherlandish models has

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15 Martens and Peeters, 211.
17 Nancy Corwin, The Fire Landscape: its Source and its Development from Bosch through Jan Bruegel I, with Special Emphasis on Mid Sixteenth Century Bosch Revival, (University of Washington, 1976). Corwin concluded that there was never really a Bosch “revival” per se; rather, the topoi were continuously developed from the painter’s death onwards. I will address this issue below.
been labeled archaic rather than traditional, but the significance of the two appellations may well be the same.¹⁸

The first decade of the sixteenth century witnessed a renewed interest in images from the 1420s and 1430s: namely, the works of Jan Van Eyck and Robert Campin.¹⁹ These were primarily devotional images. The prime example of a “resonant” image is Van Eyck’s *Madonna in the Church*, of which two copies were commissioned. One was made by the Master of 1499 for Cistercian abbot Christiaan de Hondt, and the other by Jan Gossaert around 1500 for Antonio Siciliano, a majordomo of the Sforza court in Milan, who visited the court of Margaret of Austria in 1515.²⁰ Gossaert completed a number of Van Eyck copies, including the *Deësis* found today in Madrid and the Doria Pamphilij diptych. In the latter, he artist copied the Madonna in the Church and invented a portrait pendant, with Antonio Siciliano, that replicated Eyckian detail in both its

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¹⁸ The connection between materiality and value has been articulated by Jay Bloom, "The Rise of the Painted Panel in Early Modern Netherlandish Art or How Antwerp Stole the Idea of Popular Culture." (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2002), 57-102.


landscape and figural elements. There was a continual demand for fifteenth century Early Netherlandish paintings among those who could afford them. Artists tied to these commissions were forced to negotiate between their own sixteenth-century tendencies and those of the antiek style of the previous century. This tension is most clearly demonstrated in The Master of 1499’s diptych of a Campinesque fireplace in an interior with the donor, Christiaan de Hondt, as a pendant to the Madonna in the Church (Figure 3). Here, the artist has effectively replicated fifteenth-century brushwork, color scheme, composition, and detail.

These forays into the 1400s, albeit isolated, provide clear evidence of the growing preferences for referential works. By 1514, Quentin Massys had already tested the market for old masters (before he himself would become one), with Banker and His Wife, which pulls directly from traditions of Jan Van Eyck and Petrus Christus. Massys was not alone in these experiments. Commissions forced artists to not only be flexible, but also to thrive in multi-modality.

Similar phenomena appear in the work of in several of Marinus’s most successful contemporaries, who were commissioned to copy older paintings. As a result, Jan Gossaert, Michel Coxe, Pieter Coecke van Aelst—and, most important, Massys himself—all painted in a multiplicity of modes that vacillated between new Romanizing and Italianate images, “native” old master-type images...

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21 Jan Gossaert, Deësis (c. 1525–1530), Madrid, Museo del Prado inv. no P1510; oil on paper attached to oak panel, 122 cm x 133 cm; Jan Gossaert, Simon Bening and Gerard David(?), The Doria Pamphilij Diptych (c. 1510–1515) Rome, Gallery Doria Pamphilij; oil on panel (left panel: 49.9 cm x 27.5 cm; right panel: 49.5 cm x 27.5 cm). See Ainsworth et al., 88–90.
from the fifteenth century, and contemporary scenes of everyday life. This multimodal approach is a strong indicator of artists’ responses to a changing marketplace. Although they were among the best compensated, regardless of their own styles these artists still needed to be able to paint whatever their patrons wanted.

3.3.2 The Patinir Approach as a Working Model

Joachim Patinir established a fitting model for production and a pragmatic approach to doing business. As is well known, Patinir had the benefit of a wealthy patron, Lucas Rem, which probably relieved him of the vicissitudes of the painting market. His small (extant) oeuvre comprises only seventeen paintings, of which only 10 are original compositions; the rest are workshop replicas or derivatives. The size of this oeuvre belies the immense influence the artist had over painting in Antwerp. The principal visual characteristic that proved to be so compelling for later artists was his approach to landscape, more specifically rocks within it. Apparently his colleague Joos van Cleve (c. 1480 c.1540), now also known for his landscapes, recognized that Patinir had created a valuable motif. Van Cleve achieved master status in the guild in 1511, but only began to emulate Patinir’s landscape paintings in 1515 when Patinir himself became a master. Possibly in fairness to his colleague, Van Cleve had waited for Patinir to become

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25 Rombouts, and Van Lerius, 83.
financially secure and to enjoy the benefits of freemastership. If this is the case, there can be no doubt that Patinir’s early rocky landscapes (before 1514) were known, influential, and as a result, financially viable. The size of Patinir’s oeuvre prevents determination of his popularity merely by his work; only when one recognizes the ubiquity of his motifs in other artists’ work does the idea of the “Patinir brand” become clear. By 1521, Patinir had become famous enough to be visited by Albrecht Dürer, with whom he exchanged pictures and who called him “the good landscape painter.”

Patinir’s ability to construct a hybrid genre of painting that was neither fully landscape nor fully religious gave him access to a wider market and multiple preferences for his imagery. Dan Ewing has pointed out that much of Patinir’s appeal is his multivalence; his work was essentially a number of paintings in one. Buyers who wanted a devotional-type image could accept an ascetic saint or andachtsbild whereas humanist buyers or travelers interested in cartography might find a detailed landscape appealing. Still others could have been attracted to the artist’s prickly landscapes and dramatic skies. Whatever the case, the multiplicity of visual characteristics was part of the artist’s appeal.

The formula worked but was not unprecedented. By the end of the fifteenth century, Hieronymus Bosch had already built a landscape around the image of Saint Jerome. In his St. Jerome in Prayer (c. 1482, figure 4) we find a

26 These four paintings from this period are Landscape with Saint Jerome (Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle), Landscape with Flight into Egypt (Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten), Landscape with the Burning of Sodom (Rotterdam, Museum Boymans Van Beuningen), and Martyrdom of Saint Catherine (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum).
28 Ewing, 83.
29 Ibid., 83.
now-familiar but otherworldly landscape with a small church and rocky crags. Patinir exploited this model, but paid considerably more attention to the details of the landscape itself and less to the figure or saint. Patinir’s use of a Bosch model in this painting, as well as others such as *Charon Crossing the River Styx* in Madrid (figure 5), indicates that the artist sought to capitalize on Bosch’s influence for his own financial benefit. Patinir’s inversion of Bosch’s formula of saint-within-a-landscape to landscape with a saint must have been an extremely successful strategy.

Patinir based his output upon dependable models, since 26 replicas and derivatives were made from only 10 paintings. Furthermore, specific motifs pulled from one painting such as bridges, wheat fields, castles, and churches are replicated in numerous other panels. We can only wonder how much the artist would have further developed this entrepreneurial strategy if he had not died young in 1524.

Other artists continued to develop Patinir’s landscape type after his death, but none worked within so narrow a scope. In terms of its replicability, brand recognition, and innovative timing, the Patinir working model set the course for


Kolb, 171.

Ibid., 174.

Antwerp painting for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Like Patinir, Marinus van Reymerswaele painted an extremely narrow range of subjects that was constantly revised and replicated, either by himself or by others long after his death.

3.4 Shifting Notions of Novelty and Tradition

In addition to his images of Saint Jerome in his study, Marinus is best known for his paintings that relate to money. All of these share several basic characteristics. They were always on panel, painted in oil, and depict extremely narrow scope of subjects. These choices may seem unremarkable today but indicate a sophisticated approach to establishing a visual brand. By the middle of the sixteenth century, an increasing number of paintings were done in water-based pigments and on canvas. Panel was still the most common support, as discussed in Chapter 2, but competed with canvas for dominance during the middle of the century. Most small devotional paintings, portraits, and larger

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35 Two possible attributions have linked Marinus to depictions of the Virgin Mary that have, in turn, been shown to have been made very early in the artist’s career, possibly during his apprenticeship. See Friedländer, XII, 226–230.

36 Increased efficiency and lower costs of painting on linen, cloth, or canvas are taken to mean that by the 1530s, many if not most of Antwerp’s gross production of paintings was on cloth. Of course, extant paintings belie this hypothesis: most of the paintings on linen and canvas have not survived. Curiously, as detailed in Chapter 2, hardly any linen paintings were present in Antwerp private collections. Their rarity suggests, as I argue elsewhere, that most linen paintings were destined for export. On the rise of canvas, see Jean C. Wilson, *Painting in Bruges at the Close of the Middle Ages* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998) and Diane Wolfthal, *The Beginning of Netherlandish Canvas Painting 1400-1530* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); also Peter Stabel, "Selling paintings in late medieval Bruges: marketing customs and guild regulation compared," in *Mapping Markets for Paintings in Europe 1450-1750*, ed. Neil De Marchi and Hans Van Miegroet (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 93–103; and Neil De Marchi and Hans Van Miegroet, "The Antwerp-Mechelen Production and Export Complex," in *In His Milieu: Essays on Netherlandish Art in Memory of John Michael Montias*, ed. A. Golohany, MM Mochizuki, and L. Vergara (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 2006), 133–148; and James J. Bloom, "Why Painting?," in *Mapping Markets for Paintings in Europe 1450-1750*, ed. Neil De Marchi and Hans Van Miegroet (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 31–34.
expensive paintings (religious imagery such as Adoration scenes) were on panel.\textsuperscript{37} Over time, paintings on canvas and linen became cheaper and more accessible to consumers and painters alike. Therefore, a painter’s choice to use panel despite the availability of newer, cheaper materials and the growth of workshop production capacities suggests that such a painter would have been targeting a very specific segment of the market that expressed preferences for particular supports and subjects.

Although evidence of prices for Marinus’s paintings during his lifetime has not been found, we can agree that his paintings appear to have been expensive and overtly refer to what was “old” by the 1540s. Like the copies of Van Eyck’s \textit{Madonna in the Church}, discussed previously, Marinus’s paintings share obvious visual characteristics with expensive, well-known, but unavailable works. Thus, as in these older panels, his paintings featured imagery and costumes from the past. His large oaken panels depict people wearing the sumptuous clothing and jewelry of the Burgundian period and were methodically executed with the detailed precision typical of fifteenth-century paintings.\textsuperscript{38}

The panels also, at times, made direct visual reference to other painters’ work. Marinus’s Saint Jerome images appropriate the popular \textit{Christ of the Last Judgment}—whose original source was in Franco-Flemish manuscript illumination; it had also appeared in many of Rogier Van Der Weyden’s \textit{Last

\textsuperscript{37} Traditional materials and imagery remained firmly rooted in fifteenth century visual traditions well into the sixteenth century. See the discussion in Peter Van den Brink, Maximiliaan P.J. Martens, and Nico Van Hout, eds., \textit{Extravagant! A Forgotten Chapter of Antwerp Painting, 1500-1530} (Schoten: BAI,2005), 6–7 and elsewhere in the same volume.

\textsuperscript{38} H. Van Werveke, ”Aantekening bij de zogenaamde belastingpachters en wisselaars van Marinus van Reymerswaal,” \textit{Gentse Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis en de Oudheidkunde} XII (1949-1950), 46–47.
Judgment scenes of the 1440s (figure 6). (Van Der Weyden himself had taken the image from a well-established, and often replicated, type by Hieronymous Bosch.) The bankers and tax collectors painted by Marinus for sixteenth-century collectors wear old-fashioned garb, handle fifteenth-century coins, and in at least one instance even perform banking practices that had been forbidden in 1489. His formula was simple: he employed imagery that recalled settings and costumes of the past, and then replicated these qualities in most every painting he executed.

It comes as a surprise, then, that in his short biography of the painter in the Schilderboeck, Karel van Mander described the work of Marinus van Reymerswaele as something new. The artist’s entire biography states:

Rumor will hardly permit that one is silent about an artful painter called Morin van Romerswalen or Marijn de Seeu. His works are well known in Zeeland. He had a rapid handling in the new manner but more rough than smooth as far as I have seen. There is a toll-taker sitting in his office at Wijntgis in Middelburg, well designed and handsomely executed, I do not know the dates of his birth or death except that he lived at the time of Frans Floris.

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39 The so-called Misers or Tax Collectors at Windsor refers to a specific practice of money transfer outlawed by Maximilian I on 14 December 1489. It seems unlikely that a typical sixteenth-century spectator would have been aware of this event; it is much more likely that a person whose living involved the financial sector would have recognized the old coins—and that such people were likely buyers of such paintings. Ibid., 54.
40 Het gherucht wil qualijck laten verswijgen eenen constighen Schilder / gheheeten Marijn van Romerswalen / oft Marijn de Seeu. Sijn wercken zijn veel geweest in Zeelandt. / Hy hadde een veerdige handelinge op de nieuw manier / doch meer rouw als net/ by dat icker van heb ghesien. Daer is tot Wijntgis te Middelborgh van gem eenen Tollenaer/ sittende in zijn Contoor / wesende wel gheordineert / en fraep ghedaen. Sijnd tijt van gheboort oft sterven weet ick niet / dan dat hy ten tijde van Frans Floris zijn wesen hadde. From the Life of Morijn de Seeu, f xxv. Van Mander and Miedema, 1:227.
Curiously, Van Mander described his work as “the new manner” despite the fact that current scholarship typically characterizes his paintings as “archaic” and even “outlandish”. In his notations for the *Schilderboeck*, Hessel Miedema calls Van Mander’s description “puzzling” since there seems to be nothing new about the appearance of Marinus’s paintings. The reasons for this problematic assessment are further explored below.

3.5 Changing Tastes on the Antwerp Art Market

Van Mander recognized that Marinus manipulates the notion of “old” and “new” by inverting past and present. The artist depicted scenes that take place in the past and constructed his painting as if it were made in the past, but reintroduced a subject as it had never been previously visualized. My reassessment of the painter’s work foregrounds Van Mander’s apparently paradoxical description. By painting old-fashioned images, Marinus showed awareness of the demand for tradition in the sixteenth-century art market. He constructed his work to capture both economic and cultural value. The artist was a specialist; his extremely narrow range of subjects was possibly the most focused niche to be found on the Antwerp art market. He would not have worked in such a narrow mode if the market lacked the demand for such imagery.

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42 f261v. The author’s choice of words is especially notable, suggesting that even in van Mander’s time the artist was not terribly well known, but that his works stirred conversation. Van Mander’s entire biography appears in Chapter 2. “Rumor” (gerucht) has been translated to “fame” in many editions of Van Mander’s text. Van Mander and Miedema, I:227.
3.5.1 Visualizing Change

Before examining his work, let us look more generally at the production of paintings in Antwerp when Marinus was painting. In Chapter 2, I described the subjects found in Antwerp homes from c. 1530 to c. 1588 as well as evident consumption patterns based on historical collections. We will use these data here to provide a basic sense of the market context in which Marinus built his new imagery. As such it will help clarify the dynamics faced by artists as demands and tastes changed.

A comparison of subjects (see Table 2.6) indicates the relative numbers of subjects in Antwerp homes listed per decade. In the earliest decades, religious subjects account for vast majority of the total output of paintings, with portraiture and everyday life comprising a small percentage. This result is no surprise. Over the next 50 years, religious images remain popular, but a discernable move toward new, secular images becomes clear when compared to image samples in the 1540s and later. The predominance of religious imagery declined while other subjects increased their presence. Everyday life images, while remaining relatively rare throughout the entire sample, first appear in the decade of 1540–49. Furthermore, as the relative numbers of non-religious and new image types increase, we find that by that across the 1540s, religious imagery, portraits, and everyday life scenes were produced in greater percentages (see especially the years 1540–1545). This is the juncture at which we find Marinus’s type of images of bankers and tax collectors, all derived from the

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43 A degree of indeterminacy is assumed. Between 1528–30, only Old Testament, New Testament, and mythological subjects appeared in the sample. See section 2.5, Table 2.6.
occupational portrait in the manner of Jan Gossaert’s *Portrait of a Merchant* (c. 1530, figure 7) and even Hans Holbein’s *Georg Gisze* (1532, figure 8). As extant collections indicate, portraits remained consistently present in Antwerp house inventories through the century but images clearly derived from everyday life appear to have become much less common. This discrepancy reiterates the fact that specialist imagery indicates an increasingly localized market.

3.6 Finding a Niche: Landscape, Portrait, Still Life, and Intergenre

Like so much of Patinir’s work, many of Marinus’s new subjects and their interpretations are multivalent: one of his paintings might be interpreted as a “toll collector in his office” (as Van Mander did); or an image that warns against questionable financial practices; or simply a subject painted to appease buyers who loved the specificity of portrait coins and still-life details. Even clerks recording inventories were not immune to confusion about whether a particular painting was an everyday life scene or a landscape; some solved the dilemma by describing paintings as both. The well known-collaborations between Joachim Patinir and Quentin Massys earlier in the century presented a similar transformative intergenre of both landscape and New Testament scenes. Such ambiguity, the logical offspring of the nexus of multiple subjects, is also the

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45 “Daer is tot Wijntgis te Middelborgh van gem eenen Tollenaer / sittende in zijn Contoor,” Van Mander (1604). See note 37, above. An interpretation of these subjects will be discussed in Chapter 4.
product of a creative conceptual approach to production. Patinir’s model of hybrid multivalence, discussed above, increased the appeal of singular paintings and very likely provided a touchstone by many artists who were establishing their own brands and efficient working practices.

Working decades after Patinir, Marinus dispensed with paintings that easily fit into one subject or another and combined multiple image types into one painting. His paintings quite literally illustrate a convergence of everyday life, religious imagery in the 1530s and 1540s (see table 2.6). To compete in such a diverse market, it would have been practical to “mix” a religious scene with an everyday life image. Although this innovation is credited to Pieter Aertsen in the 1550s, Marinus’s paintings and others like them indicate that Aertsen’s representational strategy was already present in the 1540s.47

Quentin Massys’ 1514 Moneychanger and His Wife (figure 9) and Marinus’s Banker and His Wife from 1542 are frequently compared to one another on purely formal terms, as if each painter worked in the same context.48 Despite their stylistic connection to Petrus Christus’ St. Eloy and his

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48 These paintings will be discussed in further detail in the following chapter. Quentin Massys, Moneychanger and His Wife (1514), Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. No 1444, oil on oak panel (70.5 x 67 cm); Marinus van Reymerawale, Banker and his Wife. Multiple versions exist, but the best known is the 1539 version in Madrid, Museo del Prado, inv. No 2567, oil on oak panel (83 x 97 cm).
Shop from 1449 (figure 11),⁴⁹ and a now-lost Van Eyck of the same subject, the contexts of the art market during which each painting was made had become quite different by the time each was finished.

In 1514, everyday life scenes were very much in the minority. Moreover, the population of painters was much smaller than during Reymerswaele’s time in the 1540s. According to my assessment, Massys was a member of a guild, with about 240 other painters, that produced some 7500 paintings in 1514.⁵⁰ By contrast, in 1514 an extremely low number of paintings were everyday life scenes. This comparison clarifies other differences. For example, Massys regularly painted multiple subjects (devotional images, portraits, Old and New Testament scenes, and finally, as a smaller fraction of his oeuvre, everyday life scenes).

However, Marinus was active between 1536 and 1545, and repeatedly painted multiple versions of the same subjects. His painting is one of about 11,000 other paintings made that year, less than a tenth of which were everyday life scenes. Over his entire career he only painted 67 known autograph works, and these depict only four main subjects: tax collectors, bankers, lawyers, and St. Jerome.

Within the 30 years that separate Massys and Reymerswaele, delineated market segments emerged that also led to new economic behavior.⁵¹ That Reymerswaele worked in less than a handful of subjects, all similarly executed, suggests he was able to meet demand for a specific type of image. There was

⁴⁹ Petrus Christus (active by 1444, to 1475/76) A Goldsmith in His Shop, Possibly Saint Eligius (1449), New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 1975.1.110, oil on oak panel, 100.1 x 85.8 cm.
⁵⁰ See Table 1.4.
⁵¹ As shown in Chapter 2, the 20% growth in panel in city collections between 1532 and 1567 indicates that it had become more affordable as well as more prevalent. Perhaps panels returned to the market because of new, low-end market segments. See Martens and Peeters, "Paintings in Antwerp Houses," 44–45.
simply no need to make other kinds of paintings. We can further infer that an artist with a narrow range of images and output must have been able to depend upon a high(er)-end collecting interest and was guaranteed financial benefit with every painting he completed. In short, the small number of paintings and subjects, as well as their similarity to one another, suggests that they were on the high end of the market and were therefore attractive to financially successful buyers who wished to insert themselves into established tradition of buying artwork with local appeal.

3.7 Standing on the Shoulders of Giants: Dürer, Massys, Marinus, and Saint Jerome

At the beginning of this chapter, I suggested Joachim Patinir as a model for a practical approach to painting production. His narrow scope of subjects and visual similarities to older Boschian motifs parallels the work of Marinus, who obviously followed Patinir’s model. Marinus’s narrow scope, precise rendering, replicable motifs, and similarity to older models indicate the same economy of scope 20 years after Patinir’s death.

Marinus was well aware of the conceptual and representational models of the Antwerp painting market. They were not only models for working practices but also pictorial models to be emulated. The most frequently replicated image invented by Marinus is Saint Jerome in his study, of which 15 autograph versions are known to exist.\(^5\) Marinus specialized in his own branding of this saint by

\(^5\) The best-known version hangs in the Prado: *Saint Jerome in His Study* (questionably dated 1521), Madrid, Museo del Prado, inv. no. 2100, oil on oak panel (75 x 100.1 cm); Another at the Prado is dated 1547, inv. no. 2653, oil on oak panel (80 x 108 cm); still another is unsigned (follower of Van Reymerswaele?), n.d. inv. no. 2099, oil on oak panel (75 x 101 cm). Museo del Prado, *Catálogo de las Pinturas* (Madrid: Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, 1996), 310.
placing him at the now-familiar bureau, together with his skull and scripture. Dürer’s original, now in Lisbon, was painted while the artist was visiting Antwerp during his tour of the Netherlands in the winter of 1520–21 (figure 12).53 One distinctive characteristic of Dürer’s original is that Jerome points to the skull, a feature that would be faithfully replicated.54 While in Antwerp, the Nuremberger painted at least two portraits of Erasmus and gave prints and copperplates as gifts.55 Perhaps inspired by and impressed with the taste for humanistic subjects among the rarefied circles of the Antwerp intelligentsia, the artist probably painted his Saint Jerome for Rodrigo Fernandez d’Almada. The painting probably remained in Antwerp until at least 1548, when the Factor of Portugal was called back to Lisbon after the closing of the Feitoria de Flandes. Surely Marinus himself saw it; the visual similarities between his and Dürer’s versions are striking although the character of the images differs. In Dürer’s version, the saint gestures with one finger on the skull on the table before him. Employing much the same draftsman’s characteristics as Dürer’s other portraits, the saint’s eyes directly engage the viewer, as in the artist’s self-portrait of 1500.56 On the table are the accoutrements of Christian scholarship: a candle, Latin texts, an open manuscript.

These details, which became important for Marinus, are taken directly from the traditional depictions of Saint Jerome (inside a study if not in the

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53 Dürer, Gijsen, and Marlier, 21–23.
55 Dürer, Gijsen, and Marlier, 65.
wilderness). Dürer was likely thinking of images such as Jan Van Eyck’s jewel-like Saint Jerome in his Study (figure 13), although this one is much smaller in scope and scale. Nonetheless, Van Eyck painstakingly depicted all of the saint’s attributes (the stack of books, open scriptures, and the table within the bureau) as well as the lion, which sits under the table on the right-hand side of the painting. Almost 100 years later Dürer dispensed only with the lion.

An easy art-historical argument can be made that connects these images on stylistic grounds. In fact we do not know if Dürer actually saw Van Eyck’s painting, although he did tour well-known collections during his stay in the Netherlands in 1520–1521. While Dürer generally operated in a completely different economic sphere than artists engaged in selling artworks locally (although this is not the case for his print work), his ten months in the Netherlands was surely an exploration of the Antwerp market. Nevertheless, we do know that the saint who appeared most frequently in homes in Antwerp—more frequently even than the Magdalene—was Saint Jerome. Several collections even contained multiple images of this subject.

