

‘Mingling with artless crafts’:¹ the corporative context of Antwerp sculpture after 1585

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Introduction

Sculpture flourished in Antwerp at several points in the city’s history. While art historians have thoroughly explored the corporative context in which sculptors operated prior to the Fall of Antwerp in 1585, they have paid much less attention to the period that followed. This is despite the fact that guilds and corporations continued to shape the activities of sculptors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This study sets out to examine the institutional and legal framework in which Antwerp sculptors operated in the centuries after 1585. It aims to highlight the elements that underpinned this framework, the shifts that occurred within it, and the influence exerted by and upon economic growth and output.

Traditional demarcation of privileges by material and product

Jacobus van der Sanden (1726–1799) noted as early as the eighteenth century the extent to which sculptural production in Antwerp was shaped by the organization of the corporative system: ‘the practice of this art was divided in earlier times between the woodcarvers, the carpenters and the masons’, that is to say between the Guild of St Luke,

the carpenters' corporation and the Guild of the Four Crowned Saints (*Vier Gekroondenambacht*).² Demarcation between the three corporations largely reflected the different raw materials available to a sculptor, categorized as either 'wood' or 'stone'. The same distinction in terms of material use had long determined the privileges of the respective organizations and decided in which guild(s) or corporation(s) the sculptor was required to enrol. If he worked in stone, he was expected to join the Four Crowned Saints, which brought together the masons and the stonecarvers, and if he worked in wood, he was to enrol with the Guild of St Luke, which united the woodcarvers.

For obvious reasons, a similar, material-based division of labour between the woodcarvers of the Guild of St Luke and the members of the carpenters' corporation was less straightforward, and so a more specific arrangement applied in this case, based on the function of the finished product. Sculptors working with wood – who were thus members of the Guild of St Luke – were prohibited, for instance, from producing on their own initiative sculpture intended to decorate furniture: they were only permitted to do so when subcontracted by a master carpenter. The carpenters' corporation sought in this way to protect its market.³

Members of the Four Crowned Saints likewise set out to shield their 'product', namely buildings, from the sculptors. So-called *metseleijnsnijders* – artisans who produced decorative architectural elements – were required to join the corporation, even if they carved their architectural *cieraeten* in wood.⁴ Members of the Guild of St Luke were only permitted to make wooden statues, therefore, and not wooden architectural decorations. The regulations in question were drawn up in 1458⁵ and were affirmed and specified in the ruling on a court case between the Guild of St Luke and that of the Four Crowned Saints in 1514.⁶

This was not the only occasion on which the two corporations found themselves at loggerheads. In 1537 the deans of the Four Crowned Saints began legal proceedings against Claudius Floris (died after 1548) and Willem van den Broecke alias Guilielmus Paludanus (1530–1579) – so-called *cleynstekers* who belonged to the Guild of St Luke. Craftsmen of this kind produced small-scale sculpture, for which one of the most common materials at the time was alabaster.

- 1 'Vermenging met konstlooze ambagten [...]', Antwerp, Felixarchief, Privilegiekamer, 173; J. VAN DER SANDEN, *Oud-Konsttoneel* {...}, manuscript, [1781], Part I, Vol. 1, p. 130.
- 2 *Loc. cit.*: '[...] de oeffening van die konst was in de oude tijden verdeijld tusschen de beeldsnijders, de schrijnwerkers en de metzers [...]'
- 3 *Loc. cit.*
- 4 C. VAN VLIERDEN, *De Antwerpse beeldsnijders en het corporatief stelsel in de late Middeleeuwen*, 1979, pp. 32 ff (master's thesis K.U. Leuven)
- 5 C. VAN CAUWENBERGHS, *La corporation des quatre couronnés d'Anvers ou les architectes anversois du moyen age (1324–1542)*, Antwerp, 1889, p. 6.
- 6 Members of the Guild of St Luke who produced wooden architectural decorations were obliged in this period to enrol with the Guild of the Four Crowned Saints too, although they only had to pay the annual subscription and not the enrolment fee. Current and prospective St Luke members wishing to make stone statues, by contrast, or architectural decorations in both wood and stone, had to join the Four Crowned Saints and pay the full enrolment fee, since members of their own guild were restricted to making wooden statues.

The stoneworkers' guild pounced on the use of this soft stone and succeeded in extending its privileges, as the court ruled that anyone engaged in *cleynsteken* was henceforth required to enrol in the Four Crowned Saints.⁷

Nomenclature as indicator of fundamental change

'Sculpture' – the contemporary, one-dimensional name we give to the production of three-dimensional images – contrasts sharply with the wealth of terms that were applied to this branch of art in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A number of authors – among them Zirka Zarembo-Filipczak and Margriet Casteels⁸ – have noted the variety that likewise existed within the nomenclature applied to the makers themselves.⁹ While this variety can be rather confusing at first sight, on closer examination, shifts in the repertoire of names offer a useful means of gauging the institutional changes that sparked a revival in sculptural production in Antwerp in the seventeenth century. Three sources have been sampled to this end: the *Liggenen* (archives of the Guild of St Luke, 1565–1620);¹⁰ the archive documents collated by Margriet Casteels¹¹ (1575–1635) on leading figures in Antwerp sculpture around the turn of the seventeenth century; and the membership list drawn up by Jan Moretus, dean of the Guild of St Luke in 1616–17.¹²

Two names feature most commonly in this period: *antycksnyder* and *beldsnyder*. These evidently refer to two distinct disciplines, since a number of sculptors are described using both terms, including Adriaen Demby in 1610, Forsi Cardon in 1612, and *meester Otmaer* (van Ommen) in 1613. We know from this that the artist in question produced both figurative and decorative carvings. *Beldsnyder* refers to the production of statues and *antycksnyder* to decorative carving in the 'antique manner'.¹³ One sculptor – Henrick van Leuven (active 1605–53) is called an *albastwercker* ('alabaster worker') and a *beldsnyder in albast* ('alabaster carver'). Given that a distinction was drawn based on the material the artist used, might this tell us something about the activities of the *beldsnyders* (literally 'image cutters')? The verb *snijden* ('cut') is only applied to soft materials like wood, so does this mean *beldsnyders* only carved in wood? And what about sculptors who worked also, or exclusively, in stone? Sculptors working in

- 7 Antwerp, Felixarchief, Gilden & Ambachten, GA 4267, *Privilegieboek van bet Ambacht der Vier Gekroonden*, Part V.: Processen (not foliated) '[...] dat alle degene die van nu voortae in de voors. stadt cleijnsteken wilde, sullen schuldigh syn te comene in't ambacht van de metsers ende dat gedaen synde, sal jegelycx meester van den cleijnstekeren in 't selve ambacht synde, moghen stellen oft setten eenen onvrijen gezelle constenaere wesende in't cleijnsteken, ende dat op syn gewoonelijck keersgelt, wel verstaende, dat 't selve insetten van eenen onvrijen geselle op syn keersgelt hem nijet voordere en sal verstaen dan op't cleijn steken.[...]'
- 8 It is worth noting that shifts in corporative organization also occurred in the same period in Utrecht, the de Noles' native city, where the woodcarvers split from the saddlemakers' corporation to form their own Guild of St Luke in conjunction with local painters. M. CASTEELS, *De beeldbouwers de Nole te Kamerijk, te Utrecht en te Antwerpen, (Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België. Klasse der Schone Kunsten*, 16), Brussels, 1961. p. 35.
- 9 M. CASTEELS, *Op. cit.*, p. 33; Z. ZAREMBA-FILIPCZAK, *Picturing Art in Antwerp 1550–1700*, Princeton, p. 15.
- 10 P. ROMBOUTS & T. VAN LERIEUS, *De Liggenen en andere historische archieven der Antwerpsche Sint-Lucasgilde {...}*, Amsterdam, 1961. (republished, originally Antwerp-The Hague 1864–76)
- 11 The documents from her archives, kept at the Rubenianum in Antwerp (M. Casteels Bequest) and those published in M. CASTEELS, *Op. cit.*
- 12 *Boek gebonden door Jan Moretus II, als deken der St. Lucasgilde (1616–1617)*, (*Antwerpsche bibliophilen*, 1), Antwerp, 1878, pp. XI–XIII.
- 13 According to Zirka ZAREMBA-FILIPCZAK, this term first appears in the *Liggenen* in 1533 and ceases to be used after 1627. Z. ZAREMBA-FILIPCZAK, *Op. cit.*, pp. 118–19.

