

Guilliam Forchondt and the role of the Greater Netherlands in the dissemination of Flemish art in Latin America

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Abstract

The many seventeenth-century Flemish paintings now found in Spain and Latin America show the expanse of the circulation of artworks from the Southern Netherlands. Antwerp artists and vertically integrated art dealers such as Guilliam Forchondt (1608–1678) drove this widespread dissemination of paintings. A systematic study of Forchondt's business records kept in Antwerp, complemented by archival and visual sources in Spain, Mexico and Peru, shows that Forchondt was an export-oriented dealer with a voluminous trade in paintings with the Iberian Peninsula and the Americas. This paper explores the type of imagery Forchondt sent to Spanish and New World buyers in contrast to what his clients bought in other parts of Europe, and identifies market conditions at the points of origin and destination that made these artistic exchanges possible. In doing so, this research also unveils the role the Northern Netherlands played in promoting this long-distance art trade venture.

Keywords: Antwerp art dealer, Flemish painting exports, Europe and Latin America, shipping networks, the Greater Netherlands

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The dissemination of Flemish art in Latin America

Paintings and prints from the Southern Netherlands or made after Netherlandish prototypes were widely disseminated in the Americas during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹ The widespread circulation of this imagery is a complex phenomenon rooted in the centuries-long popularity and impact of Netherlandish art in Spain, and of Netherlandish painters who enjoyed great esteem among Spanish patrons.² In gauging these artistic linkages between the Southern Netherlands and the Americas, art historical studies traditionally focus on the lives and works of the painters we know travelled from the Spanish Netherlands and settled in the New World, and on the influence canonical Flemish artists such as Marten de Vos (1535–1602) and Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) had on local painters in the Americas through the dissemination of their compositions through prints.³ A main research strategy in the art historical literature is the identification

1 Important museum catalogues and exhibitions examine the connection between the visual cultures of the Southern Netherlands and Latin America during the early modern period, especially *America. Bruid van de zon, 500 jaar Latijns-Amerika en de Lage Landen*, Brussels, Gent 1991; R.M. Alarcón Cedillo et al., *Pintura novohispana. Museo Nacional del Virreinato, Tepotzotlán*, vol. 1, Siglos XVI, XVII y principios del XVIII, Tepotzotlán, México 1992; *Los siglos de oro en los virreinos de América, 1550–1700*, Madrid 1999; D. Pierce, R. Ruiz Gomar, and C. Bargellini, *Painting a new world. Mexican art and life, 1521–1821* (exh.cat.), Denver 2004; J.J. Rishel and S. Stratton-Pruitt, *The arts in Latin America, 1492–1820* (exh.cat.), Philadelphia, Mexico, New Haven 2006; J. Gutiérrez Haces (coord.), *Painting of the kingdoms. Shared identities. Territories of the Spanish monarchy, 16th–18th centuries*, 4 vols., México, D.F. 2008; S. Stratton-Pruitt (ed.), *Journeys to new worlds. Spanish and Portuguese colonial art in the Roberta and Richard Huber Collection*, New Haven, London 2013.

2 Examples of these painters are Juan de Flandes (c. 1460–by 1519), Michiel Sittow (c. 1469–1525), Pedro de Campaña or Kampeneer (1503–1580), Antonis Mor (c. 1520–c. 1576). Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) enjoyed great fame among the Spanish court and other Counter-Reformation patrons, for example the Archduchess Isabella, Philip IV, the Duke of Lerma, collectors such as Nicolás Omazur, and the Jesuit Order. In addition, developments in Netherlandish and Spanish art did not happen disconnected from those in other artistic centers, mainly Italy. See J. Brown, *Painting in Spain, 1500–1700*, New Haven 1998, esp. chapter 1; and the contributions in Gutiérrez Haces, *Painting of the kingdoms*.

3 This migration of artists happened particularly between the second half of the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century. For instance, notable painters from the Southern Netherlands who

of prints local artists in the Americas used as prototypes or for inspiration, as a way to trace how artists in Viceregal Latin America adopted and transformed European models.⁴

Less research has been directed to the role paintings themselves may have played in the dissemination of pictorial models, especially those produced in the Southern Netherlands on a large scale for market consumption. Scholars who identify the influence of Rubens' works point to the 'Rubensiana' that permeated the artistic environment of the Iberian Peninsula and Spanish America. In fact, it is widely asserted in the literature that even though very few originals by Rubens' hand reached Spanish America, replicas after his works painted on copper flooded the market especially during the second half of the seventeenth century.⁵ However, we have no estimates of this influx, no comprehensive view on the types of paintings exported, and only some details about the transatlantic art trade from extant paintings in Latin America. In addition, we still know too little about the role that merchants and art dealers from the Southern Netherlands played. This makes it difficult to assess the impact of paintings produced for exports in the Southern Netherlands as a whole on the Latin American artistic landscape.⁶

migrated to New Spain are Simon Pereyins (c. 1530–1600) and Diego de Borgraff (1618–1686), both born in Antwerp. Another key figure is the Mechelen-born Jesuit Diego de la Puente (c. 1586–1662), who oversaw the decoration of many Jesuit churches throughout the Andean region. Among the many authors, publications and exhibition catalogues that touch upon De Vos, Rubens and other artists and their influence in the arts in Spain and the Americas are F. de la Maza, *El pintor Martín de Vòs en México*, Mexico City 1971; F. Stastny, *La presencia de Rubens en la pintura colonial*, Lima 1965; R. Ruiz Gomar, 'Rubens en la pintura novohispana de mediados del siglo XVII', in: *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* XIII, tomo 1, no. 50 (1982), p. 87–101; A. Balis, *Rubens y su siglo* (exh. cat.), México City 1998; M. Díaz Padrón, *Escuela flamenca, siglo XVII*, Catálogo De Pinturas-Museo Del Prado, Madrid 1975; J. Brown, *Painting in Spain*, 1998; M. Toussein, *El arte flamenco en Nueva España*, Mexico City 1949; *Relaciones artísticas entre España y América*, Madrid 1990; Pierce et al., *Painting a New World; America. Bruid van de zon*, 1991.

4 For example, the Project for the Engraved Sources of Spanish Colonial Art (PESSCA). See stable URL <http://colonialart.org>. This can also be corroborated by looking at the use of prints after the works of Peter Paul Rubens in H. von Kügelgen, 'Painting from the Kingdoms and Rubens', in: Gutiérrez Haces, *Painting of the kingdoms*, p. 1008–1078.

5 Balis, *Rubens y su siglo*; C. Bargellini, 'Painting on copper in Spanish America,' in: M.K. Komanecky (ed.), *Copper as canvas. Two centuries of masterpiece painting on copper, 1575–1575*, Phoenix 1998, p. 31–44. See also the introductory comments in H. Vlieghe, *Flemish art and architecture, 1585–1700*, New Haven 1998; J. de Mesa, 'De Vlaamse invloed in de Andesschilderkunst', in: *America, Bruid van de zon*, 1991, p. 179–188.