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58 Dürer, GijSEN, and Marlier, 15.


60 The Jerome image appears in 63 observations from my database.

61 Six of these collections contained more than one image of Jerome.
Despite his genius and fame, Dürer should not be viewed as the progenitor of the Saint Jerome image in Antwerp. Massys, who was at the height of his fame when he saw Dürer’s paintings, developed a new image type that would find a ready audience there. Massys’s characterization appropriated the salient features of Dürer’s composition: the interior scene, the skull, the scholarly objects, and the pointing finger. Massys, like Dürer, was connected with the humanistic circles in Antwerp (Massys’s Saint Jerome, a copy of which exists in Vienna [figure 14] was completed around the same time as his portraits of Erasmus and Pieter Gillis); the paintings must have been displayed in Massys’s studio in a sort of intellectual paragone. However, the fact that Massys’s steady patronage allowed him to operate primarily outside of the open market, like Dürer before him, does not mean that he did not respond to it. The artist experimented with a number of painting modes based on old models (both in portraits and polyptychs) as well as new ones (everyday life scenes).

We can surmise that large-scale altarpieces, devotional diptychs, and portraits were the most lucrative paintings for the artist, and therefore supported his other endeavors, such as his now-famous Ill-Matched Lovers and Banker and His Wife. This supposition seems even more likely as Massys had already gained fame by 1514 (most of his great altarpiece commissions were executed before 1513). Later, Massys began to work more closely with Patinir and

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62 The original Massys Saint Jerome is lost. Copies are in Vienna and Munich. See Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (n.d.), inv. no. 691; oil on panel (57 x 77 cm); and Munich, Alte Pinakothek, inv no. 5320/2888; oil on panel (60 x 81 cm).
63 For a complete catalogue see Silver, The Paintings of Quentin Massys with Catalogue Raisonné op cit.
64 Quentin Massys, Ill Matched Lovers (c. 1520). Washington, National Gallery of Art, inv. no. 1971.55.1; oil on panel (43.2 x 63 cm).
experimented with new everyday life compositions until around 1524. Thereafter, he returned to more traditional religious subject matter.

An examination of extant paintings allows us to construct a timeline based on the influence of the Dürer and Massys types of images painted before Marinus picked up the subject around 1533. For one thing, the images change after Marinus reinvents them. The Dürer/Massys type of Saint Jerome shows the saint pointing and resting his index finger on the skull and includes a small window that frames a diminutive landscape (often featuring Patinir’s rocky crags). Some examples of the Dürer and Massys type remain, although the dates are unclear; they consist of several anonymous paintings of varying quality (see figures 15, 16, and 17). All of these, which were probably made between 1530 and 1550, are loosely based on the work of Dürer, Marinus, and Joos van Cleve. They appear to be quickly executed and lack the richness of detail and rendering found in the work of Marinus, but nevertheless preserve the topical details generally associated with the subject. For example, in several of these panels the artist has devoted considerable space to the landscape outside the window. This attention not only indicates that the development of the subject itself was in transition, but also that these artists appealed directly to an audience seeking landscapes as well as images of the saint.

The earliest documented proof of a Massys painting in a private collection dates from 1552. The portrait itself, dated 1512, was in the collection of the nobleman Michiel van der Heyden, who also owned two paintings thought to be

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66 See Section 3.2.
by Bosch. The notary made a particular effort to confirm the Massys autograph and also took special pains with the two Bosch paintings. This care tells us three things about the state of affairs by 1552: First, Massys was still famous 20 years after his death; second, he had become as well known as Bosch; and third, his paintings were expensive—more so than the general public could afford.

Based on archival evidence, we know that images of Saint Jerome were found in many inventories, but it is extremely unlikely any of these were paintings by Massys. Massys’s death in 1530 and the persistent a market for images of the saint are probably not coincidental; Marinus’s renditions filled this gap well. Table 3.2 shows the increased frequency of Saint Jerome in Antwerp collections after 1530 based on the sample data found in Chapter 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Number of Saint Jerome Images</th>
<th>Total Number of Paintings in Decade</th>
<th>Percentage of Saint Jerome Paintings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1531–1540</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1541–1550</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1551–1560</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1561–1570</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1571–1580</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1581–1585</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although Marinus revived the subject, transformed it, and repackaged it in his own pictorial idiom, he never included the finger placed on the skull or any

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67 "...Een viercant tafereel, olyeverwe, daer op staet een mans personagie gefigueert ende daer staet bij een ghescritfe Quintinus Metzys me fecit anno XV ende XIIE ...” In the collection of Michiel van der Heyden, SAA GF No. 50 (published in Denucé, 1).
outdoor landscape. Instead, he focused on the anatomy of the saint’s hoary figure and details of the documents and the still-life objects on the table (the open book, candle, crucifix, and often a cardinal’s biretta). These details alone show that there are more than 60 versions of Marinus’s paintings. The fact that most of these are not autograph works indicates the commercial attraction to the image type. Marinus’s paintings appropriate the materials, techniques, and subjects of both fifteenth-century Netherlandish painting and the most well-known painters of the sixteenth century: Quentin Massys and Albrecht Dürer. Together, these qualities evoke a perception of value inherent in the “antique” visual tradition. Unlike Dürer and Massys, however, Marinus filled his paintings with legible script which, like many of the paintings made by Van Eyck and vander Weyden, demands close inspection. Marinus’ paintings are essentially a substitute for unavailable older paintings, whether by Massys, Dürer or Van Eyck.


69 While much of the international demand was fed by linen paintings, and later, paintings on copper, Reymerswaele’s oak panels and others like them also appealed to foreign markets. Not surprisingly, a number of his St. Jerome images found their way to the Iberian peninsula, where the taste for fifteenth-century Netherlandish paintings and the image of this saint were particularly strong. See Felipe de Guevara and Antonio Ponz, Comentarios de la pintura (Madrid: Don G. Ortega, Hijos de Ibarra y Compañía, 1788)also Miguel Falomir Faus, Arte en Valencia, 1472-1522, Monografies del Consell Valencià de Cultura 32 (Valencia: Generalitat Valenciana, Consell Valencià de Cultura, 1996); and Miguel Falomir Faus, "The Value of Painting in Renaissance Spain," in Economia e Arte Secc XIII-XVIII, XXXIII Settimana di Studi (Florence: 2000), 103–119.

70 Additional but unexpected proof does exist of Reymerswaele’s influence and, arguably, his popularity. Although archival records of his involvement in the guild are practically non-existent other than a few bits and pieces in Zeeland, the activities of the guild provide a solid indication of how Reymerswaele’s work was regarded in Antwerp. We find traditional imagery in the work of Jan Sanders van Hemessen (1519–1556), who entered the guild in 1519, became dean in 1548, and partly branded his own work following the style of Reymerswaele. Many of his works share the same subject, particularly in his Woman Weighing Gold (c. 1545, Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv.
3.8 Collectors and the Emergence of the Idea of Antwerp School

Did collectors actually buy into the “New Old Master” approach? Although specific documentation on the 1540s is scarce, information culled from the mid-1560s illuminates popular opinion. The success of Pieter Bruegel the Elder’s prints and paintings, the subjects and styles of which dealt with entirely native traditions, suggests a reaction to the Italianizing modes that had infiltrated Antwerp’s art market. By the middle of the century, a movement away from Romanism was found in humanist circles. Their objection was not to the so-called “correctness” in Italianizing forms and details; rather, they focused on a nascent sense of their own pictorial history. Before 1566, fifteenth-century panels and devotional installations had not been moved from their original locations in religious, public, and private spaces; moreover, by that time they had acquired the value of age, both culturally and economically. Within that environment an antiquarian interest emerged within humanist circles, including that of Ortelius, that celebrated the local past.71

Inventories from the last quarter of the sixteenth century provide some indication of public taste for Marinus’s work within the general trend of increasingly varied subjects. The collection of the city weighmaster Jan Goubau de Oude, recorded on 30 August 1581, shows a painting of a moneychanger (“een tafereel vanden wissel”) alongside 42 other paintings, including a Marian

no. 656-A; oil on panel, 44 x 31 cm). Hemessen did not concentrate exclusively on the Reymerswaele-type occupational paintings, but successfully developed the subject with a combination of theatrical scenes of grotesque figures set in Romanized landscapes. Like Massys, Van Hemessen tested his market with images of everyday life, but most of his work consisted of large-scale religious commissions. See Burr Wallen, "Hemessen," Grove Art Online http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T037472pg1 (accessed 3 Nov 2010).

71 Urbach, 237–238.
devotional painting (with doors), two Saint Jeromes, a portrait of both (King) Philip and Emperor Charles, various saints, and an image of workers in a vineyard.\textsuperscript{72} In fact, the moneychanger painting seems to be the only “new” type of image in a collection dominated by traditional religious subjects. Another 1582 inventory, of 21 paintings in the collection of Elisabeth van Gansepoel, lists a large panel of a toll-taker [\textit{tollenaer}], a panhandler/beggar on canvas, as well as paintings of a Carthusian monk, Saint Jerome, and a \textit{Salvator Mundi}.\textsuperscript{73} These inventories not only offer a relatively early snapshot of how new images may have fit into the established Antwerp tradition of collecting predominantly religious images, but also suggest some ambivalence towards types of painting suitable for both traditional and modern tastes.

But these are only two examples. Apparently such “new” paintings, in the tradition of Massys, were still atypical in most collections in Antwerp. The new style only appears in larger collections from the last quarter of the century, and not at all before 1552. Based on their visual affinity to Massys’s paintings, we can conclude that Marinus’ paintings were indeed costly and were not likely to be in small, low-end collections. Instead, they were displayed within groups of varied subjects, ranging from traditional to modern, owned by well-heeled buyers.

In the aforementioned inventory of the possessions of Jan Goubau, city weighmaster, the following paintings are listed in the same room as the moneychanger:

\textit{a small panel of Saint Francis}
\textit{another portrait of a woman}

\textsuperscript{72} SAA N1477 (not foliated). Inventory of Jan Goubau de Oude.
\textsuperscript{73} See also Chapter 2, Section 2.4.2. SAA N1172 304. Inventory of Elisabeth van Gansepoel, widow of Jan de Clerck, merchant.
The moneychanger painting is found among the paintings of a medieval saint, a Roman myth, a devotional image of the Virgin, and a portrait of the owner himself. Probably, both the style and subject made this work attractive to the collector. Although we have no sure way of knowing, the paintings of Saint Francis and the Virgin suggest traditional tastes as well as self-identifying images. For Gobau, the moneychanger fits into this scheme because of both its style and subject. He was, after all, the city’s weighmaster.

3.9 The New Old Master and his Afterlife

Elsewhere in this chapter I have discussed the persistent interest of sixteenth-century buyers in acquiring images made by Jan Van Eyck. This practice seems to have reserved for the wealthy. Works by other artists did become more collectible over the course of the century, however—not because they became more valuable, but because they became more available. Possibly the most copied and collected Netherlandish artist was Bosch. His work (or, more appropriately, his influence) casts a long shadow across the entire sixteenth century. His popularity in the 1560s and 1570s has often been attributed to the

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74 SAA N 1477. The Lucretia image was likely similar to Joos Van Cleve’s Lucretia, popular from c. 1520 onward. See John Oliver Hand, Joos Van Cleve. The Complete Paintings (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 48–49.
demands of Philip II; it spiked again when Dominicus Lampsonius named Pieter Bruegel a “second Bosch” in 1572.\textsuperscript{75}

However, Bosch had never really lost his popularity and influence. With the rise of print media, most notably with the presses operated by Hieronymous Cock in the 1550s, Bosch’s demons and hapless characters became more widely accessible to the general public. Artists, principally Pieter Bruegel the Elder, made their careers by imitating the fifteenth-century artist. The industry of false Bosch paintings in the 1560s, well documented by Felipe de Guevara, provides additional testimony of the artist’s enduring popularity.\textsuperscript{76}

In addition to Bruegel, who re-imaged the Bosch prototypes, other artists dedicated their careers to Bosch landscapes, including Jan Mandijn (c. 1500–c. 1559) and Pieter Huys (1519–1584).\textsuperscript{77} These two artists introduced entirely new Bosch-style paintings, filled with pictorial developments that had arisen since Bosch’s death. This change is due to Patinir. For example, Huys’s \textit{Temptation of Saint Anthony} (figure 18) shows the ascetic saint surrounded by beasts and brimstone in what is essentially a transformed Patinir landscape.

Well-painted, unalloyed revisitations of Patinir’s work were also made in the 1560s. The work of Lucas Gassel (1495/1500–c. 1570) shows an undeniable adherence to Patinir’s legacy. In his \textit{Saint Jerome in a Landscape} (c. 1565, figure 19), notably indicates none of the influence—or interference—of the hazy atmospheric compositions by Herri Bles or Joos van Cleve. Instead, Gassel

\textsuperscript{75} Quoted in David Freedberg, \textit{The Prints of Pieter Bruegel the Elder} (Tokyo: Tokyo Shibum, 1989), 23.

\textsuperscript{76} Guevara and Ponz, 42.

returned to the “pure” Patinir: crisp edges, minute details, and the rich color divisions Patinir drew between his bright repousoirs and blue backgrounds.\textsuperscript{78} Although Patinir’s pictorial influence was strong, it was usurped to some extent by Bosch. The Bosch tradition continued to develop, as is now well known, mainly in the form of prints of the work of Pieter Bruegel the Elder. In turn, his influence became so strong that he was copied by two more generations of Bruegel descendants.\textsuperscript{79} Clearly, Antwerp artists relied on formulae tested over many generations in order to satisfy the ongoing demand for images inspired by models that were both traditional and antique.

Maintaining a visual similarity with successful artists such as Massys and Dürer helped Marinus earn a living as a painter, but it was not enough to secure his name in the pantheon of Antwerp artists.\textsuperscript{80} Once living memory had expired, both the pictorial and financial endurance of the New Old Master can be traced. We find that his name only survived into the seventeenth century; and this among specialized dealers, not the general public (who regularly believed his

\textsuperscript{78} Gassel became well known for his landscape paintings thanks to Hieronymous Cock, who published a series of five etchings in the 1550s. See Jacques Toussaint, \textit{Autour de Henri met de Bles}, ed. Cécile Douxchamps-Lefèvre (Namur: Société archéologique de Namur, 2000).


\textsuperscript{80} In 1884, Henry Hymans (1836–1912) published his study “Marin le Zélandais, de Romerswael,” which successfully assembled what is today the artist’s accepted biographical foundation. He lamented that one of the “greatest Flemish painters of the sixteenth century” had been virtually forgotten by even the most serious critics. Hymans convincingly linked Marin de Seeu, Martin de Seeu, Marin le Zélandais, Marin Claeszoon, Guicciardini’s Marino di Sirissea, and Vasari’s Marino di Siressia to Marinus van Reymerswaele, eventually concluding that the mysterious painter is the same as Van Mander’s “Marijn van Romerswalen, or Marijn de Seeu.” He also stated that Marinus’s likely father, Nicolaes van Zieriksee, was a painter inscribed in the Antwerp Saint Luke guild registers as a free master in 1475. It follows, according to Hymans’ argument, that his son, Moryn Claessone, Zeelander, mentioned in the Antwerp Liggeren in 1509 as a student to Simon van Dale, was Marinus van Reymerswaele. If the person listed as an apprentice in 1509 was indeed the artist we know as Marinus van Reymerswaele, then this is the only definitive record of his presence in Antwerp. See Henri Hymans, "Communications et Lectures: Marin le Zélandais, de Reymerswael; par Henri Hymans," \textit{Bulletins de l’Académie Royale des Sciences, des Lettres, et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique} 53 (1884), 211–220.
paintings were the work of Quentin Massys). They had little reason to assume otherwise. Dealer prices from the seventeenth century confirm how Reymerswaele’s paintings were valued next to well-known and valuable painters. Numerous shipping manifests from the dealer Forchondt routinely list Reymerswaele panels for 100 and 150 guilders each, at a value equal to canvases by Frans Floris, who had been the most prominent, and possibly the wealthiest, painter in Antwerp as well as the dean of the St. Luke Guild. A price of 150 guilders, at least by 1668, was five times the asking price for a Van Dyck portrait. Within the same shipment, Willem Forchondt priced two Dürer portraits, and one of Erasmus of Rotterdam, at 30 guilders each. Surprisingly, Reymerswaele is also listed in later seventeenth century inventories as a master in the company of Titian, Rubens, and Holbein; as such, he commanded similar prices as these more well-known artists.

One further example foregrounds the issue. Upon their invention in the late sixteenth century, cabinet paintings (so-called “gallery paintings”) were pictorial analogues of ideal collecting practices. They could illustrate real collections, as was the case with the Archduke Albert (1559–1621; ruled 1598–1621), but they could also invent ideal collections. An owner of a cabinet painting could, in effect, have any collection he or she wanted. Frans Francken the Younger (1581–1642) specialized in these images. His diminutive Art

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82 Ibid., 107.

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Collection of 1619 (figure 20)\textsuperscript{84} shows such a fictive arrangement of paintings that reveals a newly formed local canon of painting in Antwerp and, by extension, the whole of Netherlandish Art.

Every painting depicted in this panel is an Antwerp invention. Stylistically, the earliest is a Bosch-type fire landscape from the late fifteenth century that appears in the upper center. Our attention is also drawn to a small portrait panel, possibly a scholar, on the lower left (figure 21). Today, this diminutive bureau scene with a manuscript, spectacles, and the wood-paneled interior could just as easily be interpreted as either a fifteenth-century or a sixteenth-century image. In the center of the panel is a Marian painting with a floral garland surrounded by the landscape offspring of both Patinir and the Bruegel enterprise. To the viewer’s right are two other early sixteenth-century images: an Annunciation and an Adoration, subjects that were heavily represented in household collections of the 1530s. In the background, Francken included one of the large-format paintings that became popular during the first decades of the seventeenth century: it appears to be a landscape and hunting scene in the style of Frans Snyders (1579–1657).\textsuperscript{85} This fictive painting could easily be mistaken for an open window, if not for the frame around it.

In a most interesting inversion of display, Francken also included a pile of gold and silver coins on the table, together with a shark’s tooth, coral, and a nautilus shell, among other objects of curiosity. While we might expect to find these objects in a kunstkamer, in this context they could be viewed as a play on

\textsuperscript{84} Frans Francken the Younger. An Art Collection (1619), Antwerp, Museum voor Schone Kunsten, inv. no. 816; oil on panel, 56 x 85 cm.

the pictorial traditions in Antwerp painting. The coins not only display numismatic interest but also visually echo the work of Massys and Marinus. Also like these artists, Francken painted an unfolded, wax-sealed document upon which he inscribed his own name. Such an overt reference to the work of Marinus van Reymerswaele is not only compelling; it also acknowledges the vestiges of a pictorial tradition that was invented in the first half of the fifteenth century and carried well into the seventeenth.

3.10 Concluding Remarks

Cabinet paintings depicted ideal collections comprised either real, yet unavailable paintings, or a series of completely fictive paintings. One, however, has been proven to be an accurate reinterpretation of an actual collection in none other than the Burgomaster’s house in Antwerp. Whereas we have a detailed written inventory of Antwerp mayor Adriaen Hertzen’s paintings, from 1532,86 Frans Francken II painted a visual inventory of the home of Mayor Nicholas Rockox around 1630 (figure 22).87 This painting, Dinner Party at the Home of Nicholas Rockox, prominently shows Rubens’ Samson and Delilah (now in London) and Jan van Hemessen’s Saint Jerome in His Study, which remains in situ, as well as several other landscapes and antique busts, all on one side of the

86 See op cit SAA V298.
On the other side the hearth is a fifteenth-century Marian devotional painting and its pendant, a fifteenth-century-style *Salvator Mundi*. Hanging on the right-hand wall of the room is a version of Marinus’s *Banker and his Wife*, which appears to be very similar to the painting now in Munich that shows the male figure with the dramatic red headpiece so familiar from many of the *Tax Collector* images (See figure 23). This painting is believed to be the same one mentioned in the 1616 inventory of Fernando Dassa, who at that time was himself Burgomaster. However, the artist recorded in the inventory was believed to be a different painter altogether: “*22 September 1616 ... a panel of a toll-taker or moneychanger made by Master Quentin ...*” This account suggests that the artist’s representational strategy of associating himself with the established models of Netherlandish painting worked exceedingly well, so well that the real artist’s name had already been forgotten. It was Massys, not Marinus, who was still one of the most sought-after artists for Antwerp collectors.

The Rockox collection is a retrospective pictorial history of high-end Antwerp painting at the beginning of the seventeenth century. By that time, the slowly emerging patterns of economic and artistic enterprise that had developed

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88 Held in the collections of Statens Museum for Kunst, Stockholm. See Marcello Francone, et al., *op. cit.*
89 Marinus Van Reymerswaele, *Tax Collector and His Wife* (n. d.), Munich, Altepinakothek. Inv. No 7; Oil on panel, 67 cm x 103 cm. First attributed to Massys, it has since been accepted as a painting by Marinus Van Reymerswaele. See Denucé, I, 370.
90 SAA N Notaris G, van den Bossche Protocollen 1615–1621. Inventory Hans Vanden Bossche, schilder 22 Sept 1616: “*gehadt eene paneel van eenen tollenaer oft wisselaer gemaect by Mr Quentin ...*”
91 A close inspection of Erik Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw*, Fontes Historiae Artis Neerlandicae (Brussel: Paleis der Academiën, 1984) Duverger shows that in almost every instance over the course of the seventeenth century, paintings of toll-keepers, moneychangers, and bankers are credited to Massys, and not to Reymerswaele. See Duverger V: 75, 266, 296; XI: 238; two paintings are listed in Duverger’s survey as by Reymerswaele: (III: 181, XII: 21).
over the course of the sixteenth century were well established. Historically, these patterns and their points of origin, initiated by artists’ continual development of both derivative and novel images, suggest that the concept of the New Old Master was an experiment in self-promotion and marketing launched as a creative response to increasing competition and demand. As a conceptual device, the New Old Master is a helpful tool for understanding that, despite the changing marketplace, the power of traditional images remained constant between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries. The power of tradition, supported by willing artists and buyers, was fundamental in establishing, developing, and maintaining what would later become the “Antwerp School” of painting.
Chapter Four
Money, Accounting and Visualizing Business

4.1 Introduction

In 1549 the city of Antwerp prepared itself for the “Joyous Entry” of the new Spanish prince, Phillip II, who was making a tour of his domains. Guilds erected temporary grand arches for the parade, which passed through the Sint Jorispoort, veered north to the Lange Gasthuisstraat to the Cathedral of Our Lady, and then southward down Hoogstraat towards the Kloosterstraat to the imposing Saint Michael’s Abbey (figure 24 shows a map of the route).\(^1\) Across from the abbey gate, in front of the Royal Mint, stood the Mintmaster’s Arch, formidable at 17 m tall and 9 m wide (55’ x 29’, figure 25).\(^2\) City secretary and humanist Cornelis Grapheus (1482–1558) provided a detailed description of this arch:

...on the highest story, one sees God the creator surrounded by a multitude of resplendent lights, seated on a clear and light cloud, and giving to man (who lies prostrate in front of him) gold and silver coins. This man receives coins from the divine. The name of such person is HOMO, whose figure has such a signification: As so it is with all good emanating from God, so the utility, profit, and comfort of conservation of the life of man, primarily demonstrated, administrated and done for the usage of coins of money, as long as it can not (by human fragility) be abused.

On the second story, a half-nude Saturn, in the appearance of an old man, with a long beard and with long hair seated at an anvil, in the manner of the Minters, (having at the side his forge) forging money of gold and silver.

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\(^1\) Mark Meadow, "Ritual and Civic Identity in Phillip II’s 1549 Antwerp Blijde Incompst," Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek 49 (1998), 53.
Aside of him is the beautiful MONETA, in similitude of a very beautiful woman, dressed in golden clothing and for her interior robe, a silver drape ... with a tissue crown and enriched with pieces of gold and silver, with a necklace of gold and silver. Behind her are her daughters in the appearance of beautiful virgins: OPULENcia, NEGOCIATIO and CIVITAS, which is to say Richesse, Plenty, Merchandise (Business) and Honesty.

All that money signifies first given and distributed by God the creator for the utility and use by man, and primarily, (as many say), forged, manifested, and contributed by Saturn, these products of richness, plenty and abundance, merchandise won for a civil and honest life. ... one sees of this spectacle how Saturn liberally gives to MONETA pieces from his forge which in this liberality shares at great quantity between the community, which was "illecques," a gross multitude.

...In the entablature of the highest was written boldly: MONATO MIRANDO DEI, which means, Money was admirably given from heaven by God and by Saturn and others forged for mortals to be dispensed and contributed by the beneficent means of the Princes.3

This rich iconography is a physical manifestation of the great power of money and its central role in the prosperity of Antwerp. In 1549, the city was on a rising tide of success. The epicenter of the complex relationship between the benefits of money, provided by God and Princes in the service of prosperity, and its inevitable misuse stretched from the city’s streets and market stalls to the halls of its government.4 Thus, this chapter addresses how this ubiquitous relationship was manifested in Antwerp’s visual culture.

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3 Cornelius Scribonius Grapheus and Pieter Coecke van Aelst, De seer wonderlijcke, schoone, triumphelijcke incompst, van den hooghmogenden Prince Philips, Prince van Spaignen, Caroli des vijsden, Keyers sone: inde stadt van Antwerpen, anno M.CCCCC.XLIX (Antwerpen: Voer Peeter Coecke van Aelst ...: Printere by Gillis van Diest, 1550), 53–54. See also SAA PK 1627.
4 The prologue of the 1561 Antwerp Landjuweel stated “How useful to us are the brave and talented merchants who righteously conduct their business.” [Hoe oirboirlijck ons zijn, die cloecke Engienen, / Coopleiden, die rechtveerdich handelen eepaer.] Quoted in Ethan Matt Kavaler, Pieter Bruegel: Parables of Order and Enterprise. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 298.
4.2 Money and Society in Antwerp

It is no coincidence that the first treatise on accounting in Dutch, written by Jan Ympyn in 1543, was published in Antwerp, where it was translated to French and then English (figure 26). Among other expository information on the practices of good accounting, Ympyn articulated dangers of sloppy bookkeeping:

...the evil keeping thereof, so vexes the body, that it breeds fevers and diseases...and death which leaves to the world all things rawly imperfectly, and causes some in the place of (God have mercy on his soul) to say that the devil gnaw the bones of him, and a vengeance on such a keeper of a book, with many other inconveniences.

As shown by Ympyn’s condemnation and the minters’ celebratory architecture, the subject of money was a constant undercurrent of popular culture in Antwerp. While rarely a subject on its own in the visual arts, money in paintings could warn against avarice or acknowledge temperance. Its centrality to Antwerp’s civic identity demonstrates the conflicted relationship between people and money.

This relationship was not evaluated only in terms of morality, however. Money’s emergence in everyday-life painting can be attributed to the mysteries of currency-trading—a vast, unregulated system that many believed to be strange as well as and obscure. As Antwerp’s financial system continued to develop, new processes and new language around the act of exchange emerged as well. Prices were expressed in “monies of account,” a term referring to the conceptual space between the coin and the object to be bought. The worth of a coin, based on its

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5 Jan Ympyn, Nieuwe instructie ende bewijs der looffelijcker consten des rekenboecks, ende rekeninghe te houdene nae die Italiaensche maniere (Antwerpen: Gillis Copyns van Diest, 1543).
6 Ibid.
8 John H. Munro, “Money, Wages and Real Incomes in the Age of Erasmus: The Purchasing Power of Coins and of Building Craftsmen’s Wages in England and the Low Countries, 1500 -
metal content, had to be equal to the value of the exchange; however, this equation could never be certain. Value by nature remained unstable—silver coins lost value when new sources of bullion were found, because the metal was then less scarce. Or the inherent value of a silver coin could diminish against a gold coin. Such a multiplicity of coins and values, which fluctuated not only constantly but also unpredictably, meant that people could never be entirely sure if their money was “good” or “bad.” The latter could old and less valuable, deliberately debased and reminted, or counterfeited.

To complicate matters even more, coins were identified by the seals stamped into them but were often circulated far outside the territories for which they were minted. Only the most skilled moneychangers could evaluate all of these factors to determine value and the viability of exchange. A fourteenth-century Picard-Flemish manual titled The Book of Trades, produced in Bruges around 1377, included an illustrative yet comical exchange between a fabric seller and a customer:

Sir, what are you giving me?

My lady, good money, these are *gros tournois*
Such as those of Flanders,
The others are from the time of Saint Louis
Which one calls old *gros*.

Sir, what are they worth?

My lady, the old French are worth 18 deniers,
And the Flemish, 12.
You should know that, given you take in so much money...

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1540 ” in *The Correspondence of Erasmus*, ed. R. A. B. Mynors, D. Thomson, Wallace Ferguson, James McConica, & Peter Bietenholz (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974).
9 Howell, 19–20. This was the case when Marinus’s *Tax Collectors* was painted during the years 1537 to 1542. See section 4.5.
...Sir, the twelve yards at 20 *groten* each made twelve pounds *paresis*, of which 12 schillings per yard remains or 24 schillings, or in all 13 pounds and 4 schillings...

Take [my money] madam, I know that you have reckoned accurately.¹⁰

By demonstrating her acute awareness of the different currencies and their value, the merchant wins the trust of her buyer. The manual containing this conversation, originally published as a language-learning tool, was reprinted over the next 150 years with updated currencies. Later editions (1420, 1483, and 1501), included groats of England and Flanders, Rhenish guilders, Scutes, sterling, *plackes*, *pont grote*, *pont paresijs*, shillings, pennies, *mijten*, *marcs*, and more.¹¹ Many of these books contained model letters and conversations intended for the mercantile community. Noel de Berlaimont’s *Vocabulare*, one of the most well-known of these texts, was first published in Antwerp in 1536 and would eventually appear in 56 editions. A copy of the 1540 edition was owned by Kristof Fugger, a member of the famous Augsburg family, who was apprenticed in Antwerp.¹²

The introduction of bills of exchange and other negotiable instruments deepened the mysteries of finance. As a result of the larger trade networks created by fairs and third party agents, much exchange was conducted by absent and/or anonymous moneychangers. Fernand Braudel noted that the Fuggers, the most successful financiers of Europe, complained that “doing business with

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¹¹ Howell, 22.

Genoese meant playing with pieces of paper [mit Papier], whereas they themselves operated with real money.”¹³ Paper, it seems, was not real money; new developments in credit were clearly baffling. According to Braudel, “the juggling of money and bookkeeping to a point where the two became confused, seemed not only complicated but diabolical.”¹⁴ A framework of fairness did not always guarantee a perfect transaction, however: mistakes were, unfortunately, to be expected. With this context in mind, let us turn to how images of money and its stewardship were integral to the cultural fabric of the Netherlands.

4.3. The Roles and Tools of the Trade

Moneychangers were keenly aware of their important role as caretakers of the public trust and they were reminded of their duties every time they opened their weighing boxes. Preserved labels affixed to the inside of these boxes, which contained evaluation weights and scales, displayed exchange rates, coin denominations, and printed reproductions of coin faces. Frequently, they also showed a small visual allegory on the danger of false evaluation: a moneychanger at his table, with coins and balance deployed--next to a specter of Death, observing his every move. A label owned by Francis Martens of Ghent depicts Death with his spear drawn, seemingly ready to plunge it into the weigher at his first error (see figure 27). Underneath the image is a reference to Christ’s parable


¹⁴ Ibid., 471. It was only in the seventeenth century that paper notes became acceptable and autonomous in their value.
of the rich man: “For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known” (Luke 12:3).  

These portable money-weighing boxes frequently appear in Marinus’s paintings. Inside each box were weights and a small, handheld scale. The scales had two triangular platforms or one triangular and one circular platform. The money to be evaluated would be placed on one side of the scale and then balanced with a corresponding weight from the moneychanger’s box (the coin’s worth would be determined by its intrinsic value based on weight). When the scale showed itself to be slightly off-balance, as was often the case, the moneychanger would add small, folded sheets of paper (these frequently appear in the boxes shown in Marinus’s Banker and His Wife scenes. Fifteenth-century counterweights were circular and looked very similar to the coins they evaluated. Square weights were introduced by the early sixteenth century; these fit more readily into the weighing boxes and increased their portability (see figure 28).  

Moneychangers used the fixed locations of weights within their boxes to easily identify their value, usually with handwritten or printed labels affixed to the box’s lid. Thus, the square form became the standard for the next two centuries.

4.4. Conventionalizing the Image of Financial Occupations

Economic historian Raymond de Roover has pointed out that these occupations of financial service (goldweigher, banker, and moneychanger) were

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15 Indeed, the cruelest of criminal punishments -- being boiled alive -- was reserved specifically for false coiners. Léon Voet, Antwerp, the Golden Age. The Rise and Glory of the Metropolis in the Sixteenth Century (Antwerp: Mercatorfonds, 1973), 97.

often one and the same; all three were common duties of the same vocation.\textsuperscript{17}

However, art historians have needlessly disconnected the titles from one another in more recent times. In much art historical literature, discussions about the banker and toll-taker begin with the ancient pictorial ancestor of all Netherlandish moneychanger and banker images in the Netherlands described by Marcantonio Michel, who saw the now-lost painting in the collection of Camillo and Nicolo Lampognano in Milan around 1520. Michel believed he was looking at a panel by Hans Memling; more likely, it was a gold-weigher painted by Van Eyck around 1440.\textsuperscript{18} But because this painting was probably not in Antwerp in the sixteenth century, the local appeal of this image would be properly traced to the version that Quentin Massys painted in 1514. This, of course, is his \textit{Moneychanger and His Wife}, located today in the Louvre (see figure 9).\textsuperscript{19}

This painting, made in the first phase of Antwerp’s growth, shows a banker (or moneychanger) in an office.\textsuperscript{20} With his left hand, he weighs coins on a small scale. A pile of coins of different sizes and values lies on the green, velvet-covered table in front of him. His wife sits at his left, intently watching his actions and fingering a book of hours whose facing page clearly shows an image of the Virgin and Child. On the table between the couple sits a small convex mirror, facing the

\textsuperscript{17} Raymond De Roover, \textit{Money, Banking and Credit in Mediaeval Bruges: Italian Merchant Bankers, Lombards and Money-changers} (Cambridge: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1948), 177-190, 213.


\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Banker (Moneychanger) and His Wife} (1514). Paris, Louvre. Inv. No. 1444; oil on panel; 71 x 68 cm. See Friedländer, \textit{Early Netherlandish Painting}, VII: 24; Larry Silver, \textit{The Paintings of Quinten Massys with Catalogue Raisonné}, (Montclair, NJ: Allanheld & Schram), 211–212.

\textsuperscript{20} Silver, 136–138.
viewer, that reflects an open window. In front of the window, a small figure holds a book. Behind the couple, account books sit on the upper of two shelves that also hold a larger set of scales plus assorted metalwork and glassware. Also in the background, over the wife’s left shoulder, the viewer glimpses another room in which two figures seem to be in conversation.

Multiple interpretations have been assigned to this painting. Max Friedländer, noting that it is “filled with a lofty sadness, like the spirit of an altarpiece,” suggests that the woman appears to be distracted from her prayers by money and the lure of profit—thus she is either worried that her husband has become consumed by the earthly distraction of wealth, or is she herself drawn to the benefits of money. Friedländer concluded that Massys had outlined the contrast between “calculating avarice and concern for salvation.” Larry Silver claimed that the figures are balanced, like the scales in the banker’s hand, within a spectrum of societal conduct “ranging between gossip in the street, visible out the door, to contemplative meditation in a private chamber, visible in the foreground mirror.” The painting once included an inscription on what is believed to have been the original frame, as described by a seventeenth-century viewer: “Just balances, weights ...shall ye have” (Leviticus 19:36). These interpretations pose a choice between temperance and avarice.

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22 Silver, Peasant Scenes and Landscapes: the Rise of Pictorial Genres in the Antwerp Art Market, 74.
23 Alexander van Fornenbergh, Den Antwerpschen Protheus: ofte Cyclophen Apelles; dat is: Het Leven ende Konstrijcke Daden des uyt-nemenden, end Hoogh-beroemden Mr. Q. Matsys (Antwerpen: H. van Soest, 1658), 26-27.
24 The fruit on the shelf in front of the silver platter above the moneychanger’s head may refer to Matthew 7:16, “By their fruit shall ye know them.”
More often, though, this painting is erroneously described as an attack on avaricious behavior. James Snyder described it as a commentary on the movement of societal values away from righteousness to the trappings of wealth brought about by commerce:

Traditional values are here discarded or ignored... Religious ritual and the routine of prayer have been replaced by the monotonous rites of the business world and the gloomy atmosphere that surrounds them seems to reflect the dingy chamber of their worship.\(^2\)

It is highly doubtful that Massys, one of the most famous and financially successful artists of his day, would paint a picture overtly condemning the affairs of business. Rather, Massys shows ambivalence by warning viewers of the possibilities of temptation yet including no explicit commentary. The *Moneychanger and His Wife* should be evaluated according to its context, in which bankers and moneychangers were very much a part of everyday life and possessed, time-honored, difficult skills. The banker should be viewed as an astute financial agent who, despite the potential pitfalls and temptations of worldly gain, focuses on the gravity of his work. He and his wife understand the need for precision, honesty, and, most important, the public benefit of their work. Not everyone (and this includes the conversing people and the man in the convex mirror) capable of meeting the demands of this delicate vocation.

The *Goldweigher*, a less common subject, appears around the same time as Massys’s *Moneychanger and His Wife*. One particular painting of the subject, the *Goldweigher* (c. 1515–1520, figure 29) by Adriaen Isenbrandt (c. 1490 (?))–1551) has been called one of the earliest examples of an occupational

\(^2\) Quoted in Yamey, 46.
What distinguishes this portrait, aside from its obvious formal connection with Massys’s painting, is the lack of accoutrements that might additionally contextualize the sitter’s space. The painting’s construction leaves no room for interpretations that would question the anonymous sitter’s morality, as with many images of goldweighers (and moneychangers). Unlike Massys’s painting, Isenbrandt’s painting appears to be a commissioned portrait; still, perhaps Massys’s should also be viewed as an innocuous genre image in which the duty of the vocation is honored.

When Marinus van Reymerswale revived the subject in late 1530s, he elaborated on several key features of Massys’s painting. An exemplar of his many versions of this painting is the Copenhagen Banker and His Wife from 1538 (figure 30), which is likely the earliest version of the painting in existence.27 Examining the works side by side clearly shows that Marinus has eliminated the references to spiritual probity, most obviously by replacing the prayer book with an account book. This comparison has formed the principal argument that the painting is a criticism of avarice.28 Although it may seem logical, the argument has merit only when the works are compared to one another and fails to consider their original contexts. Nor is there any reason to assume that the two images would have been hung side-by-side in an Antwerp house in 1540. No active

27 Adri Mackor has studied this painting extensively and believes it to be the earliest version in the artist’s oeuvre. Marinus van Reymerswale, Banker and His Wife (1540). Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst, Inv. No. P02567; oil on panel, 83 cm x 97 cm. See Peter van der Coelen, Marjolijn Bol, and Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Images of Erasmus (Rotterdam: Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, 2008).
removal of the prayer book was committed by Marinus; rather, one painting inspired the other. Marinus appropriated Massys's composition, but in no way illustrated a journey from religious piety to abject avarice. It is more likely that the artist visualized the duties of a typical banking official, who filled several important and valuable roles in Antwerp’s commercial community.

Recently uncovered evidence indicates that the painter himself was very knowledgeable about the occupation; possibly he was a banker in the city of Reymerswael. Inscriptions in his paintings refer to individuals who lived in the town; one specifically names a “Marinus Bankhouder,” which may refer to the artist’s second career. It seems less likely that the artist would criticize his own vocation, which suggests the Banker and His Wife is not a satirical critique of business. With its beautiful, crisp details; inscriptions; elaborate costumes; and perfectly rendered interior, there seems to be no indication that this painting is satire—nor does it feature the facial caricatures found in his other paintings. Given the long-established tradition of rendering the grotesque faces popularized in Antwerp by Massys himself, it is reasonable to assume that Marinus would have exaggerated facial features had he been intent on producing satire. Marinus’s fingers, which are spindly and articulate, suggest precision rather than grotesquerie. If the artist intended to present pure satire through the expression of the grotesque and thus to elicit repulsion in his viewers, the couple would

29 Van Werveke, 44.
32 Massy’s image of the Old Man and Old Woman, possibly inspired by Leonardo’s drawings, inspired an entire genre of ill-matched couple images for the next 150 years.
appear more like the so-called *Tax-Collectors* or *Misers* (see figure 31), in which one of the two men looks out at the viewer with a grimace.\textsuperscript{33}

*The Moneychanger and His Wife* seems to have readily appealed to the wealthy mercantile culture of Antwerp. The fine execution of the coins spread across the table in Marinus’s painting (as well as in his *Tax Collectors*) suggests the artist clearly understood a viewer’s (buyer’s) interest in the coins themselves; they are possibly the most appealing detail in the painting given their precise authenticity. Marinus’s coins were copied from a *muntboeck* (a guide moneychangers to identify currencies and values that included printed images of coins).\textsuperscript{34} Although no sixteenth-century *muntboecken* remain, the earliest known example appears in versions of Marinus’s *Tax Collectors* in Munich and Paris. On the upper left-hand shelf above the two men a *muntboeck* label appears, and the word “Ceulen” is clearly written between two illustrations of coin faces (see detail, figure 32).\textsuperscript{35}

*Muntboeken* were developed into books known as *figuerboecken* and *beeldenaers* (figure 33). Their existence proves the vast number of coins, both new and old, that were circulating at any given moment in the sixteenth century. Among the older coins identified in Marinus’s paintings are gold florins minted by Dietrich, archbishop of Cologne (1414–1463), French *écus* (1494–1518); the Swiss *Angel* (1512–1513); the double *real* of Maximilian as Duke of Brabant (1487); coins struck under the reigns of the Bolognese tyrant Giovanni II

\textsuperscript{33} The most well-promoted version of the painting is in the collection of the National Gallery in London. See Campbell, *The Early Flemish Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*, 115.

\textsuperscript{34} Van Werveke, 50–52.

\textsuperscript{35} The coins in question date from 1437 to 1460 and were issued from the Archbishop of Cologne Diedrich von Meurs. See Huiskamp, 18.
Bentivoglio (1492–1506) and Federigo II Gonzaga of Mantua (1462–1506); and various papal coins. It has been noted that at times coins were depicted as gold when they were actually silver, or as sliver when they were gold. These historical discrepancies affirm that the artist consulted a coin manual showing iconographic details rather than relying upon known metal content. Furthermore, the artist’s own experience as a banker or moneychanger lends itself to a precise rendition of the currencies. After all, the necessity of distinguishing currencies from one another was the reason the vocation existed.

Marinus’ most frequently copied everyday life subject, the Misers, has been the object of ongoing debate. This painting has been also called Tax Collectors, The Bankers, and Banker and His Client. The money spread across the table in these paintings, as if for the viewer to closely examine, possibly served a number of purposes: it could be the payment of lifetime annuities [lijfrenten] collected on behalf of a municipality; they could be excise taxes; they could be a bank deposit; or they could be coins presented for conversion into local currency. Whatever the case, it is believed that this painting was (once again) inspired by a now-lost original by Quentin Massys. Support for this argument appears in the 1615 deposition of the painter Hans van den Bossche, who claimed to have seen an image of the Tollenaers made by Massys in the

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36 Campbell, The Early Flemish Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen, 114.
37 Huiskamp, 18.
38 Mackor, 195.
39 Based on the particular interpretation, the same painting has been assigned numerous titles. See Friedländer, Early Netherlandish Painting; Vlam and Moxey, ”The Criticism of Avarice in Sixteenth Century Netherlandish Painting”; and Leo van Puyvelde, ”Un Portrait de Marchand par Quentin Metsys et les Percepteurs d’Impôts par Marin van Reymerswale,” Revue Belge d’Archéologie et d’Histoire de l’Art 26 (1957). See also Silver, The Paintings of Quinten Massys with Catalogue Raisonné.
home of the mayor of Antwerp. We have no way of knowing if the painting described was in fact the *Moneychanger and His Wife* or the *Misers*; however, we do know that the painting depicting Nicholas Rockox’s home by Frans Francken the Younger (figure 34) clearly shows the Marinus painting now called *The Moneychanger and His Wife*. Van den Bossche, among others, sought to add more prestige to the collection via the logical assumption that the painting had been made by Quentin Massys. Nonetheless, following the argument of Lorne Campbell, it seems very unlikely that Massys once painted a version that was later copied by other artists. Campbell believes that the Windsor Castle *Tax Gatherers*, painted by Marinus van Reymerswaele, is indeed the original upon which all others have been based.

With the exception of the artist’s paintings of Saint Jerome, his so-called *Tax Gatherers* was the most frequently replicated painting in his oeuvre; some 60 extant copies are known today. Every version, whether a poorly executed copy or a replica, shows two men sitting in a paneled office. One man, wrinkly and shriveled, firmly holds a pencil and writes carefully in his ledger. To his left, the other man grimaces at the viewer and, depending on the version, gestures with his hand either toward the ledger or the money. The versions in Munich, London [National Gallery], Hampton Court, Madrid, and Antwerp differ in subtle ways. The clothing, namely the hats that each figure wears, ranges from the outrageous

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41 Jean Denucé, *De Antwerpsche "Konstkamers." Inventarissen van Kunstverzamelingen te Antwerpen in de 16e en 17e Eeuwen* (Amsterdam: De Spiegel, 1932), 28, 133.
42 This issue was discussed at length in Chapter 3.
43 Campbell, *The Early Flemish Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*, 114–115.
44 However, Silver believes the subject was invented by Quentin Massys and has argued that a recently discovered painting is debated is the prototype. Larry Silver, “Massys and Money: The Rediscovered Tax Collectors” (Lecture, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, The Hague, 23 Jan 2009).
red turbans in the Madrid and Hampton Court versions to the more subdued black headpieces seen in Munich. The position of the sneering second figure changes as well. These basic differences likely affected the painting’s visual appeal but did not change its meaning. The meaning, or multiple meanings, of the paintings are brought forward in the ledger inscriptions.

In the London [National Gallery] version, the inscription reads “These are the receipts of the city” and lists the amount of money received for taxes on wine, beer, ferries, weigh houses, and milling.\textsuperscript{45} It is likely that this particular account book refers specifically to the city of Reymerswael.\textsuperscript{46} Other versions of the painting include the same sort of inscriptions. In the Munich painting, the statement appears in French (“Sensuz le payement de la Gabelle de lan 1549...Item, la Gabelle du vin...”), indicating a Francophone audience.\textsuperscript{47} In the Hampton Court version, the account book records that these are the receipts for a certain Nicola Dati and expresses differing values in various currencies: escudos, daelders, ducats de Italie, and angelots, which are all converted into schellingen. Van Werveke, who found that the conversion rates date the painting from between 1548 and 1551, believed that “Nicola Dati” may refer to a wealthy Italian merchant Niccolo Deodati, who was known to have been in Antwerp in the 1550s.\textsuperscript{48} Whatever the case, whether inscribed in French or Dutch, the texts suggest that the ledgers could be completed by the buyer, or at least customized.

\textsuperscript{46} See discussion in Basil S. Yamey, \textit{Art & Accounting} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 51.
\textsuperscript{47} Campbell, \textit{The Early Flemish Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen}, 116.
\textsuperscript{48} The artist was known to change names in paintings based on whether the person was living or had died, as in his two versions of \textit{The Lawyer’s Office}. On the Deodati, see Goris, 641 and Puttevils, 162. On the inscriptions, see Van Werveke, 50–52.
at the point of sale. Extant versions of the *Tax Collectors* bearing no inscriptions at all further indicate that the text was added at a later point.

Because these images name both the currency conversions and most frequently specify the collection of taxes on behalf of a city, the notion that the two individuals shown in the painting are “miser” should be rejected. The man writing is in fact under the obligation of the city, and is depicted as a representative of the city’s treasury, rather than an agent for his own financial gain. The grimacing figure can be then interpreted as a warning to the viewer of the dangers of intemperance, as are the Death figures on the weighing-boxes. More generally, he is a farcical representation of the universal yet loathsome obligation to pay taxes.

4.5. *Temperantia versus Avaricia*

The theme of temperance was familiar both in the tax collector paintings and in print. Pieter Bruegel the Elder’s print *Temperance* (1560, figure 35), from his series on the Seven Virtues, confirms his familiarity with Marinus’s invention.49 The script below describes the theme: “We must look to it that, in the devotion to sensual pleasures, we do not become wasteful and luxuriant, but also

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that we do not, because of miserly greed, live in filth and ignorance.” In this print a female allegorical figure of Temperantia stands with reins and a bridle, a spur on her right foot. Together, these symbols illustrate the need for control and reason. She stands on a sail of a windmill and a clock sits on her head, two overt indications that activity is regular and should be measured. Around her, people engage in everyday activities relating to measuring and care; among these are musical performances, archery, education (the development of alphabetical skills), and wheel-making. Together, these represent the seven liberal arts as defined during the Renaissance: Grammar, Arithmetic, Music, Rhetoric, Dialectic, Geometry, and Astronomy. In the lower left-hand corner of the engraving, a banker (representing Arithmetic) sits at a table (figure 36). Near him, three figures perform mathematical calculations. One sits, writing Arabic numerals on a board with paper; another writes hash marks on a bellows; and the other counts what appear to be coins (perhaps counters) on a banking table. This final character is the most telling. With his left hand, he thumbs through an account book; with his right he counts coins. There are no scales here—the man must rely on his own arithmetical skills to find balance. He is dressed in familiar costume, including a turban that virtually replicates those found in multiple versions of Marinus’s Tax Collectors and Moneychanger and His Wife. Given Pieter the Elder’s use of popular imagery, we can conclude that these visual cues were highly legible.

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A more precise interpretation of this allegory would identify the man at the table as the most honest and dutiful of the three figures. While the others are literate, and assiduously write their numbers, only he has an account book (which he is checking against his coins). He is careful and measured. However, the bellows upon which the central figure is writing allude to the emptiness upon which such calculations are based. Bruegel’s use of the bellows literally illustrates that marks upon the proverbial air come to be worthless. Likewise, the other figure writes upon an empty page, signaling that he will not pay. Both figures may allude to a well-known seventeenth-century saying, noted by Bax: “In place of money, he writes his accounts on a bellows and blank paper.” In other words, only the man who understands the tools of the art of accounting can perform the task of accounting with precision. Bruegel’s appropriation of this subject literally illustrates the popular sixteenth-century interpretation of the tax collector: all three figures perform their duties with aplomb. Likewise, Marinus’s tax collectors are emblems of virtuous behavior in the face of temptation. They are not denunciations of avarice; instead they evince the critical importance of balance, both literally and figuratively.

The metaphorical connection between the use of scales to determine correct monetary value and the virtue of temperance in conducting business was not lost upon sixteenth-century eyes. One example is Jost Amman’s largest print

project, *The Allegory of Commerce*, printed in Nuremberg in 1585 (figure 37).\(^{52}\) The print comprises six large woodcuts, measures 1085 mm x 732 mm, and is packed full of vignettes and allegories explaining the practices and the virtues of commerce. At its center Mercury perches above Antwerp, holding a huge balance that is labeled in a large banderole stretched across the sky. Surrounding Mercury are the signs of the zodiac and the crests of the principal cities of commerce in Europe. The scale’s arms hold two huge books with banderoles that read: “DEBITOR” and “CREDITOR.” Across the fulcrum arm of the balance an inscription announces: “If the two sides of the Scales are equal, the balance [of the books] is good.”\(^{53}\) Between the balance’s pans stands Fortuna, holding a set of wings in one hand and a tortoise shell in the other. Placed together, these two figures emblematize the concept of temperance.\(^{54}\)

The idea of measured fortune is illustrated everywhere in the woodcut’s *horror vacui*. More than a dozen ships with open sails float upon the river Schelde, which flows across the center of the illustration, while beside them others sink below the waves. Merchants and their shipments are visible in the foreground, but some goods are being stolen in front of their (and our) eyes. Linking the upper and lower halves of the print is a pillar upon which is written *CIRCUMSTANTLÆ*. The lower half of the image contains multiple scenes of business, the center of which is a niche-like space featuring a large volume labeled *SECRETORUM LIBER* (the private record book of the merchant or


\(^{53}\) “Die Wag sich sein vergleichen thut, / Jm Bschlusz einer Bilanza gut.”

\(^{54}\) For an extended description of this woodcut, see Yamey, 116, 117.
bookkeeper): “I am called the Secret / My master entrusts me to no one / because he keeps his business secret to himself.” This “secret book” is central not only to the composition but also to the conducting of business, in that the client must trust the many, varied abilities of the merchant or accountant. By outlining the responsibilities of the merchant throughout the composition, from fair money exchange and keeping good records to maintaining good linguistic skills, Amman charged the merchant to maintain high standards and to be fair to the public. When all of these factors are in perfect balance, success arrives and fairness reigns. Therefore, temperance is fundamental to commerce.

4.6. Ordinances Affecting Antwerp’s Financial Markets

Meticulously constructed visual narratives of successful commerce in Antwerp notwithstanding, economic realities were quite challenging for the majority of the middle decades of the sixteenth century. Business was a journey fraught with difficulty, and insecurity permeated every aspect of the economy. Many of these difficulties emanated from sources both expected and unexpected, acute and chronic. Chapter 1 briefly reviewed the financial slump in Antwerp in the 1520s and 1530s that resulted from Habsburg wars in France and revolts in Germany and Spain. To fight the rise in poverty, financial problems, and the resulting social unrest, and also to guarantee valuable liquid assets, Charles V

55 “Das Secret werd genennet ich / mein Heer keinem vertrawet mich / Weil er sein sach ghaim helt bey sich.”
57 See discussion in Chapter 1, section 1.3.
attempted to secure fluctuating commodity prices and manipulated credit transactions to create a more stable financial environment. The emperor and his regent imposed new taxes between 1541 and 1547 that were especially demanding of Antwerp, which comprised 30% of the entire tax base of the Netherlands. In fact, Flanders and Brabant contributed 52% of all revenue in the Seventeen Provinces between 1540 and 1548. These damaging policies, initiated as experimental controls over the changing shape of commercial activity in Antwerp, inadvertently impeded innovation and probably forced a more conservative approach to doing business.

4.6.1. Currency Manipulation and Taxes

Even as Charles V streamlined mercantile activity by establishing standardized coinage based on specific weights, his financial policies unintentionally crippled commerce by showing “complete incomprehension of the quantitative law of money, that is, that coined money follows the law of supply and demand.” Together with increased tax burdens, this agenda exerted pressure on not only business and substantially impeded Antwerp’s ability to maintain its financial well-being.

Charles manipulated the prices of gold and silver at several points during his reign. In late 1527, during the height of the Valois-Habsburg wars, he artificially buoyed silver at an unreasonably high rate to encourage its use (and

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value). Gold was held at about 10% below its actual exchange rate, which in effect brought it down to its 1521 evaluation. This devaluation was done partly in an effort to capitalize on the import of silver from Zacatecas (and later, from Potosí) in order to maintain funds for warfare. In 1539, two more 5% reductions of gold coin to silver attempted to achieve the same effect. But instead, favorable French exchange rates drove gold currency into France; the ensuing gold coin shortage drove interest rates upward. The devaluation also made imported goods much more difficult to sell in Antwerp. Local commodities became cheaper while imported staples like grain became more expensive. The Easter fairs of 1538 and 1539 in Bergen-op-Zoom were disastrous: not only was it impossible to draw bills of exchange, people hoarded gold in hopes that the devaluation would not continue. Public sentiment was so pronounced that the merchant Frederick Van Der Molen wrote that the “entire community stands in difference” to the policies. Unfortunately for Charles, actual exchange rates rose as silver flooded the market. His gold and silver revaluation policies wrought precisely the opposite effect he had intended.

62 Ibid., 117.
64 According to Van der Molen, writing to his clients in Italy (24 May 1539): “Le comunità stano in differentia con la Regina [Margaret of Austria as Regent] perché vorebano che lassesse corer li ori chome vano hora et allegano che tutti li ori andarla for à del paexe, e finchê non s’acordano tutti li principe qui vicini, non se potrà far valutacione che duri...”. Quoted in ibid., 669.
65 Although these disastrous policies caused serious problems, they also encouraged the development of new credit practices. Between 1537 and 1541, the majority of Antwerp’s financial transactions were executed via bills of exchange, which alleviated the need for cash. such bills were used particularly in wholesale trades because they simplified international deals. The phrase “payable to bearer” made them transferable from creditor to creditor and alleviated the need for ongoing endorsements. Although these developments were initially welcomed as ways to bridge income gaps, they did little to solve the problem of rising poverty because cash itself became a scarce commodity. See Van Der Wee, *The Low Countries in the Early Modern World*, 187–195.
The 1540s were marked by repeated failures to control financial exchange. In response to financial agents who found ways to skirt his manipulative monetary policies, Charles issued three edicts in quick succession that banned the use of foreign currencies, forced cash payments for bills of exchange at a rate of 3.5% interest, and required all pawn and credit brokers to obtain the oath of a third party notary for any transaction. However, his justification of “daily abuses” by the brokers actually increased the number of pawnbrokers and notaries in the city.66

In December 1541 the emperor issued another well-intentioned but ultimately disastrous policy.67 This ordinance stipulated that all bills of exchange were to be paid in two-thirds gold and one-third silver. The measure was designed to increase the amount of precious metals in the Netherlands, but had the opposite effect: merchants stopped using bills of exchange and did not buy goods on credit. Indeed, the Factor of the King of Portugal protested—correctly—that compliance would drain the Netherlands of its gold.

These currency manipulations were handed down alongside ever-increasing tax burdens, a combination that further increased the financial stress of the city’s inhabitants and corroded the public face of those involved in financial exchange as well as tax collection. The latter proved to be as acute as monetary policies, since taxes directly affected almost every member of society.

66 By the 1580s there were more than 1,000 notaries in the city. See Kint, 74. As described by city secretary Jan Grapheus (23 Nov 1541): “Ordonnantie ende statuyt ...ende voor een eeuwich edict wtghgeeven, Soe opt stuck van ... Retour .... oock desghelijcx opt abuys vander officien oft handel van makelaerdien." Stadsarchief Antwerpen, Antwerpsch Archievenblad, 39 vols. (Antwerpen: Guil. Van Merlen, Stadsdrukker, 1864) (1931), 140. See also Edler, "The effects of the financial measures of Charles V on the commerce of Antwerp 1539-1542," 672.

67 Antwerpsch Archievenblad, 149.
Accordingly, between 1543 and 1545 a tenth-penny tax was levied on exported goods and another small fee on property income. An additional tax on wine and beer in Brabant was levied between 1543 and 1549; other tax rates were increased to pay for massive fortifications and hugely expensive urban renewal projects.68

Virtually all of these taxes were initiated to offset rising, war-related deficits in the Imperial treasury, which Brabanters shouldered for the majority of four decades (1515–1517, 1521–25, and 1526–28, including skirmishes throughout the 1530s and full-scale wars in 1542 and 1544).69 The year 1542 was especially difficult, given Charles’s hard-fought battle to acquire Guelders and to protect Antwerp from the forces of Maarten van Rossem, who laid siege to the city in July and August.70 As with many of the tax efforts, the funds generated by this one did not cover expenses until peace with France was restored in 1544.71

These difficult financial problems persisted until the end of the 1540s. Charles


69 Charles V knew that despite a succession of smaller taxes throughout his reign, Antwerp would not openly complain. However, several guilds had rebelled against what they viewed as unfair taxation in 1539–40, actions which caused the emperor to return to his home city of Ghent with an army of 5,000. Following the guilds’ wishes, the city had not imposed the Emperor’s tax. In response, the Concessio Carolina had stripped the city of its privileges and property. Charles himself publicly humiliated the city’s administration, beheaded 25, and punished 60 others. Jonathan Israel observed that Ghent’s experience warned other cities to not resist new mandates from the emperor (39, 55). Maintaining a firm grip on the Netherlands meant that taxes were often levied on one of the most profitable territories of the empire. As Israel noted, revenues increased fivefold during Charles V’s reign, with Flanders and Brabant contributing 52% of the revenue of all the 17 provinces under Hapsburg rule from 1540 to 1548. See Jonathan I. Israel, The Dutch Republic: its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477-1806, Oxford History of Early Modern Europe (Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 39-55.

70 J.C. Van der Does, Maarten Van Rossem: de glorieuze legeraanvoerder (Utrecht: Kemink, 1943).

71 While isolated battles lingered on, both sides were forced to acknowledge that each was financially unable to continue to wage war, and 1557 under the helm of Phillip II, a peace treaty was signed with the Valois. See Hugo Soly and Willem Pieter Blockmans, Charles V, 1500-1558, and His Time (Antwerp: Mercatorfonds, 1999).
relaxed his reactionary monetary policies by 1548, which paved the way for the successes of the 1550s.

4.7. Concluding Remarks

Given the many adverse developments that affected Antwerp’s financial enterprises during the second quarter of the sixteenth century, it is indeed remarkable that the city’s economy fared as well as it did. Against this background it is no coincidence that images of moneychangers and bankers were produced in great numbers in the late 1530s and 1540s; they provided a fitting visual parallel to the anxieties surrounding mercantile and financial activity. That the celebrations of money and coin began a decade after the paintings of tax collectors and bankers were introduced also makes sense: by the 1550s, chronic financial hardships began to enter the public’s collective memory. Visual culture clearly indicated that business and the fortunes it could create was an embattled enterprise, permeated with risk—and, moreover, that the battles and risks were well known.

The development of legal standards for trade, both the good and bad ones, marks the intersection of commerce and the regulatory environment. The following chapter explores parallel incursions into Antwerp’s business and civic traditions within the realm of law. Although this new enterprise was conceived as a modernized legal framework to be built around existing commercial constructs, expanded legal authority was seen as an encroachment to both daily and communal life.
PART III:

LEGAL REFORM AND NEW IMAGERY IN THE NETHERLANDS
Chapter Five
Law, Reform, and Their Discontents

5.1 Introduction

As the primary economic, political, and cultural center of the Netherlands in the sixteenth century, the city of Antwerp is exceptionally well documented in images. Among these, Marinus Van Reymerswaele’s *Lawyer’s Office* (1542) presented a subject never before depicted in the history of art. For many years it was thought to be a painting of a tax collector’s office, illustrating a Protestant public’s warnings against avarice; however, the artist’s explicit depictions of documents related to real-life lawsuits reveal a more complex narrative. (For example, the fat lawyer speaking to clients who finger their purse imparts a satirical message about greed.) Although this painting’s messages may seem obvious today, in its time it comprised a completely new image of everyday life that communicated readily with the public.¹

Beyond its artistic importance, the painting operates on several historical and social levels. The image is not only a subject with which the artist himself was intimately familiar, it was also a timely subject in a changing Netherlandish political and social sphere.² For example, the number of law students studying at

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¹ The degree to which the artist replicated legal documents as well as the accoutrements of the profession is telling. The prevalence of these visual cues strongly indicates the artist’s intimate knowledge of legal procedures, or at least access to documents connected with particular cases. His excellent awareness of Latin, however, suggests a privileged upbringing and possibly legal training. Evidence does indicate that he studied law in Leuven; a “Marinus Nicolaj de Romerswalis Traiectensis Diocesis” was enrolled as early as 1504. That probably would have been his first year of law study, prior to the beginning of his training as a painter in Antwerp in 1509. Whether the artist completed these studies is not known, but his name appears in the Liber Tertius Intitulatorum 1485-1526. See Adri Mackor, ”Marinus van Reymerswale: Banker, Lawyer, and Iconoclast?,” *Oud Holland* 109, no. 4 (1995), 193.
² Ibid., 192–194.
Leuven increased twentyfold between 1490 and 1550. This increase is not surprising, considering that the invention of the particular discipline of legal studies, and its connection to Antwerp, coincided with a historical shift in the conception of governance and law that affected life there on a grand scale. In the first half of the sixteenth century (particularly the 1530s and 1540s), Netherlandish society experienced unprecedented changes in its legal system and political structure in addition to the financial growing pains already experienced by the city as it struggled to fulfill its economic promise. Similarly, the legal system endeavored to adjust to this new environment. Although Antwerp’s markets helped define capitalism *avant la lettre*, bureaucratic and legal frameworks struggled to accommodate the changing economic climate. For his part, Charles V completely reorganized the legal system of the Netherlands in addition to the incursions into Antwerp’s economy discussed above.

These changes launched a radical departure from longstanding traditions of judicial order and authority. Over the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Habsburg imperial authorities initiated a sweeping conversion policy within their vast territories that transformed legal codes, institutions, and traditions into a modern federalized system. This centralization marked the end of medieval notions of feudal society and urban autonomy in favor of a legal system based on the transterritorial nature of Roman law. Within this newly modernized system, local customs deeply rooted in civic identity were forcefully codified and longstanding relationships between rulers and subjects were violated. In wealthy Flanders and Brabant, localized legal traditions that had

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been in place for as many as 500 years were instantly marginalized. Henri Pirenne related that “burghers found themselves face to face with a state of affairs completely different from every point of view from that which had, during four centuries, determined their interests, aims, and social institution.” As the financial center of the Netherlands, Antwerp was permanently altered.

Citizens of Antwerp, whether rich or poor, believed their very way of life was threatened by the new civic structure and authority that became evident as the city began to be absorbed into a centralized state. Sweeping changes also threatened to upset the city’s autonomy as well as its own political and social well-being. As a visual response to these changes, *The Lawyer’s Office* was both a timely and measured response to the menace of major governmental and social upheaval in the Netherlands—and most especially in Antwerp. The painting is itself a commentary on the intrusion of imperial authority into city business, a response to the overhauled legal system, and a reaction to the academic jurist whose monopoly on justice seemed so unfair and disrespectful to the city’s traditions.

The process of homologation, conceived under the Burgundian Dukes but not realized until the middle of the sixteenth century, was a hard-fought struggle. Since Phillip the Good (ruled 1419-1467) and his son Charles the Bold (ruled 1467-1477), the cities of the Netherlands had stood firm against exactly these types of policies. Tensions between regional autonomy and centralizing authority gave rise to fears that Netherlandish cities would lose their identities along with

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their privileges. Proud Antwerp, which stood to lose the most, stonewalled in spite of repeated requests from the Habsburg government. After years of avoiding the emperor’s demands, by 1547 the fears had proven to be unwarranted; the fragmented, feudal laws of both Flanders and Brabant largely survived the homologation process, although the domains of the “Freedom of Antwerp” (the villages surrounding the city) lost their customs (to Antwerp’s benefit). The largest cities (except for the Flemish cities of Ghent, Kortrijk, Oudenaarde, and Geraardsbergen) generally maintained their particular customs and yielded little to their surrounding domains. As a result, Antwerp ceded little of its autonomy to centralization. The city’s economic strength and growing population (approximately 80,000 by 1550) were likely the major factors that contributed to its survival of the codification process.

Nevertheless, the new legal system brought with it a new type of jurist—one who could familiarize himself with mandated legislation and newly codified laws. An entirely new conception of law, and the place of law in society, created an atmosphere of confusion and even anger on the streets of Brabant. Suddenly a citizen’s town was not entirely his own; even worse, the rules by which he was expected to live were no longer clear. Hence, while the lawyer functioned as a much-needed counsel, interpreter, and guide, and thus a fundamental component of the new legal and legislative system, he also became a

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5 On the Vrijheid van Antwerpen, see Voet, 82–91.
7 John Gilissen, La rédaction des coutumes dans le passé et dans le présent: colloque organisé les 16 et 17 mai 1960 par le Centre d'Histoire et d'Ethnologie Juridiques, Études d'Histoire et d'Ethnologie Juridiques (Bruxelles: Université Libre de Bruxelles, Institut de Sociologie, 1962), 93.
8 The same could not be said of Leuven and Brussels, which fared poorly in the process.
symbol of obligation to authority and ignorance of longstanding local traditions, as well as a surrogate for political overbearance.

The importance of this transformation, and its associated processes, cannot be overstated. Although the late medieval legal and bureaucratic model presents an alien landscape to modern eyes, it must be understood in terms of what “law” was and how its definitions were deliberately altered over the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Fundamental to the legal systems of the twentieth century is the notion that laws are committed to paper; in practice, this means that anyone can consult the exact wording of a law for any reason and can also consult a lawyer to cite laws, interpret them, re-interpret them, and so forth. Whatever the case, the intention is to preserve transparency within a vast judicial system. These ideas were born, and forced onto society in the name of modernization, during the sixteenth century. As Braudel noted, Antwerp “suffered severely at the height of her powers” as a result of the Habsburg government.9 This chapter explores the dramatic changes to the Netherlands’ legal system under the Habsburgs as well as their social ramifications, and offers expository evidence of what The Lawyer’s Office meant to a viewer in 1542.

5.2 The Changing Legal Landscape

The tension over the reorganization of legal system of the Low Countries began at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Duke Philip the Good (1396–1467) had first altered localized legal systems to benefit all of the diverse territories in the Burgundian Netherlands. While he was generally sensitive to

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regional issues, he could not avoid the challenge of maintaining ultimate authority over his domains. His acquisition of Hainault, Holland, Zeeland, Namur, and Brabant between 1427 and 1430 foregrounded the need for both regional sensitivity and a centralized bureaucracy.\(^{10}\) Nonetheless, any efforts to consolidate or even streamline the justice system would have to take the vast numbers of local customary laws into account. A new system would also need to function as a centralized legislating structure for new laws as well as an interjurisdictional appellate body.\(^{11}\)

5.2.1 Unwritten Law Becomes Written

Like his great-great-grandfather, Duke Charles of Habsburg (Emperor Charles V) sought to strengthen the cohesion of his territories. He instituted this massive consolidation through the codification of customary laws and the professionalization of the jurist. His first major effort at centralizing laws is crucial to understanding the changing conception of law and what such changes meant for people living under Habsburg control in the sixteenth century. On 6 October 1531, Charles issued an ordinance \([\textit{placard/plakkat}]\) for all local and regional authorities to codify and homologize their customary laws and submit them within six months:\(^{12}\)


\(^{11}\) Ibid., 91–93.

\(^{12}\) City and provincial customs were not fully homologated until 1732; in Flanders, cities were not fully homologated until 1627. Charles Laenens, \textit{De Geschiedenis van het Antwerps Gerecht} (Antwerpen: P. Van de Velde, 1953), 13. See also Gilissen, \textit{La rédaction des coutumes dans le passé et dans le présent: colloque organisé les 16 et 17 mai 1960 par le Centre d'Histoire et d'Ethnologie Juridiques}, 90.
The task of writing customary laws fell to the local administrative authorities of large cities, small villages, and rural districts within the domain of cities. In Antwerp, this entity was the Magistracy. Charles’ directive stated that customs must be “reduced and written down by hand, that is to say, by people of law of every town, large and small, of our country...”14 Guicciardini estimated that in 1567 there were 208 walled towns, 150 unwalled settlements and over 7500 villages spread across the Netherlands.15 For every 100 customs of any typical city, there were some 500 other customs for the villages and the countryside.16 Codifying all of these laws was an enormous, highly complex task.

