Cornelis Willemsz. and Geertgen tot Sint Jans

The identification of a Haarlem painter and his relation to Geertgen tot Sint Jans and the Haarlem convent of the Johannites.

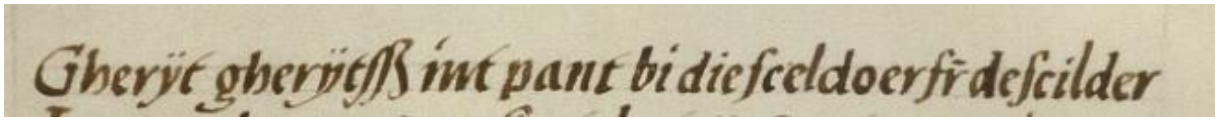

Fig. 1) Geertgen tot Sint Jans, *Liber memoriarum domus hospitalis S. Joannis Hierosolimitani in Haerle (m)*, 1570, 35 verso, NL-HImNHA_2123_359. Haarlem: Noord-Hollands Archief.

Fig. 2) Cornelis Willemsz., *Liber memoriarum domus hospitalis S. Joannis Hierosolimitani in Haerle (m)*, 1570, 42 verso, NL-HImNHA_2123_359. Haarlem: Noord-Hollands Archief.

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Introduction

The Johannite convent of the Knightly Order of the Sint Jans in Haarlem is well-known for its relation to the painter Geertgen tot Sint Jans. This early Netherlandish painter is buried in the convent, which is also known as the *Jansklooster*, and painted at least two fascinating panels now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (fig. 3, 4). Based on stylistic criteria, an oeuvre is attributed to Geertgen tot Sint Jans. However, his oeuvre is highly problematic and therefore, a consensus has never been reached. In the last century, a lot of research has been done on Geertgen tot Sint Jans, his painted oeuvre and his life in the convent. Although this Haarlem painter has been central to art historians working on Netherlandish painting, a lot of questions remain unanswered. For example, it remains uncertain *how* Geertgen tot Sint Jans was connected to the convent. Additionally, the question of if Geertgen tot Sint Jans had a workshop with assistants is central to recent art historical literature.[1]

In the art historical literature, the relation between Geertgen tot Sint Jans and his contemporaries is not discussed in depth. It is an inconvenient fact that hardly any archival sources relevant to Geertgen are known. It is partly because of this lack of new archival evidence that the discussion on the painter is broadly concerned with the same views and conceptions. A new relevant archival source could thus provide new insights. Central to this thesis is such a source. This source sheds new light on Geertgen tot Sint Jans, but more importantly, on a painter that seems to be more closely connected to Geertgen and the convent then could previously be assumed. The source is the *Liber memoriarum domus hospitalis S. Joannis Hierosolimitani in Haerle (m)*, better known in Dutch as the *memorieboek*, which is translated and referred to hereafter as the memorial book. In this memorial book, the names of the people who are buried in the church, convent and grounds of the Haarlem Johannites are written down.

In the memorial book, there is a presumed reference to the painter Geertgen tot Sint Jans: "Gheryt gherytsz in the pant by the door frater and painter" (fig. 1).[2] This reference is used by art historians to confirm that Geertgen is buried in the convent. But this memorial book is not used to its fullest extent in art historical research. The book was only discovered in the nineteenth century and was not accessible for research for a long time. Now, due to the digitalization of archives, the book is easily accessible online.

Geertgen tot Sint Jans is one of the many names in the 146 paged folio book. But apart from Geertgen tot Sint Jans, a different painter is also referenced: "Cornelis Willemsz. frater

[1] See Faries; Murphy.
[2] All the translations are by the author. "Gheryt gherytsz int pant bi die sceldoer fr de scilder."

and painter[,] that third grave in the third row in *wtlaet* by the pillars" (fig. 2).[3] The recording of a second painter in the book has not been noticed by many. Only the art historian Truus van Bueren and the historian Wim Cerutti do mention, albeit briefly, that a second painter is buried in the convent. However, the finding does not fit the scope of their research and therefore, they fail to see the art historical importance of this finding. It seems that both Van Bueren and Cerutti were not aware of the existing body of literature on Cornelis Willemsz. and the several archival sources in which a similarly named painter is mentioned.

Who is this painter Cornelis Willemsz. referred to in the memorial book and buried in the convent of the Haarlem Johannites? This will be the central question of this research. One of the goals of this research is to see how this finding relates to the literature and archival sources on the similarly named painter. In addition to this, all of the archival sources that have been connected to Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz. will be inventoried. By doing this, it will become possible to see how these two Haarlem painters are related to each other. Did they live in the same period? Did they possibly knew each other? Did they work together? Or, perhaps more importantly, was one the master of the other?

The aim of this research is to understand the reference to Cornelis Willemsz. in the memorial book, and, by doing this, to shed new light on Geertgen tot Sint Jans. In the first part of this thesis, both Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz. will be studied in relation to their connection to the convent. An important question is *how* they were connected to the convent. Additionally, what does it mean to be a frater and a painter in the convent? In the second part of this thesis, the focus will shift to Cornelis Willemsz. and his attributed oeuvre. Questions of attribution will take the forefront, instigating a discussion on how his work relates to the oeuvre of Geertgen tot Sint Jans. And which new insights can be offered through the finding of his name in the memorial book?

In order to answer these questions, different art historical sources and methods will be used. Firstly, there are the archival sources. These contain entries that are contemporary to Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz. and serve as a base and starting point. Subsequently the painters will be treated in their art historical context through research from the twentieth and twenty-first century. By placing the painters in a this context, and thus questioning long standing views grounded in the historical source material, new conclusions can be drawn, in part by leveraging less widely used source material and stylistic research.

[3] "Cornelis Willemsz fr die schilder dat 3 graf in die 3 regel int wtlaet an die pilaern"

The Knightly Order of the Sint Jans in Haarlem

The Knightly Order of the Sint Jans has a long history, starting just before the First Crusade (1096-1099). The primary task of Sint Jans Order, also known as the Johannite Order, was to shelter and nurse pilgrims. In 1099, the order gained a knightly class to defend to Kingdom of Jerusalem along with the crusaders. The order first established its headquarter at Rhodes in 1310. After being driven away by the Mohammedans they moved to Malta in 1530. Through the centuries, the Knightly Order of the Sint Jans spread throughout Europe. Although the primary task of the order was to help the poor and needy, the daily management of the order was primarily focussed on property. The order gained property through donations. The daily management was conducted by the commander of the *commanderijen*. A nursery and convent were often connected to a commenderij, of which the Catharijneconvent in Utrecht is an example. Most of the commanderijen located in the Netherlands were united in the *balije van Utrecht*, which stood under the authority of the great priorate of Germany.[4]

The convent in Haarlem, in which Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz. are buried, was founded in 1310 when Gerard van Tetterode donated several houses in Haarlem to the balije van Utrecht. Van Tetterode donated these houses so that an *oratorium et cymeterium* could be established.[5] He ordered the first commander, brother Arend, to employ religious "brothers, sisters and others of which he thinks that are fitted for the house".[6] The first monks arrived on July, 21st of that year. The most important tasks of the Johannites were the daily prayers and the daily masses. They probably first built a chapel in one of the houses of Van Tetterode. In 1316, the main residential building was finished. The commander lived in this building. The church was finished in 1318 and consisted of three parts: a nave with a straight rood screen, an aisle of 3,75 meters wide over four bays and, as an extension to the four bays, a fifth bay with a sacristy. In the northern wall there were probably three entrances to the convent.[7]

Up until the late fourteenth century, the convent was not an independent commanderij and remained part of the balije van Utrecht. This meant that the management of property and donations to the convent was being controlled by the balijer van Utrecht. Furthermore, new monks had to be accepted through the balijer as well. Due to disagreements between the commander of the Haarlem convent, Willen van Schoten, and Rutger Pauwelsz., the balijer of

[4] Van Bueren, *Macht en Onderhorigheid*, 13-14.
[5] Cerutti, 79.
[6] Van Bueren, *Macht en Onderhorigheid*, 14: "broederen sustere ende ander gehsin alse hem doncket da tons ende den huus orbaerlijc es".
[7] Cerutti, 79-86.

Utrecht, the convent of the Johannites in Haarlem was officially made independent on the 10th of March in 1399. Payments to the order and the intake of new monks was still controlled by the balije van Utrecht until 1469, at which point the convent completely freed itself from Utrecht, only having to report to the great priorate of Germany. The commander of the Haarlem convent now found himself in a powerful position that was similar to the balijer van Utrecht. By this time, the convent had grown to be an important and well-known institute and served as accommodation for visiting counts and clergymen from across Holland.[8]

Relevant to the life of Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz. is the period stretching from the mid-fifteenth century to the mid-sixteenth century. There are a handful useful sources that shed light on the physical appearance and lay-out of the convent. In the collection of the Noord-Hollands Archief, there is a map of Haarlem dating from 1560. This map, drawn by Jacob van Deventer (1501/02 – 1575), shows the town of Haarlem (fig. 5, 6). On this map we see the church and the quest house. Secondly, there is an interesting drawing made by Timan van Wou, who was the commander of the convent. Around 1570 he drew a map of the convent (fig. 7). These maps make it apparent how spacious the convent was. Furthermore, it shows that the convent of 1570 had a small amount of additional buildings that were probably used for the brewing of beer and forging.[9] The guesthouse should be seen as a retirement house and a nursery and was presumably only inhabited by woman. A contemporary photograph from the city of Haarlem shows how big the terrain of the convent actually was (fig. 8).

[8] Van Bueren, *Macht en Onderhorigheid*, 14-16.
[9] Both brewers and forgers are mentioned multiple times in the memorial book.

The meaning of the word 'frater'

Within the convent there were different categories of members. The oldest category was that of the knights. However, this was an category that did not exist in almost the entirety of the Netherlands, only the order in Arnhem was truly a 'knightly-order'. The second category was that of the priests. These members, according to Cerutti, are indicated as 'frater ordinis': friar of the order. These members were consecrated priests. The third category was that of the serving brothers. Unlike the priests, these members were not consecrated. The serving brothers helped with the care for the sick and poor, as well with the household. According to Cerruti, there were few serving brothers.[10] The fourth, and largest, category of members concerns the 'associated members'. As Cerutti notes, one of the formulas for the success of the order was allowing laymen, individuals as well as married couples to become supporting members of the order. Supporting members would officially bind themselves to a house of the order and would promise to protect the order and make donations. Supporting members could even be buried in the church. Associated members are indicated as 'frater', 'soror', 'confrater' or 'consoror'. Then, there was a fifth category, which has led to a small art-historical debate on its own.[11] This is the category of the 'paying guests'. In exchange for payment to the order, these guests received a bedded room in the order. Only four persons are known that were paying guests. These are: Dirk Oloud[12], Willem Viviensz. van Schagen[13], Reyer Jansz[14], and Jacob Cornelisz.[15] Both Willem Viviensz. van Schagen and Reyer Jansz left the convent in 1486 and received back a part of their inlay. From the sixteenth century onwards, no paying guests are mentioned.

In the memorieboek of the convent, these categories can be partly confirmed. A problem is that in a lot of cases, it is not clear to which category someone belongs. The reason is that both laymen, serving brothers and priests are called 'frater'. However, priests are often clarified by an additional title, such as 'ordinis', 'ordinis et pastor' and 'ordinis et prior' (fig, 9, 10 ,11 ,12). Laymen, on the other hand, seem to be referred to as frater without an additional title (fig, 13 ,14). This idea is further strengthened by the fact that married couples mentioned in the memorieboek are also mentioned as frater (fig. 15).

The most important activity in the convent is the liturgy. The liturgy dictated the lives

[10] Cerruti, 145.
[11] In 1980 Chatelet proposed that Geertgen tot Sint Jans joined the convent as a paying guest. His argumentation was rejected by Bruyn in 2009.
[12] Signed a contract in 1342.
[13] Signed a contract in 1476 and renewed it in 1483.
[14] Signed a contract in 1483.
[15] Placed in the convent in 1477 by Maria van Burgundy.

of the friars and consisted of five pillars; the holy mass, the office, the liturgical calendar, the liturgy around death and burial and the reading of the bible. The liturgy around death in particular is relevant for this research. This relates of course to the memorial book, that served as a guideline for the memorial services. At the memorial services the deceased were commemorated. For the service it was of importance to know when (in which month) the person died and where he or she is buried. These details are written down in the memorial book. The 'original' memorial book of the Haarlem convent has been lost. However, a copy made in 1570 still exists and is now in the Noord-Hollands Archief in Haarlem. It is presumed to be a copy because names of persons from the establishment of the convent are present.[16] The book does not have a chronological grouping based on subsequent years, but is divided in the twelfth months of the year. This reason is quite practical: it was only necessary for the service to know in which month the person died, because this was the month in which he or she had to be commemorated. Due to this idiosyncrasy, it is almost impossible to determine the exact year of death for any of the persons listed. Almost all the persons are notated according to a standard format: name, function / category and place of burial. The place of burial was important because it was there that the mis was held. Only in a few cases the year of death is added.

In this chapter, the problematic aspects of the word 'frater' have already been mentioned. This word seems to have no single and clear definition in the context of the convent. Priests, serving brothers and members are described with this word. Because of this, it is difficult to establish what it means for the understanding of Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz. that they too are referred to as 'frater'. In relation to Geertgen tot Sint Jans, this question has already been touched upon. For example, Albert Châtelet argued that Geertgen was connected to the convent as a paying guest.[17] Critique has come from J. Bruyn who stated that there is no convincing reason to assume that Geertgen came from a wealthy family or had other means to pay for his stay in the convent.[18]

In the next chapter a new approach will be used in order to provide answers on the meaning of the word frater.

[16] Cerruti, 105.
[17] Chatelet, 93.
[18] Bruyn, "Een gedachtenisvenster", 84.

Craftsmen in the convent

In art historical literature, it has never been questioned how Geertgen tot Sint Jans (and also Cornelis Willemsz.) relates to the other craftsmen listed in the memorial book. By discovering how other craftsmen were connected to the Haarlem convent and how they are recorded in the memorial book, new insights can be gained on the relation of Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz. to the convent. In the memorial book, eighteen different crafts can be distinguished. The word 'crafts' in this thesis is used as a broad overarching term which signifies all the persons who make a physical object. Thus, they are makers in the broad sense of the word. The different crafts noted in the memorial book are as follows. In italics the original word is written, followed by the translation between brackets and the number of craftsmen between parentheses:

> *sceepmaker* / *scepmaker* [Ship builder] (9); *brouwer* [brewer] (6); *caersemaker* [candle maker] (1); *glasemaker* [glass maker] (2); *oerghelmaker* [organ builder] (1); *messemaker* [knife maker] (1); *smit* [smith] (6); *scoemaker* [shoe maker] (2); *boecmaker* [bookbinder] (1); *backer* [baker] (2); *molenaer* [miller] (4); *timmerman* [carpenter] (1); *wielmaker* [wheel maker] (1); *wantsnider* [wall cutter] (2); *snyder* [cutter] (2); *scilder* [painter] (2); *slotemaker* [locksmith] (1); *scomaker* [shoe maker?] (1).

A total of forty-six craftsman are listed in the memorial book. Notably, shipwrights make up the biggest group. It is not likely that all these shipwrights worked for the convent. This is because the convent had basically no work outside Haarlem, let alone overseas. The shipwrights, for instance, could have belonged to the category of wealthy patrons who donated to the convent in order to obtain the right to be buried in the convent. But more important is the fact that for all the other craftsmen, it can be argued that they worked for the convent. They all provide services or goods that were necessary for the upkeep of the convent. The map of the convent drawn by Timan van Wou further validates this idea. His map depicts a number of buildings on the eastside of the property which likely housed craftsmen. Presumably, the craftsmen lived and worked in these buildings. Through this construction there was a separation possible between the clergymen and serving brothers. The clergymen were able to live withdrawn in the convent, whereas the serving brothers and craftsmen lived in the east side buildings. Although most of the references to crafts are easy to decipher, it is somewhat difficult with 'scomaker'. This most likely refers to the *schoenmaker*, the shoemaker.

To return to Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz. then, who are not only categorized as craftsmen, but also as fraters. How many of the above stated craftsmen are referred to as fraters? Of the forty-six craftsmen mentioned next to Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz., five others are referred to as fraters. Now follows an overview of the crafts which contains persons who were connected to the Haarlem convent as a frater, and between parenthesis the quantity within that category:

Candle maker (1 out of 1); glass maker (2 out of 2); smith (1 out of 6); painter (2 out of 2); shoe maker (1 out of 3).

It thus seems that all of the candle makers, glass makers and painters are connected to the convent as a frater. Furthermore, none of the shipwrights are known as frater. This enhances the idea that the shipwrights did not work for the convent but made donations to support the convent. Next to this, only one of the six smiths was a frater to the convent. For each craftsman that is indicated as a frater, it could be argued that they provided their services for the convent.

Remarkable is the way Geertgen tot Sint Jans is referred to. Instead of following the standard dictum of name, function and place of burial, the entry for Geertgen follows a different format: name, place of burial and function. No other entry in the memorial book follows this sequence. Another remarkable fact is that neither commander Jan Willem Jans or Van Sane were mentioned as being a frater. It was thus possible to be connected to the convent without being named frater. These two observations are beyond the scope of this research, but are exhibited here in order to stimulate further research.

Although it remains impossible to give a final and all including answer on the question what it means to be connected as a frater to the Haarlem convent, it seems that the word has a special connotation. Therefore, is should be assumed that when this term is used, a specific connection is meant. The majority of the persons who are recorded in the memorial book do not have the word frater attached to them. Of this group, the larger part seems to be made up of associated members, laymen who donated to support the convent and to gain the right to be buried in the convent. These members were not involved with the convent on a daily basis and probably lived and worked in the city of Haarlem. The group of craftsmen may not all have lived and worked in the convent. Based on the analysis of the memorial book, the following can be stated: the fact that both Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz. are recorded in the memorial book as frater has a specific meaning. The word frater suggests that the person was closely connected to the convent and worked and lived in the convent. The fact that not

all the smiths are referred to as a frater contributes to this idea. The smith that is named frater lived in and worked for the convent – the other smiths lived in the city and conducted their business there. Following this line of thought, it can be concluded that the candle maker, the glass makers, shoe maker and painters all lived in the convent. This means that both Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz. were living in the convent. Another source that enhances this conclusion is the biography on Geertgen tot Sint Jans written by Karel van Mander (1548 - 1606). He writes that: "Geertgen tot Sint Jans lived at the S. Ians Heeren in Haarlem, of which his name derives: but he did not join the order".[19] What it means that Geertgen did not join the order remains uncertain and is beyond the scope of this research.

Thus, Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz. belonged to a group of serving brothers consisting of a broad variety of persons. It is possible that they lived in the buildings occupying the east side of the complex. It is also here that they might have painted. But whether they had their own atelier there or had to share a space with the other craftsmen remains unclear.

[19] "Gheertgen woonde tot den S. Ians Heeren te Haerlem, waer naer hy den naem behiel: doch en hadde den orden niet aenghenomen" in: Karel van Mander, fol. 206 recto.

Archival sources regarding the Haarlem painters

After having established the meaning of the word frater, the biographical information will now be discussed in order to better understand their lives in the convent. Knowing that Geertgen is buried alongside another painter opens up new vistas to study the convent and Geertgen tot Sint Jans. Both Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz. are mentioned in archival sources dating from the late fifteenth century to the sixteenth century. A large part of the entries has already been incorporated into the art historical literature, but some controversial entries have escaped art historical debate. As such, this and the next chapter has two aims: 1) to give a clear overview of the available archival sources on the two painters and 2) to discuss the more controversial and problematic entries.

Most of the archival sources have been published by Adriaan van der Willigen (1810-1876) in *Geschiedkundige aanteekeningen over Haarlemsche schilders en andere beoefenaren van Beeldende Kunsten, voorafgaande door eene korte geschiedenis van het Schilders- of St. Lucas Gild aldaar* in 1866. In this book, Van der Willigen published all the relevant sources regarding payments to artists by the Haarlem churches, administrative bodies and citizens. The first source of importance regarding the two painters are the accounts of the burgomasters of Haarlem. Payments to goldsmiths, sculptors and painters are recorded, including payments made to Cornelis Willemsz.:

"1481. Cornelis Willemsz., painter, from his loan he made that holy cross hanging outside the Cruysport XV st. ft. xx s. (See on him v. Mander)".[20]; "1482. Cornelis the painter (probably the same as Cornelis Willemsz.) of six shields with the coats of arms of the men of Egmondt made for the funeral. Together xviii st. ft. xviii. st".[21]; "1523. Cornelis Willemsz. (see 1482). Painter of xx arms of the men of Van Wassenaer, painted by him and his assistants in a hurry by night, that are hanging on the *thoirssen* and on the black sheets hanged in the choir. Payment III L. V.".[22]

The second source that is of importance, is the registers concerning transport in Haarlem. These are available from 1489 and contain information on goldsmiths, sculptors and painters:

[20] "1481. A *Cornelis Willemsz.*, schilder van zijn loon dat hij gemaiet heeft dat heylige cruis hangende buyten an die Cruyspoorte XV st. ft. xx s. (Zie over hem v. Mander)." in: Van der Willigen, 38.

[21] "1482. *Cornelis* de schilder(waarschijnlijk dezelfde als Cornelis Willemsz.) van zesse schilden die hy gemaict heeft mitter wapens van myne heren van Egmondt voirs als die wtvaert gedaen worden. 't Same xviii st. ft. xviii st." in: Van der Willigen, 39.

[22] "1523. Cornelis Willemsz. (zie ao. 1482). Schilder van xx wapen van de voirs. hee. Van Wassenaer by hem en syn hulpers haestich by nachte gemaict die an de thoirssen en an de swarte lakenen hangende om 't choore gespelt waren bet. III L. V." in: Van der Willigen, 40.

“1515. (July). Cornelis Willemsz. Painter owes money to Ariaan Symonsz., metselaar. 24 Rhenish guilders”.[23]; “[1536] (April) Cornelis Willemsz. sells a house in the Zijlstraat”[24]; “[1540] Cornelis Willemsz., painter, as executor of the will of the deceased Pieter Geryts, painter, sells a house in the Barteljorrisstraat.”[25]

The third source is the registers from the St. Bavo cathedral in Haarlem. The registers start from the year 1400 and contain references to painters that have been or could be connected to Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz.:

“1498. Item father Gherritsz., painter of two *winen* in which he made four *pareken* for which he got 5 Rhenish guilder and a brass penning.”[26]; and in 1517 is recorded: “Item Ghaerhant the painter in the Kroesstraat and is buried in St. Jans, on him is sounded the bell Maeri”[27]; “1500. Item father Willemsz., painter shall paint us het vault [wuft] in the church with flowers and gold for which he will earn 21 Rhenis guilders”[28]; “1529. Item Cornelis Willemsz. painter received 6 Rhenish guilders on Pentecost evening for marbling [*marmeren*] the choir.”[29]

The last source that Van der Willigen mentions in which Cornelis Willemsz. is recorded, is the notes on inheritance taxes from the years 1511 – 1569. In 1540, Cornelis Willemsz. is referred to as the heir of the painter Pieter Gerritszoon. In the following year, Cornelis Willemsz. inherits 249 livres and 15 escarlins from Pieter Gerritszoon. And in “1552. Van Cornelis Willemsz. painter. Receives IIII L as joint heir of Pieter Frans.”[30]

Next to these Haarlem sources there is a register from the Abbey of Egmond in which an entry is made that has been related to the painter Cornelis Willemsz. “De tabula aposotlorum ad computum”, an apostle’s altar, made by “Cornelio”. This Cornelio has been identified with

[23] “1515. (July). Cornelis Willemsz. scilder sijt sculdig te wezen aan Adriaan Symonsz. Metselaar. 24 Rijnsg.” in: van der Willigen, 44.
[24] “(April) Cornelis Willemsz. scilder verkoopt een huis in de Zijlstraat.” in: Van der Willigen, 44.
[25] “Cornelis Willemsz. schilder, als executeur van het testament van wijlen Pieter Geryts scilder verkoopt een huis in de Barteljorisstraat.” in: Van der Willigen, 45.
[26] “1498. Item pater Gherritsz. scilder ghegeven van twee winen daerin te maken vier pareken daer over ghegeven iiiii r. guld. en ee braspenning.” in: Van der Willigen, 51.
[27] 1517 “item Ghaerhant die schilder in de kroesstraat is begraven tot Sient Jans, oever hem gheloet Maeri.” in: Van der Willigen, 54.
[28] “1500. Item pater Willemsz. scilder sal ons voerwen het wuift mits in die kerc met bloem ende oock goud legghen daer te doen heft, ende hy sal ons wel maken daervoer sal hy hebben voer syn aerbeyt ende voer sin voerz. Toesegghe van Dirc Jacopsz. En joest ende sal ons alle die sloetstien verwen ende goud legghen daert van moet wesen ende were eysken sal, dyer voer is hem toegezeyt by dieselpve xxi r. guld. des zoe sullen wy gout betalen.” in: Van der Willigen, 52.
[29] “1529. Item Cornelis Willemsz. schilder hadde ontfanghen van dat marmere in ’t choor op rekeninghe vi r. gl. Hem noch ghedaen pinxteravond xxx st.” in: Van der Willigen, 54.
[30] “1552. Van Cornelis Willemsz. schilder c. s. als mede erfgenaamvan Pieter Frans ontvangen IIII L.”

Cornelis Willemsz. because of the fact that Pieter Gerritszoon, of which Cornelis Willemsz. will become heir in 1540, brings loan for this altar to Cornelio.[31]

[31] Bruyn, "De Abdij van Egmond (I)", 157.

Remarks concerning the problematic archival sources

The sources and entries mentioned above have for the greater part been incorporated into existent art historical literature. But what has not been done before, is to approach the entries about Cornelis Willemsz. in the light of his relation to Geertgen tot Sint Jans and the convent. This approach will be central in the next chapters. At this point, it is necessary to remark on a few entries.

The entry from 1498 concerning Father Gherritsz. has never gained much attention in the art historical literature. The art historian Martin Davies refers to this entry in a footnote – but does not believe this actually refers to Geertgen tot Sint Jans.[32] The main reason for doubt is that the entry is dated three years after the presumed death of Geertgen. The presumed year of death was constructed by Max Friedländer in 1903. Friedländer argued that Geertgen must have been born around 1460/1465 and died around 1490/95.[33] Friedländer based his date on the text of Van Mander. Van Mander writes that Albert Simonsz., who was a student of Jan Mostaert (1475-1552), told him that Jan Mostaert had never known Albert van Ouwater or Geertgen tot Sint Jans. Friedländer argued that Mostaert, who was born in Haarlem, must have known Geertgen if they were actively painting around the same time. Although the legitimacy of this argumentation can be called into question,[34] it is still widely used and accepted by art historians. In the 2008 catalogue from the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen this date is expanded with a few years to 1455/65 – 1485/1495.[35]

The entry from 1517 is even more problematic, as it post-dates Geertgens death by at least 20 years. Davies also refers to this entry in the same footnote. But in 2009, this entry is used by John R. Decker to argue that Geertgen lived up until at least 1517. Decker states that Ghaerhant is a name that derives from Geertgen – and that therefore this name refers to the painter Geertgen tot Sint Jans. As a result, Decker goes on to claim that the painter Geertgen tot Sint Jans lived in a house on the Kruisstraat, a big thoroughfare in Haarlem where the Johannites possessed houses. So according to Decker, Geertgen tot Sint Jans did not live on the grounds of the convent, but instead occupied a house at the Kruisstraat.[36] To strengthen his arguments, Decker uses the engraving of Theodoor van Matham (1589 – 1676). In the first

[32] Davies, 88.
[33] Friedländer, 62-70.
[34] For example: how sure can it be stated that if Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Jan Mostaert lived and worked in the same period that they had to know about each other's existence. About Geertgens life in the convent, hardly anything substantial is known. Perhaps Geertgen lived secluded from the world and therefore contemporaries would never have been able to meet him.
[35] Lammertse, 76.
[36] Decker, 18.

half of the sixteenth century Van Matham made an engraving of Geertgens *Lamentation*. At the bottom of the engraving is a long caption in which is stated that Geertgen was connected to the convent as "servant and painter".[37] This leads Decker to the conclusion that Geertgen tot Sint Jans belonged to the category of lay brothers. From this, Decker concludes that Geertgen was not allowed to live on monastery grounds and therefore lived on the Kruisstraat where he later died in or after 1517. In a later chapter of this thesis, I will counter Decker's arguments.

Also remarkable is the fact that Cornelis Willemsz. receives a loan for his paintings. How plausible is it that a painter who is living in a convent received payment? Or are these commissioned and executed before his stay in the convent?

Father Gherritsz. and Father Willemsz.

Could it be, that the entries of Father Gherritsz. and Father Willemsz. refer to Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz. that are buried in the convent? As mentioned before, this would have great implications for the dating of Geertgen tot Sint Jans birth and death. However, it remains unclear if the words 'Father' and 'frater' are compatible. In general the term Father is used for a monk or lay brother that has become a priest. If this is the case, then these entries are not likely to refer to the two painters. They were probably not connected to a religious order and lived as craftsman on the ground of the convent. A second argument against this identification is given by Hof. Hof argues that Father Gherritsz. does not refer to Geertgen tot Sint Jans, but to Pieter Gerritsz. This is the painter of whom Cornelis Willemsz. will become heir, and the painter who presumably painted the St Bavo church (fig. 16).[38] This painting is attributed to Pieter Gerritsz., based on the accounts of the Bavo church from 1518: "The church owes Pieter Gheryts who painted the church and the tower […]".[39] However, by others this painting is attributed to Geertgen tot Sint Jans, based on the text by Van Mander: "Also of him [Geertgen tot Sint Jans] is the painting of the church, that hangs in the same church on the south side, a solid and nice painting".[40] Next to the Vienna panels, this is the only painting that Van Mander mentions in his biography of Geertgen tot Sint Jans. But the reason why this painting is a problematic attribution to Geertgen, it that the tower that is painted on the church dates from 1518, again far after his presumed death. Although it is not

[37] "Famuli ac pictor"
[38] Roosegaarde-Bisschop, 183-185.
[39] "de kerck is Pieter Gheryts schuldigh vant patroen van de kerck en van de toern […]" in: Roosegaarde-Bisschop, 183.
[40] "Noch is van hem t'Haerlem binnen de groote kerck, des selfs Kercks conterfeytsel, en hangt op de Zuydt-sijde, seer vast en aerdigh gehandelt." in: Van Mander, fol. 206 r.

possible to give a final answer on this matter, it seems to be likely that these entries refer to different painters.

Art historical literature and approaches

In the preceding chapters, the historical context is introduced and commented on. Now Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz. will be placed in an art historical context. The first art historical source for both of the painters is Karel van Mander. In his *Schilder-Boeck* from 1604, Van Mander writes on the lives of Netherlandish painters from his time and from the past. Van Manders book is extremely valuable for researching early Netherlandish painters. Through Van Manders biography on Geertgen tot Sint Jans, we know that Geertgen is responsible for the two paintings that are now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (fig. 3, 4). These panels formed one of the wings of a large altarpiece. Both the corresponding wing and the central panel were destroyed in the second half of the sixteenth century. Van Manders also writes that Geertgen lived in the Haarlem convent of the Johannites and died around the age of 28.

Unfortunately, Cornelis Willemsz. has no biography in the *Schilder-Boeck*. However, Van Mander mentions him once in the biography of Maarten van Heemskerck (1498 – 1547), stating that Maarten van Heemskerck "had his first education in the arts by one Cornelis Willemsz. who was the father of Lucas and Floris, who were both fairly good painters […]".[41]

A somewhat strange but complicated aspect in the study of Cornelis Willemsz., is the entry in Van Manders biography of a Willem Cornelisz. This Willem Cornelisz. is, according to Van Mander, the teacher of Jan van Scorel. Van Manders calls him: "Willem Cornelisz., [a] fairly good painter after such a time".[42] In art historical literature, this Willem Cornelisz. has been seen as being identical with Cornelis Willemsz. Art historians have assumed that Van Mander was confused, mixed up the two names and wrote Willem Cornelisz. instead of Cornelis Willemsz. in the biography of Jan van Scorel. This might seem strange, but this view has gained more and more ground in art historical literature. The 'mix-up' by Van Mander is introduced by Hoogewerff, and taken up by Thieme and Becker, Bruyn and Judith Niessen. They all presume that Maarten van Heemskerck and Jan van Scorel had the same teacher: Cornelis Willemsz. One of the few art historians who not follows this line of thinking is Wilhelm Valentiner, who argues that Willem Cornelisz. was indeed the teacher of Jan van Scorel. Also interesting is that Valentiner argues that Willem Cornelisz. is identical with the Master of Alkmaar.[43] The proposition by Valentiner has led to an art historical debate in

[41] "heeft zijn eerste onderwijs in de Const aenghevanghen te Haerlem, by eenen Cornelis Willemsz. wesende den Vader van Lucas en Floris, die oock beyde redelijcke goede Schilders zijn geweest […]" in: Van Mander, fol. 245 recto.
[42] "Willem Cornelisz. taemlijck Schilder nae sulcken tijdt" in: Van Mander, fol. 234 verso.
[43] Valentiner, 76.

itself.[44] The remarkable thing is that art historians not only assume that Van Mander mixed up the names, but that art historians who follow the text of Van Mander did this as well. Niessen writes in 2010: "years before, Valentiner argued, without convincing arguments, that the Master of Alkmaar was identical with Cornelis Willemsz. (active 1481 – 1552)".[45] However, if we turn to the text by Valentiner it is clear that not Cornelis Willemsz. is meant - but Willem Cornelisz.: "He is probably rightfully identified with Willem Cornelisz., the teacher of Jan van Scorel and who worked in Haarlem".[46]

Time after time, explicit or implicit, Willem Cornelisz. is driven out of the art historical field. Why do art historians doubt Van Mander? The primary reason seems to be the lack of archival sources in which Willem Cornelisz. appears. There is no Willem Cornelisz. found in the archival sources which relate to Geertgen tot Sint Jans, Cornelis Willemsz. or any other Haarlem painters. Because no Willem Cornelisz. was found in archival sources, more and more doubt was expressed to Van Manders entry on him.[47] And at the same time, works were attributed to Cornelis Willemsz., and because of this Willem Cornelisz. "fell in complete oblivion".[48] Although the primary aim of this research is not to re-introduce the painter Willem Cornelisz., it is important to make a note concerning him, because of his close and strange relation to Cornelis Willemsz. The fact that up till this date no works are attributed to Willem Cornelisz., and that his name did not feature among the sources that refer to Geertgen and Cornelis Willemsz., are not convincing evidence that Van Mander mixed up the names. Furthermore, there exists a source in which a painter called Willem Cornelissen is mentioned. This source is published by Hessel Miedema in 1991, and also published in his commented version of the *Schilder-Boeck*. In the Haarlem municipal archives, Miedema found a request made to the town council resolutions for support of old age. On July 4th, 1589 the "master Willem Cornelissen, Painter" requests support for his old age.[49]

So there is reason to assume that Cornelis Willemsz. and Willem Cornelisz. are not identical. Firstly, this is the text by Karel van Mander in which he writes down two different names. Furthermore, these names are derived from their fathers' last names. One of them was

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[44] This discussions centres around an note from Anton Buchelius (1565 – 1641). Buchelius writes around 1585-95, that Jan van Scorel received his first education from Cornelis Buys. Friedländer argues that Van Scorel might have been a student of Cornelis Buys *and* Willem Cornelisz. Also Hoogewerff wrote on this complex matter, and argued that Willem Cornelisz. never existed.

[45] "Eerder meende Valentiner, zonder steekhoudende bewijsvoering, de Meester van Alkmaar te kunnen identificeren met Cornelis Willemsz. (actief 1481 – 1552)" in: Niessen, 263.

[46] "Er ist wahrscheinlich mit Recht mit Willem Cornelisz, dem Lehrer des Jan Scoorel, identifiziert worden und war in Haarlem tätig" in: Valentiner, 76.

[47] Miedema, "Over de betrouwbaarheid van Karel van Mander", 269.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Miedema / Van Mander, *The lives of the illustrious Netherlandish and German painters,* 273: footnote 33.

the son of Willem (Cornelis Willemsz.) and the other was the son of Cornelis (Willem Cornelisz.). How likely is it, that this kind of information is mixed up by Van Mander? As stated earlier, the only reason why art historians assume this is because Willem Cornelisz. does not seem to exist in archival sources. Therefore, the request for support by the painter Willem Cornelissen is more than welcome. Next to this, it should be stated that if a name is not found in archival sources, it does not mean that this person never existed. Many archives have been lost, not studied yet and some people have simply never been registered. For the time being, Van Mander's presumed mixing up of the names does not rest on convincing argumentation. This means that Van Mander's mentioning of two different teachers of Van Heemskerck and Van Scorel should be taken into serious consideration. In this, Van Mander deserves our trust: there has been a Cornelis Willemsz. and there has been a Willem Cornelisz.

Timelines

A goal of this research it to offer a clear and coherent overview of all the sources regarding the two painters. Two timelines will now be offered in which all the known sources are exhibited. Revised timelines will appear at a later stage.

Cornelis Willemsz.:

1481: painted a holy cross
1482: painted six coats of arms
1500: (Father Willemsz.) painted the decoration in the St. Bavo church
1515: owes 24 Rhines guilder to Adriaan Symonsz.
1523: painted the coats of arms of the gentlemen from Wassenaar
1529: painted the choir of the St. Bavo church.
1523/24: painted the apostle's altar for the Abby of Egmond
1536: sold a house on the Zijlstraat
1540: sold a house as executor of the will of Gherrytsz. in the Barteljorisstraat
1541: inherits money from Gherrytsz.
1552: join heir of Pieter Frans

Geertgen tot Sint Jans:

1455/1465: born
1485/1495: died
1498: Father Gherritsz. painter
1517: Ghaerhant the painter

The attributed oeuvre of Cornelis Willemsz.

The information exhibited above contains all the entries that are known to be related to Cornelis Willemsz. In the next chapters this will serve as a background for attributing paintings to him. Unfortunately, only one painting is attributed to Cornelis Willemsz. that can be related to an entry in the archival sources. The other works of art mentioned in the archives have not been found. What can be deduced from the archival sources is that Cornelis Willemsz. primarily painted religious and contemplative works: a holy cross, memorial portraits, the choir of the church and an apostle's altar.

Over a 50-year period, a group of paintings has been attributed to Cornelis Willemsz. The attributions are all made by Bruyn, the only art historian who seriously committed himself to Cornelis Willemsz. and his oeuvre. Because of this, his attributions should be approached carefully. Although Bruyn is known to be a thorough and accurate art historian, his attributions have not been refined through art historical debate and critique. Furthermore, his attributions rest primarily on stylistic criteria. The larger part of the attributed paintings are in private collections and are only known through old photos. This does not mean that stylistic research is impossible, but it does make it harder. Despite Bruyns efforts, the panels have completely skirted art historical debate.

The starting point for discussing the attributed oeuvre of Cornelis Willemsz. are the panels of the Saints Paul and Petrus, now in the Museum Catharijneconvent Utrecht (fig. 17, 18). These two panels were the first that Bruyn attributed to Cornelis Willemsz. and are the only ones that are part of a museum collection. Interestingly, the paintings on display are hung just next to *The Man of Sorrows*, a small panel that is attributed to Geertgen tot Sint Jans (fig. 33). The two panels attributed to Cornelis Willemsz. depict the Saints Petrus and Paulus. Petrus is draped in a soft red robe and is displayed with his attributes, the keys for the gateway to heaven and the holy book. Paulus is dressed in a grey-green and light blue robe. Behind the figures are two landscapes and a gold decoration. The panels were bought by the museum in 1966 with support of the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social work, De Vereniging Rembrandt and private individuals. In the year that the paintings were bought, Bruyn attributed them to Cornelis Willemsz. However, Bruyn does not really answer *why* this paintings should be attributed to Cornelis Willemsz. The only reason why Bruyn attributes this painting to Cornelis Willemsz. is that the panels display stylistic features, such as the individual shaped heads, the deep eye sockets and the wild nature – that resemble the work of Jan van Scorel. It is for this reason that Bruyn thinks it is likely that these panels should be attributed to Cornelis Willemsz. because "according to Karel van Mander (1604) he was the

master of Jan van Scorel (by mistake he [Van Mander] calls him Willem Cornelisz.).”[50] Here we see that Bruyn also doubts Van Mander and assumes that the names have been mixed up. Bruyn dates the two panels at 1515. However, an earlier date of 1501 is possible based on dendrochronological research.[51]

In addition to these two panels Bruyn attributes another panel and a series of paintings to Cornelis Willemsz. in the same year. These attributions are published in *Oud Holland*. The panel shows a depiction of *The Holy Kinship* (fig. 19). The painting was sold in 1939 at the auction Öberländer, after which its location remained unknown. According to Bruyn, this panel closely resembles the two aforementioned panels on stylistic grounds. Similarities can be found in the landscapes that have “trees, spotty set against the sky” and the “morose expression of the faces”.[52] Bruyn dates the panel to 1524.[53]

Subsequently, in 1966 Bruyn added five more fragments to the oeuvre (fig. 20-24). These panels were part of a large altarpiece that showed the crucifixion of Christ.[54] Bruyn notes that the stylistic characteristics of these panels, differ from the other paintings he had attributed to Cornelis Willemsz. Only the harsh drapery and the landscape behind the figure of Abraham show a Netherlandish style, but the faces of the figures and the other landscapes are Antwerp Mannerism.[55] According to Bruyn, these panels have belonged to the altarpiece that Cornelis Willemsz. made for the Abby of Egmond, the apostle’s altar. Bruyn argues that altars dedicated to apostle’s were so incredibly rare in the first half of the sixteenth century, that it is unlikely that a second altarpiece with a similar subject existed.

Almost twenty years later, in 1984, Bruyn attributed three more paintings to Cornelis Willemsz. According to Bruyn, these paintings should all be dated after 1527 because they clearly show the influence of Jan van Scorel, who arrived in Haarlem that same year. The two panels displaying Mary Magdalene and the Saint Catherine probably belong together (fig. 25, 26). Bruyn found out about these paintings through photographs that fell into his hands by

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[50] “des te aannemelijker” dat deze panelen geschilderd zijn door Cornelis Willemsz, omdat hij “volgens Karel van Mander (1604) leermeester van Jan van Scorel is geweest (al noemt hij hem in dit verband, zeker bij vergissing, Willem Cornelisz.).”. The source of this quote by Bruyn is unclear. It is published in a small catalogue that is part of the Visual Documentation of the RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History. Bruyn argues the same in “De Abdij van Egmond (II), 202: “Cornelis Willemsz. has the honour to be mentioned, only once, by Van Mander, but by mistake is called Willem Cornelisz.”
[51] https://rkd.nl/explore/technical/5007414 accessed at 28-05-2019.
[52] “vlekkerig tegen de lucht gezette bomen”; “morose uitdrukking van de gelaten” in: Bruyn, “De Abdij van Egmond (II)”, 203.
[53] Bruyn, “De Abdij van Egmond (II)”, 217.
[54] Bruyn, “De Abdij van Egmond (II)”, 203-204.
[55] Bruyn, “De Abdij van Egmond (II)”, 204.

chance.[56] Currently, it is not known where the paintings are. It is primarily in the treatment of the landscape that Bruyn sees similarities with the other works he already attributed to Cornelis Willemsz. Bruyn states that the greatest similarities can be found with *The Holy Kinship***,** in which next to the landscape, similar acanthus ornaments are used at the *prie-dieus*. Furthermore, Bruyn argues that the faces of Mary Magdalene and Saint Catharine are based on the *Mary Magdalene* by Jan van Scorel (fig. 27).

As we have seen, Jan van Scorel has been a problematic figure in the study of Cornelis Willemsz. However, it is true that the paintings by Cornelis Willemsz. have a certain resemblance with paintings by Jan van Scorel. There seems to be a connection between the two that is not indicative of a student / master relationship. In the following chapter, the last attributed painting to Cornelis Willemsz. will be discussed. A separate chapter is necessary, as the painting sheds new light on Cornelis Willemsz. when coupled with later research by Truus van Bueren and information now known from the memorial book.

[56] Bruyn, "Over de betekenis van het werk van Jan van Scorel (I)", 119.

A variation on Jan van Scorels *Mary Magdalene*

The final painting attributed to Cornelis Willemsz. by Bruyn should, in fact, be the first. The reason is that this painting can be attributed to Cornelis Willemsz. on more than stylistic grounds. The work in question is a *Mary Magdalene* (fig. 28). This painting shows an close stylistic relation to the *Mary Magdalene* by Jan van Scorel (fig. 27). It is because of this reason that Bruyn, rightfully, argued that the painting by Cornelis Willemsz. was a variation on the painting by Van Scorel. The resemblance can be seen in the overall composition and placement of the figure, the bushes on the right side of Mary Magdalene, the tree on the left and the fashion in which her hair is depicted. But Cornelis Willemsz. did not just copy the painting. He permitted himself the freedom to fill the misty mountain landscape of Van Scorel with castles and fortresses. Furthermore, the cup that Mary Magdalene is holding is more stylized and refined. A staggering horse and rider are depicted in the left side of the landscape, while figures appear to be entering a cave in the background. According to Bruyn, the almond-shape eyes and the stiff positioning of the hands can be seen in the panels of the Saint Mary Magdalene and Saint Catherine (fig. 25, 26) as well.[57]

What was not known to Bruyn, were two things: 1) the provenance of the painting by Jan van Scorel and 2) the fact that Cornelis Willemsz. is buried in the convent of the Haarlem Johannites. The attribution, the provenance and the new information on the place were Cornelis Willemsz. lived form an interesting connection. In this chapter, I will argue that the person who is responsible for the copy of the painting by Van Scorel, had to be closely associated with the convent of the Haarlem Johannites. Cornelis Willemsz., who has spent a part of his life in the convent, is therefore a likely candidate. This chapter will also confirm that the Cornelis Willemsz. that is discussed in the art historical literature, is identical with the similarly named person in the memorial book.

Truus van Buerens dissertation, published in 1993, ten years after the latest publication on Cornelis Willemsz. by Bruyn, shed new light on the matter. Van Bueren inventoried the art collection of the Haarlem Johannites through archival sources. The convent possessed over fifty paintings, that now feature in prominent museum collections. Examples are Jan Mostaerts *The head of Saint John* (National Gallery, London), Pieter Pietersz. *Young men in the Blazing Furnace* (Frans Halsmuseum, Haarlem) and Geertgen tot Sint Jans' *The lamentation of Christ* and *The burning of the bones of St. John the Baptist* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). Amongst the collection of the Haarlem Johannites were six paintings by

[57] Bruyn, "Over de betekenis van het werk van Jan van Scorel (I)", 120-123.

Jan van Scorel. Three of these entries which refer to Scorel paintings (a Crucifixion, an Ecce Homo and a Saint Cecilia), have not been identified with currently known paintings. However, three other Van Scorel paintings have been identified by Van Bueren – and one of them is the *Mary Magdalene* (fig. 27) of which the variation (fig. 28) has been attributed to Cornelis Willemsz.[58] The *Mary Magdalene* by Van Scorel features in two entries of the inventories of the convent. The first entry from 1572 reads: "1 Tauoreel of Mary Magdalene made by master Ian Scorel".[59] The second entry that dates from 1606 reads: "A Magdalene from Schoorl".[60] These two entries prove that the painting, now in the collection of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, was in the convent from at least 1572 till 1606. An entry from 1625 could also refer to this painting: "A scene of Mary Magdalene".[61] The painting by Van Scorel is believed to be made between 1525 and 1535, presumably after 1527 the year Van Scorel arrived in Haarlem. It is argued that the painting is commissioned by one of the commanders of the Haarlem convent. The commanders of the convent can be considered as patrons of the arts. They commissioned paintings that are now of great art historical importance, such as the two panels by Geertgen tot Sint Jans. Esmijer argued that the *Mary Magdalene* by Scorel was commissioned by Simon van Sanen, commander of the Haarlem convent of the Johannites from 1514 till 1542.[62] Reason to assume this is a statement by Van Mander considering Jan van Scorel. Van Mander writes that Van Scorel "came to Haarlem, where he was received and warmly welcomed by the commander of the Order of Sint Jans, a great lover of the arts: for him he made some works of art, of which a part is still at its original place: in particular a Baptism, a truly beautiful piece".[63] According to Van Bueren, the subject of the painting is also closely connected to the order. There is a story about Mary Magdalene in which she is robbed of precious relics, which were eventually saved and housed in a convent. This story, whose subject is the saving of relics, resembles Geertgens painting, on the *Burning of the bones of John the Baptist*, which was also commissioned by the convent.[64] It thus seems reasonable to assume that the painting was made for the Haarlem convent and commissioned by Simon van Sanen.

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[58] Van Bueren, 351. The other two identified paintings are the *Baptism in the Jordan* (Frans Halsmuseum) and *Adam and Eve* (Frans Halsmuseum.
[59] "1 Tauoreel van Maria magdalena gemaect by meijster ian Scorel" in: Van Bueren, 351.
[60] "een Magdalena van Schoorl" in: Van Bueren, 351.
[61] "een Taeffereeltgen van Maria magdalena" in: Van Bueren, 351.
[62] Esmeijer, 42.
[63] "quam nae Haerlem, daer hy wel ontfanghen, en seer welcom was by den Commandeur van S. Ians Orden, Simon Saen, een groot beminder der Constnaers: voor welcke hy eenige werken maeckte, die ten deele noch in de plaetse te sien zijn: bysonder een Ioannes Doopsel, dat een seer schoon stuck is […]" in: Van Mander, fol. 236 r.
[64] Van Bueren, 354-355.

It can thus be argued that the painting entered the Haarlem convent between 1525 and 1535. A convent is not a public space in which everyone can easily enter. Therefore, it must be assumed that people who had access to this painting had a close connection to the convent. Cornelis Willemsz. then, is a good candidate. He was connected to the convent as a frater, and he lived and worked there. The new suggestion is that Cornelis Willemsz. must have seen the painting by Van Scorel during the time he lived in the convent. This artwork, then, is the most secure of the attributions to Cornelis Willemsz. It is attributed not only on the basis of stylistic evidence, but also on a combination of different archival sources.

With this painting as the new reference point for attributing works to Cornelis Willemsz., the *Saint Mary Magdalene* and the *Saint Catharine* can be convincingly added to the oeuvre. They share the same facial features and the erratic and wild depiction of the landscape. Based on the criteria that Bruyn introduced, the erratic and spotty landscape and the morose faces, the *Holy Kinship* and the two panels from the Museum Catharijneconvent Utrecht seem to be good candidates as well. However, the attribution of the five fragments from the presumed apostle's altar is not convincing, as they do not fit in with the other artworks. The style is too different; the figures do not have the morose faces but seem to be flat and two-dimensional. The landscape is just too different. These fragments seem to belong to a different artist altogether.

Revising the life and oeuvre of Cornelis Willemsz.

The attribution of the copy of Van Scorels *Mary Magdalene* to Cornelis Willemsz., connects Cornelis Willemsz. to the first half of the sixteenth century. But the question remains if all the archival entries belong to the same Cornelis Willemsz. Is the Cornelis Willemsz. that is buried in the Haarlem convent also responsible for painting the cross in 1481, and the co-heir of Pieter Frans in 1552 and the teacher of Maarten van Heemskerck? This would mean that Cornelis Willemsz. was at least 90 years old. It is for this reason that art historians have assumed that it is likely that several painters existed with this name. Hoogewerff argues that there is a Cornelis Willemsz. I, who painted the commissions from 1481 and 1482, and a Cornelis Willemsz. II, who executed the commissions from 1523 and was the teacher of Van Heemskerck.[65] Van Heemskerck must have been the student of Cornelis Willemsz. before 1527, the year Van Heemskerck joined the workshop of Van Scorel. The art historian Hof also argues that there are likely two different painters.[66] But if it is the same painter, he would have been born around 1455/1460 and died at the age of 90.[67]

The dating of the life of Cornelis Willemsz. is also important for considering his relation to Geertgen tot Sint Jans. A copy of *Mary Magdalene* was impossible before 1521, based on the dendrochronological dating of the original by Van Scorel. This means that the painting with the most secure attribution to Cornelis Willemsz. was completed about 25 years after the death of Geertgen tot Sint Jans.

From the analysis of the memorial book, it can be stated the Cornelis Willemsz. actually lived in the convent. Here, at the convent of the Johannites, Cornelis Willemsz. had access to the Scorels *Mary Magdalene*. The copy of this painting can be dated between 1527 (the year Van Scorel came to Haarlem) and 1542 (the year the commissioner of the copy, Van Sanen, died). Thus, the attribution of the copy to Cornelis Willemsz. further strengthens the idea that he lived in the convent. Based on this painting, the Saints *Paulus* and *Petrus*, the *Holy Kinship* and the saints *Mary Magdalene* and *Catherine* can be convincingly added to his oeuvre. The earliest date for the paintings is 1515, the two panels that are now in the Museum Catharijneconvent. Not all the archival sources that Van der Willigen published can be easily related to this painter. The entries from 1481 and 1482 are problematic for the early date. And because the objects themselves are no longer known, stylistic research is not possible. Adding to this is the fact that Cornelis and Willem were both common names. From this it must be

[65] Hoogewerff, 224.
[66] Hof, 124.
[67] Ibid.

concluded that these entries likely refer to a different painter or different painters. The entries that are dated from 1523 to 1552 fit better with the attributed paintings, which can all be dated between 1523 and 1552. This is especially the case for the entry dating from 1536, in which Cornelis Willemsz. sells a house on the Zijlstraat. This raises an interesting possibility. Could it be that this was his own house, and that he sold it because he would move in to the convent? Although this is hard to prove, is seems to be more likely than that he still possessed a house while living in the convent. A new timeline can be constructed:

1515 – painted the *Saint Petrus* and the *Saint Paulus* (fig, 17, 18)
1523 – painted the coats of arms from the gentlemen of Wassenaar (currently unknown)
1523 – painted the *Holy Kinship* (fig. 19)
1527, or earlier – teacher of Maarten van Heemskerck.
1529 – painting of the choir of the St. Bavo church
1536 – sells his house at the Zijlstraat
1536 – moves into the convent
1536 - 1542: painted the *Mary Magdalene*, commissioned by Van Sanen. (fig. 28)
1536 – 1552: painted the Saint Mary Magdalene and Catherine (fig. 25, 26)
1540 – Executor of the will of Pieter Gerritszoon.
1552 – Co-heir of Pieter Frans.

This timeline introduces new aspects related to Cornelis Willemsz. Firstly, the assumption that Cornelis Willemsz. came to live in the convent in the year 1536. Although counter arguments can be formulated to this conclusion, it does serve as a new starting point and answers to questions concerning Cornelis Willemsz. For example, before the year 1536 Cornelis Willemsz. received payments for his paintings. Why would a lay brother who was living in a convent receive a loan? From this perspective it is also unlikely that Cornelis Willemsz. owned a house while he was living in the convent. The source from 1536 is thus the best available source to date the year he moved into the convent. The two entries from 1481 and 1482 have been excluded from this revised timeline because of the problems they raise about Cornelis Willemsz. his old age. Cornelis Willemsz. died between 1552 (the year of the last entry) and 1570 (the year the memorial book is written).

With regard to Geertgen tot Sint Jans, it must be concluded that both of the entries cannot be reconciled with what we know about his life. The entry of 1498 is problematic because of the assumption that Geertgen tot Sint Jans was not connected to a religious order, an assumption that is also stressed in this research. It is therefore unlikely that he was referred

to as ‘Father’. The entry from 1517 is primarily problematic because of the late date, almost 30 years after the presumed death of the painter. The assertion made by Decker that the Ghaerhant from 1517 is identical with the Gherryt Gherytsz. from the memorial book and the Gheerit te S. Ians from Van Manders text is unconvincing. Yes, the name seems to have been derived from Gherryt; but is not the same. Furthermore, in the late fifteenth century, this was a common name. The memorial book also serves as proof of this, as several persons under the same name can be found (fig. 29-31). Besides this, Decker’s assumption is in conflict with the information that Van Manders provides. Geertgen tot Sint Jans died around the age of 28, and the only two known paintings, the Vienna panels (fig. 3, 4) are normally dated at 1484-1495. If the Ghaerhant from 1517 is identical with Geertgen tot Sint Jans, this is highly problematic. Geertgen would then be born around 1489 (1517-28=1489), the period in which his only secure paintings were made. To retain the entry from 1517, one has to either drastically revise the dating of the panels or completely distrust Van Mander. For both, there seems to be no good reason. Therefore, Decker’s assumption is not convincing. The dating of the life of Geertgen tot Sint Jans thus remains the same: born around 1455/65 and died around 1485/1495.

What must be concluded now is that Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz. probably did not live in the convent at the same time. The earliest painting that can be attributed to Cornelis Willemsz., is dated 1515, twenty years after the presumed death of Geertgen. Only if the entries from 1481 and 1482 do belong to the Cornelis Willemsz. that is buried in the convent, can we state that the painters might have known each other. But this would mean that we either have no attributed works of art at all, or a painter with an extremely long life. But apart from the question if the two painters have known each other - how do the attributed oeuvres of the two painters relate to each other? Do they show a strong stylistic influence between the two? Or do the two oeuvres belong to different painterly generations?

The stylistic relation between Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz.

Comparing the oeuvres of Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz. is not without difficulties. Around fifteen paintings are attributed to Geertgen. Next to the Vienna panels, no consensus has been reached but on one painting, *St. John the Baptist in the Wilderness* (fig. 32). With regard to Cornelis Willemsz., the problem is that most of the paintings can only be studied through mediocre photographs. Nevertheless, this chapter will be dedicated to the stylistic relation between the two oeuvres in order to shed light on the relation between the two painters. For Geertgen tot Sint Jans will be used four paintings that are least problematic. These are the Vienna panels (fig. 3, 4), *St. John the Baptist in the Wilderness* (fig. 32) and *Christ as the Man of Sorrows* (fig. 33). What these works have in common are firstly the oval-formed soft faces of the figures. The facial features of Geertgens figures are always elongated in an gracious and fine manner. Even in the case of suffering and deep sorrow, as is expressed in the *Christ as the Man of Sorrows*, the figures keep their graceful, rounded and almost egg-like faces. The figures of Cornelis Willemsz. on the contrary, are hollow and hard as can be seen in *Saint Petrus*, *Saint Paulus* and *The Holy Kinship*. Although the figures in his later works have fuller faces, they seem to be more akin to the generation of Jan van Scorel. Differences can also be found in the treatment of the landscape there. The landscapes by Geertgen are extremely detailed and radiate an almost mystical and serene scene. This can be seen in a detail of *St. John the Baptist in the Wilderness* (fig. 36) and the Vienna panels. The landscapes by Cornelis Willemsz, on the other hand, are less detailed. The word 'spotty'[68], is striking (fig. 37). The landscapes of Cornelis Willemsz. are constructed through a more 'romantic' atmospheric perspective, one that is altogether absent in works by Geertgen. Furthermore, Cornelis Willemsz. fills his landscapes with mysterious roads and dark castles and fortresses.

Approached from a stylistic point of view, the two oeuvres belong to different painterly periods. Geertgen tot Sint Jans is an archetypal example of the early Netherlandish painters, such as Jan van Eyck, Gerard David and Dirk Bouts. Cornelis Willemsz., fits better within the category of painters of the generation of Jan van Scorel and Maarten van Heemskerck. This further strengthens the idea that Cornelis Willemsz. was the master of Maarten van Heemskerck. Apart from Van Heemskerck's apprenticeship to Cornelis Willemsz., nothing more is known, not least because Cornelis Willemsz. is never really discussed in the art historical literature on Van Heemskerck.

[68] "Vlekkerig" in: Bruyn, "Over de betekenis van het werk van Jan van Scorel (I)", 118.

Conclusion

Three subjects have been central in this research: the Haarlem convent of the Johannites, Cornelis Willemsz. and Geertgen tot Sint Jans. On these subjects, different conclusions have been presented that have an underlying connection and are valuable for art historical research.

This research has tried to find an answer to the meaning of the word frater in the memorial book of the Haarlem convent of the Johannites. Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz. are the only painters recorded in this book, and both are named frater. Through the analysis of the memorial book in its entirety, it has been shown that the word frater has a specific meaning in the context of the convent. Persons indicated as a frater lived in the convent and executed their profession there. Thus, both Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz. lived and painted in the convent until they died.

This research has been concerned with the identification of a Haarlem painter. In this research it has become evident that the Cornelis Willemsz. that Van Manders mentions can be identified with the painter buried in the convent and with the painter to which Bruyn has attributed paintings. Furthermore, there are a number of archival sources that can be related to the painter Cornelis Willemsz. mentioned in the memorial book of which one can be used to date the year he moved into the convent. Cornelis Willemsz. must have died in the convent between 1552 and 1570. The most secure work that can be attributed to him is the variation on Scorels *Maria Magdalene*. This is the only attribution that does not rest solely on stylistic criteria. With this work as a reference point, the *Saint Paulus* and the *Saint Petrus*, *The Holy Kinship* and the *Saint Mary Magdalene* and *Saint Catherine* can be attributed to Cornelis Willemsz. as well. Also, there are no grounds for concluding that Willem Cornelisz. is similar to Cornelis Willemsz.

Another conclusion of this research is that it is not likely that Geertgen tot Sint Jans and Cornelis Willemsz. lived in the convent during the same period. This notion is further strengthened by the stylistic difference between the two painters. Nevertheless, this research has shed new light on Geertgen tot Sint Jans. Firstly, it seems that Van Mander should be trusted on the information he gives about Geertgen. Indeed, it seems that Geertgen tot Sint Jans actually lived in the convent. The two archival entries from 1498 and 1517 cannot be convincingly related to Geertgen tot Sint Jans because he was not part of a religious order and he presumably died before this time. So still, the most plausible dating of Geertgens life is 1455/65 -1485/95.

The Haarlem convent of the Johannites was an art loving convent with a specific interest in the art of painting. The great collection of paintings they possessed, the role of the

commanders as patrons of the arts and the two great painters they had living in their convent argue for this. More in-depth research into the role of the convent as a patron of the arts and research to all the craftsmen that are mentioned in the memorial book would be a welcome addition.

These conclusions shed new light on an important early Netherlandish artist, Geertgen tot Sint Jans. Although the artists of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century will always remain clouded in mystery, the memorial book of the Haarlem Johannites has proven to be an useful source for better understanding Geertgens position in the convent. Next to this, of great importance is the finding that Cornelis Willemsz. has lived and painted in the convent of the Haarlem Johannites. Research on early Netherlandish art and artists is far from completed. In an era where more and more archives are being digitalized and become easily accessible worldwide, the future looks promising – bearing new information that could shed new light on old masters.

Illustrations

Fig. 3) Geertgen tot Sint Jans, *The lamentation of Christ.* Oil on panel, 175 x 139 cm. Vienna*:* Kunsthistorisch Museum. Inv. Nr. 991.

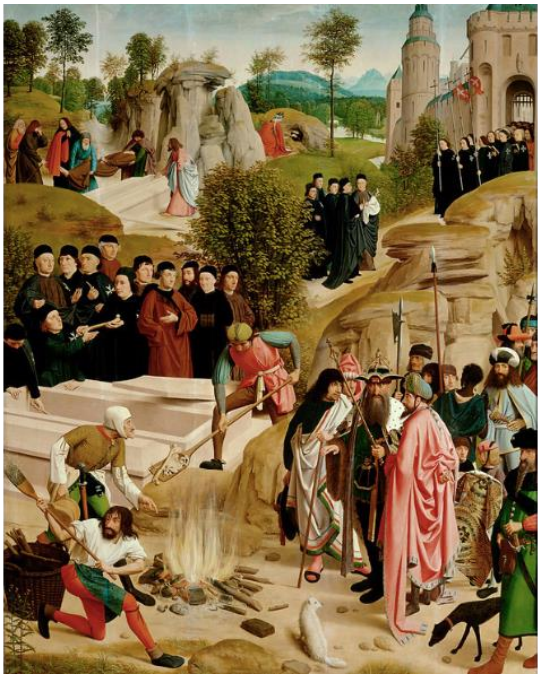

Fig. 4) Geertgen tot Sint Jans, *The burning of the bones of St. John the Baptist.* Oil on panel, 172 x 139 cm. Vienna: Kunsthistorisch Museum. Inv. Nr. 9

Fig. 5) Jacob van Deventer, *Map of Haarlem and the surroundings*, circa 1560, 62 cm x 27 cm. Haarlem: Noord-Hollands Archief. Inv. Nr. NL-HImNHA_560_002423.

Fig. 6) Detail of Jacob van Deventer's *Map of Haarlem*. Indicated in red the church and convent of the Haarlem Johannites

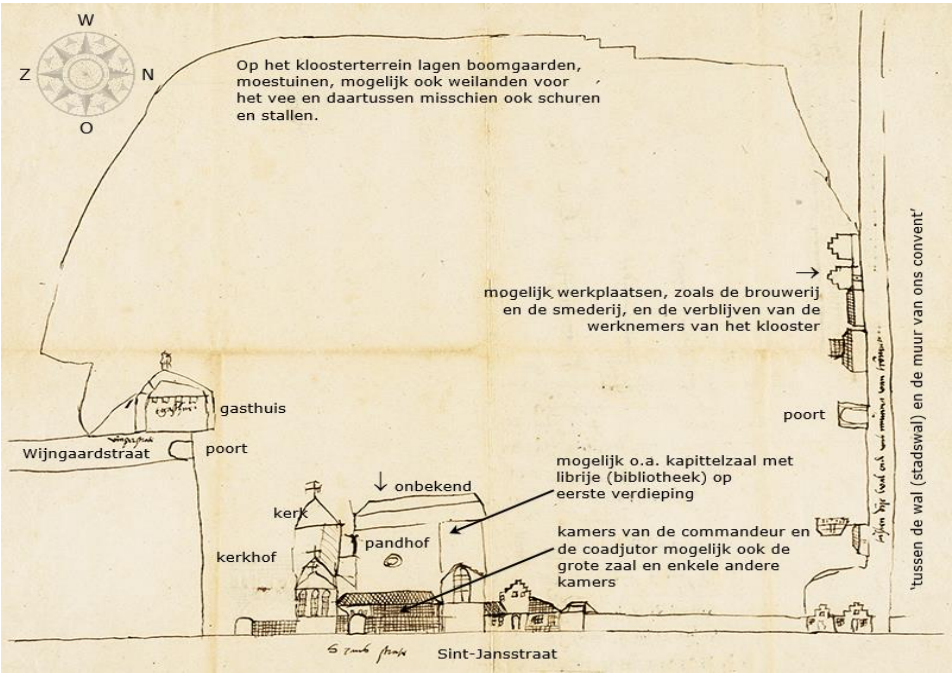

Fig. 7) Timan van Wou, *drawing of a map of the convent*, text added in the 21st century, circa 1570. Haarlem, Noord-Hollands Archief.

Fig. 8) The place of the convent, indicated in the current surrounding.

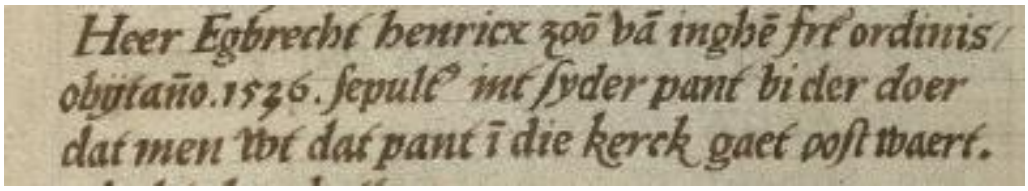
Heer Egbrecht henricx zoō vā inghē frī ordinis/
obÿtaño.1536. sepultī int syder pant bi der doer
dat men wt dat pant ī die kerck gaet oost waert.

Fig. 9) “Frater Ordinis”

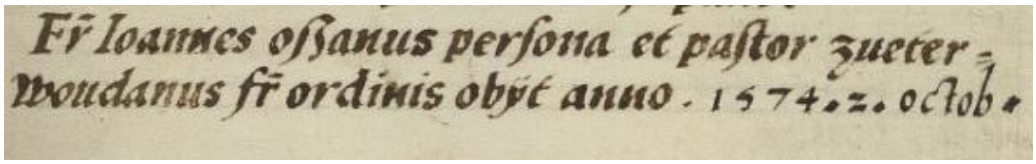
Fr̄ Ioannes ossanus persona et pastor zueter-
woudanus fr̄ ordinis obÿt anno . 1574. 2. octob.

Fig. 10) “persona et pastor”.

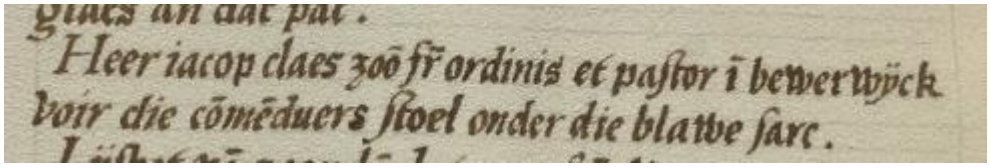
Heer iacop claes zoō fr̄ ordinis et pastor ī bewerwÿck
voir die cōmēduers stoel onder die blatwe sarc.

Fig. 11) “Fr ordinis et pastor”.

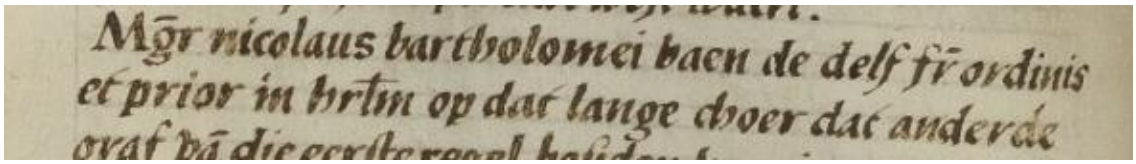

Fig. 12) “Fr ordinis”.

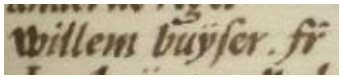

Fig. 13) “fr”.

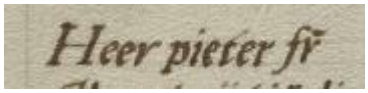

Fig. 14) “fr”.

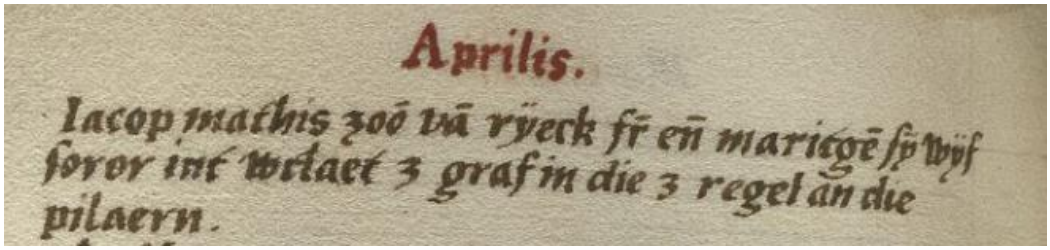

Fig. 15 “Fr én maritge zijn wijf”.

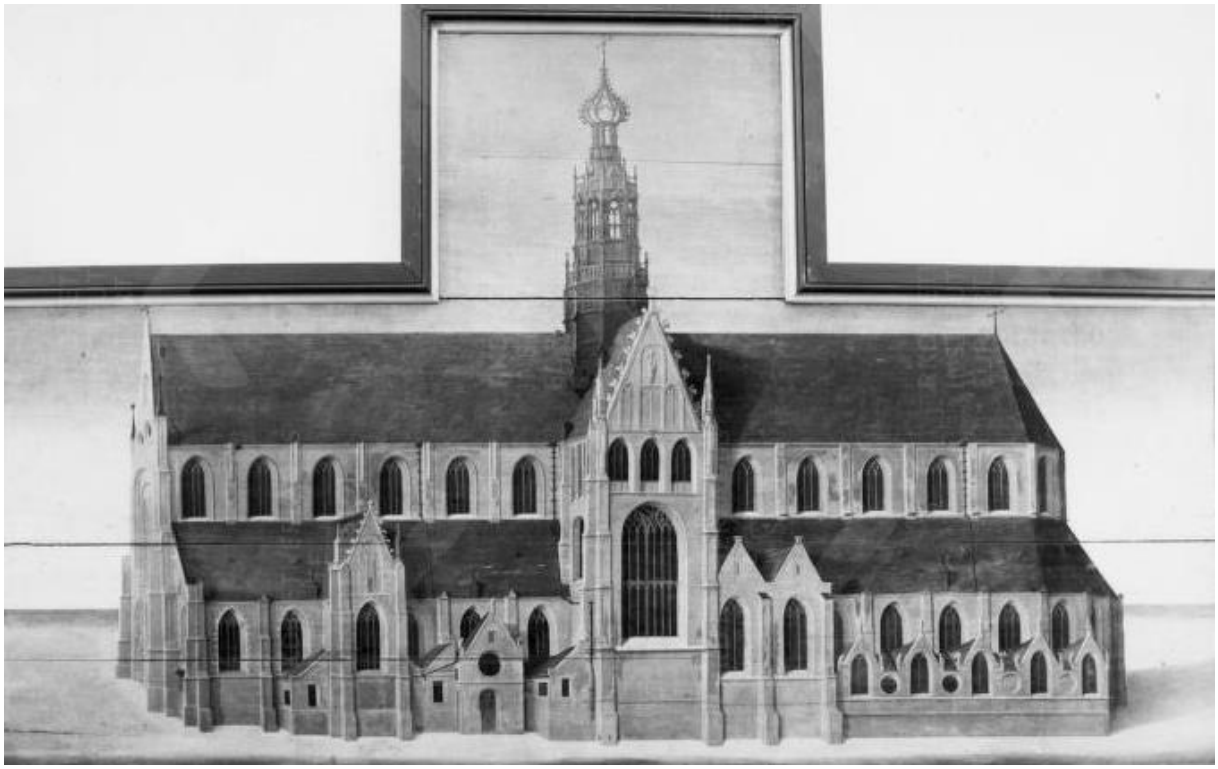

Fig. 16. Pieter Gerritsz?, Geertgen tot Sint Jans? *The Sint Bavo church*, oil on panel, 153 x 225 cm. Haarlem: Sint Bavo church.

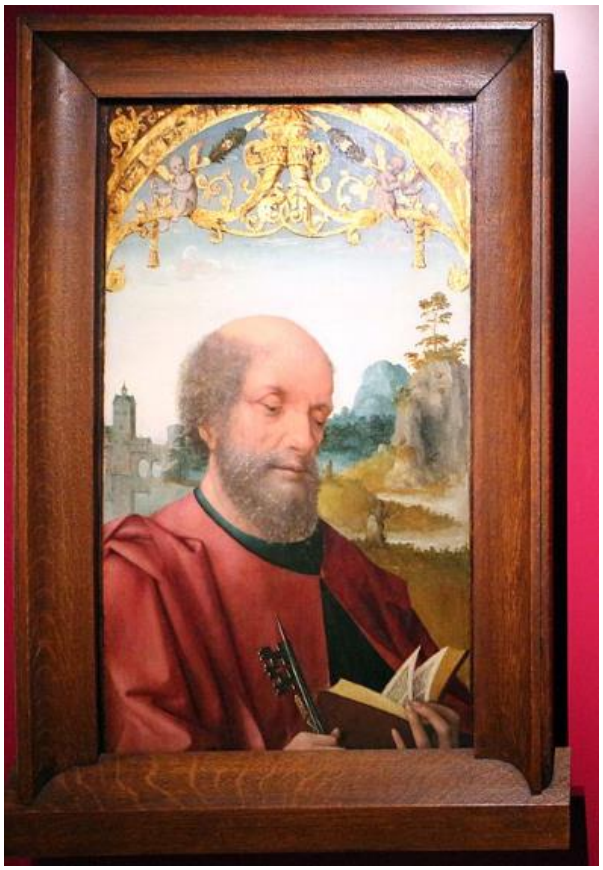

Fig. 17) Cornelis Willemsz., *Saint Petrus,* 57.0 x 34.5 cm. Utrecht, Catharijneconvent. Inv. Nr. ABM314.

Fig. 18) Cornelis Willemsz., *Saint Paul,* 57.0 x 34.5 cm. Utrecht, Catharijneconvent. Inv. Nr. ABM315.

Fig. 19) Cornelis Willemsz., *The Holy Kinship*, size unknown, current whereabouts unknown. Photo: RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History.

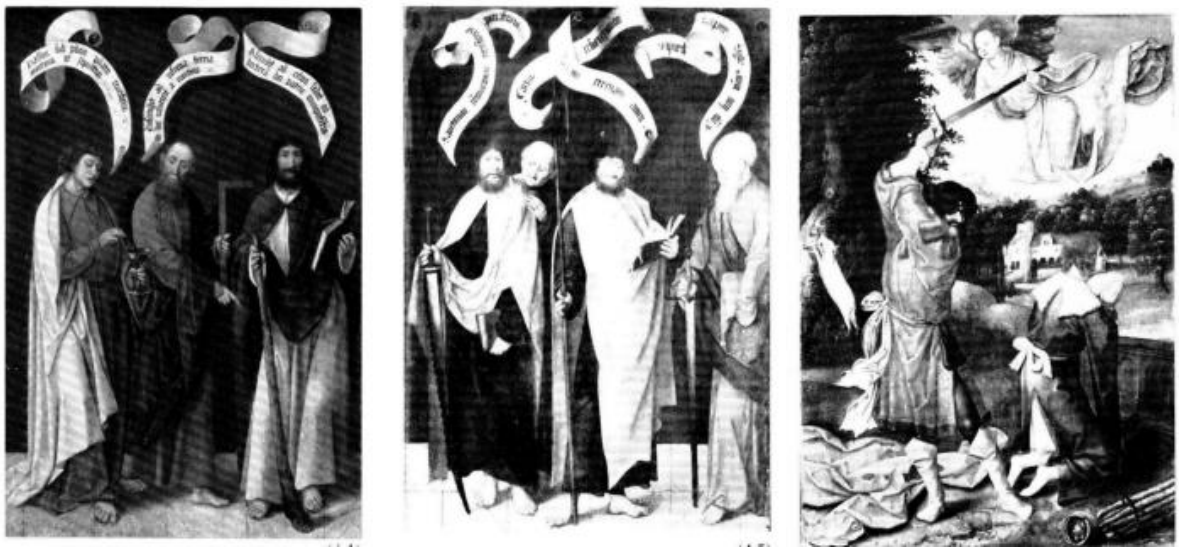

Fig 20, 21 22) Cornelis Willemsz.,? Keulen, Walraff-Richartz Museum. Photo from Bruyn, "De Abdij van Egmon (II)", 212.

Fig. 23, 24) