

# Gilles Coignet

## *A migrant painter from Antwerp and his Hamburg career*

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### Abstract

The painter Gilles Coignet was born in Antwerp c. 1542 to a family of artists and scientists. He spent some time in Italy and, as a Lutheran Protestant, fled from Antwerp to Amsterdam in 1585. He lived in Hamburg since 1595, where he died in December 1599. Here he had contact with other Netherlandish artists. Van Mander reports that it was Coignet who advised Vredeman de Vries to move from Hamburg to Amsterdam in 1598. This contribution focuses on Coignet's last years and sheds new light on the professional and social networks of exiled Netherlandish artists in Hamburg.

*Keywords:* Antwerp, Hamburg, emigration, Protestantism, artists networks

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#### *Introduction*

Studies of painters migrating from Antwerp to other cities outside the Southern Netherlands in the late sixteenth century tend to focus on the Dutch Republic, because of their role in the dawn of the Dutch Golden Age. This essay, however, introduces a migrant painter who moved beyond the Dutch Republic. Gilles Coignet (c. 1542–1599) left Antwerp for Amsterdam in 1586, but moved on to Hamburg about eight years later.<sup>1</sup> The reasons for leaving his native city were the fall of Antwerp in 1585, the subsequent standstill of the art market, political instability, and religious intolerance. Gilles Coignet was a major disseminator of Italianate, especially Titianesque

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<sup>1</sup> For a biography of Gilles Coignet see K. Van Mander, *Het schilder-boeck (facsimile van de eerste uitgave, Haarlem 1604)*, Utrecht 1969, fol. 262r; K. Van Mander, *The lives of the illustrious Netherlandish and German painters, from the first edition of the schilder-boeck (1603-1604)* (ed. H. Miedema), 6 vols., Doornspijk 1994-1999, vol. 1, 1994, p. 306-307, vol. 5, 1998, p. 1-9; F.J.P. Van den Branden, *Geschiedenis der Antwerpsche schilderschool*, Antwerp 1883, p. 271-275; U. Thieme and F. Becker (eds.), *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart. Reprint der Ausg. 1907*, 37 vols., Leipzig 1980-1986, vol. 7, p. 297-298; E. Rump, *Lexikon der bildenden Künstler Hamburgs, Altonas und der näheren Umgebung*, Hamburg 1912, p. 21; K. Rump and M. Bruhns (eds.), *Der Neue Rump. Lexikon der bildenden Künstler Hamburgs, Altonas und der näheren Umgebung. Überarbeitete Neuauflage des Lexikons von Ernst Rump (1912)*, Neumünster 2005, p. 77; L. Van Puyvelde, *La peinture flamande au siècle de Bosch et Breughel*, Brussels 1962, p. 420-421; A. Meskens, 'Enkele biografische gegevens over Gilles I Coignet alias Gilles met de Vlek', in: *Oud Holland* 110 (1996), p. 142-144; A. Meskens, *Familia universalis: Coignet. Een familie tussen wetenschap en kunst*, Antwerp 1998, p. 30-50, p. 172-177; G. Meißner (ed.), *Saur Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon*, vol. 20, Munich 1998, p. 179-180; G. Campbell (ed.), *Grove encyclopedia of Northern Renaissance art*, 3 vols., Oxford 2009, vol. 1, p. 410-411. A critical catalogue of works by Gilles Coignet does not exist. Incomplete catalogues of works are incorporated in: Meskens, *Familia universalis*, p. 173-176; Van Mander-Miedema, *Lives*, vol. 5, p. 1-2, and in: H. Miedema, 'Dido Rediviva, of: Liever Turks dan Paaps. Een opstandig schilderij door Gillis Coignet', in: *Oud Holland* 108 (1995), p. 79-86. I had no access to the thesis by J. Ubbens, *Gillis Coignet (1542/43-1599). Europees schilder aan het einde van de 16de eeuw*, diss. Universiteit Utrecht 1992 (ms). For the different spellings of the artist's name see *The Union list of artist names*, URL: [http://www.getty.edu/vow/ULANFullDisplay?find=Coignet&role=&nation=&prev\\_page=1&subjectid=500032788](http://www.getty.edu/vow/ULANFullDisplay?find=Coignet&role=&nation=&prev_page=1&subjectid=500032788) (2015-05-31).

models in the North before 1600.<sup>2</sup> He stood out for his rendering of night scenes, using special techniques for the creation of burning candles and torches. Karel van Mander (1548–1606) praises him as a good history painter and especially mentions his ‘subtle way of painting little night scenes very inventively, into which he frequently inserted embossed gilt lights of candles, torches or lamps which looked very real.’<sup>3</sup> Van Mander continues that some people criticised this technique ‘because they believe that painters ought to represent everything with paint’, while others ‘think everything to the good which makes it look better and which best deceives the eyes of the beholder.’<sup>4</sup> Van Mander, however, has a high opinion of Coignet’s work, and in his poem *Den grondt der edel vry schilder-const*, he even proclaims Coignet a second Prometheus, who brought the fire from heaven down to the people on earth.<sup>5</sup>

After a short introduction to Coignet’s work in Antwerp, Italy, and Amsterdam, I will concentrate on the last years of his life, which he spent in Hamburg. I shall analyse the conditions of his work with regard to his patrons and to his relations with other artists, who like him lived and worked in Hamburg as Flemish immigrants. The Flemish artists around 1600 exerted great influence on the local art production. This artistic exchange equals in many aspects the exchange between the Northern and the Southern provinces of the Netherlands.<sup>6</sup> In the seventeenth century, painters from Hamburg usually

2 S. Poglayen-Neuwall, ‘Titian’s pictures of the Toilet of Venus and their copies’, in: *The Art Bulletin* 16 (1934), p. 358–384, esp. 365–366; G.T. Faggin, ‘Aspetti dell’influsso di Tiziano nei paesi bassi’, in: *Arte Veneta* 18 (1964), p. 46–54, esp. 53, fig. 61; J.G.C.A. Briels, *Vlaamse schilders in de Noorderlijke Nederlanden in het begin van de Gouden Eeuw 1585–1630*, Haarlem 1987, p. 73, fig. 67; Meskens, *Familia universalis*, p. 43; S. Béguin, ‘Quelques remarques à propos des échanges entre la Flandre, Rome, Fontainebleau et Paris’, in: *Fiamminghi a Roma 1508–1608. Atti del convegno internazionale, Bruxelles 24–25 febbraio 1995, a cura di Nicole Dacos, Bollettino d’arte* 100 (1997), *Supplemento* (1999), p. 231–246, esp. 240–243, pl. 15; I. Ciuliová, ‘A little known painting “Venus” from the collection of the Slovak National Gallery (Gillis Coignet reconsidered)’, in: *Ars. Časopis ustavu dejin umenia Slovenskej akadémie vied (Bratislava: Slovak academic press)*, 2.3 (2001), p. 246–251. For the influence of Titian on North European painters in general see B.W. Meijer, ‘Titian and the North’, in: B. Aikema (ed.), *Renaissance Venice and the North. Crosscurrents in the time of Dürer, Bellini and Titian*, London 1999, p. 498–505.

3 ‘Hadde oock een aerdighe manier van te maken Historikens in den nacht, seer versierlijck, ghebruyckende veel tijt verheven vergulde lichten van den Keerssen, Fackelen, oft Lampen, dat seer natuerlijk stondt’. Van Mander-Miedema, *Lives*, vol. 1, p. 306–307.

4 ‘... doch van eenighe versproken oft berispt, meenende dat den Schilder alles met den verwen uyt te beelden behoort: doch ander houden al goet wat den welstandt verbetert, en d’ooghe des aensinders best can bedrieghen.’ Van Mander-Miedema, *Lives*, vol. 1, p. 306–307.

5 ‘En waer sy t’uyterste zijns sins vermeten/Noch zijn onmachtich te volbrengghen, boude/Ginck hy toe met den sone van Iapeten,/Aen den waghen des Conings der Planeten:/Want op dat zijn vyer oft licht leven soude,/Bracht hy dat constich te weghe met goude,/Dat zijn vyeren ligghen gloeyend’ en blinken./En zijn lichten staen als sterren en pincken. [In the margin:] Congiet maecte van verheven vergulde doppen keerslichten, die te branden schenen.’ K. Van Mander, *Den grondt der edel vry schilder-const (Haarlem 1604)* (ed. H. Miedema), 2 vols., Utrecht 1973, vii 43.

6 For Flemish artists in the Northern Netherlands see above all Briels, *Vlaamse schilders*; J. Briels, *De Zuidnederlandse immigratie, 1572–1630*, Haarlem 1978; J. Briels, *Zuid-Nederlanders in de Republiek 1572–1630. Een demografische en cultuurhistorische studie*, Sint-Niklaas 1985; J. Briels, *De Hollandse schilderkunst in de vroege 17de eeuw. Met in bijlage biografieën van Vlaamse kunstschilders in Holland 1580–1630*, Antwerp 1992; J. Briels,

turned to the Netherlands to perfect their art. In his book on the dissemination and the impact of Dutch painting of the seventeenth century, Horst Gerson (1907–1978) even describes Hamburg as a Dutch province of the arts.<sup>7</sup> In order to understand the importance of this artistic transfer, it is necessary to look beyond concepts of national schools and to explore the movements of artists and artworks between the important commercial centres Antwerp, Amsterdam, and Hamburg.<sup>8</sup>

### *Early career in Antwerp and Italy*

Coignet was born in Antwerp to a family of artists and scientists.<sup>9</sup> He was an apprentice of Lambrecht Wenslyns and lived for some time in the house of the painter and art dealer Antonis Palermo, who like him was a Lutheran and owned a house on the Meir in the tenth *wijk*.<sup>10</sup> In 1561, he became a free master of the Antwerp painters' guild. Soon after this date he set off to Italy, probably via France. In 1568 his name appears in the list of artists present at a meeting of the *Accademia del Disegno* on 16 January 1569 (i.e. 1568 in the old Florentine style) as 'Giulio Cognietta fiamingo P(ictor)'.<sup>11</sup> He travelled further to Rome, Naples, and Sicily.<sup>12</sup> Together with his fellow countryman Maarten Stellaert (died in Rome after 1568) he decorated the Palazzo Giocosi in Terni with grotesques in

'Flämische Maler in Holland um 1600', in: E. Mai and H. Vlieghe (eds.), *Von Bruegel bis Rubens. Das goldene Jahrhundert der flämischen Malerei*, Cologne 1993, p. 79–91; J. Briels, *Vlaamse schilders en de dageraad van Hollands Gouden Eeuw, 1595–1630*, Antwerp 1997.