To accommodate this almost unimaginably extensive process, Charles set up several councils in his government. First, he conferred ultimate judicial authority upon his highest court of law, the Grand Council of Mechelen (which had been re-established by Philip the Fair in 1504).17 Next, in 1531, Charles built

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13 “pour les visiter et dûment examiner, et sur icelles avoir l'avis des gens de nos consaulx provinciaux et autres que besoin sera; et à bonne et mûre délibération de conseil, résoudre et ordonner de ces dites coutumes et de l'observance d'icelles, selon que, en équité et raison et pour le plus grand bien, utilité, et commodité de bis vassaux et sujets sera trouvé appartenir.” Commission Royale pour la Publication des Anciennes Lois et Ordonnances de la Belgique, Liste Chronologique des Édits et Ordonnances des Pays-Bas, Règne de Charles-Quint (1506-1555) (Bruxelles: F. Gobbaerts, imprimeur du roi, 1885), I:753.
14 “…reduites et rédigées par escript assavoir par les officiers et gens des loix de toutes les villes de nosdits pays, grandes et petites” Gilissen, La rédaction des coutumes dans le passé et dans le présent: colloque organisé les 16 et 17 mai 1960 par le Centre d'Histoire et d'Ethnologie Juridiques, 92.
15 Cited in Voet, 61.
16 Gilissen, La rédaction des coutumes dans le passé et dans le présent: colloque organisé les 16 et 17 mai 1960 par le Centre d'Histoire et d'Ethnologie Juridiques, 94.
17 In 1435, Philip the Good first established a peripatetic Grand Council [Grote Raad] that would function as the highest court in the land. The council, which existed as a judicial body throughout
three “collateral” councils to function as the nerve centers of the centralization process and also to oversee all of his governmental affairs: the Council of State [Conseil d’État], the Council of Finance [Conseil des Finances], and the Privy Council [Conseil Privé]. The Grand Council generally did not participate in the codification process. As a purely judicial body, however, at times it was

his reign, was conceived as an independent body apart from his court, both physically and politically. Its chief functions were to maintain legal authority under Philip’s ongoing expansionist policy and to act as superior appellate body over all his domains (these doubled in size during his reign, eventually including Brabant, Cambrai, Friesland, Hainault, Holland, Liège, Limburg, Luxembourg, and Zeeland, as well as feudal dependencies and cities). Upon Philip’s death in 1467, both the Grand Council and all of Philip’s territories passed to his son, Charles the Bold. Whereas Philip’s territories had constantly expanded, Charles’ domains changed and even were lost. Nevertheless, Charles augmented his legal authority by reintroducing the Grote Raad as the Parlement van Mechelen in 1473. The Council, which had a permanent, central location in the Burgundian domain, would be a seigniory independent of Brabant and Flanders, the largest and most economically powerful territories of the Burgundy. Historians have viewed Charles’s Parlement as a means for the Duke to signal his power as equal to that of his longtime rival Louis XI of France, who oversaw the Parlement de Paris as his kingdom’s highest court. This significance is probable because the Parlement de Paris also claimed jurisdictional authority over Ghent, Valenciennes, and Artois. The first description of the evolution of the Grote Raad and Parlement is Filips Wielant, Recueil des Antiquités de Flandre, in J. J. De Smet, ed., Corpus Chronicorum Flandriae (Bruxelles: M. Hayez, 1865), 133–159. The best resource on the Grand Council and the Parlement van Mechelen is Jan Van Rompaey, "De Grote Raad van de Hertogen van Boergondie en Het Parlement van Mechelen," Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België XXXV (1973). After Charles the Bold’s death in 1477, much territory and centralizing organs of state were lost; however, the old Burgundian lands were absorbed into the larger Hapsburg territories with with the crowning of Charles V in 1515. See C. H. Van Rhee, Civil Procedure at the First Instance in the Great Council for the Netherlands in Malines (1522-1559) (Brussels: Archives Générales du Royaume /Algemeen Rijksarchief, 1997), 9. During the relative peace under the reign of Philip the Fair and Juana of Castile, the Habsburgs were able to slowly reinstate some of the givebacks made by Mary of Burgundy in 1477 under the Great Concession. The most noteworthy of these “reversals” were the 14 articles submitted by Philip on 22 January 1504 that reestablished a permanent home for the council at the Alderman’s House of Mechelen. Under the regency of Margaret of Austria, this became the Grote Raad van Mechelen. The institution would remain the principal court of law in the Netherlands until the French Revolutionary Régime of 1794–98. See Louis Théo Maes, Het Parlement en de Grote Raad van Mechelen, 1473-1797 (Antwerpen: De Vries-Brouwers, 2008), 75.


19 The councilors of the Grand Council were local authorities (usually ex-aldermen) and ducal (imperial) appointees. The council functioned as a legislating body, a court of first instance, and an appellate court that offered litigants the opportunity to challenge the verdicts of local aldermen’s courts, as well as to appeal the decisions of regional authorities such as the Councils of Flanders and Holland. It was also a venue for foreign nonresidents to litigate at first instance as they were not allowed to consult local judicial forums. While the intention was to provide a
responsible for the review of customary laws for areas outside of provincial authorities, such as Mechelen, Lille, and the Terres de Débat. The Privy Council, which although comprised of academic jurists was not a judicial body but rather a resource for questions related to justice, directly oversaw the codification process. This council was the first editorial board for customary laws. Customs that had been written down by cities were sent to this council, which received and edited them, and then forwarded them to the emperor.

5.2.2 The Weight of Custom

Each local population had adopted its own laws that were specific to unique civic customs and identities. These laws, known as Ius Proprium, existed alongside the more generalized Ius Commune and included city privileges as well as laws resulting from particular cases. Ius Proprium were established, and to some degree dictated, by customs and traditions that may have been hundreds of years old. Together, the Ius Proprium and the Ius Commune made up custom—and in the fifteenth century, custom was the law. This familiar system

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singular authority for disputes, the council’s existence also meant that competing parties seeking justice could bypass local and regional courts—a factor that would significantly weaken the power of local authority (Van Rhee, 3–34). See also Oscar Gelderblom, “The Resolution of Commercial Conflicts in Bruges, Antwerp, and Amsterdam 1250–1650,” Working Paper, (Utrecht University /IISH, 2005), 16. The council did not hold appellate power over all territories, nor could it overturn judgments in some types of cases from Brabant, Hainault, Utrecht, and Guelders, because each of these had its own sovereign court. See Blockmans and Prevenier, The Promised Lands: the Low Countries under Burgundian Rule, 1369-1530, 119. See also Van Rhee, 9–14 and 27–51.

20 Gilissen, La rédaction des coutumes dans le passé et dans le présent: colloque organisé les 16 et 17 mai 1960 par le Centre d'Histoire et d'Ethnologie Juridiques, 100.
21 Gilissen, Introduction Historique au Droit, 294.
dictated local traditions and manners. Writing in 1512, the Flemish jurist Filips Wielant (1441–1520) defined custom as

... an unwritten law introduced by usages and acts continually repeated by members of the community and which have served publicly, without contradiction by the majority of the populace, for the period of time necessary for prescription.

Charles’s ordinance required each city to write down all of its customs and subject them to imperial review. To the modern reader, homologation of customary law may seem benign—merely a written version of longstanding traditions. But to the early modern mind, custom lost fluidity when confined to written form; moreover, homologized laws were no longer a city’s to interpret. After being committed to paper and publicly announced at the Vierschaar, the city’s highest criminal court, customs were declared permanent. They were

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24 Wielant was appointed Councilor at the Parlement of Mechelen by Charles the Bold in 1473 and after 1477 became Master of Request at the Grand Council under Mary of Burgundy. Because he was opposed to regional particularism, Maximilian appointed him mayor of the Liberty of Bruges [Brugse Vrije] in 1478. In 1504 he was appointed grand Council of Mechelen, where he would remain until his death in 1520. See Véronique Lambert, "Chronicles of Flanders 1200-1500. Chronicles written Independently from ‘Flandria Generosa’," Verhandelingen der Maatschaappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent XIX (1993), 149.


26 The Vierschaar, comprised of the city council, functioned as a court of law with the addition of the schout [sheriff] who was the representative of the duke. As the highest local court, its verdicts could not traditionally be appealed. It dealt with the most serious crimes in which the accused faced torture or death. Cases required that a majority of council members be present along with the schout, who acted as the public prosecutor and presented the accused to the court. The name vierschaar refers to the court of law itself as well as the building in which it met. Traditionally, every municipality had a vierschaar (public space designated for the announcement of judgments). The space was demarcated by four posts laid flat into a square, often around a tree. Because they were arranged so as to face the four cardinal points, the posts carried both symbolic and functional meanings. In Antwerp, the Vierschaar (which had an open courtyard and two loggias where sentences could be heard publicly) stood in the oldest and, until the seventeenth century, most important part of town. This area, known as the Burcht, occupied a high point in the city’s topography and was the wharf upon which the large crane on the Schelde was affixed. As the wealthiest area, this so-called “first district” contained the most grand public buildings, including the large wharf, Saint Walburgis church, the Vleeshuis, and the Steen (the city’s prison). The area also contained the imposing fisher’s tower [Visscherstoren] and fishmarket.
frozen, in effect, and therefore could no longer be interpreted (and reinterpreted) by local judicial bodies as they had been for centuries. Although codification was meant to streamline local laws, city aldermen (who were obliged to take on the task of committing customs to paper) knew that their particular laws would be accepted only if they were deemed beneficial to all domains.

Once codified, with few exceptions the new customary laws were applicable to all the provinces of the Low Countries, regardless of village, city, or region. Many had nothing to do with jurisprudence or criminal laws per se but instead contained specific requests permeating many levels of daily life. The 1531 ordinance specifically requested language related to notary activities, bankruptcy, monopolies, vagabondage, begging, charity, *kermisse*, marriage and baptism, the policing of taverns, public drunkenness, blasphemy, and even hair cutting, among other pedestrian activities.

5.3 At Stake: Resistance, Authority, and Loss of Identity

The homologation process required a delicate balance between appeasing the Hapsburg authority and maintaining local traditions. However, magistracies across the provinces soon discovered that most local customs would be abandoned in favor seignory customs. Thus the homologation process was fiercely resisted in all regions, but especially in urban centers. Representatives,

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Unfortunately, the last remnants of the medieval warren at the heart of the Vleeshuis were razed in the 1970s in a massive urban redevelopment project. On the Vierschaar and its history, see Laenens, 52–63 and Wim Meeuwis, *De Vierschaar: De Criminele Rechtspraak in Oude Antwerpen* (Kapellen: De Nederlandsche Boekhandel/Uitgeverij Pelckmans, 1992).

27 Gilissen, *Introduction Historique au Droit* 294. More standardizing ordinances were issued in 1570 and 1611.

28 Ibid., 303.

even those appointed by the emperor himself, strongly defended the customary privileges of their particular city. Because local officials were so insistent on maintaining the particular customs of their domains, a largely heterogeneous network of laws resulted. Local laws were “filtered out” by authorities some provinces, while in others they were generalized into an agreeable corpus of provincial laws.

5.3.1 Resistance on the Regional and Local Levels

Having already witnessed the erosion of customs and privileges in other cities in the region, Antwerp resisted the homologization process. Although the intent had been to centralize and streamline diverse customs across a vast territory, many customary laws were not incorporated into the new system. For example, Charles V intentionally rejected the customs of Ghent, Kortrijk, Oudenaarde, and Geraardsbergen, due to each city’s insubordinate actions in response to his taxation demands and their requests for special considerations (he also revoked each city’s privileges) between 1537 and 1540. The Procurator-General of the Grand Council of Mechelen assigned to the emperor “the intention to declare, abolish, destroy, and break certain documents and books of customs of these said cities as they contain several exorbitant customs [that were] unreasonable, contrary, and derogatory to the superiority and highness of the

\[\text{Ibid., 94.}\]
emperor.” In such an atmosphere, the more power and autonomy a city had enjoyed, the more it stood to lose.

As customary law pervaded all aspects of justice, commerce, and even social behavior in memory extending back generations, it is little wonder that almost no province complied with the six-month deadline specified in the original 1531 ordinance. Instead, most jurisdictions submitted their customs gradually: the City of Lille (1533), Province of Hainaut (1534), the City of Mons (1534), the City of Valenciennes (1534), the City of Kassel (1534), Ypres (1535), Mechelen (1535), and Province of Artois (1540). Several of these had written down their own customary laws prior to the request, but others refused to cooperate at all; as a result, at least one city’s laws were not represented in central authority. From the initial decree, only 20 customs were written, and out of these only 10 were definitively constituted into official law.

Retaining Antwerp’s civic identity vis à vis its overlord was an ongoing struggle. The city preferred a weak central government so that it could maintain its own privileges, having developed a republican attitude toward its own sense of self. As Guicciardini wrote in 1567:

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31 “...affin de voir déclarer, abolir, annichiler et casser certain cayer et livre de coutumes de ladicte ville ... comme contenant aulcunes coutumes exorbitant, desraisonnables, contraires et desrogantes à la supériorité et hauteur [de l'empereur].” Quoted in Ibid., 95.
Antwerp has for its Lord and Prince the Duke of Brabant as Marquis of the Holy Roman Empire: but with so many and great privileges, obtained in ancient times, that she is ruled, maintained, policed and governed by herself, almost like a free city, and a republic is free seigneurie; save, always, with respect to the rights and superiority to the prince.\(^3\)

Antwerp’s insubordinance was described less diplomatically by Provost Morillon in a letter of 9 May of the same year: “It would be quite good to make [Antwerp’s Magistracy] shave off their S.P.Q.A. which they inscribe everywhere in their buildings and edifices, claiming a free republic and that the prince can ask nothing of them without their consent.”\(^3\)

Fifteen years of repeated ordinances requesting Antwerp to submit its customs weighed heavily on the conscience of the city.\(^3\) Guy Wells observed that imperial authority and citizenry alike depended on the Magistracy to maintain the city’s excellent economy and prosperity. Members of the Magistracy knew that they would be able to maintain older city privileges, the ones that promoted commerce in the city to the benefit of both the emperor and the citizenry. For his part the emperor knew that he could depend on the power of the Magistracy to maintain social order.\(^3\)

\(3^{\text{6}}\) Guicciardini, 90.
\(3^{\text{7}}\) Leon Voet, Antwerp: The Golden Age, 90. The city’s intransigency continued until its downfall in 1585. In 1570 the Duke of Alba republished the customs (Antwerpsche Costuymen) in a new edition, with new additions; in 1582 the Calvinists put out a different version that more accurately reflected their own ideologies. Published as Rechte ende Costumen van Antwerpen, it was later abolished by the ruling Spanish.
5.3.2 Individuality in Antwerp’s Commercial Tradition

In addition to the prospect of rejected privileges and customs, the Antwerp Magistracy feared the city would be subject to foreign territorial customs that had never been espoused there. Such fears were well founded: a particular set of circumstances pertaining to customary laws had long distinguished Antwerp from other cities in the Netherlands. Not only was custom the dominant model for all transactions and behavior, the city had developed its own legal processes around commercial (and particularly mercantile) activities. Until the sixteenth century, there were no separate provisions for standard mercantile contracts in Antwerp; instead, they existed only within the *oude costumen ende herbrengen van deser stad* [Old Customs and Privileges of this City] of the city’s own charter. Although Antwerp’s laws remained unwritten until the 1540s, under the entrenched legal tradition known as “merchant style,” [*stylus mercatorum/ius mercatorum*] judgments were recorded in what was known as the *Turbenboeck*. These books contained all written judgments related to mercantile disputes (usually debt repayments), to be consulted in case of subsequent disagreements, and notably, were the only documented forms of law before Antwerp’s customs were committed to paper. Although this practice already existed in France (*Inquête de Turbe*), it has been shown that in Antwerp these processes were ad hoc attempts to maintain regulatory control over a sector of the city’s economy.

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40 SAA V 68 35r. See Ibid., 45.
41 Laenens, 12.
42 De Ruysscher, 46–57.
that had developed so rapidly, the city magistracy constantly struggled to keep up.

Customary practices were also adapted from business interactions and behavior at the stock exchange. Numerous Turben describe practices “after the usage of the Exchange at Antwerp” and “after the custom and usages of this city.” These terms had no standard definition, although they were widely used: they applied to both legal rules and previous practices. Indeed, commercial law [ius mercatorum] had developed over the course of the medieval period without input from lawyers, and therefore without reference to either canonical or Roman law. Even a cursory overview of these circumstances confirms that rapid expansion of Antwerp’s financial markets undoubtedly supplied the primary reasons for its resistance to Charles’s edicts.

5.3.3 Resistance in Antwerp’s Government

The history of Antwerp’s delays in complying with the emperor’s ordinances can be clearly traced. However, specific complaints about overreaching of authority in Antwerp seem to have been rare. To find any requires the examination of documents found within the provisions of city officials and in the privileges guaranteed at the Joyous Entries. These sources

43 Numerous examples of this language exist. SAA V 68-72. For a discussion of this phenomenon, see Ibid., 45-46.
44 Ibid., 47.
provide a more lucid conception of public opinion at a time when such information was generally undocumented, in the interest of self-preservation.  

Evidence of formal complaints exists within files in the possession of high-ranking city officials, including the *stadspensionaris* [city attorney]. Documents among the personal effects of Jan Gillis (1519–1581), pensioner of Antwerp from 1551 until his death, effectively communicate the tensions between the city and authority. Gillis was a son of the well-known humanist and jurist Peter Gillis (1486–1533), whose portrait was painted by Quentin Massys in 1521. The Gillises, one of Antwerp’s most powerful and respected families, was deeply entrenched in local political and legal affairs throughout the sixteenth century. Jan’s brother-in-law was a member of the Grand Council; his older brother served as secretary to Maximilian I of Habsburg, King Ferdinand of Spain, and later to Charles V. Jan himself matriculated at Leuven in 1532. After the death of Peter Gillis, he had been taken into the care of his aunt and uncle and was later tutored by Gilbert Van Schoonbeke the Elder.

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5.3.4 Broken Promises

Within Jan Gillis’s private files are numerous ordinances, letters, and copies of privileges.50 Several of these documents indirectly challenge the legality of imperial measures reversing the fourteenth-century agreements that had guaranteed Antwerp’s autonomy. For example, Gillis kept copies of city privileges long since revoked by the establishment as well as records of general operations of the Grand Council of Mechelen and the Council of Brabant. One of the latter was an annotated copy of the Golden Bull, issued in Nuremberg on 25 July 1349 by Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV.51 This particular papal bull was held in the highest esteem in much of the Netherlands because it gave subjects the right to uphold their own customs and rights even when these conflicted with the ruler. The Golden Bull clearly stated that local customs and privileges would be honored in all the domains of the Holy Roman Empire, and that imperial privileges found to have negative effects would be abolished:

For such privileges and charters, if, and in as far as, they are considered to derogate in any way from the liberties, jurisdictions, rights, honors or dominions of the said prince electors, or any one of them, in so far we revoke them of certain knowledge and cancel them, and decree, from the plenitude of our imperial power, that they shall be considered and held to be revoked.52

The bull also guaranteed that if an overlord violated any of a city’s privileges, or if his subjects saw just cause to disagree with the manner under which they were governed, they had no obligation to recognize that overlord’s authority. Finally,

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50 The inventory is preserved at the Antwerpen Stadsarchief. See SAA LZ 22 De Nagelaten Documenten van Jan Gillis, pensionaris van Antwerpen (1551-1581).
51 SAA PK 479 (1) f4.
the Golden Bull’s most important guarantee defied the Grand Council by declaring that the emperor’s subjects could never be summoned outside of their “home” territory by any other authority than his own. These points represented two main points of contention between the Duke (i.e., the emperor) and his subjects in Brabant (and elsewhere). First, customary law was granted higher status and force than the emperor’s; and second, neither the emperor nor his agents could summon any subjects to be tried outside of his or her home region. The second right, called the *ius de non evocando*, had been a central conflict between local governments and the Burgundian and Habsburg courts since the time of Charles the Bold. Gillis’s possession of this document some 200 years after it was created, when so many reforms had already become part of the legal fabric of the Netherlands, indicates that imperial will had intruded on the rights of the city. Moreover, it affirms a well-known example one of the principal violations committed against city privileges in the Netherlands by the Burgundian and Habsburg governments.

Gillis also possessed a copy of a “reaffirmation” of the Golden Bull, signed by Emperor Maximilian I on 15 March 1512. The copy of the Golden Bull and the Reaffirmation of the Great Privilege both show that the city had been guaranteed privileges now revoked by Charles V. Although there is little contemporary documentation of complaints about these developments in the early sixteenth

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54 Until that time, the highest authorities were the regional courts of law at the Council of Holland the Council of Flanders and the Brabant. With the Charles the Bold’s *Parlement* and the Grand Council of Mechelen, these became intermediary district institutions that were established as appellate courts within each jurisdiction. Blockmans and Prevenier, *The Promised Lands: the Low Countries under Burgundian Rule, 1369-1530*, 191.

55 SAA PK 479 no. 19.
century, this and other evidence shows that the violation of the Golden Bull had been a major point of contention since the time of Philip the Good in the 1430s.\textsuperscript{56}

Furthermore, a promise signed by Margaret of Austria on 14 March 1530, in the presence of the Grand Council of Mechelen, binds the regent to upholding the promises contained in the Great Privilege of 1477.\textsuperscript{57} This final article of this doctrine, which reversed all of Charles the Bold’s efforts to centralize Burgundy, specifies that if the duke or member of his authority were to pursue any action out of accordance with privilege, his subjects would be under no obligation to comply.\textsuperscript{58} As Walter Prevenier phrased it: “What the Great Privilege accomplished was an agreement to keep ducal institutions like the Parlement of Mechelen from trampling all existing rights”\textsuperscript{59} Although the privilege dated from 1477, it had been endorsed by a reigning monarch (Mary of Burgundy, the only child of Charles the Bold) and thus functioned as a longstanding contract between the sovereign and the people.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{56} SAA PK 476 no. 24 f 16.
\textsuperscript{57} “...waarbij ze belooft de privileges toegestaan door “den gulden privilegen” van de Roomse keizers te bewaren” SAA PK 479 no. 23 f 66.
\textsuperscript{58} As part of his aggressive consolidation policies, Charles the Bold’s Parlement van Mechelen was a superior authority over the courts of each duchy or county. Before the establishment of Charles’s Parlement, Brabanter could not be summoned outside his or her duchy as guaranteed by Emperor Charles IV’s Golden Bull of 1349, a privilege that cities maintained until well into the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{58} This right, called the Ius de non evocando was violated by the Charles’s Parlement of Mechelen. Until that time, the highest authorities were the regional courts of law at the Council of Holland the Council of Flanders and the Brabant.\textsuperscript{58} With the Parlement, these became intermediary district institutions that were established as appellate courts within each jurisdiction. Within cities, Charles the Bold increased his control over Aldermen’s councils. In many cases he ignored city privileges by appointing those able to pay for their position as aldermen. In effect he ended civic elections for aldermen and replaced city governments with his own puppets. Charles was even known to appoint “foreigners” from other cities to sit on Aldermen’s councils. See Blockmans and Prevenier, The Promised Lands: the Low Countries under Burgundian Rule, 1369-1530, 191.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 197.
\textsuperscript{60} The death of Charles the Bold in Nancy in January 1477 was a watershed moment in the formation of new civic identity. As the new sovereign, Mary of Burgundy was forced to repeal many of the centralization policies that he established. She could not protest with much of her armies destroyed and in a with a weakened treasure, the States General, with ample
Nonetheless, the principal provisions of this document appear to grant more liberty in theory than in practice:

1. The dismantling of all centralizing institutions at Mechelen.
2. The creation of a new Great Council with representation from all territories.
3. The rights of the Estates general to meet freely.
4. That the consent of the Estates general must be obtained before declaring war.
5. Respect for all customs and privileges.
6. Free trade among the territories.
7. The right of any of the duke’s (or his successors) subjects to not obey any command that does not accord with privilege.61

Declarations that purportedly upheld cities’ rights did not seem to give Antwerp adequate assurances. Yet, the traditions of the fairs had given Antwerp and economic and thus a republican freedom that the city magistracy celebrated. For example, in the first decades of the sixteenth century the city printed dozens of descriptions of mercantile practices and policies that they wished to follow.62 These books not only celebrated the city’s mythical roots and the origins of the iconography of the city’s seal, they also listed its ancient privileges (see figure 38).

representation from cities, forced the twenty year old to sign the Great Privilege just a month after Charles’ death. We also note that since the Great Privilege was in Dutch, it signaled a cultural shift “back” to the concerns of the local communities and away from the court language of French. The young heiress was forced to sign a list of grievances compiled by the Estates General that reversed policies created by Charles the Bold as a means to recognize the rights of nobility, who in turn could muster an army to protect Mary’s territory from French invasion. After the Great Privilege was signed system reverted to more regional authority policies and less a “federative” approach to governance with the re-incorporation of local privileges, chiefly through the preservation of aldermanic power and customs rather than the exclusive direction of a ruler. It was a response to Charles the Bold’s expansionist policies and to the threat of more changes to come. The Parlement was not fully eradicated, however, and once again became an itinerant court of law.60 In addition to returning legal autonomy to cities, the Great Privilege protected what might be called the great medieval institutions: the abbeys, lords, and the wealthy cities. Cities regained more control over their local vicinities to the detriment of the central authority. See Van Rhee, 961 In addition to returning legal autonomy to cities, the Great Privilege protected what might be called the great medieval institutions: the abbeys, lords, and the wealthy cities. Cities regained more control over their local vicinities to the detriment of the central authority. See Van Rhee, 9; and Blockmans and Prevenier, The Promised Lands: the Low Countries under Burgundian Rule, 1369-1530, 205.