6 I deal with these issues in my doctoral dissertation entitled 'The role of the Antwerp painter-dealer Guilliam Forchondt in the large-scale distribution of new imagery in Europe and the Americas during the seventeenth century' (2015) for the Department of Art, Art History and Visual Studies at Duke University, under the supervision of Dr. Hans J. Van Miegroet. For the dissemination of paintings from the Southern Netherlands in Spain and the Americas, see Bargellini, 'Painting on copper in Spanish America'; N. De Marchi and H.J. Van Miegroet, 'Exploring markets for Netherlandish paintings in Spain and Nueva España', in: R. Falkenburg et al. (eds.), *Kunst voor de markt. Art for the market 1500–1700. Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* (1999), p. 81–111. We only have some estimates of exports of paintings from Spain from the economic historian Lutgardo García Fuentes' study of the American trade between 1650–1700, where he identified that 240 rolls of paintings were exported during the second half of the seventeenth century, figure from which Duncan Kinkead calculated that 24,000 paintings could have been exported to the Americas during in that period. See L. García Fuentes, *El comercio español con América, 1650–1700*, Sevilla 1980; D.T. Kinkead,

In this paper, I focus on the dissemination of Flemish paintings in Spain and the Americas through the activities of one particular art dealer based in Antwerp, Guiliam Forchondt (1608–1678).⁷ Studies on Forchondt by Jean Denucé and Erik Duverger provide evidence that Forchondt established a successful painting workshop and a profitable commercial venture in Europe particularly through the activities of his sons in Vienna, Lisbon and Cadiz.⁸ These studies concentrate on Forchondt's activities as art dealer and painter based on piecemeal evidence from partial archival transcriptions and from a handful of his surviving paintings. No study to date has looked in a systematic way at his workshop operation, the paintings he traded, and his commercial activities geared towards Spain and the New World.⁹ I approach the Forchondt case differently and look at his activities and the paintings he traded in the aggregate.

A systematic study of Forchondt's voluminous surviving written documentation kept in the City Archives in Antwerp offers the opportunity to quantify and map his activities across Europe and the Americas. I focus on his surviving cashbooks, invoices and shipping documents for the period between 1643 and 1678.¹⁰ I also incorporate complementary archival sources I consulted in Spain, Mexico and Peru, and Forchondt's extant visual production now in Europe and Latin America. As a result of taking into account the many painters that Forchondt subcontracted, the types of paintings he sold, where he shipped those paintings, and who were the ultimate buyers, I am able to outline his network for artistic transmission and exchanges. These pain-

'Juan de Luzón and the Sevillian painting trade with the New World in the second half of the seventeenth century', in: *Art Bulletin* 66 (1984), p. 303–312.

7 Even though 'Flemish' really implies Flanders, contemporaries used it to refer to anyone and anything from the Southern Netherlands. In many instances, it also denoted more generally Northern European origins.

8 J. Denucé, *Exportation d'œuvres d'art au 17e siècle à Anvers. La firme Forchoudt*, Sources pour l'histoire de l'art Flamand, vol. 1, Anvers 1931; E. Duverger, 'De firma Forchoudt en de kunsthandel met Centraal Europa', in: *Handelingen* 20 (1966), p. 403–404; E. Duverger, 'La Firme Forchondt d'Anvers et le commerce d'art avec l'Espagne et le Portugal au xvii^e siècle,' in: *xxiii Congreso internacional de historia del arte. Ponencias y comunicaciones*, Granada, 1973, p. 160; E. Duverger, 'Zeventiende-eeuwse schilderijen met de signatuur van Gilliam en Guilielmo Forchondt uit Antwerpen', in: *Bulletin. Musées royaux des beaux-arts de Belgique* 38–40 (1989), p. 303–315.

9 Ria Fabri has studied in detail Forchondt's furniture production, see R. Fabri, 'Het archief van de Familie Forchondt als bron voor de studie van de 17de-eeuwse Antwerpse kunstkasten', in: *Bulletin van de Koninklijke musea voor kunst en geschiedenis* 57 (1986); R. Fabri, *De 17de-eeuwse Antwerpse kunstkast. Typologische en historische aspecten*, Brussel 1991.

10 Specifically, I have transcribed, entered into a database designed for this purpose, and analysed Forchondt's workshop cashbooks that cover the period 1646–1671, all invoices of paintings, plates and frames that cover the years 1635 to 1702 (including undated documents), and his cargo book for the period 1669–1671; Antwerp, Stadsarchief (hereinafter SAA), *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, IB1082 (*Kasboek, 1647–1650*), IB1083 (*Kasboek, 1664*), IB1043 (*Kasboek, 1650–1656*), IB1044 (*Kasboek, 1655–1663*), IB1046 (*Kasboek, 1663–1671*), IB1103 (*Rekeningen van schilderijen, lijsten en platen*), and IB1045 (*Cargasoenboek A, 1669–1674*). In addition, I have consulted Forchondt's correspondence exchange and copies of sent letters, grouped under IB1082 (*Brievenkopijboek, 1647–1650*), IB1083 (*Brievenkopijboek, 1662–1668*), and IB1085 to IB1093 (*Briefwisseling aan Guiliam Forchondt*), as well as IB1109 (*Rekeningen voor onkosten van vervoer*).

ters and buyers are for the most part unfamiliar to us, but in fact constituted the force behind much of the artistic production in Antwerp that we now find spread throughout Europe and the Americas. In addition, mapping Forchondt's relationships with his agents and business collaborators, and the information that travelled through them, makes it possible to identify developments in both the Southern Netherlands and the end markets that sustained this trade in imagery across several decades. Among my goals is to connect business practices in Antwerp and details of shipments to surviving seventeenth-century paintings from the Southern Netherlands that I have located in Peru and Mexico.

In the following pages I focus on the fact that as art dealer Forchondt participated and contributed to what we could call the legacy of Flemish art in Latin America through the large-scale production of paintings he oversaw in Antwerp and Mechelen and shipped to Spanish territories. I propose that information and distribution networks that covered long distances efficiently made this integrated undertaking possible. Having access to information about the types of paintings that appealed to buyers in Spain and the New World assured this dealer's success. Furthermore, the Forchondt case shows that the Dutch Republic played a fundamental role in his art-trading venture to the Iberian Peninsula and the New World, particularly through shipping and finance.

The art dealer Guilliam Forchondt (1608–1678)

From each transaction registered in Forchondt's books and invoices for the period 1643–1678, I collected and tabulated in a relational database the number, price, description of goods sold and purchased, as well as the names, when recorded, of Forchondt's suppliers and clients often with their location, and the financial intermediaries and shipping agents involved.¹¹ As result, I have been able to measure the size of the enterprise in terms of total outlays and revenues, and the types of products sold broken down by destination and client name when possible. Table 1 summarizes Forchondt's painting sales information, and shows that he oversaw a production and distribution of artworks on a large-scale. In thirty-five years of activity, he sold 12,852 paintings. His activity in Antwerp and neighbouring cities in the Southern Netherlands represents 5 per cent of

¹¹ In the database, I organized all transactions into revenues or expenses (by subtypes such as purchase of materials, goods sold, shipping costs, etc.), and classified the goods transacted into eight categories: imagery (paintings, sculptures, sketches, illuminations, prints and maps); furniture (cabinets, writing desks, tables, foot parts, coffers, hanging mirrors, vanity mirrors, and frames); workshop items (pigments, painting supports, tortoise shell, wood, glass, foil, metal, parts and decorative items for furniture); other furnishings (tapestries, leather panels, tablecloths and rugs); other household goods (book covers and sewing cushions); textiles (linen, lace, ribbons, yarn); jewellery (set and loose precious stones); and foodstuffs (a variety of products such as sugar, tobacco, cacao, vanilla, tea and wine). Workshop items correspond to input materials, while imagery, furniture, textiles, other furnishings and household items, jewellery and foodstuffs indicate to finished products.