stone were also referred to in many cases using the term *beldsnyder*. This solution appears to have been unsatisfactory, however, since the practice gradually changed, with the result that we find increasingly explicit references to working in stone. Occasionally mixed terminology such as '*beldsnyder en steenbouder*' ('image-cutter and stone-carver') and '*steenbeldsnyder*' ('stone-image-cutter') testify to the need to distinguish between these makers. The most obvious term – by analogy with the name 'image-cutter' (*beeld-snijder*) – would appear to be *beeld-houwer* (literally 'image-hewer'), which combines the terms *beldsnyder* and *steenhouwer*. It was not until around 1617, however, that this term began to be applied to the specific category of sculptors working in stone. Jan Moretus also seems to make a clear distinction in his notes for that same year: Hans van Mildert (1588–1638), Forst Cardon, and the brothers Hans (1560–1624) and Robrecht (?–1636) de Nole, are exclusively recorded as *beeldhouwer*, while Otmaar I van Ommen (1539–after 1628), Adriaan Dembry and Erasmus I Quellinus (1584–1640) are listed as *antijcksnijders*.

This evolution in nomenclature precisely reflects the institutional shifts that occurred in Antwerp sculpture in the latter part of the sixteenth century, as the wood sculptors gradually lost ground within the Guild of St Luke to another category, namely that of sculptors working in stone. Not only did this development call for an adjustment in nomenclature, it was also naturally viewed with considerable suspicion by the Guild of the Four Crowned Saints.

The Four Crowned Saints on the defensive

The accusations that had once been hurled back and forth between the rival corporations had died down in the meantime, but the changed situation now triggered a fierce renewal of hostilities. The result was another lawsuit in 1595, pitting Rafaël Paludanus (?–1599), Cornelis Floris III (1551–1615) and the de Nole brothers on the one hand against the deans of the Four Crowned Saints on the other.¹⁴ The specific point of dispute on this occasion was the status of sculptors' apprentices. The stoneworkers' guild took legal action against the sculptors for taking on apprentices to work in stone without its knowledge.

14 Antwerp, Felixarchief, Processen, S970; F. BAUDOUIN, 'Peter Paul Rubens and the Notion "Painter-Architect"', in *The Reception of P. P. Rubens' Palazzi di Genova* (P. Lombaerde ed.), (*Architectura Moderna. Architectural Exchanges in Europe, 16th–17th Centuries*, 1), Turnhout, 2002, p. 27; M. CASTEELS & J. RYLANT, 'De metsers van Antwerpen tegen Paludanus, Floris, de Nole's en andere beeldhouwers', in *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis*, 31, 1940, pp. 185–203; C. DUVIVIER, 'Contestation entre la confrérie des maçons et les sculpteurs d'Anvers', in *Revue d'histoire et d'archéologie*, 3, 1862, pp. 91–94; W. KUYPER, *The Triumphant Entry of Renaissance Architecture into the Netherlands*, Alphen aan de Rijn, 1994, pp. 154–55; H. MIEDEMA, 'Over de waardering van architect en beeldende kunstenaar in de zestiende eeuw', in *Oud Holland*, 94, 1980, pp. 78–79; Z. ZAREMBA-FILIPCZAK, *Op. cit.*, pp. 16 and 118.



Ill. 1.

Frans II Francken, *The Four Crowned Martyrs at Work*, oil on panel, 221 x 78 cm, Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, 160

Ill. 2.

Frans II Francken, *The Four Crowned Martyrs at Work*, oil on panel, 221 x 78 cm, Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, 162

The Four Crowned Saints demanded that the apprentices enrol with it and that they be registered, moreover, as citizens (*poorters*). The masons and stonemasons once again largely got their way: the court ruled in 1596 that the apprentices must first enrol with the stoneworkers' guild and then, at the appropriate age, register as citizens of Antwerp.¹⁵ The sculptors failed to comply, triggering a further legal dispute on the same grounds in 1602, this time between the de Nole brothers alone and the deans of the Four Crowned Saints.

15 M. CASTEELS & J. RYLANT, *Op. cit.*, pp. 202–03.

The stoneworkers plainly objected to the steady encroachment on their turf by sculptors belonging to the Guild of St Luke. As the plaintiffs themselves put it, the sculptors had ‘begun to involve themselves with the making of stone statues, tombstones and suchlike [...]’(Ills. 1-2).¹⁶ They sought to head off this development by making it as expensive as possible to train an apprentice. The fee for enrolling in the Guild of the Four Crowned Saints and the cost of registering as a *poorter* came to a total of sixty guilders¹⁷ – a substantial sum for a youth who had yet to begin his training. The demand was also unreasonable, the sculptors argued, since it had yet to be ascertained whether the youngster in question possessed the talent required to achieve master’s status, let alone whether he would eventually want to set up in the city as an independent master.

16 Antwerp, Felixarchief, Processen, S970, 30 March 1595, separate document, *Solutien voor de dekens van de meisserambachte, rescribenten teghen Rapphael Paludanus cum suis remonstranten*: ‘[...] begonst[...]’ hun ‘[...] te moeyen met wercken van steenen beelden, sepulturen ende dyer gelycke [...]’

17 Antwerp, Felixarchief, Processen, S970, separate document: *Contresolutien voor Rapphael Paludanus en consoorten remonstranten teghens de dekens van den metsersambachte deser stadt, rescribenten*: ‘[...] uuijt regarde van incomgelt, ende andere lasten desselffs ambachts, die byde ouders van alsucke leerjongers souden moeten betaelt ende gedraghen worden, dwelck nyet weijnich, maer dadt als tsestich guldenen bedraghen souden [...]’

18 M. CASTEELS, *Op. cit.*, doc. 102, pp. 279–80: ‘sculpteur et tailleur en marbre, allebastre, bois et semblables matières’.

19 IDEM, *Loc. cit.*: ‘pouvoir de apprendre à ses serveiteurs son dict art, sans estre assusjecti a ceulx de mestier’

20 IDEM, *Op. cit.*, doc. 105, pp. 281–82: ‘[...] de toute sorte de pierre dure comme de pierre bleue, pierre de touche, marbre et aultre semblable, soit crue ou polistre, toutes sortes d’ouvrages assavoir: autelz, casses ou custodes du venerable saint sacrement, epitaphes, cheminees, portaulx et autres quelzconques, a leur bon plaisir [...]’.

21 IDEM, *Op. cit.*, doc. 113, pp. 289–92.

Robrecht de Nole and the ordinance of 1606

The situation as it stood was a millstone around the neck of the city’s sculptor-architects, who now took a different tack. Robrecht de Nole (died after 9 July 1636) took the lead in settling the protracted dispute, as Rafaël Paludanus, the prime mover, had died in 1599. De Nole, now an established artist, received confirmation in 1604 of his application for the position of court sculptor (Ill. 3). The relevant document describes his status in the following terms: ‘sculptor and carver of marble, alabaster, wood and similar materials’.¹⁸ More important still was the privilege he was granted to ‘instruct his assistants in the art of sculpture without being subject to the corporation.’¹⁹

The next step in the recognition of his privileges came when the Guild of the Four Crowned Saints in Antwerp was obliged to grant official permission in 1605 for Robrecht de Nole and those he employed to produce ‘all manner of works, including altars, sacrament towers, epitaphs, mantelpieces, portals, and suchlike, made from all sorts of hard stone, such as bluestone, touchstone, marble and similar, whether rough or polished, as he sees fit’.²⁰ In the meantime, however, the lawsuit initiated in 1602 between himself and his brother Hans (died 1624) on the one hand, and the Four Crowned Saints on the other, reached its conclusion, with the magistrate ruling on 22 March 1606 that the brothers were guilty of an offence and ordering them to pay a fine and the legal costs.²¹



Ill. 3.
Robrecht de Nole & Jan de Nole, *S. Bavo*,
alabaster, life size, 1615-23, Collegiate church
of S. Gummarus, Lier, (formerly crowning
statue of the high altar of the Ghent cathedral)