62 De Ruyscher, 49-50.
Each contained a title page upon which appeared the city’s castle-and-hand seal and banderoles celebrating its freedoms over the waters and over storage and staples, as well as its ancient feudal privileges. Such publications were read aloud on the steps of the town hall. One, an edition of Antwerp’s “command-book” [geboedboeck] was published in the face of Charles’s request in 1533. The publication of these laws, intended for local consumption at a moment when the effort to federalize statutory law, illustrates that the city remained obstinant to the Emperor’s wishes. The specific visual and textual articulations foregrounded both the city’s pride and its willingness to remain free from the incursion of authoritarian control.

5.4 Submission

On 4 October 1540, Charles V issued another ordinance that repeated the request and added several provisions about minting money and currency, ecclesiastical and civil law, and parental consent for the marriage of minors. Antwerp was the only city in the Low Countries that did not comply. Only after three more warrants dated 25 March 1545, 24 November 1546 (“written orders for the non-obeying”) and a final order on 2 January 1547 for the customs to be “written without delay” were the 16 chapters and 897 articles that made up the city’s customs written down and sent to the files of the Privy Council at the Coudenberg in Brussels.

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63 “Antiquiteyt oft Out Ghedichte van Bewys der Fondatie Oirspronck der Wapene, metten Borch, Handen Roosen Hoet der Stadt van Antwerpen, van Brabons Tijden, als Oock der Twee Vrije Iaermercten.” SAA PK 2816.
64 Gilissen, Introduction Historique au Droit 306.
65 “voorschreven bevelen niet geobedieert” Quoted in Laenens, 13.
66 “...sonder meer vertreck ende dilay” Ibid., 13-14.
5.5 The Rise of the Jurist

Charles’s policy on the homologation of customs was only one part of a great erosion of individual autonomy. His policies affected social-class structure by foregrounding the jurist as a new and powerful member of Antwerp’s ruling class: tensions within longstanding traditions of social order resulted.

5.5.1 Changing Vocations

By the twelfth century, the emergence of legal education had made the study of law a historical discipline. At Bologna, Paris, Oxford, and Salamanca, renewed interest emerged in the origins of law, Justinian’s *libri legales*, and Roman law. The founding of the University of Leuven in 1425 brought legal education to the Low Countries. At that time, the typical jurist was thoroughly trained in Roman jurisprudence and functioned mainly as a historian whose work was an intellectual exercise in philology.

Between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, European law schools taught jurists how to apply a legal framework inherited from Antiquity to localized customary practices. As a new type of philosopher, academically trained jurists engaged in theoretical discourse, theology and ethics, and historical analyses of laws; they also served as councilors for legal authorities. Unlike the jurists of today they were not advocates for those seeking justice, but instead offered counsel to judicial bodies. But with the advent of increased legislation and more

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68 Academic interest in law resulted in the concept of the *Ius Commune* (the coexistence of civil law, canon law, and laws directed by a sovereign). By the fifteenth century, it was comprised of legislation by numerous sovereigns, local and regional customs, and city privileges housed in city belfries.

69 Bellomo, 47.
complex centralization policies by the Ducal authority in the Burgundian and
Habsburg Netherlands (or any other sovereign), the role of the jurist was
transformed from advisor to advocate. As such they would play a key role in the
reorganization of the Burgundian and Habsburg legal system.

The traditional makeup of ducal judicial councils of the Burgundian period
and the Habsburg imperial councils was a combination of city officials and ducal
appointees. However, over time local authorities found their power undermined
and even usurped by the new class of local elites: university-trained jurists. This
phenomenon signalled a shift in both the composition of these courts and the
perception of authority. Whereas lower aldermen’s and regional courts
maintained a connection to traditional legal customs, noble members of the
upper councils eventually lost their authority and were replaced by scholarly
elites. By 1530, none of the collateral councils, including the Grand Council of
Mechelen, included members appointed because of their noble status; such
members had been replaced by urban bourgeoisie.70 Indeed, Charles preferred
councilmembers who were “men of modern means who sought a career in royal
service.”71 These developments significantly diminished the power of the
patriciate.

In 1530, Charles decreed that all jurists must hold a Juris Doctor degree
and be licensed to practice law from the University of Leuven (or another

70 During the Burgundian period, fewer than 20% of the Duke’s Parlement had any legal
education. See Hugo De Schepper, “The Individual on Trial in the Sixteenth-Century Netherlands:
Between Tradition and Modernity,” in Between the Middle Ages and Modernity: Individual and
Community in the Early Modern World. Essays in Honor of Jim Tracy (Lanham: Rowman &
71 Ibid., 194.
university that offered legal training). With this mandate, local jurisprudence became the domain of the jurist rather than the alderman. It also shows that those who had previously sat on judicial bodies must have been unlicensed or lacking adequate legal training. Data shows a steady increase in the enrollments at the university between 1525 and 1550. In 1490, only 37 new students came to Leuven to study law; in 1525, law students numbered about 500; and by 1550 the number of new students had grown to approximately 750.

5.5.2. Changing Social Strata

Given noble families’ traditional roles of leadership, accepting this new policy must have been difficult. Regardless of prior training or competence, nobles in the Grand Council had been addressed as “Your Majesty,” but this form of address was dropped when so many non-nobles began to populate the council. The social (and educational) status of an academic jurist soon exceeded that of a noble; at this juncture, lawyers had well and truly infiltrated the higher echelons of both public and governmental life. Therefore, the 1530 law requiring the attainment of a Juris Doctor can be interpreted as an affront to the authority of nobility. This affront was keenly felt by those who longed for the past and felt threatened not only by the new laws but also by the jurists who studied, understood, and dispensed them. Furthermore, the profession of jurist now brought with it the connotation that such folk were immersed in both the intellectual and financial elite and also firmly connected with power itself. The latter assumption was particularly apt as jurists had to be able to closely analyze

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72 Belgique, 172.
73 Stedelijk Museum Leuven, 113.
74 Bellomo, 220.
the roots of legal history—and power—from the Roman period onward. As official interpreters of power, jurists justified as well as explained it.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, academically trained jurists had established themselves in an area previously impenetrable by those outside the aristocracy. Once there, however, they were perceived as a negative byproduct of modern life by all levels of society. To the poor, jurists were a boon to the rich, who could afford their services to leverage financial gain. To the rich, jurists were the sole proprietors of new, complex laws that were incomprehensible not only to laymen, but even to those who had previously wielded judicial power. As the most visible members of government, jurists found themselves the objects of ire from many who were unhappy with any government policy (from new ordinances and new taxes that funded foreign wars to local construction projects).7

Antwerp, the largest city in northern Europe, naturally contained a large population of lawyers and others allied with legal training. But the actual numbers are striking. On average, from 1533 to 1600, .4% of the city’s population was engaged in legal careers. Within a population as high as 100,000, this would mean that 400 lawyers or people employed in allied fields worked in the city. This percentage was higher than those involved in Antwerp’s book and printing industry and four times as high as those holding ecclesiastical offices!76 (To use a modern-day comparison: this percentage translates to four times the number of

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7 Taxes for the construction of city walls in 1541–1545 likely displeased taxpayers, who tended to direct their complaints to lawyers, who in turn maintained the political machinery at both local and international levels. See Soly, Urbanisme en Kapitalisme te Antwerpen in de 16de Eeuw: de Stedebouwkundige en Industriële Ondernemingen van Gilbert van Schoonbeke.

lawyers per capita in the borough of Manhattan in 1986.\textsuperscript{77} Although not all of these individuals were involved in city government, clearly a substantial service industry, closely tied to the city’s economic behavior, operated throughout the sixteenth century. Lawyers were involved in all aspects of commerce.

Consistent with that transition were increases in the importance of prescribed civil procedure and standardized legal terminology. The growth of the number and length of pleadings quite literally shows the proliferation of legal expertise in the courts of the Low Countries. Between 1460 and 1504, lawyers’ pleas numbered 1,412 pages. Between 1504 and 1540, they numbered 7,670 pages; furthermore, records indicate a steady increase in frequency until 1560.\textsuperscript{78}

Nevertheless, heightened pressure from successive sovereigns released floods of new laws. With the jurisdictional machinery in place at last, Imperial authority could submit legislation more frequently. The presence of the Grand Council of Mechelen insured that new imperial legislation could be easily passed down. In successive years, council averaged 37 ordinances annually during Charles V’s reign, for a total of 1807.\textsuperscript{79} This number would significantly increase after 1555, during the reign of Philip II.\textsuperscript{80}

Equally revealing is the dramatic increase of people with legal expertise writing tracts and treatises on legal jurisprudence (more than threefold from 342

\textsuperscript{77} United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics (http://www.bls.gov/oes/1999/oes_5600.htm), accessed 17 Nov 2010. The population of Manhattan was 1,478,000 and the number of people involved in legal careers and services was 3581.2, a percentage of .0002.
\textsuperscript{79} Gilissen,\textit{ Introduction Historique au Droit}, 296.
\textsuperscript{80} See Wells,\textit{ Antwerp and the Government of Philip II: 1555-1567}; and De Schepper, 195–198.
As previously mentioned, increased legal complexities accompanied the jurists’s growing presence and influence. Complicated proceedings and opinions replaced the traditional flexibility and accessibility of customary law. Because customary laws had remained unwritten, they were easily tempered to fit particular circumstances. One Flemish jurist, Maarten vanden Bundere, complained in 1510 that “learned judges rejected the dignity and antiquity of local custom” and replaced it with law from books.\(^8\)

5.5.3 A New Legal and Social Order

Like written complaints about new jurists and their supposed detriment on society, the development of new imagery of lawyers, together with tax collectors, came about as an outward sign of this anxiety in urban spheres.\(^8\) Tension generated by the ongoing Hapsburg centralization policy, which had continued since the 1430s were well ingrained in the public’s collective consciousness. Renewed legal authority in the form of the Grand Council reminded the city magistracy that their authority could be undermined or overtaken at any moment. Customary laws were now homogenized into a popular average for every other locale in the Emperor’s domain.

5.6 Picturing the Lawyer in 1540s Antwerp

Beginning in the 1530s, the academic jurist occupied a new and enviable place in Netherlandish society that had been cultivated for them with Hapsburg


\(^8\) Van Rompaey, 162–163.
legal reforms. They could study their way into the highest echelons of society and operate within a level of authority previously reserved for noble families. At the local level, they were perceived as an outward sign of ducal (or imperial) authority. As an object of parody that appealed to poor and wealthy alike, images of the lawyer found their way into various collections, including those of tax collectors (because so many paintings of tax collectors and misers have been discovered in collections of the well-to-do, one can safely assume that images of lawyers were also bought by members of the legal profession).  

Although no solid provenance can be reconstructed for the multiple versions of van Reymerswale’s *Lawyer’s Office*, logic suggests that this painting was invented to appeal to an urban audience undergoing successive legal reforms. Like the *Tax Collector* in the office of Melchior Wijntgis cited by Van Mander and the *Miser* in the collection of inner-burgomaster Adriaen Hertzen (1532), images of lawyers were probably displayed in the homes of lawyers themselves. Antwerpenaars, who as a civic culture had experienced almost a century of centralization and erosion of their autonomy, understood what a painting depicting lawyers meant. Rather than a depiction of vanity in the face of Protestantism, the *Lawyer’s Office* offered a timely and measured response to the repeated menaces of major governmental and social upheaval, both in the Netherlands generally and specifically in Antwerp.

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84 The jurists’s confraternity was only established in 1630, many years after the vast majority of the guilds in Antwerp. As many of the great medieval guilds had done, in 1636 the confraternity sponsored the construction of an altar dedicated to Saint Ivo and had it installed in the parish Church of Saint Jacob in Antwerp, accompanied by a large canvas by Gerhardt Seghers (1591–1651).

85 These paintings were discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.3.
Both versions (and according to Friedländer, a third and fourth as well) correspond to the dates of Charles’s issuing of the homologation ordinances. The Munich version is dated 1542; the New Orleans version is 1545. Presumably, the other two were also made between 1540 and 1545. It was during these years that Antwerp most deeply feared the loss of its own privileges and autonomy that would occur with its submission of its customary laws.\textsuperscript{86} The precise correspondence of Charles’ October 1540 ordinance (which Antwerp refused) with the year these images were painted suggests that the \textit{Lawyer’s Office} refers not only to the issuance of the ordinance, but also to the general contempt with which Antwerp greeted the Hapsburg overhaul of the legal system, the emperor’s legal polices emanating from the Grand Council of Mechelen, and the sudden presence of academic jurists in the new justice system that permeated every level of Antwerp’s commercial life.

5.7 Concluding Remarks

The mammoth task of federalizing and modernizing the legal system of the Netherlands changed both bureaucratic institutions and longstanding notions of social order: it marked the de facto end of the Medieval era. In the course of this process, the fear of change became a narrative through which to evaluate popular sentiment in society at large. The changed relationship between the sovereign and his subjects, whether wealthy or impoverished, was manifested by the representations of the jurist, who had assumed a central position in both the

\textsuperscript{86} Friedländer, \textit{Early Netherlandish Painting}, XII:226–227. The remaining two paintings were in Paris and seen at a Vienna auction (RKD item no. 18623).
pedestrian and powerful levels of society. Despite Charles V’s intention to simplify the juridical process and system, public attitudes favored a return to the past. Ironically, to the early modern mind, the pliability of custom and the localized nature of justice were both more transparent and categorically more simple, despite the fact that one of the hallmarks of modernity is the accessibility and clarity of statutory law.

In the end, because Antwerp’s fears proved to have been unwarranted, tensions between the city and the sovereign became less visible. As a result, the visual rhetoric in a painting such as The Lawyer’s Office is not as simple to interpret as one might expect. Only with a critical awareness of the legal history of Antwerp in the first half of the sixteenth century can its meaning and cultural resonance become apparent. The following chapter examines the contentious atmosphere of the sixteenth century and explores the changed mentality of popular culture in the wake of Habsburg reforms. Images of the lawyer’s office continued to be painted, but the world around them had changed forever.
Chapter Six
Picturing Law

6.1 Introduction

Even a casual observer can easily recognize the visual similarities between Pieter Bruegel the Younger’s *Peasant Lawyer* (1602, figure 39) and Marinus Van Reymerswaele’s *Lawyer’s Office* (figure 1).¹ Both paintings show the interior of a disorganized office strewn with papers, bundles, and reference books. Lawyers and clerks, absorbed in their numerous cases, study them intently as a motley group of countryfolk await their help. Bruegel’s painting is a captivating and satirical view of life in a small village, where clients pay for services with farm animals, produce, and whatever else they have to offer.

Although the basic set of visual cues is very similar in the two images, Bruegel has elaborated upon and transformed the image invented by Reymerswaele through an enlarged viewpoint: the viewer sees a larger office than Marinus ever painted, filled with a larger cast of characters. Bruegel has also figuratively transformed (or, more literally, widened) the painting’s meaning from specific commentary on law in Antwerp and the Netherlands to a general lampooning of lawyers in society. Comparing these two paintings allows us to examine differences in popular mentality, meaning, and political atmosphere between the times they were completed. Together they form an excellent case

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¹ Many versions exist. See Pieter Bruegel the Younger, *Peasant Lawyer* (1618), (Maastricht, Bonnefantenmuseum, inv.no. 3816; oil on panel, 73 x 105 cm) and the 1621 version now in Ghent (Museum voor Schone Kunsten, inv. no 6696; oil on panel, 74.8 x 122 cm). For the most extensive list of the multiple versions of this composition, see Klaus Ertz and Pieter Bruegel, *Pieter Brueghel der Jüngere (1564-1637/38): die Gemälde mit kritischem Oeuvrekatalog* (Lingen: Luca, 2000), 501–522.
study through which to understand the artistic, commercial, and legal changes that took place in northern Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

*Peasant Lawyer* became the most frequently produced painting in Pieter Bruegel the Younger’s oeuvre; 91 versions exist today. Many are signed and feature the Antwerp hands and tower as a trademark stamp on the back of the panel. Of the 91 extant versions, Ertz has ascribed 25 to the artist. Notably, this is the only composition in Pieter the Younger’s oeuvre that the artist invented himself (the others replicated his father’s compositions). As such, it stands out among Bruegelian topoi; Bruegel’s audiences enjoyed this strictly interior, even claustrophobic scene full of the humanity they expected to see in his works.

Eleven people of varying social classes crowd the space. At the left, a man creeps into the door; on the other side of that door, a clerk writes in a small ledger. All of the clients, dressed in tattered but respectable clothing, have removed their hats as they wait to speak to the lawyer himself, who sits in his throne-like chair behind a desk on the right. Encouraged by a clerk who stands at his side, he closely examines a document. He appears somewhat oblivious to the disorder around him, which is sizable—the surface his desk is almost completely obscured by files from various lawsuits. These *proceszakjes* are also piled high on shelves and hung, several to a nail, on the walls. Old, worn documents lie scattered on the floor. Standing attentively, peasants wait naively for the lawyer to take their money, whether outright cash or—more plentifully—goods to be

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2 Peter van den Brink et al., *Brueghel Enterprises* (Maastricht: Bonnefantenmuseum, 2001), 173 and Ertz and Bruegel, 427.

3 As the only painting that Pieter the Younger produced that was not based on his father’s composition, it has been asked whether Pieter was even a painter at all, or simply a skillful manager of a workshop for replicas. See Elizabeth Alice Honig, “Review: Pieter Brueghel the Younger. Maastricht and Brussels,” *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 144, (2002), 181-183.
offered in kind. Bruegel’s message is clear: the lawyer’s role is to separate the peasants from their money. Are they too dim to recognize his dubious practices? Of course.

6.2 Evolution of a Subject: Marinus’s *Lawyer’s Office* and Bruegel’s *Village Lawyer*

6.2.1 Framing a New Idea

Although *Village Lawyer* was the most widely replicated subject of the artist’s oeuvre, it is also the least studied. In fact, for much of its modern existence it was believed that the painter had depicted a tax collector’s office. This interpretation likely stemmed from old inventory evidence, as well as the iconographical tradition of the Marinus/Massys hybrids of tax collectors. Such attributions are complicated by the fact that, unlike Marinus’s paintings, Bruegel’s work bears no inscriptions that indicate any particular lawsuit or specifying details. It has been suggested, based on the costumes and French words on the calendar behind the lawyer (““*Almanach de Grace...de Dieu...”*) that Pieter the Younger developed this painting from an obscure French source.

Versions of the painting appear in at least two inventories taken in seventeenth-century Antwerp. The 1627 inventory of Antoinette Wiael listed a “painting of a *procureur* on panel, framed, by Pieter Brueghel [sic].” The case for

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4 Ertz, 392.
5 One recent exception is Christina Currie, *Technical Study of Paintings by Pieter Brueghel the Younger in Belgian Public Collections*, (Université de Liège, 2003). Her study is essentially an investigation of workshop replication practices.
6 Dirk de Vos, *Catalogus schilderijen 15de en 16de eeuw* (Brugge: Stedelijke Musea Brugge, 1979), 95. See recent technical analyses in Currie, *op cit*.
7 Jan Denucé, *De Antwerpsche "Konstkamers." Inventarissen van Kunstverzamelingen te Antwerpen in de 16e en 17e Eeuwen*, Bronnen voor de Geschiedenis van de Vlaamsche Kunst, 2 (Amsterdam: De Spiegel, 1932), 40, 338.
8 Ibid., 40.
French sources was more recently corroborated, with some reservations, by Van Den Brink and colleagues for the *Brueghel Enterprises/De Firma Brueghel* exhibition held at the Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht in 2001.9 This assertion is problematic, however. Not only was French the *de facto* language of the legal profession, since the Burgundians in the fifteenth century it had been the preferred language at court. Although the question of Bruegel’s source is interesting and potentially compelling, I argue that the painting is a continuation of the subject lineage invented by Marinus van Reymerswaele, who in turn had developed it from Massys exemplars painted a century before.

6.2.2 Anatomy of a Subject Over Time

Two distinct courses of influence emanate from Marinus’s subject. The first preserved the intimacy of a shallow picture plane and predominance of the figures, shown in half-length, within the image. The other image type was Bruegel’s transformed version of the subject, in which the viewer is presented with the context of a large, chaotic office and multiple figures. While both of these (the “Marinus type” and the “Bruegel type”) existed concurrently, ultimately it was Bruegel’s composition that endured. Whatever ambiguities it contains (i.e., whether it depicted a tax collector or lawyer), are subordinate to its basic meaning or universal appeal, even today. The popularity of the Bruegel Enterprise presents a strong counterpoint to the Massys/Marinus version of the *Lawyer’s Office* subject. The latter has a somewhat diminished cultural and

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9 Van den Brink et al., 173-174.
artistic resonance. Examples of the Marinus-type were perpetuated by Jan Woutersz Stap (1599–1663), who painted several versions of a lawyer, notary, or steward [rentmeester] in a crowded office (figure 40) around 1625. He maintained the paneled, claustrophobia-inducing interior and the strict social division between the lawyer and clerk on the left side of the canvas and the peasant woman and child on the right. The clerk clutches a purse of coins while the steward (or lawyer) listens to a woman who appears to be pleading.

That Stap’s image bears a strong resemblance to Marinus’s paintings is no coincidence. The subject itself is consistent. The old-fashioned clothing reminds one of the Banker and his Wife. Stap also includes legible inscriptions detailing the nature of the transaction: “Year [16]29 the 13 January I have received from Pieter Pietersen 29 guilders 7 stuivers, still remaining 8 guilders, 10 stuivers”. Bikker has claimed that this painting was based specifically on Jan Massys’s The Landlord’s Steward (1539, figure 41). But it could have easily come from any of the wide variety of interior scenes made in the style of Quentin himself, his son, or Marinus. Stap is known to have drawn inspiration from paintings made in the middle of the sixteenth century, including another notable image of a scholar

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10 Ibid., 134–148.
11 Jan Woutersz, Stap The Notary’s Office (c. 1625). Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A 1341; oil on canvas. 75.5 x 106 cm. On this obscure painter, see A. Bredius, "Archiefsprikkelingen," Oud Holland 52, no. 1 (1935), and Arthur Francois Schendel, "Johannes Woutersz Stap," Oud Holland 54, no. 6 (1937), 268–282.
13 Jan Massys At the Office of the Tax Collector (1539). Dresden, Staatliche Kunststammlungen, Inv. No 804; oil on panel, 85 x 115 cm.
in his study (figure 42), in which the artist used the familiar sixteenth-century interior, but inserted no moralizing cues at all. Although Stap’s work was contemporaneous with that of Pieter the Younger, his paintings both lack the great number of people found in Bruegel’s works and render the popular satire far less overtly. Stap essentially continued the visual traditions of both Massys and Marinus, while Bruegel did not.

A hybrid version of the subject painted in 1655 by Adriaen Van Ostade (1610–1685) is today in Allentown, Pennsylvania (figure 43). Van Ostade reconstructed the familiar setting of a small space, but chose to focus the viewer’s attention on the table and documents being examined by the lawyer rather than the eager clients who await his counsel. Van Ostade, a Haarlem native, was a pupil of the Antwerp immigrant Adriaen Brouwer; his work evocatively combined the classic Antwerp Lawyer’s Office subject with the dark, barn-like interiors that his master painted so frequently. As is typical from Van Ostade’s late period, this painting lacks bawdiness and overt moralizing themes. Gone are the excessive documents (including the case-bags) and the chaotic office. Instead, Van Ostade foregrounded the simple communication among the small-time lawyer, his assistant, and a client who packs a pipe in anticipation of what might be a long discussion. On the wall behind the men hang deflated bagpipes which could be read as a symbol of the lawyer’s gluttonous or garrulous nature. What we are to make of Ostade’s rehashing of the subject, however, remains unclear. We cannot

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14 Scholar in His Study (n.d.), oil on panel, 80 x 62.2 cm. Sotheby’s (New York) auction of 21 May 1998, nr. 40.
15 Adriaen Van Ostade, Village Lawyer (1655). Allentown, PA, Allentown Museum of Art, inv. no. 1961.48; oil on panel, 37.3 x 29.9 cm.
declare with certainty that the image carries the same meaning if the artist has removed all of the signature details. This painting represents the death of Marinus’s subject: removed from its context, devoid of semiotic resonance, and thoroughly absorbed into greater and more permanent vein of seventeenth-century Dutch genre scenes.

The Bruegel caricature eclipsed its pictorial antecedent to become the de facto Lawyer’s Office – not only do the large number of copies attest to the image’s popularity, but artists also emulated the Bruegels’s chaotic spaces and iconography. Pieter de Bloot (1602–1658), for example, treated the subject with a more realistic approach that lacked the ridiculous cynicism of Pieter the Younger’s panel. His Lawyer’s Office of 1628 (figure 44) lacks the outwardly comical treatment of the villagers but has maintained the strong social commentary. Here is a more orderly space, but the artist has taken care to arrange his villagers across the picture plane in a somewhat disorderly fashion; papers are scattered on the floor; and dogs wait by their masters. Little proceszakjes hang on the wall behind the jurist on the right. An inscription on the lower right makes the picture’s meaning clear: “He who sues over a cow will lose another.”

Within this visual rhetoric, this current of admonition survived well into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Some changes were instituted: artists replicated the desk and the document bags but often changed the office context. When Jan van Kessel the Elder (1626–1679) painted Monkeys Playing the

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18 “die wil rechten / om een koe / die brengter / noch een toe”
Peasant Lawyer in 1649, he did not include any inscriptions to make the painting’s meaning clear (see figure 45). The grand-nephew of Pieter the Younger, he made a successful career of elaborating the Bruegel model. In this early work, monkeys appear in the guise of both the gullible peasants and greedy lawyers as a parody of civilized behavior. The documents are strewn on the floor, hang in case-bags, and cover the work space.

Gérard Thomas (1663–1720), a specialist in the Teniers tradition of gallery painting, produced several more theatrical versions of the scene c. 1680 (figure 46). Filipczak, who placed him at the very end of this important genre of Antwerp paintings, has discussed his work as “paintings about paintings.” Thomas’s version of the Lawyers’ Office replaces the terribly crowded and cluttered space with an open, vaulted interior, objets d’art, paintings, and sculptures. Despite the Baroque finery and setting, however, Thomas echoed Bruegel by depicting the peasants and their barter with the same interest and care. His version of the Landlord’s Steward (figure 47), in which a line of peasants clutches notarized documents and in-kind payments, is even more fully

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21 Filipczak, 182–183.
indebted to Bruegel’s chaotic interiors. Thomas’s work is a pastiche of several image types other than the Teniers gallery painting: the peasant interiors of Adriaen Brouwer and, in this case, a Bruegel subject. Professional interiors evidently joined the normal repertoire of gallery painters, along with artists’ and sculptors’ studios, doctors’ housecalls, peasants’ homes, and scenes of merrymaking.

This development affirms that through the seventeenth century and thereafter, the Bruegel model replaced Marinus’ invention. Van Kessel’s and Thomas’ paintings were based on local tastes in Antwerp, where the Bruegel family had dominated the art market for some 75 years. For Van Kessel, it was the Bruegel tradition that remained strong, whereas Thomas integrated the model into the genre gallery paintings that remained popular from the late sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

More importantly, the Bruegel model was made more accessible and “universal” through print replication. Engravings taken from pamphlets that attacked the legal profession were circulated even during Pieter the Younger’s lifetime. One such print, known as the Pamphlet of Paulus Fürst, was published in Nuremberg about 1619 (figure 48). Fürst, a dealer of books and art, probably based his updated version on an old Bruegel copperplate and added explanatory text below Bruegel’s (reversed) image. For his part, the writer described the “evil” and “unchristian” nature of lawyers and jurists who abuse the trusting nature of

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22 Gerard Thomas, *The Landlord’s Steward (The Collector of Tithes)* c. 1700., oil on canvas, 49 x 59.9 cm; Amsterdam Auction. Christie’s, 16 Nov 2005, Lot Nr. 00015.
23 See, for example, Balthasar Van den Bossche, *Lawyer’s Office* (1706), oil on canvas, 50 x 65 cm; Auction, Lempertz, 22, November 2008, lot no. 01217.
those they serve. Although the exact production and dissemination of these prints remains unclear, their Nuremberg source and their frequency show that they must have been very popular in the seventeenth century, as Fürst’s text remained on subsequent impressions of the image in 1618 and 1619. Krueger suggested that the Bruegel plate was brought to Nuremberg by printer Balthasar Caymox (1561–1635), whose family had moved from Brabant to the Franconian city in 1590. Whereas Pieter the Younger’s original painting featured no text other than the artist’s (brand) signature, these engravings and especially the texts clarify the meaning of the image to the seventeenth-century eye.

Even without ekphrastic texts, the image contains a reference that quite clearly illustrates a changed political atmosphere between the latter sixteenth century and the seventeenth century. In Bruegel’s painting, the village lawyer’s projecting underbite is an undeniable Habsburg reference. We can accept this interpretation because the Bruegel tradition is replete with overt references to the Habsburg authority, most notably in the placement of the double-headed eagle above the census taker’s booth in Pieter the Elder’s Census at Bethlehem (1566,"

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25 Van den Brink et al., 174.
26 Krueger, 82.
27 Peter H. Meurer, ”Der Nürnberger Verlag Caymox und die Kartographie,” Quaerendo 23, no. 1 (1993), 27.
28 As the only painting that Pieter the Younger produced that was not based on his father’s composition, it has been asked whether Pieter was even a painter at all, or simply a skillful manager of a workshop for replicas. See Honig, 181.
29 De Vos, 95.
figure 49).³⁰ Pieter the Younger replicated this small detail in his 13 extant versions of the painting, effectively preserving the census’s topical theme of the people’s obligations to authority.³¹ His Village Lawyer does not include the eagle, but instead shows an obvious caricature of the likeness of the Habsburg authority. Marinus did not include obvious references to the Habsburg overlords in his paintings of tax collectors (short of the seal of Great Council itself as a synecdochical reference to the Emperor and his institutions). But 20 years after Marinus, Pieter the Elder surely was comfortable enough to emblazon the tax collector’s office with the Habsburg insignia (see detail, figure 50) and forty years later, Pieter the Younger used the image of Phillip II, dead since 1598, as the lawyer himself (figure 51). Such an act would have been unthinkable in the sixteenth century.

6.3 Social and Legal and Context in Bruegel’s Time

As Pieter the Elder (1525–1569) was completing The Census at Bethlehem, Brabant and particularly Antwerp were in the midst of transition from Ius Proprium to a new Ius Commune imposed by the Habsburg authority. Antwerp’s legal code would not be finally systematized until 1582—after Pieter’s death and just before the city’s fall to Spain. The ensuing era, known as the “second Spanish period,” operated within an entirely different legal atmosphere than the ones experienced by Marinus and Pieter the Elder. By 1618, when Pieter the Younger’s Peasant Lawyer was finished, the transformations of the sixteenth century were

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³⁰ Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, inv. no. 2903 ; oil on panel, 115.3 x 164.5 cm. See Van den Brink et al., 84–159.
³¹ Ibid., 134.
already a distant memory. These changes will now be addressed.

6.3.1 Political Context in Antwerp and the Netherlands

The last three decades of the sixteenth century brought Antwerp monumental political and social hardships, but reforms would eventually lay the groundwork for a more peaceful future. During the reign of Philip II, many changes were forcibly instituted while the city was under the control of the Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, the Duke of Alba (1567–1573), Luís de Requesens y Zuñiga (1573–1576), and Alessandro Farnese (1578–1581). On 18 July 1580 the Antwerp City Magistracy was compelled to create a revised draft of the Antwerpsche Costuymen.\(^3\) This monumental achievement garnered ultimate recognition when Christoffel Plantin was commissioned to print the final version of the Rechten ende Costuymen van Antwerpen in November 1582.\(^3\) Antwerp likely proceeded with the task (and expense) of printing the 200-page document as a way of setting itself on equal footing with Mechelen and Ghent, which had committed their laws to a printer in 1535 and 1564, respectively.\(^4\) Four hundred copies were printed and distributed, and the laws they contained changed Antwerp forever.\(^5\) Still, discussion of this document persisted during the

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\(^3\) I discuss of Antwerp’s reluctance to homologize its customs in Chapter Five. See also Dave de Ruysscher, Handel en Recht in de Antwerpse Rechtbank (1585-1713), (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2009), 62.

\(^3\) Charles Laenens, De Geschiedenis van het Antwerps Gerecht (Antwerpen: P. Van de Velde, 1953), 17.

\(^3\) Costumen, usancien ende stijl van procederen der stadt vryheydt ende jurisdictie van Mechelen gheapprobeert ende gheauctonzeert byde keyserlycke, majestygt inde jaere ons heeren mdxxv (Antwerpen: Michiel van Hoochstraeten, 1535); "Costumen der stede ende schependomme van Ghent, bi der Coninghlicke M. gheconfirmeert, den xxiiij. dagh van December XVe.LXIII," (Gent: Henric. van den Keere, 1564).

\(^3\) After this date there were a series of edits, and after 1585 the official text was banned by the Farnese as too Calvinist; however, it was ultimately accepted. See Laenens, 20-21; de Ruysscher,
turbulent years after 1585, and addenda and deletions continued until the full text was reconfirmed by the Council of Brabant in 1608.36

Thereafter, formal recognition of the laws and a much friendlier relationship with the centralized authority of the Council of Brabant enabled the city magistracy to go about its business with less worry. After the Spanish crown had gained control of Southern Brabant and Flanders, the Collateral Councils worked more closely than in previous years with these provinces and often deferred to them. The central authority, after the fall of Antwerp and especially under the Archdukes Albert and Isabella (reigned 1598–1621), had to cooperate with the provincial councils at every level and began to rely a great deal on the advice of local governments.37 In the financial realm, councils were not permitted to impose taxes without the consent of the provinces.38 In fact, the Council of Finance was overseen by a committee comprised of representatives of the states and one representative of the sovereign.39

While the Spanish regime was consumed with battling the Northern Provinces at the turn of the century, the relationship between the cities in the

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36 This document was published by the city as ‘Memorien opde Costuymen van Antwerpen, overgesonden byde Stadt ten versoecke van de Heeren Commissarissen Anno 1608.’ See de Ruysscher, 65–69; Laenens, 21, and John Gilissen, La rédaction des coutumes dans le passé et dans le présent: colloque organisé les 16 et 17 mai 1960 par le Centre d’Histoire et d’Ethnologie Juridiques, Etudes d’Histoire et d’Ethnologie Juridiques (Bruxelles: Université Libre de Bruxelles, Institut de Sociologie, 1962), 87–111.
37 See Dries Raeymaekers, “‘Siempre un pie en palacio.’ Het hof en de hofhouding van de aartshertogen Albrecht en Isabella, 1598-1621.” (University of Antwerp, 2010).
39 Ibid. 243. Despite this increasing sense of transparency, within the higher realms of justice the Privy Council exercised greater power and could intervene in all levels of cases at will, with “an arbitrary use of an impressive range of judicial instruments which all legal tribunals had to respect.” See de Schepper and Parker, 246.
South and the central authority in Brussels was improved. Particularly in light of the ongoing conflicts with rebel provinces, this was a victory for both parties and a far cry from not only the homologation difficulties of 1530s and 1540s, but also the widespread social discontent during the disastrous years of the siege, fall, and depopulation of Antwerp. Indeed, by the seventeenth century, particularism in local communities had given way to a new universalism as a new order of law and governance emanating from territorial governance subsumed customary laws.\textsuperscript{40} This symbiosis permitted stable local environments to flourish even as the power of the Habsburg overlords slowly declined.\textsuperscript{41}

6.3.2 A New Social and Mercantile Order

By 1609 the Spanish were fully in control of Antwerp and, after the tumultuous decades of the sixteenth century, the city was well into its own “Indian summer” of economic prosperity.\textsuperscript{42} After the ceasefire in 1607 and the Twelve Year Truce of 1609, Antwerp began a recovery that remained steady until the years immediately preceding the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.\textsuperscript{43} The prosperity of Antwerp in the 1560s would never return, but if artistic activity is any measure of economic and social well-being, the city made a remarkable comeback. 1609 was also, not coincidentally, the year of Peter Paul Rubens’s

\textsuperscript{41} On the developing relationship between subject and the state at this time, see Jan Luiten van Zanden and Maarten Prak, “Towards and economic interpretation of citizenship: The Dutch Republic between medieval communities and modern nation-states. European Review of Economic History 10 (2006), 111-145. My thanks to Ilja Van Damme for pointing out this reference.
\textsuperscript{42} The best discussion of this period of growth is Roland Baetens, De nazomer van Antwerpens welvaart: de diaspora en het handelshuis De Groote tijdens de eerste helft der 17de eeuw, 2 vols., Collection Histoire Pro Civitate Serie in-8o; no 45 (Brussel: Gemeentekrediet van België, 1976).
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 163.
return to Antwerp from Italy, where he celebrated the signing of the truce in hope that the city “would flourish again.” Antwerp’s residents rejoiced at the possible return of peace and prosperity after the previous 40 years of conflict.

The major contemporary account of Antwerp’s economy from this moment in time is Leonardus Lessius’ (1554–1623) *De Justitia et Jure* [On Justice and Rights], published in 1605. Although principally a Jesuit theologian, Lessius provided a remarkable view into popular attitudes about the collecting of loans, interest, and accounting during the first decade of the seventeenth century. His observations indicate a widespread acceptance of issues that had been major points contention in less than 50 years before. Instead of examining ideal ethical practices outlined in scripture, his work was informed by contemporary mercantile and business practices—the practices that had made Antwerp’s mercantilism so successful and the city so prosperous. Lessius was the first writer to describe “competition” as an economic principle and to recognize that such competition leads to expediency. Joseph Shumpeter noted that Lessius’ observations on late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century business practices were in fact necessary “utilitarian” requirements of the “Public Good” and mutual

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47 Honig, 106.
benefit for each party. Lessius understood that drastic price and credit fluctuations reflect “normal” market circumstances such as product supply, the numbers of buyers and sellers, and transactional and transportation costs. He also believed that monopolies are acceptable if their composition benefits common and public use, and although he condemned the abstract notion of “credit,” he found the “credit” collected by Antwerp mercantile bourgeoisie acceptable, since trade credit – loans to traders – differs from normal at-credit loans. Lessius’ acceptance of current business practices in Antwerp (in spite of his beliefs as a Jesuit theologian) indicates that, when he was writing, popular opinion had already abandoned the conflicted issues of morality and anxiety connected with the financial and legal reforms of the middle sixteenth century.

The Jesuit writer Toussaint Bridoul (1595–1672) shed additional light on how far the collective attitude toward the everyday economy had come in his *Sacred Shop of Saints and Virtuous Artisans* (1651). Merchants, formerly accused of blatant *abuysen* [abuses] were now extolled as virtuous and even quite Christian (“every Christian man was made a merchant by our Lord”) and argued that one should emulate the merchant who maximizes profits from goods in a warehouse by storing one’s own moral capital. At the end of life, Christians

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50 I thank Neil De Marchi for clarifying this issue.
51 See Toussaint Bridoul et al., *Den doorlvchtigen winckel van de heylighe ende devghdelycke cooplieden ende ambachtslieden* (Antwerpen: Cornelis Woons ... 1651).
52 “Alle Christen mensch is van onsen Heer een coopman ghemaecckt,” Ibid., 88. Honig discussed these issues at length in relation to the changing paradigm of merchant images. See Honig, *Painting for the Market*, 107.
should fear “leav[ing] the market without any profit”. Accordingly, during their lives people were entrusted to behave and to conduct business ethically, as well as to model their behaviors upon those of the merchant. By stripping the ethical criticism from real-life market activity, these writers illustrate a transformed public opinion that had abandoned the dogmatic suspicions coloring financial transactions of the previous century.

6.4 The Art Market in the First Decades of the Seventeenth Century

Within the newly defined realm of commodity exchange in the seventeenth century, Antwerp artists enjoyed greater freedom to sell their works across the Low Countries and France through extensive trade networks that had been well established since the middle of the previous century. Because most of these networks were maintained by Antwerp natives (rather than the foreigners who were the primary reasons for Antwerp’s economic successes in the 1560s), the city’s artists began to enjoy new possibilities for production and export. The Liggeren show increased numbers of new registrants from the first decade of the seventeenth century until the 1640s; no doubt these had been lured to the city by new collaborative possibilities and increased demand.

53 “Wt vreese dat wy ons selven ten eynde vande merckt sonder eenich profijt,” Ibid., 89.
The proliferation of dealers also indicates wider possibilities for artists and a growing trade in paintings. But the demand for luxury items in general was increasing substantially, as the Antwerp bourgeoisie and middle class returned to the consumption practices of the 1560s by filling their homes with new paintings. The nature and subjects of commissioned works dramatically changed as well, in response to Counter-Reformation policies on cultural production. Improved employment opportunities for artists resulted. Even more opportunities were created when the iconoclastic riots at the end of the sixteenth century, coupled with a long-term lack of maintenance, required church interiors to be redressed with new works of art.

These vastly increased opportunities notwithstanding, however, art and art making in Antwerp in the seventeenth century was permeated by one fundamental: risk aversion. This is not as counterintuitive as it might seem. After the religious disruptions, financial uncertainties and constant threat of war in the sixteenth century, the more stable and organized business climate of the seventeenth century compelled artists to pursue reliable trajectories. Artists did

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59 I elaborate on the financial difficulties resulting from Charles V’s manipulations of precious metals and specie in Chapter 4, section 4.6. The experimental and inventive behavior of Antwerp’s merchants has been explained by Clé Lesger as a natural response to the inhibiting factors of war, social and financial upheaval of the sixteenth century. Clé Lesger, *The Rise of the Amsterdam Market and Information Exchange: Merchants, Commercial Expansion and Change in the Spatial Economy of the Low Countries, c. 1550-1630* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 37-60. These parameters are discussed and applied to Antwerp’s art market in the seventeenth century.
not explore new media or experiment with new subjects as they had in the
sixteenth century. The replicative practices of the Bruegel enterprise demonstrate
this aversion: they relied on older, established models that were sure to sell.
Works bound for Spain were based upon models developed by Marten de Vos
(1532–1603), who specialized in conservative religious imagery that in turn was
derived mainly from Italianate sources.\(^6\) In counterreformatory Antwerp, his
replicable images both found a readymade audience and conformed to the visual
rhetoric deemed fit for export to Spain and New Spain.

The dominant family groups of painters (the Teniers, the Bruegels, the
Franckens, the de Mompers, et al.) all exhibited similar stylistic execution,
depicted generally derivative forms and subjects, and largely concentrated on
marketable pictorial models. In addition, the popularity of classical histories such
as those by Rubens and his followers coalesced into the generally conservative
and cautious visual vocabulary that predominated seventeenth-century Antwerp.
Undoubtedly, the above provides a rather schematic and simplified description,
but Antwerp’s faltering economy in the later seventeenth century did little to
encourage risky entrepreneurial behavior in the art market as seemed typical for
the sixteenth century.\(^6\)

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\(^6\) Armin Zweite, *Marten de Vos als Maler: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Antwerpener Malerei

\(^6\) De Marchi and Van Miegroet, “Uncertainty, Family Ties and Derivative Painting in
Seventeenth-Century Antwerp”
6.4.1. Tenant Farmers, Landlords, and Peasant Lawyers

Vastly changed economic conditions, combined with increased collectability of artwork, explain the social, political, and legal framework surrounding Pieter the Younger’s *Peasant Lawyer*. In the 60 years between Marinus and Pieter the Younger, the meaning of the *Lawyer’s Office* had changed. By 1618, the merchant was proof of economic prosperity and temperance; the lawyer, steward to such activities, was a necessary fixture who guaranteed fair transactions. Therefore visual language of depicting lawyers had also changed. This altered language explains why the subjects of paintings after Bruegel’s time were often blurred among lawyer, tax collector, and Land Steward [*rentmeester*]. Two paintings dating from 1636 and 1662 well illustrate these points. Jan Woutersz Stap’s *The Landlord’s Steward* (figure 40) anachronistically brought the Bruegel prototype into the seventeenth century.\(^\text{62}\) Here the peasants appear to pay a notary, in kind, for his lease to a piece of land [*twee morgenlant*]. The inscription shows that they will pay off their debt in the following month of 1636. Here there appears to be little moralizing, in contrast to sixteenth-century depictions of tenant farmers (as in Jan Massy’s *Landlord’s Steward*, figure 41). Stap portrayed the steward holding the document approving the debt of 14 stuivers as the peasant looks on with his hat at his chest. Unlike Massys’ Grimacing farmer, Stap’s farmer is a concerned and almost noble peasant. His child is conscientious and obedient. Jonathan Bikker notes that Stap

\(^{62}\) Jan Woutersz Stap *The Office of the Steward* (c. 1636). Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. SK-A-2426; oil on panel; 83.3 x 68.8 cm. On Stap himself, see Schendel. For many years he was mistakenly believed to have lived in the middle of the sixteenth century in Antwerp, because of his archaizing style that was indebted to Massys, van Hemessen, and Marinus van Reymerswale. However, an archival discovery in 1935 showed that he was likely born in Amsterdam in 1599.
replaced the satire of Jan Massys with an updated “sentimental seriousness.”\textsuperscript{63} A similar painting (1662, figure 52) by Quiringh Gerritz van Brekelenkam depicts another peasant paying his rents in an office but appears more stylistically indebted to the Dutch interior scenes of the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{64} The steward sits at his table and poses for the artist as his farmer tenant removes his hat upon entering the office. Both Stap and Brekelenkam portrayed their subjects not as satire, but as a part of modern life, thus illustrating the dichotomy between those who work the land and those who own it. Both types have been depicted with care and are devoid of any moralizing gestures or satirizing caricature.\textsuperscript{65} Each role carries a dignity reflective of the shift in work ethic of the seventeenth century. Both Stap and Brekelenkam worked in the Northern Netherlands; these paintings’ visual articulation of a new, tempered attitude toward business is evident.

6.5 How a Painting Acquires (and Loses) its Meaning

Over the centuries since Pieter the Younger painted his \textit{Peasant Lawyer}, his interpretation of the subject has in many ways erased the sixteenth-century idea of the lawyer in his office. Indeed, Pieter the Younger’s sources have puzzled many, leading to the assumption that the artist chose diverse sources “foreign” to his own immediate environment.\textsuperscript{66} Ingeborg Krueger asked who the inventor of the image was, since the painting seemed to differ so much from the images

\textsuperscript{63} Bikker et al., 361.
\textsuperscript{64} Quiringh Gerritsz van Brekelenkam, \textit{The Tenant Farmer’s Rent} (1662). Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-2698; oil on canvas; 57 x 70 cm.
\textsuperscript{65} Schendel, 278.
\textsuperscript{66} Ertz used the word “foreign” numerous times in his description of the details found in Bruegel’s painting. See Ertz and Bruegel, 499.
invented by Pieter the Elder. In response, Jacqueline Folie noted that the lawyer’s short beard and closely cropped hair were well out of fashion for the seventeenth century. The Burgundian and “archaic” costume has brought about conclusions that the source is not even Flemish at all, a conclusion supported in part, once again, from the French wording on the calendar behind the lawyer (Almanach de Grace). In his 2000 catalogue raisonné on Pieter the Younger, Klaus Ertz also supported Folie’s conclusion but offered an alternative identity for the lawyer himself, who is depicted with Habsburg features. Ertz suggested a number of possible sources, all French, including Jacques Bellange, (1575–1616), Georges Lallemant (1580–1636), and Jacques Callot (1592–1635). Ertz suggested that the best possible source is a certain Nicolas Baullery (1560–1630), who worked in Paris. Baullery worked in a Bruegelian mode, but only three paintings have been firmly attributed to this artist.

These viewpoints, while thorough, counter the artist’s known practices. Pieter the Younger replicated his father’s work, evidently never looking far for new inspiration. It would have made little sense for him to be attracted to a French source instead of capitalizing upon what was popular in the local art market. The case for French pictorial sources rests on purely stylistic grounds.

67 Krueger, 78.
68 Jacqueline Folie, ”Pieter Bruegel de Jongere,” (Maastricht: Bonnefantenmuseum, 1993). See also Van den Brink et al., 73.
69 See Ertz and Bruegel, 493.
70 Ibid., 498.
71 Ibid., 498.
72 Ibid., 499.
73 Paola Pacht Bassani, ”L’art à l’époque d’Henry IV, entre Flandre et Italie,” Bollettino d’Arte 82, no. 100 (1997), 247–262.
74 Peter van den Brink, ”The Art of Copying. Copying and Serial Production of Paintings in the Low Countries in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” in Brueghel Enterprises, ed. Peter van den Brink (Maastricht, Brussels, Ghent: Bonnefantenmuseum, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, 2001), 13–14.
and upon details such as the calendar mentioned above, the rush wallpaper, the
arrangement of the room as a kind of proscenium-set, and the dress of the
peasants. However, it seems clear that Bruegel’s painting did in fact influence
others, for the simple reason that Bruegelian imagery was immensely popular in
Paris throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries via the Saint-
Germain-de-Prés fairs.\textsuperscript{75} Artists known to have worked in the area adapted their
subjects to popular tastes in the styles of Rubens, Caravaggio, Bril, Snyders, and
the many facets of the Bruegel enterprise.\textsuperscript{76} Given the clear influence of peasant
scenes from the Bruegel enterprise and the David Teniers, we can logically
conclude that Baullery followed suit, as did other French painters in the first
decades of the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{77} Not much is known about these artists. The
presence of Antwerp dealers and sales of Antwerp paintings in Paris between
1600 and 1628 show that Bruegel’s \textit{Village Lawyer} was not based on any French
source; instead, French painters familiar with the “Bruegelian” style emulated the
Fleming’s work.\textsuperscript{78}

\textsuperscript{75} Neil De Marchi and Hans J. Van Miegroet, “Bruegel in Paris” \textit{Jaarboek van het Koninklijk
Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen XX} (2006), and the publications of Michaël Szanto,
“Libertas artibus restituta. La foire Saint-Germain et le commerce des tableaux, des Frères
Goetkindt à Jean Valdor (1600-1660),” in \textit{Economia e arte, Secc. XIII-XVIII}. Atti della
Trentatreesima Settimana di Studi, Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica “F. Datini.”
(Florence: Le Monnier, 2002), 149-185 and his ”Antwerp and the Paris Art Market in the Years
1620-1630,” in \textit{Mapping Markets for Paintings in Europe 1450-1750}, ed. Neil De Marchi and
Hans J. Van Miegroet, \textit{Studies in European Urban History (1100-1800)} (Turnhout: Brepols,

\textsuperscript{76} Szanto, “Antwerp and the Paris Art Market in the Years 1620-1630,” 333.

\textsuperscript{77} On the Le Nain Brothers, who lived in the Saint Germain des Prés, see Jacques Thuillier, \textit{Les
Frères Le Nain: Exposition Organisée par la Rédaction des Musées Nationaux, Grand Palais, 3
Octobre 1978-8 Janvier 1979} (Paris: Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, Éditions de
la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1978).

\textsuperscript{78} Pieter the Younger’s name does not appear in any Parisian dealer’s documentation; instead
dealers generally referred to paintings simply “of Bruegel” or “Bruegel.” See De Marchi and Van
Amid the speculations about Bruegel’s pictorial sources, his thematic meaning seems to have been sidelined. For example, until 1993 it was assumed that the case-bags hanging on the walls were actually mailbags. Both Folie and Krueger corrected this rather glaring misinterpretation; Van den Brink suggested that only with the accompanying explanatory texts on prints such as The Pamphlet of Paulus Fürst does the “key” to the picture’s meaning be known.\(^7\)

However, since the case-bags are a constant feature of every “laywer’s office” painting, it is odd that this insight had eluded generations of art historians. Indeed, readable labels sewn onto case-bags in Marinus’s Lawyer’s Office clearly display the names of one party versus another.\(^8\) It is also striking that the clothing and the hairstyles would be questioned as archaizing and more connected to a French source than a Flemish one. Indeed, Ertz and Folie were not the first to question the source of the subject, but they may have been the first to ask why Bruegel clothed his subjects in such attire. We find exactly the same questions about why Marinus’s characters’ costume appears archaic.\(^8\)

Side-by-side examination of Marinus’s and Pieter the Younger’s paintings reveals that Pieter the Younger’s work is actually much more solidly indebted to “native” traditions in Flanders, and even in Antwerp. As I have tried to articulate, the historical context of these works underwent tremendous changes over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. If a lineage can be assigned

\(^7\) Krueger, 78; and Van den Brink et al., Brueghel Enterprises, 173.

\(^8\) These labels state: “Jan van campe…Tsegens…Wouter olieslager” and “Tclooster van Saint magriete Tsegens de affgen(amen) van c…” The inscriptions were transcribed and published in Adolph Monballieu, “The Lawyer’s Office by Marinus Van Reymerswael in the New Orleans Museum of Art,” Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen (1972), 131.

from Quentin and Jan Massys to Marinus and his followers, culminating with Pieter the Younger, the genomic makeup of the *Lawyer’s Office* becomes clear. It passed from one decade to the next, adhering to the most salient stylistic and subjective features of each, down to the Antwerp hand trademark stamp impressed on the back of Bruegel’s panels.\textsuperscript{82}

6.6 Concluding Remarks

The discussion above has attempted to clarify the teleological assumptions regarding the meaning of lawyer’s office images by setting image within appropriate, relevant context. Neither Bruegel’s nor Marinus’ painting can be understood without a clear sense of their immediate political and social circumstances, which despite the paintings’ formal similarities were quite different. When the subject was invented in the 1540s, it connected with localized anxieties about the changed relationship among the lawyer, the general public, and the Habsburg authority. Bruegel’s manipulation of the image 50 years later marked a self-conscious break from those anxieties and in doing so generated a new pictorial tradition. The dominance of the Bruegel Enterprise’s production capacity and notoriety, as well as its hermeneutical magnetism in more recent times, have obscured the fundamental connection between Bruegel and Marinus.

Bruegel’s comical, satirical image, the model chosen by countless imitators, has endured. This new archetype, replicated both in paint and print,

and even sold in Paris in the seventeenth century, permanently colored all future interpretations of Marinus’s work. As a result, we have been far too eager to interpret his painting as a precursor to Bruegel rather than as an image that stood on its own in the middle of sixteenth-century Antwerp.
Conclusion

Karel Van Mander famously wrote, “Art follows wealth for its rich rewards.”\(^1\) Whether or not this aphorism remains true today, money and popular visual culture first entwined, both visually and financially, in Antwerp in the sixteenth century. This knowledge supplies Van Mander’s observation with multiple resonances: Art and its enterprise generate financial rewards for artists (and dealers) and the pursuit and pleasure of art are reward in themselves. In this dissertation I have tried to illustrate these trajectories, and others, in order to explain why a painting of a banker, a goldweigher, or a lawyer might have been invented and why such paintings would have been desirable. However, while we tend to assume that paintings such as these were synonymous with popular painting in Antwerp, evidence shows that they were in fact produced for and acquired by only a small audience—people who were intimately familiar with the practices, frustrations, and dangers of financial stewardship.

As an illustration of this artistic and economic topicality, I conclude with a unique work by one of the most successful artists of the sixteenth century, Pieter Coecke Van Aelst (1502–1550).\(^2\) He is best known for his sweeping, large-scale commissioned altarpieces and for his important role in the design and execution


of Brussels tapestries. He was an appropriate choice for ecclesiastic public commissions; only the wealthiest could afford his paintings for private spaces. But in many ways, his subjects—all derived from mythological, historical, and religious subjects—parallel the dominant tastes of both the elites and lower classes.

A curious little drawing in the Albertina in Vienna of a goldweigher and his wife in his office (figure 53) is attributed to the artist’s hand. An array of weights and coins are spread upon the table, and the couple is attended by an old man on the viewer’s right, who waits patiently with a cane in his hand. Various objects fill the shelves, and a picture on the wall appears to show Saint Jerome with his lion. Thus Pieter Coecke combined the two most timeless subjects popularized by Marinus Van Reymerswaele, but executed his work in an impermanent medium.

To my knowledge no other works in the artist’s oeuvre remotely approach this subject: The distinction is noteworthy. The rarity of this subject within the artist’s oeuvre, as well as the ephemeral medium he chose for this singular depiction, closely parallel the relative niche of similar paintings on the Antwerp art market. These images are both distinct and multivalent.

As the sixteenth century unfolded, these alluring paintings eventually passed into the realm of collectors’ homes and became part of Antwerp’s art

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history, where they remained—cleaved of their topicality and inserted into the larger discourse of the art history of Antwerp and that of Early Modern Art in Europe. This subordination was largely inevitable. After all, since the fifteenth century, every socioeconomic level of Netherlandish urban society had acquired paintings with which to dress their domestic spaces. Therefore, illuminating the complex intersection of art market, legal and financial reform, and social history requires a wide survey of visual and popular culture as well as a focused dissection of historical minutiae. As such, this project has been as much about understanding the multivalent meanings of images as about ways of discerning them.

Therefore, several conclusions can be drawn from each sphere of this project. Changes in the material composition of paintings that hung in domestic spaces in the sixteenth century are noteworthy. Linen paintings lose favor and their varied presence in homes indicate that although they may have been a cheap substitute for panel paintings, they should not be considered a material support found only in lower-income homes. Furthermore, it is quite surprising that panels remain present and even increase in frequency in domestic spaces in Antwerp over the course of the sixteenth century. This observation indicates that although canvas was a new and more affordable alternative to wooden panels, the public generally favored more traditional media.

The strength of tradition is evident in subjects as well. One of the main thrusts of this dissertation is the development of new imagery, which was partly due to changing tastes and concurrent political developments, as well as the creative pursuit of economic advantage on the part of artists. Such new images,
however, also depend on well-established models which were adopted and varied by later artists. One such artist, the new old master, invented new subjects but firmly couched them in traditional visual vocabularies. But even as novel images were developed, they existed alongside other subjects, and depended on them for their viability. Traditional subjects, usually Old and New Testament scenes, remained a constant presence in Antwerp and should not be considered any less important to the visual culture of Netherlandish art of the sixteenth century than new subjects such as landscapes and everyday life scenes.

It is also crucial that the long and painful process of the homologation of Netherlandish customs be linked with the invention of the seminal painting known as *The Lawyer’s Office*. This process, which consisted of no less than the complete overhaul of the legal structure of the Netherlands, brought the weight of longstanding civic traditions and local autonomy to bear against the power of an absolutist overlord. Within this context, the importance of financial stability and the development of standard business practices that were so crucial that Antwerp’s economic dominance became a regular part of the city’s visual rhetoric. No study has previously linked these historical trajectories.

This dissertation has also focused on the changing topicalities of the lawyer’s office as an art historical subject. By tracing the subject through its successive interpretations from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, I have argued that the subject completely lost its specificity and passed into the realm of universality. The causes of this shift are numerous. By the seventeenth century, the culture of Antwerp had moved far from the conflicted and fluid attitudes that had previously defined the city’s singularly mercantile culture. Not only were
once-abstract notions of credit and monetary policies firmly implanted into a more homogenous religious and political atmosphere, but one of the most successful artistic enterprises in Antwerp’s history had also appropriated the original urban image of the lawyer’s office. The Village Lawyer, as the subject become known after it was appropriated by Pieter Bruegel the Younger, confirmed the image’s wide appeal and became the most replicated subject in the artist’s oeuvre. Bruegel’s version has drawn varying interpretations over the centuries, but is logically and clearly indebted to Marinus Van Reymerswaele’s invention. Of course Bruegel’s model was the best known of the derivatives; however, it should be considered alongside the other, more opaque guises of land stewards, tax collectors, and moneychangers that continued to be produced through the seventeenth century, chiefly in the United Provices. As the Renaissance waned, the subject and its topical references became fatally obscured. This project, therefore, has sought not only to rediscover this history, but also to question the historical processes that affected its reception.

* *

* *

When I embarked upon this project, seven years ago, the paintings of Marinus Van Reymerswaele were alluring and mysterious to me. In many ways, they are still. The very fact that the artist filled his paintings with historical documents in the forms of words, coins, and satire is deceiving: The meaning of his work appears obvious and authentic, but the multiple veneers of history, reception, and changing topicalities afford the modern viewer no such satisfaction. The details—the “facts”—are but a ruse. The final shape of this
dissertation, then, has been formed in part by the need to make sense of these opacities, an endeavor which has opened up new critical inquiries that I hope will be taken up in later studies: How does *The Lawyer’s Office* relate to Antwerp painting as a cultural and historical enterprise, and can we understand the multiple layers of this enterprise? The painting stands at the center of a multiplicity of interwoven discourses, some more prominent but all worthy of examination.

This analysis has brought to light a myriad of issues relating to what the experiences of buying, selling, and owning paintings entailed for people living in Antwerp in the sixteenth century and the larger social currents that permeated everyday life in that place and time, as well as how our own heuristic practices can affect our understanding of images and artists. In the end, finding definitive historical truth is, of course, impossible. Nonetheless, the continuing course of history and historiography guarantees that images and their meanings not only change, but also have multiple life-cycles. My investigation of *The Lawyer’s Office* is but one of these ongoing tales.
Appendices

Appendix 1: Documents concerning price data for paintings sold in Antwerp 1545-1572.


Sales inventory of goods confiscated from Cornelis Bos, after he fled Antwerp after being convicted for his religious sympathies. Published in Van Der Stock, *Printing Images in Antwerp*, 356-362.

ARAB Rekenkamer, kwitanties no. 3729 (5A)

[fol.1v]

...  

*Een geschilderde contrefaicture voer* .......................................................IX groo(ten)*

*Item Jan Boel een beeldt van Maria Magdalena / van olieverwen voer* ..........II sc(elling) I 1/2 groo(ten)*

*Item Peeter Sanders een belde van Loth op lynwaet / voer* ..........XVI 1/2 groo(ten)*

*Item een tavereel van Adam en(de) Eva op lywaet / voer* ...........XVI 1/2 groo(ten)*

*Item Mathijs Brille opte nyeuwe borze vier / cleyn tavereelkens voer* ..............II sc(elling) I 1/2 groo(ten) VI (myten)*

...

*Item Mathijs Bril een schilderie van negligen(tia) en(de) / diligen(tia) voer* ....III sc(elling)*

...
Document 2. Antwerp, 6 May 1558.

Sales inventory of goods owned by textile merchant Antonis Daems at the Friday Market. Unpublished.

Stadsarchief Antwerpen. Processen supplement 1503.

Item dit is den inventarys
Vanden vercochten perseelen
Hier naevolghende toebehorende
Antonij daems ende zyn ver
Cochtter vrye vridachs merckt
Den 6 mei 1558

... 1 ront tavereelken met 1 maribelt ................................................................. VI st.
... 1 cleyn tavereelken met eenen gescilderden Jhesus ..............................III st. 9 d.
... 1 tavereel van Abraham ende Ager ................................................................. 7 st.
...

Document is a copy (from 1583) of a public sale in Antwerp that took place 1562 of the goods of Fredrick Van der Molen. In many instances the name of the buyer is also preserved. Unpublished.

Zeeuws Archief. Familie de Jonge van Ellemeet, 41.

Prices expressed in Pounds Flemish/Schellingen/Penningen.

1583 den 12 december het
principael gefonden van babtista was vande
handt van frederick vander molen
coop boeck

i pampire carte van hollant................................. £2
ii karte op lysten ........................................... 5 Sch
i karte op lysten ........................................... 5 Sch
    Florys van der molen
i francien Carte van Ostlant
i geschildert doek van Roome.............................. £2

    Cornelis Cal
i tafereel vande lop der werelt.......................... £18
i tafereel vande deluvye.................................. £16.6
i tafereel van ons lyve vrouwe........................... £3.4
i effigies van Rotterdame................................ £2.6

    Cornelis Cas
i tafereel van ons lyve vrouwe........................... 21 Sch

    Cornelis van der molen
i tafereel van judich.................................... £12.9

    Florisse van der molen
i mary belt................................................ £17.6

    Cornelis van der molen
i tafereel van Lucrecy................................... £13
i tafereel van ons lyfrou elysabet...................... £88

    Mr jan Bollant
i tafereel van Pluto en Proserpina....................... £28

    Pieter Baltens
i Marien belt met ii deuren................................ £12.3

    Joncker henrich van etten
i tafereel vanden gulden appel.......................... £10.6

Item ii lantcaerten d'eene grootachtig geïntitleert de Nederlandtsche
descryvinghe ende d'ander Hollant ende Zeelant.................. XI st.
Item een cleyn tafereelken van ons Lieve Vrouwe
in Egypten.......................................................... II g.
Item een tafereelken dat een lantschap is.............................. III g. VIII st.
Item een groot tafereel van eender boeren bruyloft
van P. Bruegel [olie verve in lyste gestoffert] ...................... LXXX g.
Item een boeren kermises [op doeck] van Bruegel
gemaeckt [olie verve in lyste] ......................................... XLII g. X st.
Item een groot tafereel genaempt een Acteon met
zyn vergulde lysten ende een custodie ......................... I°LI
Item een tafereel genaempt een Cleopatra hebbende
een Cupido [olie verve in lyste] .................................. XXXVI g.
Item een groot stuck schilderyen genaempt de
Keucken van Martha .................................................. LXIII g. X st.

Item eenen doeck van Bruegel gemaeckt in lysten met
eene boeren bruyloft............................................. XXXVIII g.
Item een boeren bruyloft op doeck gemaeckt by
Jeronimus Bosch ende met zyn lysten............................ XXI g.
Item een boeren kermisse op doeck met zyn listen van
Bruegel gemaeckt ................................................... XXVII g. XV st.
Item een winter op doeck gemaeckt van Bruegel
met zyne lysten..................................................... XXVIII g. X st.
Item een Sint Anna op bert met zyne vergulde
Lysten ................................................................. XXXVIII g. XV st.
Item een Marien bootschap op bert geschildert
Met zyn lysten ...................................................... XXII g.
Item een Marien beelt met de vlynghe van Egypten op
Bert met zyn lysten ................................................ XXI g.
Item een boeren bruyloft op doeck met zyn vergulde lysten........... XXXI g.
Item een tafereel op doeck gevrocht van St Anna geslachte met vergulde
lijsten ..................................................................... LXXV g.
Item eene Paris met drye goddinnen op vert met vergulde lysten........ L g.
Item een troenie met rondomme in houtwerck geset, gewrocht
met albasten, gen een Diane ........................................ XXXII g.
Item een Caritas op bert met zyne lysten ................................ XXXVI g.

...
Item ii geschilderde doecken [zonder lyste], dene een uylnghe
  in Egypte ende d’ander een Emaus [landtschappen] ..........XII g. XII st.
...
Item, een hoop patroonen ..................................................III st.
Item een conterfeytsele van Ste Quinten in lyste ..................XXII g. 1/2 st
Item de bataille van Ste Quinten in lysten ......................... XXVI st.
Item eene winter op doeck met zyne lysten ....................... IIII g. X st.
Item een hoywaghen [op lynwaet metter temptatie van St Anthonis] met zwerte
  vergulde lysten ............................................................... XVIII g. II st.
Item een troenny in lysten...................................................... III st.
Item twee tronien, een mans ende een vrouwen, met lysten......... XII g.
Item noch twee antyxe troennien, een mans ende een
  vrouwen persoon, met lysten............................................. VIII g.
Item noch twee troennien, een mans en een vrouwen
  Persoon, met lysten .......................................................XIX g. V st.
Item noch ii troennynen, een mans en een vrouw
  Persoon, met lysten ....................................................... XV g. I st.
Item noch ii troennynen, een vrouwen ende een mans
  Persoon, met lysten ....................................................... XIII g.V st.
Item noch ii troennynen, een mans ende vrouwen, met lysten XV g
Item noch een vrouwen troenynye ........................................ VIII g. X st.
...
Item een slach van Grevelinghen met zynye lysten.............. II g. XII st.
Item een historie van Icara oft Faeton ................................ VI g.
Item een geschilderden hont............................................... XVI st.
Item een Marienbeelt met zyne lysten vergult...................... XXVI g. X st.
Item een schilderye genaempt belle videre ........................... LXXX g.
Item een merkatte in schilderye op bert met lysten.............. II g. III st.
Itemtwee troenynen van eender bootschappe, d’eene een Lieve
  Vrouwe ende d’ander eenen engel, met zyne lysten............ XXIII g. V st.
Item eenen doeck met zyne lysten genaempt een Adonis........... IIII g. X st.
Itemeen uylnghe in Egypten op het hout met olye verwe
  Ende zyne lysten vergult................................................ XII g. III st.
Item een stuck schilderyen op doeck van eender bruyloften........ II g. II st.
...
Appendix 2: Painters’ Population and Production in Antwerp 1500-1600

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Biography

Robert Mayhew was born on November 28, 1973 in Raleigh, North Carolina. He graduated from Wofford College with a bachelor's degree in Spanish and Art History in 1996. He taught English as a Second Language for two years before pursuing his Masters degree in Art History, which he received in 2001 from the University of South Carolina.

He enrolled in Duke University’s Department of Art, Art History & Visual Studies in the fall of 2004 and received research awards from the Graduate School to conduct preliminary research in Belgium in 2006 and 2007. In 2008 he participated in the Duke University exchange program at the Institut de Récéherches Historiques du Septentrion at the Université Charles de Gaulle - Lille 3 in Villeneuve d'Ascq, France. With the support of Duke University's International Research Travel Fellowship for Advanced Students and a Belgian American Educational Foundation Fellowship, he conducted archival research in Antwerp in 2009, where he was associated with the Centre for Urban History at the University of Antwerp. He received his Ph.D. from Duke University in 2011.
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