Table 1 Sales of paintings per destination, 1643–1678

Destination	Number of Paintings	Percentage of Total
Southern Netherlands	694	5%
Dutch Republic	436	3%
France	340	3%
Holy Roman territories	2,026	16%
Iberian Peninsula	4,215	33%
Unknown	2,591	20%
Unspecified exports	2,550	20%
Total	12,852	

Source: Antwerp, Stadsarchief (SAA), *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, IB1043–1047, IB 1082–1083 and IB1103.

his overall sales. Sales to unknown destinations that could be local sales or exports total 20 per cent, while 20 per cent were sales to unspecified cities albeit outside the Southern Netherlands. Consequently, at least 75 per cent of the paintings he sold in this period were international sales, a fact that demonstrates his was an export-oriented business.¹²

A painter himself who also dealt in paintings on a large scale, Forchondt was a vertically integrated art dealer because he controlled several consecutive steps in the production and distribution of paintings. He received requests for paintings from a variety of buyers and contacts abroad, and that made him involved in the design and production stages locally. These orders against future sales guaranteed a continuous painting production in the Southern Netherlands that he then distributed and sold mostly in foreign markets through his network of buyers and agents abroad.¹³ Vertical integration is generally viewed as a strategy to increase market power and reach because it increases control over suppliers or distributors, and reduces the associated transaction

12 Note that destinations designated ‘Unknown’ (20 per cent) could have been local or foreign, but the category ‘Unspecified exports’ (20 per cent) refers exclusively to shipments sent to locations outside Antwerp, albeit unnamed. Adding the 20 per cent of unknown sales to the 5 per cent of local sales sets an upper bound of 25 per cent of sales within the Southern Netherlands.

13 The dealer in art appeared in Antwerp as a professional category already in the early decades of the sixteenth century, and by the end of the century dealing in art constituted a well-established activity. Vertically integrated art dealers appeared during the first decades of the seventeenth century as international art trade ventures expanded the scale of their operations. The best-known examples to date are Chrisostomo Van Immerseel (1588–1654) and Matthijs Musson (1598–1678). For the rise and development of art dealers in Antwerp and the benefits of vertical integration, see F. Vermeylen, ‘The art of the dealer. Marketing paintings in early modern Antwerp’, in: H. Cools, M. Keblusek and B.V. Noldus (eds.), *Your humble servant. Agents in early modern Europe, 1500–1800*, Hilversum 2006, p. 109–120; N. De Marchi and H.J. Van Miegroet, ‘Exploring markets for Netherlandish paintings’ (n. 6), p. 82; and the essay by Claartje Rasterhoff and Filip Vermeylen in this volume. Fundamental in all these developments was the opening in 1445 of the Dominican *pan* for the sale of luxury goods including paintings, in 1460 in the Church of Our Lady, and in 1540 of the Painters’ Hall or *Schilderspan* in the second floor of the New Stock Exchange. See D. Ewing, ‘Marketing art in Antwerp, 1460–1560. Our Lady’s Pan’, in: *Art Bulletin* 72 (1990), p. 558–584; F. Vermeylen, *Painting for the market. Commercialization of art in Antwerp’s Golden Age*, Turnhout 2003.

costs by integrating activities within the firm and using existing resources. This strategy also lowers the risks associated with supply or distribution channels that fall outside the firm by placing them under the firm's management. In adopting this strategy, Forchondt was able to reach foreign markets efficiently, and transform Flemish painting production into a going concern.

The distinctive characteristics and configurations across Forchondt's sales destinations show that markets differed. Forchondt operated in both the primary and secondary market segments, and his shipments depended on who his buyers were and on their preferences for paintings. This, in turn, manifested in his relationships with the many painters in Antwerp and Mechelen he subcontracted – I have identified 65 known painters and 8 who remain unknown – some of whom I mention below.

Figure 1 visualizes the spatial distribution of Forchondt's sales of paintings to known destinations per types of support (from darker to lighter: copper, canvas, linen; unknowns in grey) (fig. 1). Through his sons Alexander, Melchior and later Marcus in Vienna Forchondt dealt with great profits in a wide array of expensive goods including furniture, jewellery, lace, tapestries and paintings especially from 1666. The Forchondts concentrated on the Hapsburg aristocracy in Vienna, as well as wealthy burghers in Cologne, Frankfurt, and Hamburg. Unfortunately documentation does not specify the type of support for the majority of the paintings sold ('null' support in fig. 1), but in the account books many of the descriptions of these paintings included the artist names or attributions, which were seldom indicated in his sales invoices to other locations. In fact, Forchondt annotated the artist's name or the painting's attribution for 808 (or 41 per cent) of the paintings he shipped to Central Europe. This may have been a way for his sons to manage those large shipments of paintings with ease; however, this strategy also suggests names and 'attributability' as key information for pricing and marketing paintings among the aristocracy in Vienna, and for attracting potential buyers.¹⁴

For instance, Forchondt assigned values above 100 guilders for paintings by known sixteenth century masters like Marinus van Reymerswael (1493–1567), Barend de Ryckere (1535–1590), and Jan Sanders van Heemesen (1500–1556), as well as by the more contemporary Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641) and Jacob Jordaens (1573–1678). Paintings valued at 50 guilders or under abounded in his shipments to Vienna – the many dozens of battle scenes by Alexander Casteels (1635–ca. 1682) and marine paintings by Willem van de Velde (perhaps the son, 1633–1707) stand out.¹⁵ Forchondt also sent paintings labelled as copies after known artists,

14 For attributability in valuations of paintings during the seventeenth century, see N. De Marchi and H.J. Van Miegroet, 'Art, value, and market practices in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century', in: *Art Bulletin* 76.3 (1994), p. 451–464; A. Tummers and K. Jonckheere (eds.), *Art market and connoisseurship. A closer look at paintings by Rembrandt, Rubens and their contemporaries*, Amsterdam 2008.

15 Forchondt did not specify if the paintings were by Willem van de Velde I (1611–1693) or II (1633–1707). It is also possible that he also worked with Pieter van den Velde, another marine painter active in Antwerp between 1654 and 1687 and apparently no relation of Willem the elder or the younger.