7 H. Gerson, *Ausbreitung und Nachwirkung der holländischen Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Haarlem 1942 (reprint Amsterdam 1983), p. 215–222. For a critical review of this thesis see G. Walczak, 'Expatriaten, Wandergesellen und Bönhasen. Zur Migration von Künstlern zwischen Hamburg und den Niederlanden', in: N. Büttner and E. Meier (eds.), *Grenzüberschreitung. Deutsch-niederländischer Kunst- und Künftler Austausch im 17. Jahrhundert*, Marburg 2011, p. 71–90, esp. 71.

8 The most important essay about Netherlandish artists in Hamburg is G. Walczak, 'Expatriaten'. Aspects of artistic exchange between Hamburg and the Netherlands are also treated by T. Trümper, 'Jacob Weyer (1623–1670) und die Hamburger Malerei im Kontext der niederländischen Kunst', in: Büttner and Meier, *Grenzüberschreitung*, p. 91–102; T. Fusenig, 'Hamburg als Umschlagsort künstlerischer Ideen im 17. Jahrhundert. Der Perspektivmaler Gabriel Engels (1592–1654)', in: A. Steiger and S. Richter (eds.), *Hamburg. Eine Metropolregion zwischen Früher Neuzeit und Aufklärung*, Berlin 2012, p. 703–725.

9 For the Coignet family see Meskens, *Familia universalis* (n. 1).

10 J. Van Roey, 'De Antwerpse schilders in 1584–1585. Poging tot sociaal-religieus onderzoek', in: *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten te Antwerpen* 1966, p. 107–132, esp. 113, 126.

11 J.A.F. Orbaan, 'Italiaansche gegevens', in: *Oud Holland* 21 (1903), p. 161–164, esp. 163; Van Mander-Miedema, *Lives* (n. 1), vol. 5, p. 3; Meskens, 'Enkele biografische gegevens' (n. 1), p. 142.

12 For Coignet's sojourn in Italy see J.A.S. Collin de Plancy, *Légendes des artistes*, The Hague 1842, p. 117–126; J.A.F. Orbaan, 'Italiaansche gegevens II', in: *Oud Holland* 22 (1904), p. 136–138; G. Saporì, 'Van Mander e compagni in Umbria', in: *Paragone-arte* 41 (1990), p. 10–48, esp. 28–29; Van Mander-Miedema, *Lives*, vol. 5, p. 2–4; N. Dacos (ed.), *Fiamminghi a Roma 1508–1608. Artistes des Pays-Bas et de la Principauté de Liège à Rome à la Renaissance*, Brussels 1995, p. 157–161; Meskens, *Familia universalis*, p. 31; Meskens, 'Enkele biografische gegevens', p. 142; G. Saporì, *Fiamminghi nel cantiere Italia 1560–1600*, Milano 2007, p. 73–93, 154–166.

the style of the Fontainebleau school, and he was among the painters who decorated the Villa d'Este in Tivoli under the guidance of Federico Zuccari (1542–1609).<sup>13</sup>

Coignet was back in Antwerp by 1570, where he led his own workshop and had apprentices, among others around 1580 Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem (1562–1638).<sup>14</sup> On 8 October 1583 he was elected dean of the St Luke's guild and in 1585–1586 he was past-dean.<sup>15</sup> In 1584 he received the prestigious commission of a large altar piece, possibly for the Franciscan friars in Antwerp, for which Cornelis de Molenaer (c. 1540–c. 1589) created the background landscapes (fig. 1).<sup>16</sup> It is possible that it was commissioned to replace an altar piece, which was destroyed during the iconoclasm of 1566 or removed during the so-called silent iconoclasm in 1581.<sup>17</sup>

1584 was a difficult year, since Alessandro Farnese (1545–1592) started the siege of Antwerp in July and thus isolated the city from its surroundings. He blocked the river Scheldt downstream, which had a fatal effect on the commerce. After one year the city's situation had become so hopeless that the city authorities – a delegation led by the burgomaster Philips Marnix van Sint Aldegonde (1540–1598) – signed a reconciliation pact on 17 August 1585. When Farnese took the city, the Protestants were forced to either convert to Catholicism within a timespan of four years or to leave Antwerp.<sup>18</sup> Thousands of people left in search of religious tolerance or a better life. The city's population sank from estimated 80,000 in 1585 to merely 42,000 in 1589.<sup>19</sup> Antwerp's formerly thriving economy came to a standstill, and the art market collapsed.<sup>20</sup>

**13** Saponi, *Fiamminghi*, p. 74–75, 156–165.

**14** Van Mander, *Schilder-boeck* (n. 1), fol. 292r; J.C.G.A. Briels, *De zuidnederlandse immigratie in Amsterdam en Haarlem omstreeks 1572–1630, met een keuze van archivalische gegevens betreffende de kunstschilders*, PhD Diss. Universiteit Utrecht 1976, p. 150, 158.

**15** See P. Rombouts and T. Van Lerijs, *De liggeren en andere historische archieven der Antwerpsche Sint Lucasgilde, onder zinspreuk 'Wi ionsten versaemt'*, 2 vols., Antwerp 1872–1876, vol. 1, p. 176, 227, 243, 245, 256, 284, 289, 295, 300, 312–317; Van den Branden, *Geschiedenis* (n. 1), p. 274; Van Mander–Miedema, *Lives*, vol. 5, p. 1.

**16** This important work is not listed by Meskens, *Familia universalis* and by Miedema, 'Dido Rediviva' (n. 1). The altar piece consists of nine panels in an architectural frame. The central scenes show the birth of Christ and the resurrection of Christ. The lateral scenes show the annunciation and the assumption, and the apostles Peter and Paul. The three panels of the predella show scenes from the life of St Francis. The altar piece was donated to the chapel Señorío de Somalo near Nájera by D. León García Villareal in 1843. Since 1983 it is located in the concathedral of Logroño. See J. Ollero Butler, 'Gilles Coignet y otros pintores flamencos del siglo XVI en un retablo de Santa Maria de la Redonda de Logroño', in: *Anuario de Departamento de Historia y Teoría del Arte I* (1989), p. 97–102. See also URL: <http://www.vallenajerilla.com/musica/retablo.pps> (2015-05-31).

**17** See D. Freedberg, 'Painting and the counter reformation in the age of Rubens', in: P.C. Sutton (ed.), *The age of Rubens*, Boston 1993, p. 131–145; D. Freedberg, 'Kunst und Gegenreformation in den südlichen Niederlanden, 1560–1660', in: Mai and Vlieghe, *Von Bruegel bis Rubens* (n. 6), p. 55–70.

**18** F. Vermeylen, *Painting for the market. Commercialization of art in Antwerp's Golden Age*, Turnhout 2003, p. 109–118. For the migration of people from Flanders and Brabant after 1585 in general see G. Asaert, 1585. *De val van Antwerpen en de uittocht van Vlamingen en Brabanders*, Tiel 2004.

**19** G. Marnef, *Antwerp in the age of Reformation. Underground protestantism in a commercial metropolis 1550–1577*, Baltimore 1996, p. 5; Vermeylen, *Painting for the market*, p. 37, table 2.

**20** Vermeylen, *Painting for the market*, p. 111.

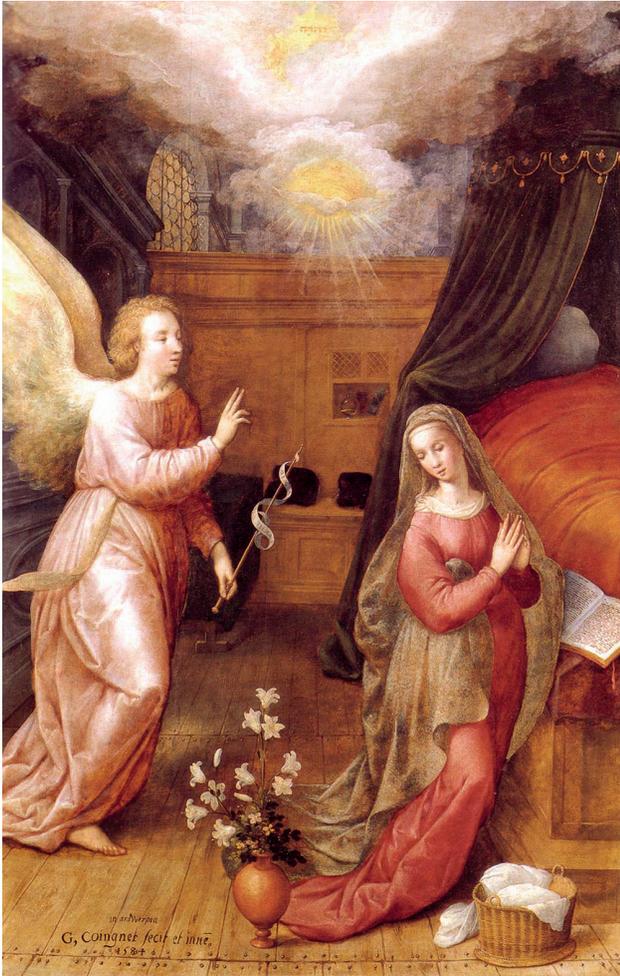


Fig. 1 Gilles Coignet, Annunciation, 1584, detail of an altar piece, oil on panel, c. 105×75 cm, Concathedral St María de la Redonda, Logroño © Wikimedia commons/photograph: Manuel Gómez (Magopi).