The ruling must have driven the sculptor to despair, because a few months later, on 3 July 1606, he petitioned his patron, Archduke Albert, on behalf of all the sculptors of Antwerp, to be allowed to work wholly independently of the Guild of the Four Crowned Saints. De Nole took care to mention several other successful contemporary sculptors who were employed elsewhere and so were obviously not required to enrol in the Antwerp stoneworkers' guild. He dropped the

- 22 'Pedro Franquevilla' is most likely the French sculptor Pierre de Franqueville (c. 1553–1615), who was employed in the workshop of the best known Southern Netherlandish emigrant in Italy: Giambologna (Giovanni Bologna or Jean de Boulogne, 1529–1608). The 'Rutgardo' said to be active in England has not, so far, been identified. IDEM, *Op. cit.*, doc. 116, pp. 297–98: 'Juan de Bolonia que vive de presente en Florenza, Rutgardo en Ynglatierra, Alexandro Colin en Insprucq, Pedro Franquevilla en Francia, todos statuarios y scultores famosos vivian en la dha villa de Anvers'.
- 23 Antwerp, Felixarchief, Gilden & Ambachten, GA 4574, separate document & Antwerp, Koninklijke Academie voor Schone Kunsten, Archief Sint-Lucasgilde, 31 (52*) & 32 (52bis*) (printed version); J. B. VAN DER STRAELN, *Jaerboek der vermaerde en kunstrycke gilde van Sint-Lucas binnen de stad Antwerpen {...} in orde gesteld en met verscheydene aenteekeningen opgebelderd door J. B. Van der Straelen en uytgegeven door P.Tb. Moons-Van der Straelen*, Antwerp, 1855; pp. 74–76; M. CASTEELS, *Op. cit.*, doc. 119, pp. 300–01: '[...] voortaeene oock selve moge aennemen ende maecken alderhande wercken dependerende van hunne inventie ende conste, als altaeren ende thuynen der selver, ochsaelen, epitaphien, tomben ende gaenderijen, pilaeren ende ciraet van schouwen ende diergelycke andere constige wercke ende tot dijen eynde oock aenveerden ende leeren alsulcke leerjongers als hun sal goetduncken en de sij van doene sele hebben tot henne wercken sonder ter saecken vande selve henne leerjongers oft anderssints der ambachte vande metssers iet te derven betaelen [...]']
- 24 Loc. cit.: 'meer de conste binnen de selve lande te houden ende de constenaers van buyten herwaerts aene te locken, trecken ende te verwilgen'.
- 25 Z. ZAREMBA-FILIPCZAK, *Op. cit.*, 1987, p. 118 and p. 168.
- 26 M. HURX, 'Architecten en gildedwang; vernieuwingen in de ontwerppraktijk in de vijftiende en zestiende eeuw', in *Koninklijke Nederlandse Oudbeidkundige Bond Bulletin*, 2009, 1, p. 6.

names of 'Giambologna, who lives at present in Florence, Rutgardo [Rutger/Roger?] in England, Alexandro [Alexander] Colin in Innsbruck, and Pedro Franquevilla [Pierre de Franqueville] in France, all of them celebrated sculptors residing outside the city of Antwerp'.²² The implication was clear: it was more economical to quit Antwerp than to stay there and have to work under the current circumstances. De Nole's move proved successful: the Archduke, who saw no justification for the demands of the masons and stonemasons, pressurized the civic authorities in Antwerp to accede to de Nole's petition. On 17 December 1606, the city council issued a fresh ordinance with regard to the sculptors, specifying that they: 'may henceforth also undertake and execute all manner of works associated with their designs and art, including altars, altar enclosures, rood screens, epitaphs, tombs, galleries, pillars and chimney decorations, and similar artful works and may, with a view to this work, take on and train as many apprentices as they deem necessary, without their being obliged to pay the masons' corporation to this end'.²³

The civic authorities had a precise goal in mind in creating these more favourable working conditions, namely 'the better to keep art in the country and to attract and persuade artists from abroad'.²⁴ This was a pressing need, since the number of sculptors in Antwerp had fallen to an alarmingly low level around the turn of the century.²⁵ It is evident from the enrolment figures for the Guild of St Luke that the new measure had the desired effect: the number of apprentices, for instance, leapt after 1606.

Handicraft or 'knowledge and art'?

Viewed in strictly legal terms, this late-sixteenth-century dispute centred on the demarcation of privileges by guilds engaged in overlapping activities.²⁶ It is evident, however, when we read the court documents²⁷ that there was an additional, underlying mechanism at play: a strategy designed to create a sociocultural distinction between practitioners of *artes liberales* and *artes mechanicae*.²⁸ The sculptors argued that their activities belonged to the realm of the Liberal Arts (Ill. 4), practised by individuals of distinction: 'the work of the defendants, to wit sculpture and architecture, for which the art of geometry must be observed and applied; this said architecture, statuary and sculpture are



reckoned among the Liberal Arts and were held in such great esteem and repute by the Greeks and Romans that they could only be learned and practised by free men, at times those of noble family.²⁹

As part of this urge to differentiate themselves, the sculptors attached great importance to education. Not only did they state that they had to master the art of geometry, they also argued emphatically that talent was a prerequisite if their training was to be successful:³⁰ ‘considerably more intelligence and intellectual skill are required to learn the defendants’ knowledge and art, and to bring them to perfection, than are needed to learn the mason’s trade’³¹ and ‘in order to learn any art or knowledge and to achieve perfection therein, it is necessary above all to possess skill and capability of mind and natural aptitude.’³² The court documents offer an intriguing insight, therefore, into the growing influence of the meritocratic model of education during the *ancien régime*, based on the presence and functional development of a *naturlycke inclinatie* (aptitude or talent), allied with *scientie ende conste* (knowledge and art).³³

Ill. 4.

Frans Floris, *The Awakening of the Liberal Arts in the company of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture* on the left), ca. 1560, oil on canvas, 161,9 x 238,7 cm, Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico

- 27 Antwerp, Felixarchief, Processen, S970, separate document, 9 May 1595: *Contresoluitien voor Raphael Paludanus en consorten remonstranten teghens de dekens van den metsersambachte deser stadt, rescribenten, los stuk*: According to (partial) edition: M. CASTEELS & J. RYLANT, *Op. cit.*, pp. 185–203 (collated & supplemented).
- 28 B. DE MUNCK, *Technologies of Learning. Apprenticeship in the Antwerp Guilds from the 15th Century to the End of the Ancien Régime*, (*Studies in European Urban History* (1100–1800), 11), Turnhout, 2007, p. 247.

- 29 '[...] dwerck der remonstranten te weten sculptura et architectura, daerinne de conste der geometrien geobserveert ende gebruyckt moet worden ende welcke architectura statuaria et sculptura, over sulcx onder de vrije consten gerekent worden ende soo byde grieken als de romeijnen in soo groote estime ende reputatie is geweest, dat nijet dan vrije persoonen ende bij tijden van edelen geslachte, de selve en hebben moghen leeren ende exerceren [...]'
- 30 G. BINDING, *Meister der Baukunst. Geschichte des Architekten- und Ingenieurberufes*, Darmstadt, 2004, pp. 20 ff.
- 31 '[...] dat omme de scientie ende conste der remonstranten te leeren, ende daerinne tot perfectie en volmaetheydt te geraecken, vele meer clockheydt ende bequaemheydt van geeste is gerequireert ende vereijst, dan om te leeren het metsers ambacht[...]'
- 32 '[...] dat om eenighe conste oft scientie te leeren ende daerinnen tot perfectie te comen, boven al ist gerequireert ende geeycht de bequaemheyte ende habilitieit vanden gheeste ende natuerlycke inclinatie[...]'
- 33 B. DE MUNCK, *Op. cit.*, p. 250.
- 34 IDEM, *Op. cit.*, pp. 247–49.
- 35 '[...] contrarien notoor ist, bij alle persoonen van stande, dat alle sunderlinghe ende excellente edificien ende wercke als kercken, torrens, theatren, coliseen, pallaijsen, stadtuysen, tomben, ocsalen, affsluytinghen ende siraten van kercken, bij de beeltsnyders ende architecten geprojecteert, geordoneert ende tot perfectie gebracht moeten worden, de welcke de metsers moeten leeren ende de forme prescriberen, die sij moeten naevolghen, soo dat de beeltsnyders ende architecten dien aengaende in effecte de leeraers ende schoolmeesters vande metsers sijn, de welcke in alsulcke wercken nijet eenen steen en souden connen leggen, dan bij ordonnantie van architecten.[...]'