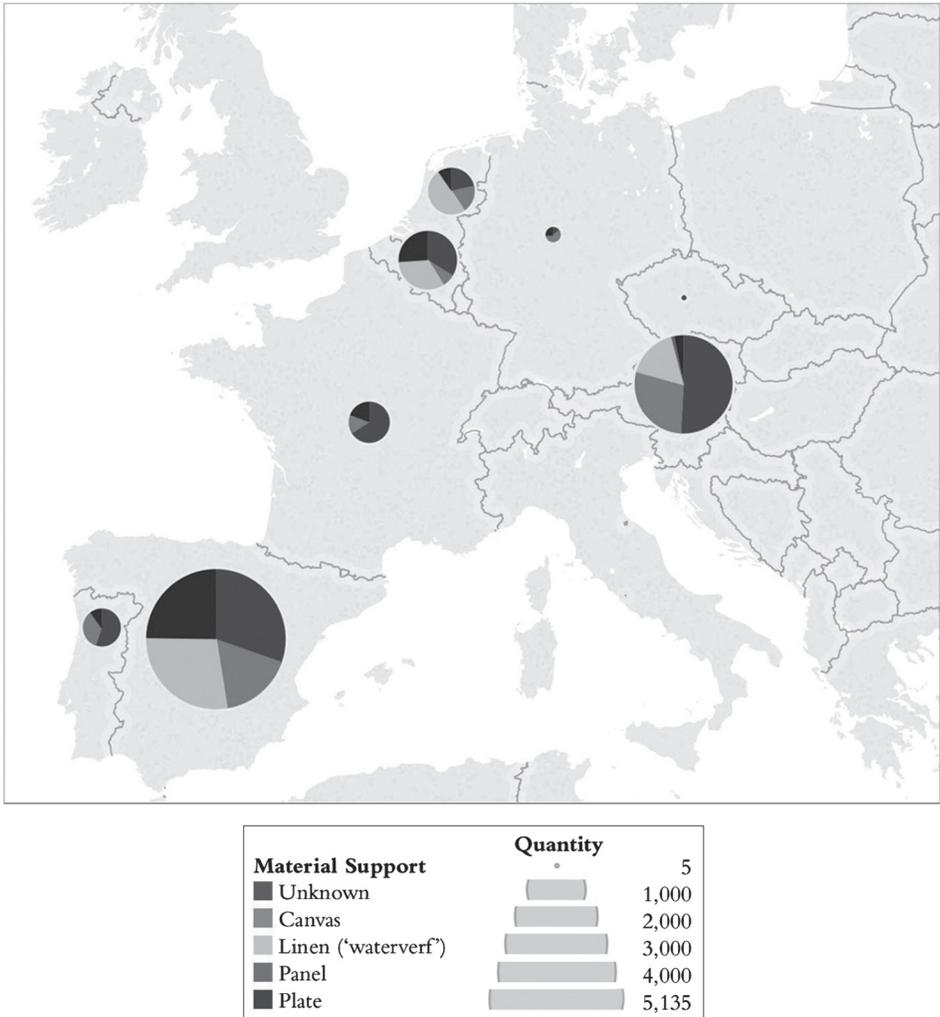


Fig. 1 Spatial distribution of Forchondt's painting sales by destination and type of support, 1643-1678.

including Italian masters.¹⁶ In accordance with the practice among seventeenth century artists, appraisers and dealers who deliberately used family or workshop names and caused confusion about authorship because they recognized the value of the workshop's

¹⁶ In the bracket between 50 and under 100 guilders are Cornelis van Cleve, Lucas van Leyden, Anthonis Mor and Pieter Snayers. As mentioned, the majority of works were valued at less than 50 guilders, many of them copies after known works or artists (for example a painting of 'a Greek priest and pagans' after Anthony Van Dyck by Jan Boeckhorst valued at 48 guilders) and the cheapest paintings were unknown copies or generic themes such as market scenes and 'pleasantries'; SAA, *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, 1B1045, fol. 10v[2^o] (loose insert).

brand name, he sent several paintings by 'Breughel', 'Francken' and the aforementioned seascapes by 'van de Velde'.¹⁷

The Southern Netherlands attracted 5 per cent of Forchondt's total sales, and paintings on copper plates and on linen predominated. Among his clients in Antwerp were a combination of private collectors and merchants such as Hendrick Hillewerven and Louis de Faria, who bought paintings in significant quantities.¹⁸ As anticipated, buyers in Brussels were associated with the court circle or held official posts, but they were more interested in the luxurious and expensive cabinets Forchondt also produced in his workshop.¹⁹ In contrast, Ghent was part of the trade route to the north of France and Spain. Therefore, this city mostly functioned as an intermediate point for re-exports. For instance, the Antwerp merchant Jacobus de Bruyn bought paintings in large quantities, and sent them to Lille through his wife who supervised operations in Ghent.²⁰

To Paris, Forchondt shipped paintings mostly to dealers, such as Peter Forêt who ran a shop in the Pont Neuf. Most of these paintings were secular series on copper plates, such as the elements and the senses that reproduced the style of Jan Brueghel II (1601–1678), whose works were highly coveted. Forchondt's business associates in Paris also requested he sent hunting scenes and decorative still lifes. Religious themes were the exception in these shipments, which is another striking difference between the Parisian market and the observed preferences in Lille (where De Bruyn sent Old Testament stories) or other parts of Europe.²¹

Contrary to sales in France, paintings sold in the Dutch Republic show a high participation of watercolour paintings on unprepared linen produced in Mechelen, also called *watervverf* paintings (50 per cent of the total sales). These paintings were cheaper

17 K. Jonckheere, 'Supply and demand. Some notes on the economy of seventeenth century connoisseurship', in: Tummers and Jonckheere, *Art market and connoisseurship*, p. 69–96.

18 SAA, *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, IB1043, fol. 51v–52r, 47v–48r, 62v–63r, 91v–92r, 131v–132r, 141v–142r; IB1044, fol. 46v; IB1047, fol. 59v.

19 Some examples in: SAA, *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, IB 1044, fol. 50v, 97r, 105r; IB 1046, fol. 35r, 39v.

20 For example, the 12 fruit pieces, 12 portraits and two big 'Cleopatras' De Bruyn received in 1660; SAA, *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, IB1044, fol. 97r. De Bruyn was among the Antwerp dealers who 'invaded' the Lille art market. N. De Marchi and H.J. Van Miegroet, 'Antwerp dealers' invasions of the seventeenth-century Lille market', in: D. Lyna, F. Vermeylen and H. Vlieghe (eds.), *Art auctions and dealers. The dissemination of Netherlandish art during the Ancien Régime*, Turnhout 2009, p. 43–58.

21 Among the 75 paintings Forchondt sent Forêt in 1662–1663, only 6 were devotional paintings; see SAA, *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, IB1044, fol. s 127r and 141v. The low percentage of paintings going to Paris might seem at odds with the case of other Antwerp dealers who exported paintings to France in large quantities and very successfully, for example Matthijs Musson to Jean-Michel Picart, and the Antwerp dealers who had overtaken shops at the Pont Notre-Dame earlier in the century. However, the monopolistic concentration of a handful of Parisian dealers Mickaël Szanto notes from 1650s onwards may have acted as a barrier of entry for Antwerp dealers who previously did not already have a strong presence in the city through their contacts; M. Szanto, 'The Pont Notre-Dame, heart of the picture trade in France', in: N. De Marchi and H.J. Van Miegroet (eds.), *Moving pictures. The European trade in visual imagery, 1400–1800*, Turnhout 2014, p. 88–89; N. De Marchi and H.J. Van Miegroet, 'Comment les tableaux des anciens Pays-Bas ont envahi le marché parisien', in: *Rubens, Van Dyck, Jordans et les autres. Peintures baroques Flamandes aux Musées royaux des beaux-arts de Belgique* (exh.cat.), Paris 2012, p. 29–47.

and represented a voluminous trade that differed from what Forchondt sold to high-profile clients in The Hague and Rijswijk. These latter clients commissioned instead luxurious pieces of furniture and purchased few but more expensive paintings.²²

With 31 per cent of all paintings shipped to Spain and 2 per cent to Portugal, totaling 4,215 paintings, the Iberian Peninsula was Forchondt's main export market. In Seville, Forchondt dealt with business associates from the Flemish community, and in 1671 when his son Justo settled in Cadiz, the business with Spain and the New World became wholly in-firm. Shipping and selling Flemish paintings in the Americas required working with professional agents allowed on the transatlantic fleets called *cargadores de Indias* and their networks in the Americas.²³

My analysis of Forchondt's shipments to the Iberian Peninsula – those intended for Spain or for the American markets – shows that the composition of each cargo depended on the agent or business partner at the receiving end, and on the information exchanges between them and Forchondt. In spite of the numbers of paintings for which no type of support can be identified, Forchondt sent paintings on copper (24 per cent of the total) and canvas (18 per cent) by Antwerp masters, produced in collaboration or individually though not signed for the most part. He also sent an equally important amount of paintings on linen produced in Mechelen (26 per cent).²⁴ For these exports Forchondt engaged little-known painters such as Jan Boots (?-after 1657), Jacob de Formentrou (?-?), and Justo Daniels (1605-afér 1666) in Antwerp, as well as Jaspas de Hemelaer (1587-?), Jan Verhuyck (1622-1681) and Jan de Hondt (active 1619-1653) in Mechelen.