## Amsterdam

In 1586 Coignet sold the lifelong tenancy, which he had acquired for a house in the Tapissierspand in Antwerp in 1580.<sup>21</sup> Karel van Mander writes that he ‘left Antwerp on account of the war at the time of the Duke of Parma and went to live in Amsterdam’.<sup>22</sup> He became a burgher of Amsterdam in 1589. Here, he led a workshop and had

<sup>21</sup> Van den Branden, *Geschiedenis* (n. 1), p. 273–274; Van Roey, ‘De Antwerpse schilders in 1584–1585’ (n. 10), p. 125; Meskens, ‘Enkele biografische gegevens’ (n. 1), p. 39.

<sup>22</sup> ‘Hy is om den krijgh als ten tijde van den Prins van Parma uyt Antwerpen geweken, en quam wonen t’ Amsterdam.’ See Van Mander, *Schilder-boeck* (n. 1), fol. 262r; Van Mander–Miedema, *Lives* (n. 1), vol. 1, p. 306 and vol. 5, p. 1, 5; Van Roey ‘De Antwerpse schilders in 1584–1585’ (n. 10), p. 113; Vermeylen, *Painting for the market*, p. 111.

apprentices.<sup>23</sup> In May 1593 he painted a night scene showing the lottery that took place in 1592 in aid of the lunatic asylum.<sup>24</sup> It is very well possible that Karel van Mander saw the Lottery painting in the regent's room of the lunatic asylum, where it hang until the middle of the seventeenth century, and that it was this painting that prompted him to praise Coignet's night scenes.

In Amsterdam, Coignet was an active member of the group of Lutheran Protestants.<sup>25</sup> This may be the reason for a conflict with the painter Adriaen van Conflans (c. 1535–1607), who was a Calvinist originally from Brussels. On 15 March 1590 Coignet and Conflans had a fist fight near the Sint Jans Bridge. Although reconciliation was arranged by their respective church representatives, it is possible that this incident or perhaps the general opposition against Lutherans in a mainly Calvinist city prompted Coignet to leave Amsterdam in 1594.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, as both David van der Linden and Eric Jan Sluijter point out in this volume, Amsterdam was not a thriving art centre in that period. On the contrary, in the late sixteenth century there seem to have been few opportunities for young migrant painters coming from elsewhere. Hamburg might have offered more attractive prospects, especially for a Lutheran painter. In contrast to Calvinists, Lutherans were not entirely opposed to having paintings in their churches.

## Hamburg

In 1595 Coignet settled in Hamburg. Like many other Hanseatic cities, Hamburg was a refuge for Netherlandish Protestants. The city expanded considerably during the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Between 1578 and 1583 a new quarter in the South of the city developed, where the main part of the Netherlanders settled. The streets Wandrahm and Holländischer Brook still exist, although nothing remains today from the canals with quays on both sides that followed the Antwerp and Amsterdam model of a city expansion. Around 1600 Hamburg had a population of about 40,000, of which

<sup>23</sup> Briels, *De zuidnederlandse immigratie* (n. 14), p. 97.

<sup>24</sup> Gilles Coignet, *The Drawing of the Lottery for the asylum on the Rusland 1592*, signed and dated G coignet fe./in mey 1593, oil on panel, 113×203.5 cm, Amsterdams Historisch Museum. See C.A.L. Sander: 'Het Dulhuys of dolhuis aan de vesten of de kolveniersbrugwal', in: *Amstelodamum. Maandblad voor de kennis van Amsterdam* 45 (December 1958), p. 229–238; H. Miedema, 'Nog een schilderij van Gillis Coignet: Judith toont het hoofd van Holofernes aan de inwoners van Bethulië', in: *Oud Holland* 109 (1995), p. 143–151, esp. 145–147; A. Middelkoop et al. (eds.), *De oude meesters van de stad Amsterdam. Schilderijen tot 1800*, Amsterdam 2008, p. 68–69; N.E. Middelkoop, 'Gillis Coignet en de dolhuisloterij van 1592', in: *Amstelodamum. Maandblad voor de kennis van Amsterdam* 95.3–4 (2008), p. 2–8; N.E. Middelkoop, 'Nogmaals de dolhuisloterij van 1592', in: *Amstelodamum. Maandblad voor de kennis van Amsterdam* 96.4 (2009), p. 189–191; N. Middelkoop, 'Gillis Coignet and the Amsterdam lottery of 1592. Locating an extraordinary night scene', in: *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art (JHNA)* 2.1–2 (2010), URL: <http://www.jhna.org/index.php/past-issues/volume-2-issue-1-2/123-gillis-coignet-and-the-amsterdam-lottery-of-1592> (2015-05-31).

<sup>25</sup> Briels, *De zuidnederlandse immigratie*, p. 16–18.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 17; Van Mander–Miedema, *Lives*, vol. 5, p. 5–6.

c. 10,000 were Netherlanders. Dutch was the language spoken at the Hamburg stock exchange, which was established in 1558 and for which a new building was erected in 1583.<sup>27</sup> The English Merchant Adventurers, who had given up their mart in Antwerp after 1586, transferred much of their commerce to Hamburg too.<sup>28</sup> Apart from Netherlandish refugees, a large community of Portuguese Jews settled in Hamburg, who also had strong ties with merchants in Amsterdam.<sup>29</sup> Among the Hanseatic cities, Hamburg established itself as the most important trading partner of Amsterdam and as a place of transshipment between the overseas trade, which was dominated by the Dutch, and the Central European hinterland.<sup>30</sup> Coignet, who according to Van Mander, ‘worked for merchants a lot’,<sup>31</sup> could expect to find in Hamburg a clientele of wealthy patrons, many of them being Protestant expatriates.

Among the Netherlandish immigrants the Lutherans held the best positions. In contrast to their Calvinist or Mennonite countrymen, they were, for instance, allowed to bury their deceased family members on the city churchyards or inside the city churches, while the other confessions were forced to move outside of the city walls to Altona in the West or Stade in the South West of Hamburg. Coignet quickly found a patron in the pastor of St Peter’s church, Johann Schellhammer (1540–1620). Schellhammer was an ardent Lutheran, who frequently came into conflict with the Hamburg city council, because in his eyes the municipal government was too tolerant with other religious groups. In 1595 Schellhammer commissioned Coignet with the transformation of the medieval main altar of the St Peter’s church in order to accommodate it to

**27** J.M. Lappenberg, ‘Von der Ansiedlung der Niederländer in Hamburg’, in: *Zeitschrift des Vereins für hamburgische Geschichte* 1 (1841), p. 241–248; W. Sillem, ‘Zur Geschichte der Niederländer in Hamburg von ihrer Ankunft bis zum Abschluß des Niederländischen Contracts 1605’, in: *Zeitschrift des Vereins für hamburgische Geschichte* 7 (1883), p. 481–488; F. Rachfahl, ‘Die Hanse und die Niederlande in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. und im Anfang des 17. Jahrhunderts’, in: *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 25 (1924), p. 278–289; R. Van Roosbroeck, ‘Die Niederlassung von Flamen und Wallonen in Hamburg (1567–1605)’, in: *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 49–50 (1964), p. 53–76; H.-D. Loose, ‘Reformation und Gegenreformation’, in: idem (ed.), *Hamburg. Geschichte der Stadt und ihrer Bewohner*, vol. 1, *Von den Anfängen bis zur Reichsgründung*, Hamburg 1982, p. 190–258; R. Postel, ‘Asyl und Emigration in der Frühen Neuzeit’, in: *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 83 (1997), p. 201–223.

**28** G.D. Ramsay, *The city of London in international politics at the accession of Elizabeth Tudor*, Manchester 1975, p. 121–123, 217–250; W.-R. Baumann, *The merchants adventurers and the continental cloth-trade (1560s–1620s)*, Berlin 1990; F. Sprang, ‘From London to Hamburg in Germanie. Engländer in Hamburg um 1600. Eine Begegnung zwischen Pragmatismus und Aufklärung’, in: Steiger and Richter, *Hamburg* (n. 8), p. 765–780.

**29** H. Kellenbenz, *Unternehmerkräfte im Hamburger Portugal- und Spanienhandel 1590–1625*, Hamburg 1954; M. Studemundt-Halévy (ed.), *Die Sefarden in Hamburg. Zur Geschichte einer Minderheit*, 2 vols., Hamburg 1994–1997; J. Poettering, ‘“In die äusserste Welt Oerther”. Die Hamburger Kaufmannschaft und ihre frühneuzeitlichen Handelsbeziehungen’, in: Steiger and Richter, *Hamburg*, p. 781–791; J. Poettering, *Handel, Nation und Religion. Kaufleute zwischen Hamburg und Portugal im 17. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 2013.

**30** Walczak, ‘Expatriaten’ (n. 7), p. 72.

**31** ‘Werkende veel voor Coopluyden.’ See Van Mander, *Schilder-boeck* (n. 1), fol. 262r; Van Mander-Miedema, *Lives* (n. 1), vol. 1, p. 306–307.

Protestant needs.<sup>32</sup> To this end, Coignet overpainted the side wings, which showed the creation of the world and the story of Noah, with the Last Supper, the Resurrection, and the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The altar was taken apart in the eighteenth century and the central shrine was given to St George's church in Grabow, while the side panels remained in Hamburg. The separate pieces of the altar were purchased by the Hamburger Kunsthalle in 1903, and in 1904/05 Coignet's paintings were removed, to regain the original medieval paintings underneath. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Coignet's paintings were regarded as inferior works of art, as becomes clear from a statement by Gustav Pauli (1866–1938), who became the director of the Hamburger Kunsthalle in 1914. In a small guidebook on the altar, Pauli wrote that the works of the Antwerp painter had 'no high artistic value'.<sup>33</sup> These paintings are known today only from a nineteenth century description and two old photographs.<sup>34</sup>

### *The Last Supper*

In his own times, Coignet gained a good reputation as a copyist of Titian (c. 1488/1490–1576). During his travels in Italy he must have seen Titian's Last Supper, which is today part of the collections of the Escorial.<sup>35</sup> When he was still in Amsterdam, he had created a version of Titian's invention as a night scene in an etching, engraved by Jan Muller (1571–1628). Coignet added to Titian's composition four big, burning candles on the table and two small background scenes showing Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane and the arrest of Christ (fig. 2).<sup>36</sup> The large print of three plates is dedicated to Jacques Razet (died 1609), an Amsterdam lawyer, who was an important patron and collector

**32** Attributed to Master Bertram, *Main altar of St Peter's church Hamburg*, 1379–1383, tempera and gold on panel, 277×726 cm, Hamburger Kunsthalle. C. Beutler, *Meister Bertram. Der Hochaltar von Sankt Petri. Christliche Allegorie als protestantisches Ärgernis*, Frankfurt a. M. 1984; S. Hauschild, *Meister Bertram. Der Petri-Altar*, Hamburg 2002; M. Sitt, S. Hauschild, *Der Petri-Altar von Meister Bertram*, Hamburg 2008.

**33** 'Mit Genehmigung der Besitzer wurden die Malereien des Antwerpener, die ohnehin keinen hohen Kunstwert besaßen, abgenommen, und es kamen nun, fast völlig unversehrt, die Gemälde Bertrams zum Vorschein.' G. Pauli, *Meister Bertram und der Hauptaltar von St. Petri (Grabower Altar)*, Hamburg 1931, p. 12.

**34** J. Suhr, *Beschreibung der Sanct Petri-Kirche zu Hamburg und ihres Thurmes*, Hamburg 1842, p. 33; T. Ketelsen, 'Gemalter Bildersturm um 1600? Gilles Coignet in Hamburg', in: U.M. Schneede (ed.), *Goldgrund und Himmelslicht. Die Kunst des Mittelalters in Hamburg*, 3 vols., Hamburg 1999, vol. 3, p. 83–89; B. Uppenkamp, 'Gilles Coignet. Ein Antwerpener Maler im Hamburger Exil um 1600', in: Steiger and Richter, *Hamburg*, p. 727–741.

**35** Titian and workshop, *The Last Supper*, c. 1557–1564, oil on canvas, c. 207×464 cm, signed TITIANUS F, Escorial, Nuevos Museos. H.E. Wethey, *The paintings of Titian*, 3 vols., London 1969–1975, vol. 1, 1969, p. 96–98, no. 46. For Coignet's copies after Titian in general see Faggini, 'Aspetti dell' influsso di Tiziano' (n. 2).

**36** Jan Muller, after Gilles Coignet, *The Last Supper*, etching from 3 plates, c. 445×933 mm, signed and dated 1594, GILLES COIGNET Antus inventor; dedicated to Jacques Razet: D[omino] Iacobo Razeto singulari artium liberalium admiratorj, perpetuae amicitiae ergo D[onum] D[edit] Egidius Coignet. See F.W.H. Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish etchings, engravings, and woodcuts ca. 1450–1700*, vol. 14, Amsterdam 1957, p. 106, no. 19; Van Mander-Miedema, *Lives*, vol. 5, p. 6.



Fig. 2 Jan Muller, after Gilles Coignet, *The Last Supper*, 1594, etching, c. 445×933 mm © The Trustees of the British Museum.

of art.<sup>37</sup> The print after Titian's *Last Supper* is the direct model of the large canvas showing the *Last Supper* in Hamburg's St Peter's church – the only work by Gilles Coignet which is still *in situ* in Hamburg (fig. 3).<sup>38</sup> Just like the print, the painting shows the *Last Supper* as a night scene, with three big candles standing on the table. Christ is handing a piece of bread to Judas. The apostles show surprise about his words, when he tells them that one of them will betray him. The two small background scenes showing Christ at Gethsemane and the arrest of Christ are placed at the top margin, above the right candle and near to the head of St Peter on the left. They are hardly visible because the painting is very dark and in a bad condition. Coignet used a special technique to render the candle flames. They are made of glass paste and stick out three-dimensionally from the canvas. Coignet also frequently used gold to highlight special parts in his paintings. In a smaller version of his *Last Supper* on panel, he carved the wood behind the candles and filled the hollow parts with gold foil. This technique adds a lively, three-dimensional effect to the candle flames.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> For Jacques Razet see Briels, *De zuidnederlandse immigratie* (n. 14), p. 107, p. 196; T. Schulting, 'Hen-drik Goltzius and Cornelius Ketel – "hertsen vrienden"?', in: *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 42-43 (1991-1992), p. 455-480, esp. 460-461.

<sup>38</sup> Gilles Coignet, *The Last Supper*, oil and glass paste on canvas, 163×333 cm, signed and dated at the bottom 1595 Gilles Coingnet inue(nit) et fecit, St Peter's church Hamburg. See J. Gerhardt and R. Klée Gobert (eds.), *Die Bau- und Kunstdenkmale der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg*, 3 vols., Hamburg 1968, vol. 3, p. 82; Ketelsen, 'Gemalter Bildersturm', p. 85; Uppenkamp, 'Gilles Coignet', p. 732-736.

<sup>39</sup> An earlier version of the *Last Supper* on panel, signed and dated EGID. COINGET PIN. 1594 was part of the collections of the Herzogliches Museum Gotha picture gallery in 1844-1845. See G. Rathgeber, *Annalen der niederländischen Malerei, Formschneide- und Kupferstecherkunst*, Gotha 1844, p. 336-337, p. 381-382; Van Mander-Miedema, *Lives*, vol. 5, p. 2. A similar painting of the *Last Supper* on panel is part of the collections of the National Museum in Gdańsk.



Fig. 3 Gilles Coignet, *The Last Supper*, 1595, oil and glass paste on canvas, 163×333 cm, St Peter's church, Hamburg  
© photograph: author.

The big candles of the Last Supper reflect a special, Protestant understanding of the subject. Hans Holbein the Younger (1497/98–1543) had created in a woodcut of 1523/24 an iconography that related Christ to the candle of the Gospel.<sup>40</sup> In this woodcut, the risen Christ is pointing to a burning candle on a large candlestick in the centre of the composition. On the left, Protestant burghers and peasants, the so-called simple folk representing the laity, follow Christ's gesture by looking at the candle. On the right, a monk, a priest, a bishop, a cardinal, and the Pope representing the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, turn away from the light and join Plato and Aristotle blindly into a dark pit. The candle is an allusion to the parable of the lamp under a bushel.<sup>41</sup> In a Protestant understanding of this parable, the candle represents the Reformation and the light of Christian truth. The metaphor of darkness and light to contrast the right and wrong ways of worship became very popular during the second half of the sixteenth century in Protestant broadsheets, which sometimes even show the reformers of the church sitting around a table with lit candles while Catholics try to blow the lights out.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Hans Holbein the Younger, *Christ as the Light of the Gospel*, woodcut, 80×277 mm, c. 1523–1524. R.W. Scribner, *For the sake of the simple folk. Popular propaganda for the German reformation*, Cambridge 1981, p. 46–47; M. Trudzinski: 'Von Holbein zu Brueghel', in: *Niederdeutsche Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte* 23 (1984), p. 63–116.

<sup>41</sup> Matthew 5.14–15; Mark 4.21–25; Luke 8.16–18.

<sup>42</sup> Scribner, *For the sake of the simple folk*, p. 46–47; P. Tudor-Craig, 'Group portraits of the protestant reformers', in: T. Hamling and R.L. Williams (eds.), *Art re-formed. Re-assessing the impact of the reformation on the visual arts*, Newcastle 2007, p. 87–102.

### *Netherlandish artists and their patrons in Hamburg*

Coignet was neither the first nor the only Netherlandish artist who settled in Hamburg. As early as 1566, the year of the iconoclasm, a painter called Joachim van Schwoll (Joachim van Zwolle, died 1575 or 1586), became a member of the Hamburg painters' guild.<sup>43</sup> In 1571, Cornelius Crommeny (died 1599), who probably came from Krommenie in North Holland, is listed as a member of the painters guild in Hamburg. In 1576 he moved on to become a court painter at the court of Duke Ulrich of Mecklenburg (1527-1603) in Güstrow.<sup>44</sup> The painters Johann de Kempener (died 1594) from Brabant and Johann Kindt (Jan t'Kint, died 1608) from Kortrijk both reached Hamburg in 1580 and became members of the painters' guild in 1587. De Kempener became an elderman of the guild in 1592.<sup>45</sup> Johann Kindt's son David Kindt (1580-1652), who was born in Hamburg, became a member of the guild in 1605 and an elderman in 1629. He was the city's leading portraitist of the seventeenth century.<sup>46</sup> Hans (1526-1609) and Paul (1567-1617) Vredeman de Vries spent several years in Hamburg, between 1591 and 1600. The Vredeman de Vries family had moved from Antwerp to Frankfurt in 1586 and further to Wolfenbüttel in 1587. In 1587, Duke Julius of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (1528-1589) sent Hans Vredeman de Vries to Hamburg as an agent to negotiate plans for the foundation of a trading company, with the participation of Netherlandish and English merchants.<sup>47</sup> After the Duke's death, Vredeman spent two years in the city of Braunschweig, before he settled in Hamburg in 1591. In 1592 he moved to Gdańsk, together with his wife Sarah van der Elsmaer and his two sons Paul and Salomon. In 1596, he was back in Hamburg, but moved on to Prague, where Paul already worked as a court artist for Rudolph II (1552-1612). The family returned to Hamburg in 1598. Van Mander reports that it was Gilles Coignet who advised the Vredeman de Vries family to

43 J.M. Lappenberg, 'Beiträge zur älteren Kunstgeschichte Hamburgs', in: *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 5 (1866), p. 224-365, esp. 355; Walczak, 'Expatriaten' (n. 7), p. 75.

44 Walter Josephi, 'Cornelius Krommeny und sein Rühner Altar', in: *Mecklenburgische Jahrbücher* 95 (1931), p. 153-162, esp. 158; Gerhardt and Klée Gobert, *Die Bau- und Kunstdenkmale* (n. 38), p. 81-82; Walczak, 'Expatriaten' (n. 7), p. 75.

45 Lappenberg, 'Beiträge', p. 355; Walczak, 'Expatriaten', p. 75-76.

46 Lappenberg, 'Beiträge', p. 356; H. Schmidt, 'Der Hamburger Maler David Kindt', in: *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 23 (1919), p. 25-51; H. Schmidt, 'Noch einmal David Kindt', in: *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte* 29 (1928), p. 164-166; C. Schellenberg, 'David Kindt. Ein Nachtrag', in: *Nordelbingen* 17-18 (1942), p. 260-289; Walczak, 'Expatriaten', p. 76-77.

47 F. Thöne, 'Hans Vredeman de Vries in Wolfenbüttel', in: *Braunschweigisches Jahrbuch* 41 (1960), p. 47-68; F. Thöne, *Wolfenbüttel. Geist und Glanz einer alten Residenz*, Munich 1963, p. 232-233; H. Borggreffe et al. (eds.), *Tussen stadspaleizen en luchtkastelen. Hans Vredeman de Vries en de Renaissance*, Gent 2002, p. 311-319; H. Borggreffe, 'Hans Vredeman de Vries 1526-1609', in: Borggreffe, *Tussen stadspaleizen en luchtkastelen*, p. 15-38, esp. 22-23; P.S. Zimmermann, *Die Architectura von Hans Vredeman de Vries. Entwicklung der Renaissancearchitektur in Mitteleuropa*, München 2002, p. 40-47; B. Uppenkamp, *Das Pentagon von Wolfenbüttel. Der Ausbau der welfischen Residenz 1568-1626 zwischen Ideal und Wirklichkeit*, Hannover 2005, p. 19-24, 27-28, 58-61, 76-80, 98-102.

move from Hamburg to Amsterdam in 1599.<sup>48</sup> In 1605, however, Hans Vredeman de Vries returned to Hamburg, where he died probably in 1609. During his last years in Hamburg, Hans Vredeman de Vries apprenticed Gabriel Engels (1592–1654). Engels was the son of a merchant, who had migrated from Brussels to Hamburg before 1588.<sup>49</sup> He belongs to the second generation of Netherlandish artists, who were born in Hamburg and apprenticed by Netherlanders. Paul Vredeman de Vries remained in Amsterdam, where he collaborated, among others, with Pieter Isaacsz (1568–1625) and Adriaen van Nieulandt (1587–1658).<sup>50</sup>

In Hamburg, the painters and glassworkers were organised in one guild (*Maler- und Glaseramt*).<sup>51</sup> To become a member of the guild, a painter had to be a burgher of the city and marry the widow or the daughter of a deceased guild member. Artists and artisans, who were not members of the guild, the so-called *Bönhasen*, confronted difficulties to acquire official commissions. However, only very few of the Netherlandish immigrants became painters of the guild. This is understandable if we look at the conditions of the guild, since most of the expatriates, like Gilles Coignet and Hans Vredeman de Vries, were married and had children, when they arrived in Hamburg. The *Bönhasen* worked almost exclusively for private patrons, who they found primarily among their compatriots.<sup>52</sup> Gilles Coignet may have been an exception for his prestigious commissions from the church because of his Lutheran confession.

We may imagine Gilles Coignet as a member of a larger community of painters, goldsmiths, engravers, and confectioners from Netherlandish origins, who successfully settled in Hamburg. The wealthy Netherlandish immigrants were famous for their lifestyle. The display of conspicuous consumption was an important means to show their creditworthiness to the established Hamburg merchants. Many of the Netherlanders had houses in the Southwest part of the city close to the harbour and also maintained summer houses at the outskirts of the city.<sup>53</sup> One of the most important patrons and collectors of art was the rich sugar refiner Hans L'Hommel (died 1597).<sup>54</sup> L'Hommel owned a house at the street Wandrahm, which he had decorated with perspective wall and ceiling paintings by Hans Vredeman de Vries.<sup>55</sup> The son of Hans L'Hommel, Hans de l'Hommel II, was probably born in Antwerp before the family settled in Hamburg. He was equally a sugar refiner

48 Van Mander, *Schilder-boeck* (n. 1), fol. 266v; Van Mander-Miedema, *Lives* (n. 1), vol. 5, p. 63; Borggreffe, *Tussen stadspaleizen en luchtkastelen*, p. 320–373; Borggreffe, 'Hans Vredeman de Vries', p. 24–30.

49 Sillem, 'Zur Geschichte der Niederländer' (n. 27), p. 538; T. Fusenig and B. Vermet, 'De invloed van Hans Vredeman de Vries op de schilderkunst', in: Borggreffe, *Tussen stadspaleizen en luchtkastelen*, p. 161–178, esp. 166; Fusenig, 'Hamburg als Umschlagsort' (n. 8); Walczak, 'Expatriaten' (n. 7), p. 77.

50 Borggreffe, 'Hans Vredeman de Vries', p. 30. For Pieter Isaacsz see most recently B. Noldus and J. Roding (eds.), *Pieter Isaacsz (1568–1625). Court painter, art dealer and spy*, Turnhout 2007. For Adriaen van Nieulandt see the contribution by E.J. Sluijter in this volume.

51 Lappenberg, 'Beiträge', p. 231–242.

52 Walczak, 'Expatriaten', p. 74–75.

53 Poettering, *Handel, Nation und Religion* (n. 29), p. 196–201.

54 Sillem, 'Zur Geschichte der Niederländer', p. 517–518.

55 Van Mander, *Schilder-boeck* (n. 1), fol. 265v–267v; Van Mander-Miedema, *Lives* (n. 1), vol. 1, p. 318–326, esp. 325–326; Borggreffe, 'Hans Vredeman de Vries', p. 26–27; Walczak, 'Expatriaten', p. 76.

and an important, early investor in VOC bonds. He died in Amsterdam in 1632. His death inventory, which was drawn up on 20 October 1632, lists 25 works of art. Among the paintings a church interior by Paul Vredeman de Vries is listed under number 5: 'item een prospectyff van Jan [crossed out: Vr Pau] de Vries, op paneel'.<sup>56</sup> In contrast to Coignet, no works by Hans or Paul Vredeman de Vries survive in Hamburg. A trace of their Hamburg sojourn may be found in a church interior by Paul Vredeman de Vries, which features prominently the unique, late Gothic baldachin of the pulpit of the St Peter's Church.<sup>57</sup> This painting, however, may not be identified with the church interior from the collection of Hans de l'Hommel II named above, since it is painted on canvas and not on wood.

It is possible that Hans L'Hommel and Hans Vredeman de Vries knew each other already from Antwerp, as they had both lived there in the sixth *wijk*.<sup>58</sup> Vredeman and Coignet certainly had contact in Hamburg. Like Coignet, Hans Vredeman de Vries worked on several commissions in the church of St Peter's. For instance, he decorated the funeral chapel of the goldsmith Jacob Mores (c. 1540/50–1609), who was active in Hamburg since about 1570. Like the L'Hommel family, the Mores family owned a large house at the street Wandrahm.<sup>59</sup> Van Mander tells us that Hans Vredeman de Vries painted *trompe l'oeil* frescoes for Mores's funeral chapel in the St Peter's church. According to Van Mander the chapel dated from 1598 – several years before Jacob Mores actually died. The chapel was decorated with Christ triumphant over devil and death. Two caryatides on the sides looked like wood carving, and a painted lamp virtually looked as if it would burn.<sup>60</sup> Two other paintings by Hans Vredeman de Vries showed Christ and the Pharisees and Christ driving the moneychangers from the Temple. In the seventeenth century, Conrad von Hövelen (1630–1689) describes both paintings as perspective church interiors.<sup>61</sup> They remained in the church until at least 1789 and

<sup>56</sup> For the inventory see the Montias database of inventories of Dutch sixteenth- and seventeenth-century art collections; URL: [http://research.frick.org/montias/browserecord.php?action=browse&-recid=1429\(2015-05-31\)](http://research.frick.org/montias/browserecord.php?action=browse&-recid=1429(2015-05-31)).

<sup>57</sup> Paul Vredeman de Vries, *Interior of a Gothic church*, oil on canvas, 108.5×115 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Borggreffe, *Tussen stadspaleizen en luchtkastelen* (n. 47), p. 343–345, no. 182.

<sup>58</sup> Van Roey, 'De Antwerpse schilders in 1584–1585' (n. 10), p. 119; Borggreffe, 'Hans Vredeman de Vries', p. 26–27.

<sup>59</sup> For Jacob Mores see B. Olsen, *Die Arbeiten der Hamburgischen Goldschmiede Jacob Mores Vater und Sohn für die dänischen Könige Frederik II. und Christian IV.*, Hamburg 1903; R. Stettiner, *Das Kleinodienbuch des Jakob Mores in der Hamburgischen Stadtbibliothek. Eine Untersuchung zur Geschichte des Hamburgischen Kunstgewerbes um die Wende des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Hamburg 1916; J.F. Hayward, 'The mannerist goldsmiths, 5. Northern Germany, part VII', in: *The connoisseur* 175 (1970), p. 22–30; E. Schliemann (ed.), *Die Goldschmiede Hamburgs*, 3 vols., Hamburg 1985, vol. 1, p. 94–103; G. Asaert, 1585. *De val van Antwerpen* (n. 18), p. 118.

<sup>60</sup> For an interesting piece of wood architecture, which seems to reflect Vredeman's composition see B. Uppenkamp and D. Klemm, 'Die Aedicula-Bekrönung des Kanzelaufgangs aus der Hamburger Petrikirche', in: H. Borggreffe and V. Lüpkes (eds.), *Hans Vredeman de Vries und die Folgen* (*Studien zur Kultur der Renaissance* 3), Marburg 2005, p. 208–216.

<sup>61</sup> C. von Hövelen, *Der Uhaltten Deutschen Grossen und des H. Römischen Reichs Freien An- See- und Handel-Stadt Hamburg Alt-Vorige und noch Iz zu Nennende Hoheit/samt allerhand verhandener Glaube- und Besahe-währten Altertums Herrlichen Gedächtnisse/den Einheimischen/Auß-ländischen und Reisenden Fremden zur Nachricht entworfen/und auf das Kürzeste ausgefärgigt*, Lübeck 1668, p. 82–85.

may have been looted by Napoleonic troops, who used the building as a stable for their horses.<sup>62</sup>

The inventory of Hans de l'Hommel II lists three paintings showing Venus, Pallas and Juno without naming their author, and several unidentified mythological scenes.<sup>63</sup> Mythological scenes in the style of Titian were a specialty of Gilles Coignet. He painted several versions of Titian's Venus with a mirror, Venus and an organ player, and the Venus of Urbino.<sup>64</sup> It appears that Coignet's mythological and allegorical paintings with Titianesque nudes were especially successful in Hamburg, and several paintings from the last four years of his life in a Titianesque style survive. I would like to draw attention to four particular paintings, which can firmly be situated in the Hamburg context.

The first painting is an allegory, which shows a satyr lifting Naked Truth from her fetters, while Envy is trying to pull her down (fig. 4).<sup>65</sup> The background scenes show ruins with idols on the left, and on the right the Adoration of the shepherds and a man kneeling in prayer in front of the Resurrection. The central motif can be related to Francesco Marcolini's (c. 1500–1559) printer's mark *Veritas filia Temporis*. The strange rendering of Father Time as a satyr is probably a literal understanding of satyrs, who were identified with the genre of satire plays in contemporary art theory. They equally reveal the truth, although in coarse and comic words. It is tempting to relate the central figures and the background scenes of the painting to discussions about the right or wrong religion, which went on in Hamburg and played a critical role in the lives of most Netherlandish expatriates.

A similar painting, which was probably painted in Hamburg, also shows Time revealing Truth (fig. 5).<sup>66</sup> The inscriptions on the two unfolded sheets of paper visible at the bottom of the painting comment that Truth may be knocked down but will never be completely oppressed, and that Truth will attract hatred. The background scenes may relate to the true interpretation of the Gospel and the *sola scriptura* principal.

<sup>62</sup> Gerhardt and Klée Gobert, *Die Bau- und Kunstdenkmale* (n. 38), p. 51.

<sup>63</sup> The Montias database of inventories of Dutch sixteenth- and seventeenth-century art collections; URL: <http://research.frick.org/montias/browserecord.php?-action=browse&-recid=1429> (2015-05-31).

<sup>64</sup> See, for instance, *Venus and Cupid with a mirror*, after a lost model by Titian, oil on panel, 107.9×86 cm, The Royal Collection, Windsor Castle. The painting, which is now attributed to Coignet, was formerly attributed to Johann Rottenhammer and Peter Paul Rubens. A similar painting by Coignet on panel, 139×96 cm, signed and dated 1575, was part of the collection of the Gemäldegalerie Kassel and got lost in World War II. See Meskens, *Familia universalis* (n. 1), p. 173; Ciulisová, 'A little known painting' (n. 2) p. 246–251. For Coignet's variants of Titian's Venus with an organ player see Meskens, *Familia universalis*, p. 32–33, 173; Miedema, 'Dido Rediviva' (n. 1), p. 84, n. 2.

<sup>65</sup> Gilles Coignet, *Allegory of Time revealing Truth*, oil on canvas, 181×141 cm, signed and dated G. CONG[NET] [F]ET. A° 1596, private collection, Europe. See H. Miedema, 'Gilles I Coignet. De waarheid verheven?', in: *Oud Holland* 118 (2005), p. 113–120; Uppenkamp, 'Gilles Coignet' (n. 34).

<sup>66</sup> Gilles Coignet, *Time revealing Truth*, oil on canvas, c. 170×190 cm, inscribed at the bottom left VERITAS/PREMITVR/NON.OPP R/IMITUR, at the bottom right VERITAS/ODIVM/PARIT. The painting was sold by Fernand Nidecker, Brussels, in 1939. Its present whereabouts are unknown. See Miedema, 'Gilles I Coignet', p. 114–117, Uppenkamp, 'Gilles Coignet', p. 737–739.

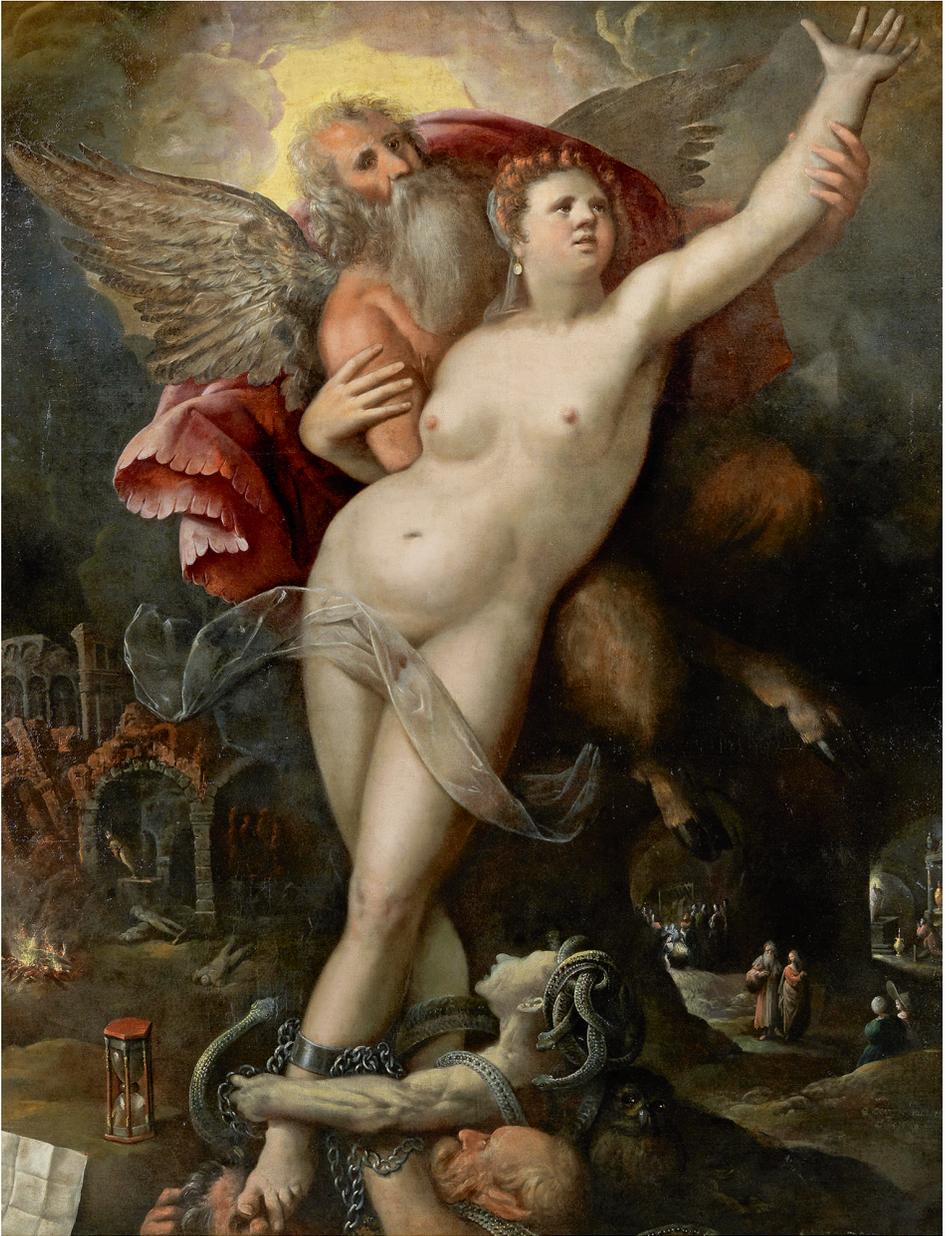


Fig. 4 Gilles Coignet, *Allegory of Time revealing Truth*, 1596, oil on canvas, 181 × 141 cm, private collection, Europe  
© photograph: Bonhams Fine Art.