At the same time, the lawsuit illustrates the segregation of the production process – a development that began in the Renaissance, and which bestowed increasing power upon those who controlled the theoretically underpinned elements of the process.³⁴ The sculptor-architects set out to appropriate these elements, while pushing members of the Guild of the Four Crowned Saints into the subordinate role of implementing the other, more empirically based aspects: 'it is known on the contrary, among all people of standing, that all exceptional and excellent buildings and works, such as churches, towers, theatres, amphitheatres, palaces, town halls, tombs, rood screens, enclosures and decorations in churches, must be designed, guided and brought to perfection by sculptors and architects, who must teach the masons and prescribe the forms that the masons must follow; in other words, sculptors and architects are in fact the teachers and schoolmasters of the masons, who would be incapable of laying a single stone without an architect's guidance.'³⁵

The sculptors presented a variety of arguments in support of their case, beginning with specific examples of how sculptor-architects acted as teachers to stonemasons: architectural works could only be erected, they argued, based on their instructions. The cases they cited included the building of the town hall in Antwerp and the Ceremonial Entry of Archduke Ernest in 1594: 'Which is evident from the construction and finishing of this city's town hall, which was conceived according to the design of the late Cornelis Floris, Guilielmus Paludanus, and other architects, and of which the same Floris had charge; but also during the recent reception of Archduke Ernest, when the defendants demonstrated their arts and knowledge to the honour of the city in the building and supervising of the triumphal arches and other marvellous works, for which the masons, who lack the skills and have no understanding of architecture, were not consulted.'³⁶

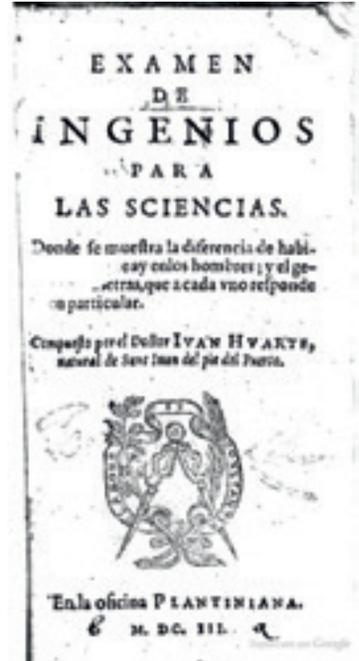
Their next line of attack was to cite the work of two illustrious counterparts, the 'universally admired Michelangelo Buonarroti, who placed the art of sculpture at the centre of his work and who studied it as the mother that nourished architecture and painting; and the late Frans Floris [who] rightly presented sculpture and painting among the Liberal Arts on his house on Gasthuisbeemd' (Ill. 5).³⁷



Ill. 5.

Monogrammist TG after Frans Floris, *Painting, Architecture and Sculpture (part of the decoration of the façade of his house)*, engraving, 24,3 x 28 cm

The sculptors must have suspected that these arguments were insufficient in themselves to persuade their opponents, as they turned next to evidence from beyond the realm of art to bolster their case. They cited, for instance, the book *Examen de los ingenios para las ciencias* – a pioneering work of differential psychology published by the Spanish physician Juan de Huarte y Navarro (c. 1530–1592) in 1575 (Ill. 6): ‘And one thus sees every day, not only among the painters but also in many other branches of art and knowledge, that of the many individuals who embark thereon, only a few attain perfection and are worthy to be called master; as also [...] demonstrated, and with many examples, by Doctor Juan Huarte in his book, dedicated to his Royal Majesty, with the title *Examen de los Ingenios para las ciencias*.’³⁶ De Huarte’s study postulated substantial differences in intelligence between individuals, and argued that not everybody had the necessary aptitude to practise a particular activity. He called for talent to be investigated before identifying an appropriate professional activ-



Ill. 6.

Frontispice of Juan de Huarte y Navarro, *Examen de los Ingenios para las ciencias*, Antwerp, 1593

36 ‘[...]Dwelck metter daet ist gebleken nijet alleene in’t bouwen ende maecten van den raethuyse deser stadt, dwelck nae uutwijsen vande patroone daeraff gemaect by wylen Cornelis Floris, Guillaume Paludanus en meer ander architecten, is geordonneert geweest, ende tot laste desselfs Floris heeft gestaen, maer oock onlanx geleden, in die incompste vande hoocheijt vanden Eertshertoghe Ernestus van goeder memorien als waneer de remonstranten tot eere ende ciraet deser stadt hunne conste ende sciencie bewesen hebben, in’t maecten ende ordoneren vande triumphale arcquen ende andere loffelijcke wercken, daer toe de metsers als onbequaem ende egheen verstandt vande architecture hebben, nijet en syn gebruyckt noch geemployeert geweest.[...]’

ity. His controversial book, which was placed on the Spanish index in 1583, was published in Antwerp in 1593 by the Plantin press.

The sculptors also resorted, lastly, to an argument drawn from historical jurisprudence, referring to the *Corpus Juris Civilis* of Emperor Justinian: 'Citing the fact that the same has also been correctly noted and remarked by the jurist *'nam ut tradit Ulpianus in l. Inter artifices longa differentia est, et ingenii et natura et doctrine et institutionis (...)*³⁹ *de solutio et liberatio (...)*.⁴⁰ The *Corpus Iuris Civilis* was drawn up on Justinian's order between 529 and 534.⁴¹ The passage in question comes from the second part, and quotes the Roman jurist Ulpian.⁴² We have been able to identify three editions of this key work of legal history published by Officina Plantini: two in 1567, and one in 1573.⁴³

Persistent issues in a complex corporative environment

Ground-breaking though it was, the ordinance of 1606 did not prevent further friction in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, not least because the new dispensation remained vague in certain respects. Sculptors, for instance, regularly engaged in architectural work, even though in principle this remained the exclusive preserve of the Guild of the Four Crowned Saints. The same naturally applied to buying and selling stone. It is plain, however, from testimony recorded during a dispute between the deans of the Four Crowned Saints and the supervisor of the guild, Sebastiaan van den Eynde (1624–before 1702) (Ill. 7), that sculptors were also selling stone as a side-line.⁴⁴ The accusation levelled by the deans in their *duplicque* of 6 May 1662 was as follows: 'In view of the fact that the defendant did not join the plaintiffs' corporation in order actually to practise the trade of masonry or stonecarving, but with the sole purpose of acting as a merchant in stone, lime and slate'.⁴⁵ Further evidence of the strict way in which the Guild of the Four Crowned Saints policed its privilege regarding the sale of stone and building materials is provided by an ordinance dated 12 November 1683, reaffirming earlier bylaws: 'that no one in this city, who is not a member of the aforementioned craft, and does not or has not engaged in it, shall, in accordance with its regulations, purchase or sell any white or blue stones, bricks, cement, slates or other old or new fired materials imported from outside the city with whole or half ships.'⁴⁶

- 142 37 '[...] vviytvermaerden Michael Angelo Bonarota, in seker syn werck in't midden heeft gestelt en gecollocceert de sculptura, als de moedere voedende de architectura ende pictura, ende wijlen Franchoy's Floris, heeft voor sijn huysinghe was gestaen in de Gasthuysbempde alhier, sculpturam ende picturam, wel ende te rechte gestelt ende geschildert onder de vrije consten. [...].'³⁷ Passage previously published by M. CASTEELS & J. RYLANT, *Op. cit.*, p. 199; C. KING, 'Artes Liberales and the mural decoration on the house of Frans Floris, Antwerp, c. 1565', in *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 52, 1989, 2, p. 239.
- 38 '[...] Ende daeromme siet men dagelycx nijet alleene onder de schilders maer in vele andere consten ende scientien, dat onder seer vele persoonen, die daeraff professie doen, end weynich syn, die tot perfectie comen, ende weerlich syn meesters genoempt te worden, gelyck tselve in alle [...] ende met veelderlijc exemplen wordt bewesen, by doctor Juan Huarte in sijn boecxken dwelck hij aende Co. Ma. t heeft gededicceert, onder de titulatie Examen de los Ingenios para las ciencias, [...].'³⁸
- 39 'There is a great difference between the masters, as between the talents, character, scholarship and education.'³⁹
- 40 '[...] Vuegende alleene dat al tselve oock wel ende rechte is genoteert ende inngesien geweest by de rechtsgeleerde nam ut tradit Ulpianus in l. Inter artifices longa differentia est, et ingenii et natura et doctrine et institutionis [...] de solutio et liberatio.'⁴⁰
- 41 There are three parts to the Codex: the first part, the *Codex Justinianus*, collects all the imperial constitutions from the reign of Emperor Hadrian onwards. The second part, the *Digestae* or *Pandectae*, comprises writings of prominent Roman jurists, while the third part, the *Institutiones*, is a kind of textbook for law schools.⁴¹



Ill. 7.
 Attributed to Sebastiaan van den Eynde, *Bust of Cornelis Lantschot*, ca. 1656, marble, 83 x 73 cm, Museum Maagdenhuis, Antwerp

An issue related to that of buying and selling stone was the subcontracting of architectural elements to non-Antwerp stonecutters. This matter came to court in 1716 in a dispute between Jan Peter I van Bauscheit (1669–1728) and, once again, the Guild of the Four Crowned Saints.⁴⁷ Picking our way through the thicket of arguments, it seems the stonecutters objected to the way sculptors were turning to workshops at the quarries to source ready-made pedestals in blue-stone – a material in which the stonecutters traditionally produced a great deal of work. The pieces in question were produced according to ‘models and drawings by the master sculptors, with instructions accompanying the illustration of the work’.⁴⁸ Members of the Four Crowned Saints felt disadvantaged by this, whereas the sculptors claimed for their part that stonecutters ‘are incapable of producing

42 DOMINI NOSTRI SACRATISSIMI PRINCIPIS IUSTINIANI IURIS ENUCLEATI EX OMNI VETERE IURE COLLECTI DIGESTORUM SEU PANDECTARUM, Liber sextus-quadragesimus, Dig.46.3.0. *De solutionibus et liberationibus*. Dig.46.3.31, Ulpian 7 *disp. : ‘[...] Inter artifices longa differentia est et ingenii et naturae et doctrinae et institutionis. ideo si navem a se fabricandam quis promiserit vel insulam aedificandam fossamve faciendam et hoc specialiter actum est, ut suis operis id perficiat, fideiussor ipse aedificans vel fossam fodiens non consentiente stipulatore non liberabit reum. quare etiam si illis stipulationibus fideiussor accesserit: ‘per te non fieri, quo minus mihi ire agere liceat?’, prohibens ire fideiussor stipulationem non committit et, si patientiam praestet, non efficit, quo minus committatur stipulatio.’

43 *Institutionum {...} libri IIII, Ex officina Christophori Plantini*, Antwerp, 1567; *Jus civile {...} Ex officina C. Plantini*, Antwerp, 1567; *Institutionum {...} libri IIII, Ex officina Christophori Plantini*, Antwerp, 1575.

44 Antwerp, Felixarchief, Gilden & Ambachten, GA 4271. Court case mentioned by A. JANSEN & C. VAN HERCK, *Op. cit.*, pp. 73–74.

45 ‘[...] 3 Gemerckt den verweerdere hem int ambacht der gevuegde niet vry en heeft gemaect ten effecte omme het ampt van metsen oft steenhouwen reelyck te exerceren 4 Maer wel ende alleenelyck om coopmanschap van steen, kalck, ende scalien te mogen doen [...]’

46 Antwerp, Felixarchief, Processen, A634, separate document, 12 November 1683: ‘[...] dat niemandt binnen dese Stadt, in het voornoemt Ambacht niet zijnde, ende dat niet exercerende, oft gheexerceert hebbende volgens d’Ordonnantie van’t selve, en sal mogen koopen oft verkoopen eenigh wit ende blauw werck tichelen careelen calck tiras, schalien, pannen oft andere soo oude als nieuwe ghebacke materiaelen, die alhier van buyten worden inghebrocht, ten waere metten schepe oft halven schepe [...]’.

- 47 A. JANSEN, 'De communiebanken in de Antwerpsche Sint-Pauluskerk', in *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis en folklore*, 7, 1944, pp. 38–39; A. JANSEN & C. VAN HERCK, *J. P. van Bourscheit I en J. P. van Bourscheit II, Antwerpsche beeldhouwers uit de 18de eeuw*, (*Koninklijke Oudheidkundige Kring van Antwerpen. Jaarboek*, 18), Antwerp, 1942, pp. 35–106.
- 48 Antwerp, Felixarchief, Processen, A634, separate documents, c. 1716: '[...] modellen ende desseÿns ofte teekeninghe van de meester belthouwers met een explicatie daer bÿ van de verbeldinghe van het werck [...]'. See also G. VAN TUSSENBROEK, *The Architectural Network of the Van Nuerenberg Family in the Low Countries (1480–1640)*, (*Architectura Moderna*, 4), Turnhout, 2006, pp. 18, 25.
- 49 '[...] soodaenighe wercken niet en connen maecten [...]']
- 50 '[...] tÿts bestaan in mismaeckte wercken omdat de teekeninghe niet en correspondeert met de wercken waer toe die moeten dienen //: [...]']
- 51 Antwerp, Felixarchief, Gilden & Ambachten, GA4271.
- 52 '[...] dat hy is meester onder de beeltsnyders maer oock vrymeester. Welck vrymeesterschap niet en bestaet in het doen van eenighe preuve oft inscriptie van eenich ambacht ofte natie. 4. Want de conste vant beeltsnyden is eene vrye conste waertoe geene preuve en staet oft obligatie van onder een lith te comen, 5. Maer den genen die het can is meester ende vrymeester 6. Ende in die qualiteyt vermach den selven int stuck van beeltsnyden te employeren soo vele gesellen alst hem gelief 7. Sonder dat onder de beeltsnyders eenighe distinctie bekend is tusschen vry ofte onvry [...]']
- 53 Antwerp, Felixarchief, Processen, A634, 17 March 1674, separate document. Prior to 1674 the master's test was only required by the masons' corporation.

work of this kind',⁴⁹ and, moreover, that they themselves placed orders with the quarry workshops, resulting on occasion in 'misshapen works, because the drawing did not match the works for which they were intended to serve'.⁵⁰

Not only was the demarcation of the two guilds' respective privileges a source of friction, so too were differences between their respective internal organization. The immediate trigger for the aforementioned court case between Sebastiaan van den Eynde and the deans of the Four Crowned Saints, for instance, was the employment of journeymen. Van den Eynde was accused of taking on journeymen ('unfree') without notifying the corporation or paying *kaarsgeld* (literally 'candle money'), as required by the ordinance of 21 November 1559.⁵¹ Van den Eynde's defence was that he had put these journeymen to work as *beeldsnyders*, and was therefore not required to declare them to the masons' guild.