Forchondt as cultural mediator between the Southern Netherlands and the Americas

Forchondt's success in the secondary market relied on a dense information network, adequate financial resources, and a web of clients able and willing to buy the artworks he exported.²⁵ His clients and agents in Spanish territories communicated in writing their

²² For example, dowager princess of Orange Mary Henrietta who bought expensive furniture and some paintings, the highlight being a *Diana and Satyrs* by Rubens for the princely collection purchased in 1652 for 300 *patacons*; see SAA, *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, 1B1047, fol. 16v, and 1B 1043, fol. s 29v-30r, 41v-42r, 83v-84r.

²³ Spanish regulations dictated that only Spanish-born or naturalized merchants could sail to and directly trade with the Indies. For Forchondt's key business contacts in Spain and the paintings they requested, and for the traveling agents to whom the Forchondts consigned the paintings they sent to the Americas, see S. van Ginoven, 'Exports of Flemish imagery to the New World. Guiliam Forchondt and his commercial network in the Iberian Peninsula and New Spain, 1644-1678', in: *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten* (2011), p. 119-144.

²⁴ Shipments to Lisbon consisted mostly of paintings on canvas and also on copper plates (35 per cent and 10 per cent of the total), while paintings on copper and on linen dominated the exports to Seville (26 per cent and 33 per cent respectively).

²⁵ I bring these ideas from Olav Velthuis' study of contemporary art dealers in New York and Amsterdam; O. Velthuis, *Talking prices, contemporary art, commercial galleries, and the construction of value*, Princeton 2005, p. 41-42.

Fig. 2 Anonymous seventeenth-century Flemish, *The Triumph of David*, oil on copper plate, 78.5×61 cm, private collection, Seville, Spain.



preferred visual elements and characteristics in the paintings they requested. Above all, agents stressed that buyers delighted in lively and colourful pictures. For instance, they alluded to the visual appeal of a dynamic composition, especially a variety of figures, and of landscape elements that framed these figures and provided narrative content. An anonymous *Triumph of David* on copper support now in Seville, and similar versions by Forchondt also painted on copper that I have located in Spain and Mexico, help exemplify this point (fig. 2).²⁶ The client requested

[...] another lamina [copper plate] of the welcoming and the celebration when David brought back the giant's head, it must have women with tambourines and other musical instruments receiving him, accompanied by others, all rejoicing in the victory, dressed beautifully and colourfully [...].²⁷

Buyers sometimes specified precise dimensions for the paintings, and very often the maximum prices they would be willing and able to pay. The challenge for Forchondt was to take into account all the information communicated to him about buyers' preferences, and produce, subcontract and acquire works that he could expect to sell within a reasonable timeframe and at a profit. With intimate knowledge about

²⁶ The version shown belongs to a private collection in Seville. Another known version is located in San Juan de los Lagos, Estado de Jalisco, Mexico (private collection); and a signed version by Forchondt was auctioned in Spain in 2013 (Sala de Subastas Retiro, December 12, 2013 [Lot 01279]). Unfortunately no images are available for reproduction. The auctioned version represents a slight variation to the image shown: a merry processional group that accompanies David leaving the battleground holding the giant's head.

²⁷ In the original: '[...] otra [lamina] del resivim[ien]to, y aplausos de David quando traia la cabeza del gigante/esta lamina ha detener aquellas doncellas q[ue] con sonajas y otros instrumentos/de musica le resivieron, y otro mucho num[er]o de personas todas regocijando la/victoria con lindos ropaxes, y coloridos/'; SAA, *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, 1B1218, not foliated.

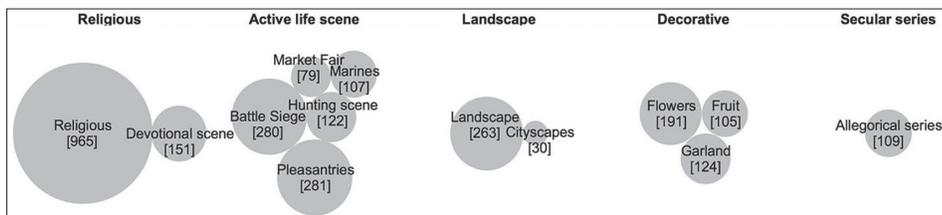


Fig. 3 Main descriptors used in the documents for paintings exported to the Iberian Peninsula grouped by type and sized by frequency of use, 1643–1674.

his clients' preferences, Forchondt's meditating role rested on accessing, identifying, translating and promoting this information both in the production and retail sides. Forchondt's behaviour as dealer in paintings demonstrates he dealt *in* and *with* information about buyers' preferred features and elements in the paintings they acquired.²⁸

The most-demanded types of paintings Forchondt sent to his clients and agents in the Iberian Peninsula and American markets emerge when looking at the frequency of descriptors used in his cashbooks and shipping documents. Figure 3 shows the main descriptors grouped by type, and the size of the circles represents the frequency of use (also shown in brackets) (fig. 3).²⁹ Religious scenes or characters, populated landscapes (my own designation to group 'pleasantry' and also devotional scenes in landscapes), battle scenes, and fruit and flower pieces emerge as the most popular themes. While subject matter depicted on canvas support varied, painters used copper plates for allegorical series such as the elements and senses, but mainly for religious themes, particularly series of the Passion of Christ, the life of the Virgin, and stories from the Old Testament. Paintings on copper had a material advantage over paintings on canvas or on linen. They could bear overseas travel to Spain and the long transatlantic journey to the Americas much better than paintings on canvas did. For example, dampness and humidity could rot the canvas support and ruin the painted surface, but these damages were not as fatal for paintings on copper support.³⁰ Copper paintings

²⁸ I develop this argument further in my dissertation, and propose that the mediation role of dealers as Forchondt was substantiated in an information asymmetry manifested in a demand for artworks that were otherwise not available locally.

²⁹ These categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, some landscapes had a religious theme, and decorative motifs often appeared in more than one type of subject matter.

³⁰ Lori Kata has described the problems arising from damages to artworks during long sea voyages, in particular water damages to a shipment of paintings on canvas that the Spanish painter Francisco de Zurbarán sent to an overseas agent in Portobelo in 1636. Kata also reminds us of Peter Paul Rubens' 1603 well-known description of the way rain badly damaged a case of his paintings during a diplomatic mission to Spain. L. Kata, "With the most diligence possible." Francisco de Zurbarán and the overseas art trade in the seventeenth century', in: *Hispanic Research Journal* 12.5 (2011), p. 387–396. For technical analysis and material characteristics of paintings on copper, see I. Horowitz, 'The materials and techniques of European paintings on copper supports', in: Komanecky, *Copper as Canvas* (n. 5), p. 63–92.

Fig. 4 *Guillelmo Forchondt, Crucifixion, oil on copper plate, 73×57 cm, Church of San Pedro Mártir, Juli, Peru.*



were neatly packed on cases one against the other, usually with a wooden structure nailed to their backside around the edges to prevent them from bending. However, they were on average the most expensive paintings sold at an average 32 guilders each and usually came in series. For instance, Forchondt received a total of 480 guilders for a group of fourteen paintings of Christ, the Apostles and the Virgin Mary. This sum represented a considerable investment, that agents could expect to sell in the Americas at double or triple their value in Spain outside packing, shipping and insurance costs, or commission fees.³¹

Forchondt produced and commissioned variations of themes as well as exact copies that he shipped to different locations in the Americas, where we still find them today. Mapping the geographical distribution of these works reveals the scope of the Forchondt operation directly by him and through his network of agents. Figure 4 shows a painting on copper of the Crucifixion signed by Guillelmo Forchondt (presumably the son), which is part of a group of twelve paintings (eleven survive) of the Passion of Christ that hang in what used to be a Jesuit church in the village of Juli, close to the Lake Titicaca in the Peruvian Andes (fig. 4). I have located exact replicas of these paintings throughout Spain and in other parts in Latin America. For example, a reproduction of the Juli Crucifixion (also signed) exists today in La Rioja, Spain, and I found an anonymous version of roughly the same size in Guadalajara, a city close to the Pacific coast in Mexico, though more research is necessary to identify how they got there (fig. 5).

Shipments also included high numbers of paintings of secular themes. The diagram in figure 3 above indicates large numbers of pleasantries, battle and hunt scenes, and fruit and flower pieces destined for the Peninsular and American markets. For the

31 Kata, ““With the most diligence possible””, p. 389.



Fig. 5 Anonymous seventeenth-century Flemish, Crucifixion, oil on copper plate, 72.5×55 cm, Museo Regional, Guadalajara, Mexico.

most part, these correspond to large-scale shipments of Mechelen *watervelf* paintings. When Justo settled in Cadiz, he wrote to his father in 1672 that devotional scenes in landscapes, and decorative paintings ornamented with flower garlands sold well.³² These linen paintings sold in Spain at 3 guilders each, and Justo consigned them to travelling merchants to the Americas adding a premium of 20 per cent outside the taxes collected by the customs office in Seville. Here volume was important, as margins for Forchondt were low because he bought them from Mechelen workshops

at 1.8 to 2 guilders apiece. These paintings have not survived due to their material fragility, and the existing archival documentation is our only source about the demand for this type of paintings. The popularity among Andean painters of flower garlands to frame their compositions provides further testimony of the rising appeal of decorative imagery from the Southern Netherlands. These flower garlands invented by Jan Bruyghel crossed the Atlantic and spread through prints as well as the paintings Forchondt commissioned to artists like Jan van Kessel (1626–1679).³³

Local workshops in Mexico and Peru were quick in reacting to the popularity of identifiable painting themes and visual traits originating in Flemish painting. Two circumstances help illustrate this point further.³⁴ First, in 1649, painters in Lima raised a complaint against Diego Calderón, a local entrepreneur who contracted painters and supplied them with European paintings, particularly landscapes, still lifes and cityscapes presumably of Flemish origin that he borrowed from private homes.³⁵ Calderón and the painters he employed used these paintings to produce low-cost reproductions that local buyers hungrily acquired, in a way that brings to mind the practice by Antwerp dealers to treat original paintings as ‘principals’ and

³² SAA, *Insolvente Boedekamer*, 1B1065, letters of Guiliam Forchondt to Justo in Cadiz, 12 and 26 July 1672.

³³ Van Ginhoven, ‘Exports of Flemish imagery to the New World’ (n. 23), p. 128, 135.

³⁴ I explore these issues in my doctoral dissertation, mentioned in note 6. Both circumstances involve complaints, discussions among local painters about the production sale of paintings, and attempts (failed and successful) to reinstate or reform the painters’ guild regulations.

³⁵ Gabriela Siracusano has explored in detail this document; G. Siracusano, ‘Para copiar las “buenas pinturas”. Problemas gremiales en un estudio de caso de mediados del siglo xvii en Lima’, in: *Memoria del III Encuentro Internacional sobre Barroco. Manierismo y transición al Barroco*, Pamplona 2011, p. 131–139. The master painters who testified in January 1649 against Calderón were: Nicolás Ponce de León, Bernardo Chacón, José Luis Nunes, Tomás Ortiz Linares, Domingo Gil and Alonso de la Torre, alongside the following officials (journeymen): Joan de Barrios y Santillán, Juan Luis de Valenzuela, Diego de la Serda y Serrano, and Juan de Piña. I thank Ricardo Kusunoki for pointing out the location of this document in the Archivo Arzobispal de Lima.

reproductions as ‘interest’.³⁶ The ten master painters and journeymen who testified against Calderón stated that as clergyman (Presbyter) and not a master painter he had no right to produce or sell paintings. They also complained about the competition his activities created for them, quoting the high prices he charged for mere copies. But mostly they resented that he had access to ‘the best originals in the city’ by making their owners believe he borrowed them for his own use and appreciation. This complaint led thirty-seven painters in Lima to sign before a notary a request for the establishment of a painters’ guild.³⁷ However, their efforts never materialized: the guild was not established, and by 1657 Calderón was still actively producing paintings.³⁸ Even though I have no evidence that Forchondt dealt with entrepreneurs such as Calderón directly, the complaint indicates that imported works, particularly Flemish, were highly desired in the market and that local painters felt the competition. Information about this excessive demand relative to local supply must have travelled back to Forchondt since his exports of paintings to Seville, from where they sailed to the American markets, increased dramatically during the 1660s and 1670s.

Second, artistic developments in seventeenth-century Mexico show that the technique of painting on copper support travelled from Europe to New Spain through the paintings Forchondt and other dealers exported. Presumably the influx of Flemish (and also Italian) paintings on copper led painters in Mexico to try this technique early in the century (fig. 6). The introduction of painting on copper into the masters’ exam as part of the new painters’ guild regulations of 1686 established the full incorporation of this technique into late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Mexican painting.³⁹ Moreover, this new ordinance coupled with a prohibition to sell works that were not produced locally by official masters. Specifically, these new regulations prescribed that deans and the guild’s overseers could at any time search local workshops to check that painters sold only works by their own hand. Since, also by ordinance, all official master

36 According to Emilio Harth-Terré, Calderón employed four painters and one carpenter to make frames; E. Harth-Terré and A. Márquez Abanto, ‘Pintura y pintores en Lima virreinal’, in: *Revista del Archivo Nacional (Lima)*, 27 (1963), p. 175, quoted in Siracusano, ‘Para copiar las “buenas pinturas”’, p. 139. Harth-Terré, p. 137, also argues that towards the first third of the seventeenth century the painting environment was that of a quasi-industrialized production, of repetitive themes and copies, by interlopers, amateurs, and commercially inclined image-makers. For paintings as ‘principals’ and ‘interest’, see De Marchi and Van Miegroet, ‘Exploring markets for Netherlandish paintings’ (n. 13).

37 They signed the petition on February 25, 1649. Harth-Terré, ‘Pintura y pintores en Lima virreinal’, p. 143–147.

38 In Lima, attempts to reinstate and enforce guild regulations never succeeded. The reason official painters could not enforce their request (in contrast to painters in Cusco, who were a more powerful group and successful in this respect) has yet to be fully explained.

39 The masters’ exam included the preparation of canvas, *laminas* (copper plates) and panels, and everything that pertained drawing and the depiction of figures and their clothing, including architectural elements, landscapes, animals, and fruit and flower elements, as decorum dictated. The ordinances are transcribed in F. del Barrio Lorenzot, *Ordenanzas de gremios de la Nueva España. Compendio de los tres tomos de la compilación nueva de ordenanzas de la muy noble, insigne y muy leal e imperial ciudad de México*, Mexico 1921, p. 19–25.



Fig. 6 Baltazar de Echave Ibia, *Crucifixion*, 1637, oil on copper, 42.6×42.9 cm, Jan and Frederick Mayer, Mexico City, Mexico.

painters were to sign their paintings, only signed works could be sold in workshops.⁴⁰ Therefore, it was through the signature that local workshops sought to protect themselves from the competition of outsiders, which also included imported works. I propose that only a continuous influx of European paintings on copper into New Spain that threatened the sustainability of local workshops can fully explain these new regulations.

The role of the Dutch Republic in Forchondt's art trade with the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America

Fundamental to Forchondt's success in the secondary market segment was his access to financial resources and an efficient shipping network for his exports to the Iberian Peninsula and the Americas. The Dutch Republic played an important role due to key financial intermediaries stationed in Amsterdam, and a network of shipping agents in Middelburg, Rotterdam and Amsterdam entrusted with transporting the paintings Forchondt sent to the Spanish markets.

Before Amsterdam's commercial expansion from about 1590 onwards, Antwerp enjoyed a preeminent role in importing chiefly Southern European and colonial goods, in their distribution to the whole of the Low Countries, and in their transshipment abroad through the ports of Zeeland.⁴¹ With the so-called closure of the Scheldt, as Antwerp ceased to play the central role in connecting Dutch ports and the rest of Europe, ports in Zeeland and Holland rose to prominence. Through their study of Zeeland toll records, Filip Vermeyleen and Claartje Rasterhoff have shown that imports of luxury goods from Antwerp into the Dutch Republic increased significantly during the second half of the seventeenth century.⁴² They found that the primary destinations of consignments of paintings were Amsterdam

⁴⁰ New ordinances stipulated '[...] That the [guild] overseers go whenever they desire to register squares, streets, inns and portals and markets to check whether there are paintings that are not by master [examined] painters, which can be confirmed by the autograph they should have [...]'; Del Barrio Lorenzot, *Ordenanzas de Gremios de la Nueva España*, p. 23.

⁴¹ C. Lesger, *The rise of the Amsterdam market and information exchange. Merchants, commercial expansion and change in spatial economy of the Low Countries, c. 1550-1630*, Aldershot 2006, p. 46.

⁴² F. Vermeyleen and C. Rasterhoff, 'The Zeeland connection. The art trade between the Northern and Southern Netherlands during the seventeenth century', in: De Marchi and Van Miegroet, *Moving pictures* (n. 21), p. 123-150.

(24 per cent), Middelburg (23 per cent), and Rotterdam (17 per cent), with very small consignments to Delft, The Hague, Haarlem and other cities in Holland.⁴³ Given the relatively small sizes of the local art markets in Middelburg and Rotterdam, and the fact that studies of Amsterdam household inventories have shown locally-produced paintings dominated the market, the authors propose that other factors beyond the local demand for paintings from the Southern Netherlands help explain the observed distribution of paintings across years and Dutch destinations. Vermeylen and Rasterhoff propose that a considerable percentage of painting imports were intended for transit to other parts in Europe. My findings from the Forchondt case provide evidence for transshipments to the Iberian Peninsula, and demonstrate that the Southern and Northern Netherlands together provided an infrastructure that integrated the production, distribution and financial aspects of this dealer's long-distance art trade venture.

Figure 7 maps the main trade routes Forchondt used for his shipments of paintings from Antwerp to foreign markets (diagram a) (fig. 7).⁴⁴ When intermediate ports are known, these are included as nodes between origin and destination cities. The thickness of the edges or lines that connect two locations represent the volume of paintings sent through that particular route. As already seen above, shipments to the Iberian Peninsula concentrate 33 per cent of the exports. Ghent, Bruges, Ostend, Dunkirk, Middelburg, Rotterdam and Amsterdam functioned as the main intermediate ports for these shipments (diagram b).

Before 1671, the main route to Spain was via Ghent, Bruges and Ostend or Dunkirk. From Antwerp shipments arrived to Peter Lams in Dunkirk or to his employee Reinier Martiny in Ostend, often passing through Philip Blancquart or Jan van Wambeke in Bruges, who were also under employment of Lams. From either Dunkirk or Ostend cargoes sailed to Cadiz and Seville.⁴⁵ In 1662 Dunkirk became French possession, and the alternate route to Spain through the Northern Netherlands became increasingly more frequent. The Anglo-Dutch Wars between 1652 and 1674 also played a role in these developments since they affected the safety in the North Sea as England allied with Spain's enemies during this period.⁴⁶ Jacques Hoys (or Hoeyes) in Ostend continued to link Forchondt in Antwerp and his contacts in Spain, though much less

⁴³ Ibidem, p. 132-137.

⁴⁴ Network maps produced with Gephi, an interactive visualization and exploration platform for networks and complex systems (gephi.org). Source: SAA, *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, IB1043-1047, IB 1082-1083 and IB1103.

⁴⁵ See for example the shipments to Sebastian Fackx in Seville between 1652 and 1654; SAA, *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, IB1109, under 'Blancquaert, Philipe' (1652), 'Lams, Pieter' (1652), 'Martin, Reinigier' (1653) and 'Wambeke, Jan van' (1653-1654).

⁴⁶ The literature on the Spanish economy and trade is extensive, and points to the fact that the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 between Spain and the Dutch Republic in fact reinstated the role of the Dutch in Spanish trade, and that the Anglo-Dutch Wars further complicated Spain's stormy relationship with England; A. Alloza Aparicio, *Europa en el mercado español. Mercaderes, represalias y contrabando en el siglo XVII*, Valladolid 2006.

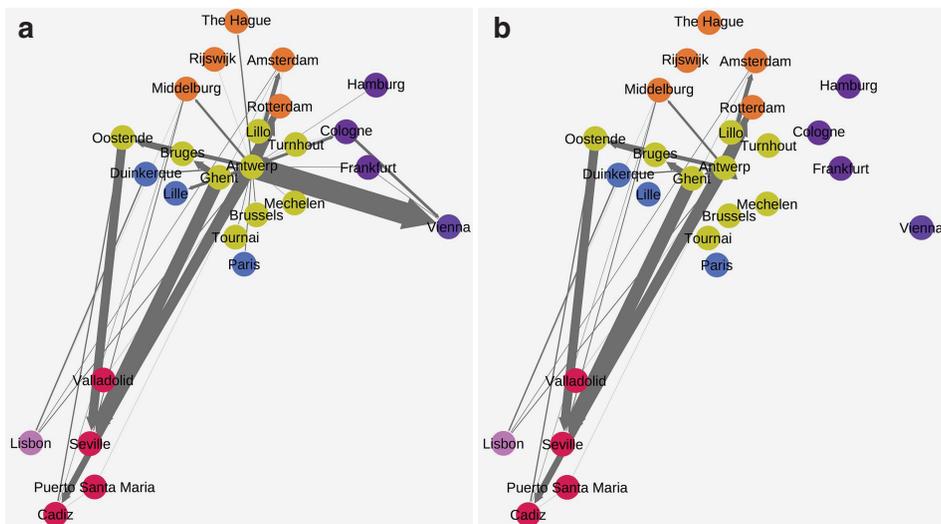


Fig. 7 Network map of intermediate and end destinations of Forchondt's sales of paintings, 1643–1678. Diagram a shows all sales, while diagram b highlights sales to the Iberian Peninsula only and their route through intermediate cities and ports.

frequently than before.⁴⁷ This meant that Middelburg, Rotterdam and Amsterdam acquired a growing significance in the shipping route to Spain. In fact, for the period between 1669 and 1675, the widow of Justo Nacquens in Middelburg managed a network of shipping agents that via Zeeland connected Forchondt in Antwerp to his business contacts in Portugal and Spain.⁴⁸ However, the shift to Dutch ports for the transshipment of cargoes to Spain became established when Forchondt's son Justo settled in Cadiz in 1671 to manage the family's business with Spain and the Americas since all cargoes Forchondt sent to Cadiz went through Domenico Rosmale in Rotterdam.⁴⁹ After Forchondt's death in 1678 his widow Maria Lemmens continued to engage agents stationed in Amsterdam for the shipments she sent to her sons Justo and Guilielmo in Cadiz through Dutch ports.⁵⁰

Furthermore, during the period I analyse, Amsterdam played a vital role in Forchondt's commercial network and therefore in his international art trading business. This city housed merchants with links to Spain who acted as intermediaries between Spanish clients and Forchondt. For instance, in 1651 Forchondt sent 384 paintings valued at 2,446.2 guilders to Alonso Guerrero in Amsterdam, paintings that Guerrero had requested on the basis of what potential clients in Spain had communicated to

⁴⁷ SAA, *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, IB1109, under 'Hoeys, Jacques' (1672).

⁴⁸ SAA, *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, IB1109, under 'Nacquens, Justo (weduwe)' (1669–1675).

⁴⁹ SAA, *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, IB1092, under 'Rosmale, Domenico' (1671).

⁵⁰ For example, C. Meschman, G. Raas and T. Claesen in Amsterdam; SAA, *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, IB1109, under 'Mesckman, C.' (1681–1683), 'Raas, Gerard A.' (1677), 'Reael, Cornelis' (1677–1684).

him. He arranged for their transport to the Peninsula via Rotterdam.⁵¹ In addition, Forchondt traded with merchants in Amsterdam active in the commodities trade. Such was Joachim Boncius, who purchased 156 *waterverf* paintings in 1652, undoubtedly for resale.⁵² The purchase was not satisfactory to Boncius and he refused to pay. To collect his payment, Forchondt enlisted the help of Francisco Ballinque and of Francisco Boureye, apparently just arrived in Amsterdam.⁵³ Boureye would later be sent to Seville under the employment of another merchant, Jan Bollaert, who headed an important commercial operation between Antwerp and the Iberian Peninsula geared towards the American markets, and was Forchondt's main buyer of paintings in Seville.⁵⁴

The relationship with Forchondt and commercial intermediaries stationed in the Dutch Republic illustrate another aspect that connected Antwerp, Amsterdam, the Iberian Peninsula and the Americas. American products arrived in Amsterdam, from where Dutch merchants distributed them throughout Europe, including Antwerp. As already mentioned, Nacquens & Cia from Middelburg arranged Forchondt's shipments to Lisbon and to the south of Spain, for instance the paintings shipped to Cadiz to the transatlantic traveling merchant Antonio Rodriguez Cortes, who in turn sent them to his business contacts in New Spain in 1672.⁵⁵ They also arranged for the return cargoes to Amsterdam of American cochineal (the prized animal red dye from Mexico and Central America), tobacco and cacao – all of which Rodriguez Cortés brought back from the Indies in very large quantities – and sugar that Joan Maria Pollet sent from Lisbon.⁵⁶

Amsterdam's role in trading in New World products also meant that it was a centre of finance.⁵⁷ The correspondence between Isaac de Bie in Amsterdam and Forchondt in Antwerp illustrates that Forchondt relied on trustworthy agents to make and collect

51 SAA, *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, 1B1043, fol. 33v-34r, 38v-39r, 52v-53r; and 1B1089, letter of Alonso Guerrero to Guilliam Forchondt of January 24, 1651.

52 SAA, *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, 1B1043, fol. s 81v-82; 1B1085, letter from Joachim Boncius to Guilliam Forchondt of 1652.

53 SAA, *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, 1B1085, letter from Francisco Boureye in Amsterdam to Guilliam Forchondt, 13 May 1652.

54 Van Ginhoven, 'Exports of Flemish Imagery to the New World' (n. 23), p. 129-133.

55 SAA, *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, 1B1065 (loose folio), letter of 12 January 1672 to Antonio Rodriguez Cortes.

56 The return cargoes from New Spain to Cadiz and Puerto de Santa María that Antonio Rodriguez Cortés loaded on several of the ships of the fleet in 1671 show he primarily dealt in añil (the American indigo), cochineal, sugar, tobacco and cacao; Seville, Archivo General del Indias (AGI), *Contratación*, 676B, *Papeles de carga*, no. 5 (1670-1679).

57 For research on the involvement of merchants and firms from the Southern Netherlands and their Amsterdam counterparts in the trade with Peninsular and American products, see E. Stols, *De Spaanse Brabanders of de handelsbetrekkingen der zuidelijke Nederlanden met de Iberische wereld, 1598-1648*, Brussel 1971; J. Everaert, *De internationale en koloniale handel der Vlaamse firma's te Cadiz 1670-1700*, Brugge 1973; A. Crespo Solana, 'Las comunidades mercantiles y el mantenimiento de los sistemas comerciales de España, Flandes y la República Holandesa, 1648-1750', in: M. Herrero Sánchez and A. Crespo Solana (eds.), *España y las 17 provincias de los Países Bajos. Una revisión historiográfica (XVI-XVIII)*, vol. 2, Córdoba 2002, p. 443-468; A. Crespo Solana, *Mercaderes atlánticos. Redes del comercio flamenco y holandés entre Europa y el Caribe*, Córdoba 2009.

payments, and to acquire raw materials to his best advantage. De Bie arranged shipments of tortoise shell to Forchondt, necessary for the luxurious cabinets he produced in his workshop, and advised him on the current prices of indigo and cochineal, all New World products. De Bie also served as financial intermediary between the above-mentioned Joan Maria Pollet and Forchondt, and negotiated Forchondt's bills of exchange in the Amsterdam Exchange, in one occasion reporting a satisfactory business with Lucas Schoren, 'een principaal coopman hier van de beurs'.⁵⁸ Consequently, trading in artworks was inextricably linked to the larger commercial activity concentrated in global financial and information centres such as Amsterdam in the seventeenth century.

Final remarks

Forchondt's preserved archival documents in Antwerp are unique sources that allow for reconstructing, as much as possible, the activities of an art dealer operating on an international level and on a large scale. Studying and analysing his business documentation in the aggregate helps us expand our knowledge of the role art dealers played in the city's artistic landscape, in particular their relationship to local painting workshops. Forchondt sold close to 13,000 paintings throughout his 35 years of activity, fuelling the production of paintings on copper and watercolour paintings on linen (*waterverven*) in Antwerp and Mechelen. Forchondt's written and visual sources also reveal artistic and commercial relationships that stretched to other cities in the Dutch Republic, France, Central Europe, Spain and Latin America, and their relevance for painting production in Antwerp and Mechelen. The impact of the paintings exported outside the Southern Netherlands is to be gauged not only by the volumes identified, but also because it was a production that responded very precisely to what buyers wanted. In other words, Forchondt received very detailed information about what sold where, and that was key information at the stages of design and production of imagery in Antwerp and Mechelen. His knowledge about buyers and their preferences assured a future market for an on-going painting production. I have outlined the types of paintings exported to the different markets across Europe, focusing on Spain and the Americas. This led me to identify some developments across art markets interconnected through the mediating role of art dealers. Forchondt's participation in and contribution to the wide dissemination of imagery from the Southern Netherlands in the Iberian Peninsula and the Americas relied on his commercial and information network. In this, the Northern Netherlands provided the necessary shipping and financial infrastructure that assured the longevity of Forchondt's art trade with the Spanish-speaking world.

⁵⁸ SAA, *Insolvente Boedelkamer*, 1B1085, letter from Isaac de Bie in Amsterdam to Guiliam Forchondt, 5 April 1675.