

J. BRUYN Works of Art commissioned by Egmond Abbey in the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century (II)

Chapter III deals with the painters who worked for the abbey, on the basis of information contained in the account-books (see Chapter II).

Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostanen (before 1470–1533), of Amsterdam, painted a big retable, now lost, for the altar of the Holy Cross (half-way in the nave) in 1526–'28. The predella represented the Passion and was carved by Steven Gijsbrechtsz. of Haarlem in 1523.

Cornelis Buys, presumably the second Alkmaar painter of that name (d. 1546) executed a retable, now lost, for the altar of the Holy Virgins (northern lateral apse) in 1524. For his early style, not yet affected by the influence of Jan van Scorel, cf. fig. 1.

Pieter Gerritsz. (ca. 1470–1540), of Haarlem, whose name frequently occurs in various documents, was one of the favourite painters of the abbey and on several occasions acted as her agent in commercial transactions. The only work hitherto ascribed to him on the strength of documentary evidence (fig. 2) offers hardly any basis for expanding his oeuvre. The 'tabula sancte Anne' which he executed for the Abbey in 1523/24 may be identified hypothetically with a Holy Kinship in a private collection (figs. 3, 4, 6, 8, 9). This painting shows Haarlem characteristics in style and iconography but also the impact of Antwerp mannerism (cf. fig. 5). Pieter Gerritsz. seems to have been trained in the circle of Geertgen tot St. Jans and to have adopted the fashionable mannerist style in a later stage of his career; his name actually occurs in the administration of the Antwerp Guild of St. Luke for 1525.

Cornelis Willemsz. (ca. 1480–after 1552), also of Haarlem, is mentioned twice by Karel van Mander as the teacher of Jan van Scorel as well as of Maerten van Heemskerck. He must have been a close friend of Pieter Gerritsz.'s, for he became the latter's heir. For this reason a fragment of a free copy after the Holy Kinship just mentioned may tentatively be attributed to him (fig. 10) together with two pictures representing St. Peter and St. Paul which obviously are by the same hand (figs. 11, 12). The remnants of an Apostles' retable (figs. 13–17), possibly again by the same artist, may be identified with fragments of an altar-piece which, according to the documents, Cornelis Willemsz. painted for the abbey in 1523/24. This identification tends to confirm the working hypothesis

regarding the artistic personalities of two Haarlem painters, who closely followed Antwerp mannerist prototypes from ca. 1520 onwards.

On the strength of his biography, we may expect a different development in the case of Frans Jansz. (ca. 1490–after 1542), also of Haarlem, who executed a pair of wings for the abbey's main altar and a retable (or wings) for the altar of the Holy Martyrs (southern lateral apse). He was trained in Antwerp from 1506 until 1512 and registered again as master in the Antwerp guild in 1516. No documented work by him can be identified but a pair of wings whose style combines Dutch and Antwerp (Joos van Cleve) elements may give an idea of this painter's personality (figs. 18–21).

Lastly, the painter Jan Joesten of Hillegom (ca. 1475–1535/43), who until recently has been confused with Jan Joest of Kalkar, lived in the abbey as a pensioner since 1512. His work would not be specified in the account-books and cannot, therefore, be identified on documentary grounds.

One pair of wings has already been recognized as far as the outside is concerned (figs. 24, 25) by Réau as representing saints connected especially with Egmond. The inside (figs. 26, 27) turns out to bear the date 1530 and the initials of the abbot Willem van der Goes (1526–1560) (besides those of one P.T.). The altar-piece to which these wings belonged cannot be identified with any mentioned in the account-books but it may be connected with the 'Patrons' altar in the abbot's quarters. As no mention of any payment is made, it seems just possible that Jan Joesten was responsible for these rather feeble paintings.

On the basis of what little we know of the work of Haarlem painters born around 1470/80 (contemporaries of Jan Mostaert) an evaluation is attempted of a hitherto unknown phase in the development of Haarlem painting. Initially under the spell of Geertgen tot St. Jans and his school, Pieter Gerritsz. and Cornelis Willemsz. seem to have turned to Antwerp mannerism around 1520. In contradistinction to the Leyden school, however, Haarlem mannerism did not become an autonomous stylistic entity. The introduction of Jan van Scorel's raphaellesque style following this artist's arrival in Haarlem in 1527 meant a radical and fruitful turn in Haarlem's artistic tradition.