It is evident from Van den Eynde's *voldoeninge*, dated 1 September 1662, not only that such controls did not apply within the Guild of St Luke, but also that no distinction was made within that guild between a master and a free master: in other words, it was not necessary to pass a master's test in order to be deemed a master: '[...] that he is a master among the sculptors but also a free master. The status of free master does not require the passing of a test or enrolment in a guild or corporation; 4. For the art of sculpture is a Liberal Art, which does not involve any test or membership of a corporation; 5. But the person who can exercise it is a master and free master; 6. And in that capacity he may employ as many journeymen as he deems necessary; 7. Without the sculptors recognizing any distinction between free or unfree [...]'.⁵²

This liberal regime was diametrically opposed to the strict regulations of the Guild of the Four Crowned Saints, to which the stonemasons' craft was subject from 1674.⁵³ As of that date, any would-be free master stonemason was required to complete a four-year apprenticeship, to spend three years working under a master and, lastly, to pass a test: 'To wit, that anyone who wishes to become a stonemason shall make a column with base and capital according to the five orders of architecture, namely the Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and Composite, from which the examiner may choose, and shall make it

in common blue stone or marble, as large or as small as he sees fit. He shall also make a drawing of a gallery and a facade [...] on a scale to be determined by the deans and must also calculate various arches with their inner and outer chords, and that this test shall be completed at the home of the serving dean.’⁵⁴

Strategies for dealing with corporative tensions: the double oath and the transcorporative division of labour within the family

The most obvious strategy for negotiating the corporative minefield was already apparent in the legal documents relating to the lawsuit between Sebastiaan van den Eynde and the deans of the Four Crowned Saints, namely to enrol in both guilds or ‘swear a double oath’.⁵⁵ The primary drawback of dual enrolment was naturally the added expense. What’s more, the problems experienced by Peter II Verbruggen (1648–1691) show that this strategy was not a cure-all either (Ill. 8). The Guild of the Four Crowned Saints evidently insisted that before taking the double oath the celebrated sculptor should serve his apprenticeship under a stonemason. Norbertus van den Eynde (1628–1704) and Jan van den Eynde argued in 1690, however, ‘that anyone who has learned to sculpt in stone in the city and is competent to make all architectural works and who wishes to enrol in the Guild of the Four Crowned Saints as a stonemason has always been admitted and accepted as such by that guild without being required to serve an apprenticeship under a stonemason’.⁵⁶

We find a well-documented example of the double oath in the career of Otmaar van Ommen, who enrolled as an apprentice in the Guild of St Luke in 1587–88 under the name *Otmer antick*. Following a legal dispute,⁵⁷ he was also obliged to enrol in the carpenters’ corporation in 1589–90.⁵⁸ But the case of this woodcarver-carpenter also reveals a further strategy for dealing with corporative rivalries: the transcorporative division of labour within a family. Van Ommen’s daughters, Rachel, Elisabeth and Catharina, were married respectively to the carpenters Jan de Gipploy (c. 1576/77–1640) and Jan Herry (died 1638),⁵⁹ and the woodcarver Adriaen Dembry.⁶⁰ The family connections between these masters provided an ideal opportunity to collaborate and hence to avoid any problems arising from ‘ambiguous’ commissions touching on the privileges of their two guilds, such as

54 ‘[...] Te weten, dat den ghene die sal pretenderen te worden steenhouwer, dat die sal moeten maecken eene colomme met sijn basement ende capiteel naer de vijf ghedeelten vande architecture, te weten, Toscana, Dorica, Ionica, Corinthia, ende Composita: van welcke voornoemde vijf reghels den proefmeester nae sijne gheliefte eene sal moghen verkiesen, ende de selven maecken van ghemeynen blauwen steen oft marmer, ende soo groot ende kleyn als hy sal willen het selve doen. Bovendien, soo sal den selven proef-meester oock moeten maecken de teeckeninghe van eene gaalerie ende gevel opden kleynen voet, ende naer de maete ende proportie aen hem by de Dekens te gheven, midtsgaeters oock moeten trecken diversche soorten van boghen, spannende soo onder als boven de half ronde: ende sal de selve proeve moeten gheschieden ten huysse vanden dienende Deken. [...]’

55 Z. ZAREMBA-FILIPCZAK, *Op. cit.*, 1987, p. 15.

56 ‘[...]dat alle degene die het steenbelthouwen alhier binnen deser stadt hebben geleert, ende bequam waeren om allen de wercken van de architectuur te maecken ende willende comen onder het metsers ambacht deser stadt als steenhouders, altyt onder hetselve ambacht als steenhouders aenveert ende geadmitteert syn geworden sonder eenige leerjaeren te hebben moeten voldoen by eenige gemeyne steenhouders [...]’ A. JANSEN & C. VAN HERCK, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 39 and 67.

57 J. VAN DAMME, *Bijdrage tot de studie van de Antwerpse schrijnwerkers hun ambacht en hun werk tijdens het corporatief stelsel*, 1985, p. 119: (master’s thesis K.U. Leuven); Antwerp, Felixarchief, Processen, W943.

58 E. KEIGNAERT, ‘Otmaar van Ommen (ca. 1539-ca.1630), Antwerps antiëksnijder en schrijnwerker werkzaam in West-Vlaanderen’, in *Handelingen van de Koninklijke geschied- en oudbeidkundige Kring Kortrijk*, 61, 1995–96, p. 4.

59 J. VAN DAMME, ‘Het biechtgestoelte van de Antwerpse Sint-Pauluskerk’, in *Monumenten en Landschappen*, 15, 1996, 3, p. 41.

60 IDEM, *Loc. cit.*

III. 8.

Pieter II Verbruggen, *Design for a funeral monument*, drawing, 245 x 159 mm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2010.97



61 IDEM, *Bijdrage tot de studie van de Antwerpse schrijnwerkers hun ambacht en hun werk tijdens het corporatief stelsel*, 1985, pp. 179–80 (master's thesis K.U. Leuven)

62 IDEM, *Loc. cit.*

63 A JANSEN & C. VAN HERCK, *De van den Eynde's. Antwerpse bouwmeesters en beeldhouwers uit de XVIIe eeuw*, (*Jaarboek Koninklijke Oudheidkundige Kring van Antwerpen*, 20–21), Antwerp, 1944–45, pp. 5–90. M. CASTEELS, *De Van den Eynde's*, s.d. (typescript, Rubenianum Antwerp), also gathered data.

church furniture with abundant carved decoration. Elisabeth's marriage to Jan Herry produced the carpenter and successful maker of church fittings Octavio Herry (1614–1693),⁶¹ who also enrolled in the Guild of St Luke in 1664–65, just like his grandfather Otmaar before him. Octavio's daughter, Elisabeth Anna, was married in turn to the woodcarver Jan-Baptist de Vree (active 1665–1714).⁶²

The Van den Eynde-de Neve family was a similar dynasty of craftsmen, though now in the field of stone sculpture. Adolf Jansen and

Charles Van Herck have performed extensive research into this particular clan,⁶³ which was also firmly embedded in the two relevant corporations: the Guild of the Four Crowned Saints and that of St Luke. The land surveyor and stonemason Cornelis van den Eynde (1585–1664) was the brother of the successful sculptor Hubertus van den Eynde (1594–1661), of whose refined marble sculptures, Cornelis de Bie wrote: ‘Life or soul alone seems yet to lack / In the white stone statues, which otherwise would speak / For the marble resembles skin and veined flesh / As wonderfully lifelike as Nature herself.’⁶⁴ Cornelis’s son Sebastiaan was, as already noted, a member of both corporations, and Hubertus’s workshop was continued by his son Norbertus. Sebastiaan de Neve (1612–1676) was the son of Marten de Neve and Anna van den Eynde – almost certainly Cornelis and Hubertus’s sister. For their part, Cornelis and Hubertus were both registered as sculptors: it is not known whether they also belonged to the Guild of the Four Crowned Saints.

This transcorporative division of labour within the family offered two principal benefits: a ready concentration of intellectual capital and enhanced availability of financial resources. Analysis of contracts shows that master artisans were regularly expected to provide sufficient liquid capital for purposes of surety and the purchase of materials.⁶⁵ It is plain from the bankruptcy of the de Neve-Couplet company that it was far from simple to set up an independent workshop with the necessary starting capital and resources to fund master status, premises, tools, raw materials and staff.⁶⁶ Jacques Couplet (active 1641–1658) and Sebastiaan de Neve took over rental of *den Winckel ofte werckhuys van beeltsnyerye* from Marie de Vernis, the widow of Andries de Nole (1598–1638), on 12 September 1639.⁶⁷ They also took over all de Nole’s outstanding orders as of the same date,⁶⁸ borrowing a hefty 4,000 guilders to this end from Dieric Cocx.⁶⁹ The business was, however, destined to be short lived: the partners became embroiled in legal proceedings in 1647 and their alliance was dissolved.⁷⁰ We know that the de Nole brothers too had to rely on loans to meet their cash flow needs.⁷¹

The opportunity to spread the financial risk within a family context was thus of considerable commercial benefit to those starting out in business. We know from the testamentary inventory (19 July 1624) of his first wife, for instance, that Hubertus van den Eynde – who

- 64 C. DE BIE, *Het gulden cabinet vande edel vry schilder-const inboudende den lof vande vermarste schilders architecte beeldbouwers en de plaetsnyders van dese eeuw*, Antwerp, 1662 [1661], p. 449: ‘[...] Het leven oft een siel en compt hier maer t’ ontbreken / In beelden van wit steen, sy souden anders spreken /Want t’ marber schijnt hier vel en recht vol-adert vlees /Soo wonder levendich als oyt Natuer bewees [...]’.
- 65 V. HERREMANS, ‘Eenen loffelycken ende boffelycken aultaer’ *Retabelplastiek in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden ca. 1585-1685*, Free University Brussels, 2007, vol. 1, p. 280.
- 66 Antwerp, Felixarchief, Processen, C2854, 1639–44.
- 67 A. JANSEN, *Documentatie over Antwerpsche beeldbouwers (2de deel)*, (*Jaarboek Koninklijke Oudheidkundige Kring van Antwerpen*, 16), Antwerp, 1940, Doc. No. 2, p. 15. (offprint)
- 68 IDEM, *De beelden van de O. L. Vrouwkapel in de Sint-Caroluskerk te Antwerpen*, (*Antwerpen’s Oudheidkundige Kring Jaarboek*, 14), Antwerp, 1938, Supplement 1, p. 56.
- 69 IDEM, *Documentatie over Antwerpsche beeldbouwers (2de deel)*, (*Jaarboek Koninklijke Oudheidkundige Kring van Antwerpen*, 16), Antwerp, 1940, Doc. No. 6, p. 17 (offprint).
- 70 Antwerp, Felixarchief, Processen, C2854. Various documents from this minor legal dispute have previously been published by A. JANSEN and in the aforementioned publications, but also by M. CASTEELS, *De beeldbouwers de Nole te Kamerijk, te Utrecht en te Antwerpen*, (*Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België. Klasse der Schone Kunsten*, 16), Brussels, 1961, pp. 186 ff.
- 71 A. JANSEN & C. VAN HERCK, *De Antwerpsche beeldbouwers Colyns de Nole*, (*Koninklijke Oudheidkundige Kring van Antwerpen. Jaarboek*, 19), Antwerp, 1943, pp. 8–9 (offprint).

became an independent master in 1620 – owed his brother, the land surveyor and stonemason Cornelis van den Eynde, no less than 676 guilders ‘in respect of purchased stone’.⁷² Robrecht de Nole likewise collaborated after the death of his brother Jan with the latter’s son Andries in ‘a stonemasonry company’.⁷³

The Quellinus-Verbruggen-Scheemaekers dynasty

One particular dynasty of Antwerp sculptors succeeded in carving out a prominent position for itself not only in its native city, but also in Southern Netherlandish and even international sculpture. Its founding figure was Erasmus I Quellinus (1584–1640), who probably came from Liège. His son Artus I (1609–1668) and the son of his brother Arnoldus, Artus II (1625–1700), became synonymous with the international prestige that Southern Netherlandish sculpture enjoyed in the seventeenth century. In 1641 Erasmus Quellinus’s daughter Cornelia married Peter I Verbruggen (1615–1686), whose sister later became the mother of Petrus I Scheemaekers (1652–1714). Peter’s own legacy was secured by two sons: Peter II Verbruggen (1648–1691) and Hendrik Frans Verbruggen (1654–1724).

How did this illustrious family relate to the complex corporative environment in which it operated? Two things stand out when we take a closer look at the profiles of the family’s various members, the first being that their collective know-how extended to both wood- and stonemasonry. The testamentary inventory of the clan’s founding father, Erasmus I Quellinus, clearly shows that he worked in stone, in addition to the sculpture in wood for which he is better known.⁷⁴ Artus I and Artus II Quellinus and Peter I Verbruggen were also active in both fields. While this was not unusual for contemporaries in cities like Brussels, where the corporations were not organized on the basis of raw materials, the situation in Antwerp was plainly different. The local craft dynasties we examined earlier structured their transcorporative activities around a single material – wood or stone.

The second likely key to the Quellinus-Verbruggen-Scheemaekers clan’s success was the way they brought the different elements of the production process – invention and execution – under the same roof, giving them control over the creative process as a whole and

72 ‘[...] ter saecken van gehaelden steen [...]’: IDEM, *De van den Eynde’s. Antwerpsche bouwmeesters en beeldhouwers uit de XVIIe eeuw*, (*Jaarboek Koninklijke Oudbeidkundige Kring van Antwerpen*, 20–21), Antwerp, 1944–45, p. 42 (offprint).

73 ‘[...] een compagnie van beelthouwen [...]’: M. CASTEELS, *Op. cit.*, p. 407, doc. 243; P. GENARD, ‘Vennootschap der beeldhouwers Colyns de Nole’, in *Dietsche warande*, 9, 1896, pp. 555–57; A. JANSEN and C. VAN HERCK, *De Antwerpsche beeldhouwers Colyns de Nole*, (*Koninklijke Oudbeidkundige Kring van Antwerpen. Jaarboek*, 19), Antwerp, 1943, p. 9 (offprint).

74 E. DUVERGER, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw. vol. 5: 1642–1649*, (*Fontes historiae artis neerlandicae. Bronnen voor de kunstgeschiedenis van de Nederlanden*, 1, 5), Brussels, 1991, pp. 50–52; A. JANSEN, ‘Het gestoelte van den Zoeten Naam en de Tuinen in de St. Pauluskerk te Antwerpen’, (*Antwerpen’s Oudbeidkundige Kring Jaarboek*, 14), Antwerp, 1938, pp. 45–49.



Ill. 9.

Attributed to Erasmus II Quellinus, *Allegory of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, in the company of Inventio and Geometria*, drawing, 215 x 278 mm, Sotheby's New York, 24.01.2007, lot 56

allowing them to guarantee the quality of the designs they supplied (Ill. 9). This happy state of affairs reflected the fact that, in addition to its sculptural qualities, the Quellinus family boasted some first-class painterly talent: Artus I's brother, Erasmus II Quellinus (1607–1678), was a pupil of Peter Paul Rubens, in whose footsteps he followed to become a *grand designateur et Architecte*.⁷⁵ Although this aspect of the painter's oeuvre has yet to be studied in depth, we know that – as this epithet suggests – he did indeed provide his sculptor relatives with designs.⁷⁶ Claire Baisier⁷⁷ believes he designed the high altar for the Abbey of St Bernard in Hemiksem, the commission for which was originally placed with Peter I Verbruggen. Erik Duverger has published the contract for the organ-case and the 'stoel' (chair) the painter designed for St Andrew's Church in Antwerp.⁷⁸ The importance placed on models and drawings as part of the intellectual capital of the sculptors' *winckel* is evident from their explicit mention in wills and inventories.⁷⁹ In his will dated 9 January 1685, for instance, Peter I Verbruggen left drawings and models to his son Peter II,⁸⁰ while Jan van den Cruyce (1616–1699) likewise

75 C. DE BIE, *Op. cit.*, p. 261.

76 F. BAUDOUIN, 'Van concept tot beeldhouwwerk. Het arbeidsproces van de beeldhouwer in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens de 17de en de 18de eeuw. Terracotta's', in *Terracotta's uit de 17de en 18de eeuw. De verzameling Van Herck*, s.l., 2000, pp. 34–35. ; A. JACOBS, *Sculptuur in de schilderijen van Erasmus II Quellinus*, in *Erasmus Quellinus : in de voetsporen van Rubens*, Gent, 2014, pp. 27–34. The latter considers merely the influence of sculpture on painting within the Quellinus family.

77 C. BAISIER, 'Nieuwe gegevens over het hoogaltaar van Peter I Verbruggen en Willem Ignatius Kerrix in de St.-Andriesskerk te Antwerpen eertijds in de St. Bernardusabdij te Hemiksem', in *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Oudbeekunde en Kunstgeschiedenis*, LXVII, 1998, pp. 27–53.

78 E. DUVERGER, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw. vol. 10: 1674–1680*, (*Fontes historiae artis neerlandicae. Bronnen voor de kunstgeschiedenis van de Nederlanden, Reeks 1*, 10), Brussels, 1999, pp. 67–68, no. 3104.

79 See also E. DUVERGER, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw*, passim

80 Antwerp, Felixarchief, Notariële Protocollen, N 3872, f° 2 notaris van der Linden. Reported by I. KOCKELBERGH, *De Antwerpse 'meester constbeldhouwer' Henricus-Franciscus Verbruggen 1654–1724. Een monografische benadering*, 1986, vol. 1, p. 7. (master's thesis, U. Gent)

bequeathed to his son Jan-Antoni 'all [...] architectural models and drawings, together with all tools serving the art of sculpture'.⁸¹

In addition to the designs themselves, the incorporation in the family's intellectual capital of the *disegno* traditionally associated with painting is bound to have been a crucial extra asset in the training of the family's sculptors, and will undoubtedly have contributed to the innovative character of their work. Incidentally, although the Antwerp sculptors claimed to 'design and guide' their commissions, we have to wait until well into the seventeenth century before we find any actual design drawings by them. This state of affairs changed in the final decades of the seventeenth century, due in part to the opening of the Academy, where no less than twenty percent of the pupils attending drawing classes around 1700 were sculptors.⁸²

The sculptors on the defensive

The Guild of the Four Crowned Saints was not the only institution at which the charge of protectionism may be levelled. Having developed out of economic considerations, rather than attachment to historical structures, the sculptors' corporation was not entirely innocent in this regard either. Its membership grew steadily in the decades after 1606, prompting the need to protect its activities more effectively.

Christine Van Vlierden has shown that a test was introduced around 1656 for apprentices enrolled in Antwerp.⁸³ The sculptors asked the civic authorities for permission to introduce the test because 'the youth of today wishes to fly before it has wings; it quits its parents and masters before it has gained the necessary skills and practice, with the consequence that it produces faulty and poor work that is not appreciated by visitors and which deceives the public [...]'.⁸⁴ Reference was made to cities like Ghent, Bruges, Mechelen and Brussels, where a similar test was said to be in place. To pass the test, the candidate would be asked 'to make a statue or figure in wood or stone, six feet high, nude with a draped robe, according to the requirements and proportions of sculpture [...]'.⁸⁵ It is not known whether the civic authorities agreed to the sculptors' request.

81 '[...] alle [...] modellen ende teekeningen van architecturen, mitsgaeders alle gereetschap dienende totte conste van belhouden': J. VAN DAMME, 'Enkele gegevens omtrent Jan en Jan Anthoni van den Cruys: Antwerpse beeldhouwers uit de barok' in *Cornelis Floris*, 1988, p. 57.

82 B. DE MUNCK, *Op. cit.*, p. 252.

83 C. VAN VLIERDEN, *Op. cit.*, pp. 142–43.

84 '[...] alsoo tegen woorde de meeste jonckheijt wilden vlieghe eer sij vleugels hebben, verlatende hunne ouders ende meesters eer sij daerinne van deghen gegriffiet ofte geexerceert connen sijn, maeckende alsoo alle onnutte ende brodwercken, tot groote misachtinghe van alle vrempdelinghen ende bedroch vande goede gemeijnte [...]']

85 '[...] maecken een belt ofte figuer van houdt ofte steen van ses voeten hooch, in het naect ende drapperije alles met goede observantie heys ende proportie van het belhouden [...]']

A municipal ordinance of 25 October 1689, prescribing a number of new rules was more significant in this regard.⁸⁶ Nobody was to be permitted to engage in sculpture in Antwerp unless he had completed a four-year apprenticeship in the city or elsewhere: 'Firstly that nobody in Antwerp may practise the aforementioned art of sculpture, unless he has become a free master in this city or in another, and that he has trained to this end under a free master for four years, having been properly enrolled in the guild [...]'.⁸⁷ Sculptors from elsewhere who did not wish to undergo the four-year trial period were required, having registered as citizens (*poorters*), to take a test at their own expense: 'Sculptors from outside who have already practised the art of sculpture and have proved their competence, will be admitted without having to serve the trial years, provided that they have taken the test and have paid the costs thereof and that they have become *poorters* of this city [...]'.⁸⁸ A limit was also placed on the number of new apprentices: '[...] and each free master may only take on an apprentice once every two years, subject to a fine of twenty-five guilders; he may employ as many time-served journeyman as he sees fit'.⁸⁹

Conclusion

The corporative context in which Antwerp sculptors operated was shaped for centuries on the basis of their raw material. Those who worked in wood fell under the jurisdiction of the Guild of St Luke, and those who worked in stone under that of the Guild of the Four Crowned Saints, whose members included both masons and stone-carvers. In certain specific cases, where the privileges of the respective corporations could not be adequately demarcated in this way, it was also prescribed which products members of the two guilds were permitted to produce: this happened between the Guild of St Luke and the carpenters' corporation, for instance, with respect to woodcarving intended to decorate furniture.

A category of sculptors in stone arose in the course of the sixteenth century, which no longer identified with the Guild of the Four Crowned Saints, but with that of St Luke, resulting in a series of lawsuits and eventually – in 1606 – in a reallocation of privileges. Henceforward, these were no longer based purely on the material used but also on the 'products' that members of the Guild of

86 J. B. VAN DER STRAELEN, *Op. cit.*, pp. 149–51.

87 '[...] In den eersten, dat niemant binnen dese stadt de voorgemelde conste van beldt-houwen en sal moghen exerceren, als de ghene die de selve binnen de stadt, oft binnen eene stadt alhier bevrijdende, bij eenen vrijen meester gheleert sullen hebben den tijdt van vier volle jaeren, naer dat sij behoorlijk van te vorens sullen wesen opgeschreven. [...]

88 '[...] Behoudelijck dat alle vremdelinghen, die de selve konste sullen hebben gheexerceert, ende constweerdigh worden bevonden, sonder proef-jaeren alhier, sullen worden gheadmitteert, midts doende de proeve, ende betaelende de oncosten daer toe staende, ende zijnde te vorens geworden poorter deser stadt [...]

89 '[...] Ende sal oock ieder vrij meester maer alle twee jaeren moghen aennemen eenen leer-knaep, op pene van vijf en twintigh guldens, dan sal soo veel vrij gesellen, die hunne leer-jaeren hebben voldaan, moghen te werck stellen als hem sal gelieven. [...]

St Luke were permitted to produce in stone: altars, altar enclosures, rood screens, epitaphs and tombs, galleries and sculptural work for decorative mantelpieces. The disputes that culminated in this radical change were driven primarily by economic motives: essentially the fear on the part of the Guild of the Four Crowned Saints of being deprived of part of its market. The lawsuits through which these conflicts were settled also required the deployment of legally relevant arguments founded on the prevailing regulations, hence their focus on issues like the employment of journeymen, apprenticeships and masters' tests.

However, the court records also reveal a more deep-seated tension, namely the growing sociocultural division between stonemasons and sculptors. As far as the sculptors were concerned, their activities belonged to the category of the *artes liberales*, and those of the stoneworkers to that of the *artes mechanicae*. Sculptors also took the view that they alone were capable of supplying designs for sculptural work and of guiding projects to a successful conclusion. In reality, their claims with regard to design seem to have been more of an aspiration at first: we do not find any autograph design drawings by sculptors until the final decades of the seventeenth century, when sculptors began to take drawing lessons at the city academy, which opened in 1663. The Quellinus-Verbruggen-Scheemaekers dynasty of sculptors appears to have enjoyed a substantial advantage in this regard, as the significant element of *disegno* in the family's intellectual capital undoubtedly contributed to its success.

Whatever the case, by establishing more flexible working conditions and stimulating artistic impulses through the incorporation of stone sculpture in the Guild of St Luke, the Antwerp ordinance of 1606 plainly exerted a substantial influence on the city's flourishing sculpture scene in the seventeenth century. This ultimately led the Guild of St Luke to introduce protectionist measures of its own in 1689, to resist the excessive influx of apprentices and sculptors from outside the city.