Fig. 5 Gilles Coignet, *Time revealing Truth*, oil on canvas, c. 170×190 cm, present whereabouts unknown © RKD Den Haag.

The Titianesque model is also visible in an allegory of Vanity (fig. 6).<sup>67</sup> I have mentioned earlier that the display of wealth was an important means to prove creditworthiness for the Netherlandish immigrants. On the other hand, going bankrupt for a lifestyle beyond one's own means was regarded as a possible risk and as a great shame at the same time. It was by no means regarded as apt to show too much pride in worldly riches or to disregard the luxury regulations.<sup>68</sup> Another peculiar painting

<sup>67</sup> Gilles Coignet, *Allegory of Vanity*, oil on canvas, 200×158 cm, signed and dated G. Coignet inve. et fec. in Hamborch 1595 Julio, Musée Baron Gérard, Bayeux. See Briels, *Vlaamse Schilders* (n. 2), p. 73; A. Tapié, J.-M. Dautel and P. Rouillard (eds.), *Les vanités dans la peinture au xvii<sup>e</sup> siècle. Méditations sur la richesse, le dénuement et la rédemption*, Caen 1990, p. 222–223; Meskens, *Familia universalis* (n. 1), p. 173; Miedema, 'Gilles I Coignet', p. 113; E. Leuschner, *Persona, Larva, Maske. Ikonologische Studien zum 16. bis frühen 18. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt a. M. 1997, p. 249–253, 422, no. 506; Ciulisová, 'A little known painting', p. 248–249; Uppenkamp 'Gilles Coignet', p. 739–740. The painting was formerly part of the collections of the Louvre in Paris. See A. Brejon de Lavergnée et al. (eds.), *Catalogue sommaire illustré des peintures du Musée du Louvre, vol. 1, Ecoles flamande et hollandaise*, Paris 1979, p. 41.

<sup>68</sup> Poettering, *Handel, Nation und Religion* (n. 29), p. 196–201.



Fig. 6 Gilles Coignet and Georg Flegel, *Allegory of Vanity*, 1595, oil on canvas, 200×158 cm, Musée Baron Gérard, Bayeux © bpk Berlin/RMN-Grand Palais/Benoît Touchard.



Fig. 7 Gilles Coignet and Georg Flegel, *Allegory of Vanitas: Luxuria and the Downfall of Mankind*, c. 1599, oil on panel, 82.5×124.5 cm © Collection Lingenauber et des amis, Monaco.

by Gilles Coignet possibly belongs to this context of vanity, wealth, and its dangers. It shows Luxury as a reclining nude in the style of Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (fig. 7).<sup>69</sup> A winged evil spirit is filling her wine glass with burning liquid, and an old woman is hovering in the background in front of the scenery of the burning city of Sodom. To this painting, the young Georg Flegel (1563–1638) in Frankfurt contributed a still life in the foreground. The still life displays, among other precious objects, a plate with sugar confection and a chest with coins current in Hamburg around 1600. The chest appears to

<sup>69</sup> Gilles Coignet and Georg Flegel, *Allegory of Vanitas: Luxuria and the Downfall of Mankind*, probably 1599, oil on panel, 82.5×124.5 cm, Collection Lingenauber et des amis, Monaco. For this painting see E. Lingenauber, *Lost in transition*, exh. cat. Dresden 2008 (unpublished), p. 206–227; URL: [http://collection-lingenauber.org/Container/SL/Flegel\\_Coignet.html](http://collection-lingenauber.org/Container/SL/Flegel_Coignet.html) (2015-05-31). The painting was earlier attributed to Lucas van Valckenborch and Georg Flegel. It is described by H.S. Hüsgen, *Artistisches Magazin, enthaltend das Leben und die Verzeichnisse hiesiger und anderer Künstler*, Frankfurt a. M. 1790, p. 76–77; W.J. Müller, *Der Maler Georg Flegel und die Anfänge des Stillebens*, Frankfurt a. M. 1956, p. 86, 146; S. Segal, 'Georg Flegel as flower painter', in: *Tableau* 7.3 (1984), 73–86, esp. 86; A. Wied, 'Georg Flegel und Lucas van Valckenborch', in: K. Wettengl (ed.), *Georg Flegel*, Stuttgart 1993, p. 29–31; H. Seifertová, *Georg Flegel*, Prague 1994, p. 61–63; A.-D. Ketelsen-Volkhardt, *Georg Flegel (1566–1638)*, Munich 2003, p. 34–35, 172–173; O. Calabrese (ed.), *Vénus dévoilée. La Vénus d'Urbino du Titian*, Brussels 2003, p. 307; F. Siedler, 'Die Rezeption von kooperativen Arbeitsweisen niederländischer Künstler in Frankfurt am Main', in: Büttner and Meier, *Grenzüberschreitungen* (n. 7), p. 57–69, esp. 61–63.

be made in Goa, the Portuguese commercial place in India. Other exotic objects are a porcelain bowl and a plate from China filled with fruit. These precious oriental objects may allude to the activities of the Netherlandish merchants in Hamburg active in the sugar trade and in the VOC. Flegel was a pupil of Lucas van Valckenborch (c. 1535–1597), who was originally from Mechelen and had worked in Aachen, Antwerp and Linz before he transferred his workshop to Frankfurt in 1592/93, where his brother Marten (1534–1612) already lived.<sup>70</sup> Gilles Coignet knew the Valckenborch brothers from Antwerp, since in 1586 he had attested Marten van Valckenborch's compliance.<sup>71</sup>

It is very well possible that paintings, like these allegories of luxury and vanity, were commissioned by wealthy Lutheran or Calvinist expatriates in Hamburg. The rich sugar refiners like the L'Hommel family dominated the trade between Hamburg and Portugal.<sup>72</sup> Their houses were filled with paintings according to the Dutch taste, as Conrad von Hövelen reported in 1668.<sup>73</sup> It is interesting to know that at about the same time when the Allegory of Luxuria was created, the L'Hommel family and other sugar traders from Hamburg were involved in a lawsuit about a freight of sugar, which was brought in the imperial court in Frankfurt. In this process, the sugar traders David de l'Hommel, Peter van Leyen, Emmanuel Alvarez de Castro and Cornelius Beselaer complained about the suspending payment for three tons of sugar by Abraham Pelten, an agent from the Netherlands. The process lasted from 1595 to 1607.<sup>74</sup> Besides this special case of a conflict in commerce, there was more conflict potential among the Netherlandish immigrants caused by their different confessions. It happened on several occasions that the Lutherans attacked the coaches of the Calvinists and Mennonites on Sundays, when they went to Altona for religious service.<sup>75</sup> With regard to their legal status too, the Netherlanders did not form a homogeneous group. The group of wealthy merchants, to which Hans L'Hommel belonged as a Calvinist, was well

<sup>70</sup> For the Valckenborch brothers see A. Wied, *Lucas und Marten van Valckenborch (1535–1597 und 1534–1612). Das Gesamtwerk mit kritischem Oeuvrekatalog*, Freren 1990; A. Wied, 'Neues zu Lucas und Marten van Valckenborch', in: *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 85–86 (1989–1990) [1990], p. 9–23; A. Wied, 'Nachträge zu Lucas und Marten van Valckenborch', in: *Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien* 6–7 (2004–2005) [2006], p. 90–159.

<sup>71</sup> Meskens, 'Enkele biografische gegevens' (n. 1), p. 143.

<sup>72</sup> Sillem, 'Zur Geschichte der Niederländer' (n. 27), p. 535; C. Amsinck, 'Die Hamburger Zuckerbäcker', in: K. Koppmann (ed.), *Aus Hamburgs Vergangenheit. Kulturhistorische Bilder aus verschiedenen Jahrhunderten*, vol. 2, Hamburg 1886, p. 209–231, esp. 211; H. Kellenbenz, *Unternehmerkräfte* (n. 29), p. 179, 276; Loose, 'Reformation und Gegenreformation' (n. 27), p. 250; A. Petersson, *Zuckerstiedegewerbe und Zuckerhandel in Hamburg im Zeitraum von 1814 bis 1834. Entwicklung und Struktur zweier wichtiger Hamburger Wirtschaftszweige des vorindustriellen Zeitalters*, Stuttgart 1998, p. 42–43.

<sup>73</sup> 'Die Häuser/Zimmer und Gemächer sind nach der Holländischen Art inwändig und zwar teils mit überaus/kostbaren Schildereien aufgebuzt.' See Hövelen, *Der Uhaltten ... Stadt Hamburg ... Hoheit* (n. 61), p. 131; Walczak, 'Expatriaten' (n. 7), p. 73–74.

<sup>74</sup> Kellenbenz, *Unternehmerkräfte*, p. 179.

<sup>75</sup> Sillem, 'Zur Geschichte der Niederländer', p. 573–585; P. Piper, 'Die Reformierten und die Mennoniten Altonas', in: R. Ehrenberg (ed.), *Altona unter Schauenburgischer Herrschaft*, 7 vols., Altona 1893, vol. 6, p. 7–23.

organized and had a legal contract with the Hamburg senate. This contract granted them a certain grade of political power. Others, mostly Lutherans, were burghers of the city, and a third group was formed by individuals who were neither partners of the Netherlandish contract nor burghers of the city. But all Netherlanders were either contributors or beneficiaries of the Netherlandish poor box as their central institution.<sup>76</sup>

### Conclusion

To conclude, Coignet's patrons in Hamburg possibly had a special interest in allegories that may be related to the trials and tribulations caused by different groups of Netherlandish Protestant expatriates. The Netherlanders probably also liked paintings that reflected their knowledge of antiquity and humanistic education. Paintings with mythological and allegorical scenes in the manner of Titian, which did not contradict their Protestant world view, may have been especially welcome. In the last five years of his life, Coignet created mythological and allegorical history paintings, but he was also active as a painter of religious themes. For Lutherans, the donation of religious historical paintings was a welcome means to show their wealth and their belonging to this group. Hamburg saw no iconoclasm, but the silent removal of relics and holy images, and the transformation of church interiors according to Protestant needs in the second half of the sixteenth century provided Coignet with major commissions. Apart from his paintings for the church of St Peter's, a canvas showing St John at Patmos, which is dated 1598, is attributed to him.<sup>77</sup> Obviously, Coignet never completely cut his ties to Antwerp, where his brother, the instrument maker and cartographer Michiel (1549–1623) still lived. Michiel had become a member of the St Luke's guild in Antwerp in 1581 and a contributor to the guild's poor box in 1583 during Gilles's time as a dean.<sup>78</sup> The St Petersburg painting with St. John at Patmos must have travelled between Antwerp and Hamburg, because Tobias Verhaecht (1561–1631), who became dean of the St Luke's guild in 1594/95, painted the landscape and Coignet only added the figures.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Lappenberg, 'Von der Ansidelung der Niederländer' (n. 27); Sillem, 'Zur Geschichte der Niederländer', p. 555–562; H. Schilling, *Niederländische Expatriaten im 16. Jahrhundert. Ihre Stellung im Sozialgefüge und im religiösen Leben deutscher und englischer Städte*, Gütersloh 1972, p. 79; Poettering, *Handel, Nation und Religion* (n. 29), p. 316, 319–323.

<sup>77</sup> Gilles Coignet and Tobias Verhaecht, *Landscape with St John at Patmos*, 1598, oil on panel, 133 × 191.5 cm, Hermitage St Petersburg. Van Mander briefly mentions Tobias Verhaecht as a good landscape painter. See Van Mander, *Schilder-boeck* (n. 1), fol. 295v; Van Mander–Miedema, *Lives* (n. 1), vol. 1, p. 441.

<sup>78</sup> For Michiel Coignet see Meskens, *Familia universalis* (n. 1), p. 51–145. Gilles Coignet's other brother Jacob (c. 1544–1614) lived in Antwerp as a goldsmith. His son Gilles II Coignet (1586–after 1650) became a painter. See *ibidem*, p. 149.

<sup>79</sup> For Tobias Verhaecht see Y. Thiéry, *Le paysage flamand au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1953, p. 61, 199; J.-P. de Bruyn (ed.), *Le siècle de Rubens dans les collections publiques françaises*, Paris 1977, p. 289; U. Härting, 'Einige frühe Werke des Tobias Verhaecht (1561–1630) und der Wiener Seesturm. Quot homines tot sententiae', in: E. Mai and K. Schütz (eds.), *Die Malerei Antwerpens. Gattungen, Meister, Wirkungen*,

Like in his earlier career, Coignet worked for the market and cooperated with other painters.<sup>80</sup>

Coignet died in Hamburg in 1599 and was buried in St Jacob's Church. His wife commissioned an epitaph giving a short summary of his life. This short text tells us that Gilles Coignet was an honorable and distinguished painter from Antwerp, who was highly esteemed among the artists of his time and renowned in the Belgian Provinces, in Germany, France, and Italy: 'He died in piety in the year 1599 on December 27 in this city [Hamburg] and is buried in this church [St Jacob's], leaving behind his widow and his only daughter Juliana in tears'.<sup>81</sup> His daughter Juliana, who may have been c. 12–14 years old in 1599, later married Philips van der Veken, a merchant of Flemish origin, who owned a house in Hamburg and a country house in Trittau near Hamburg. The couple returned to Antwerp, where Juliana died in 1616.<sup>82</sup> Philips van der Veken sold the Coignet family tomb in 1619 to the portraitist David Kindt, a member of the second generation of Flemish immigrants.<sup>83</sup> Also in 1619, David Kindt bought the country house in Trittau from Philips van der Veken and apprenticed Juliana's and Philip's son as a painter.<sup>84</sup>

The influence of Netherlandish artists remained strong from the second half of the sixteenth century until the beginning of the eighteenth century. Only few of the Flemish painters appear in the accounts of the Hamburg painters' guild. The Flemish artists held contact among each other and kept close ties with their former home land.

Köln 1994, p. 92–103; H. Vlieghe, *Flemish Art and Architecture, 1585–1700*, New Haven 1998, p. 183; K. Ertz et al. (eds.), *Die Flämische Landschaft, 1520–1700*, Lingen 2003, p. 136–137, 397.

<sup>80</sup> Van Mander-Miedema, *Lives*, vol. 1, p. 306–307; Vermeylen, *Painting for the market* (n. 18), p. 77; Uppenkamp, 'Gilles Coignet' (n. 34), p. 740; Siedler, 'Die Rezeption von kooperativen Arbeitsweisen' (n. 69), p. 61–63.

<sup>81</sup> The epitaph, which is now lost, was transcribed by T. Anckelmann, *Inscriptiones antiquissimae et celeberrimae urbis Patriae Hamburgensis*, Hamburg 1706, p. 35, no. cvi: 'Aegidius Coignet, Memoriae. Ornatiss(imi) viri Aegidii Coignet Antverpiani, pictoris eximii & cum summis hujus temporis artificib. quibus in Belgieis Provinciis & in Germaniâ, Galliâ & Italiâ familiariter innotuit, meritò Comparandi, Anno MDXCIX [1599], XXVII. Xbris [27. Dezember]. in hac urbe piè demortui & in hac Ecclesiâ religiose sepulti. Magdalena moetiss. vidua, & Juliana filia unica superstites cum lachrimis F.F. [Facere Fecerunt].' See the translation in Van Mander-Miedema, *Lives*, vol. 5, p. 6: 'To the memory of the very renowned Gillis Coignet of Antwerp, an excellent painter and worthy of comparison with the best artists of his age, with whom he had friendly contact in the Netherlands regions and in Germany, France and Italy. He died in piety in this city on 27 December 1599 and was buried in this church according to religious custom. His sorely grieving widow Magdalena and only daughter Juliana, tearfully surviving him, have had [this epitaph] made.'

<sup>82</sup> Meskens, *Familia universalis*, p. 181. For the Van der Veken family see Sillem, 'Zur Geschichte der Niederländer' (n. 27), p. 508.

<sup>83</sup> For Johan Kindt see Lappenberg, 'Beiträge' (n. 43), p. 355. For the the Kindt family see Sillem, 'Zur Geschichte der Niederländer', p. 507–508. Different from Lappenberg, Sillem maintains that David Kindt was the nephew of Johan.

<sup>84</sup> Schmidt, 'Der Hamburger Maler David Kindt' (n. 46), p. 44–45, n. 2; Walczak, 'Expatriaten' (n. 7), p. 77. The first name of this son is not mentioned. He does not seem to have joined the Hamburg painters' guild.

The second generation of Netherlandish painters born in Hamburg, like David Kindt and Gabriel Engels, were trained by the immigrants of the first generation. Gilles Coignet's grandson belonged to the third generation. Born probably in Hamburg to Coignet's daughter Juliana and her husband Philips van der Veken, he lived for some time with his parents in Antwerp and was sent back to Hamburg as an apprentice to David Kindt in 1619.

It has become clear that an artist such as Gilles Coignet disrupts any notion of local schools. To recapitulate, Gilles Coignet was trained in Antwerp around 1555–1560. In Italy, he was successful as a decorative painter who worked in the style of the Fontainebleau school, which itself was an import from Italy. Also in Italy, the works of Titian became his main examples, like for many other painters from the North, who we might subsume under the term 'Netherlandish Mannerism'.<sup>85</sup> He developed his personal style, which is characterized by rapid brushstrokes and a Titianesque *colorito*. He applied special painting techniques by using gold and glass paste in his nocturnals. Van Mander notices that Coignet signed works of his pupils and sold them as his own.<sup>86</sup> This was common workshop practice, and we can deduce that there was a demand for Coignet's paintings in Antwerp and in Amsterdam, where he led workshops and had pupils. As far as we know today, Coignet was the only painter in Hamburg, who could supply Titianesque paintings, and it is difficult to assess in hindsight whether these paintings were esteemed for their Netherlandish or for their Italianate appeal. His clientele in Hamburg – apart from the Lutheran church – seems to have been internationally orientated merchants, who like him had left the Southern Netherlands for their confession. Most of these people remained in close contact with their relatives and with commercial partners in Antwerp and in Amsterdam, and the same seems to be true for Coignet and his family.

<sup>85</sup> For a discussion of 'Netherlandish Mannerism' see the contributions in: G. Cavalli-Björkman, *Netherlandish Mannerism. Papers given at the symposium in Nationalmuseum Stockholm, September 21–22, 1984*, Stockholm 1985.

<sup>86</sup> Van Mander-Miedema, *Lives*, vol. 1, p. 306–307, vol. 5, p. 8–9.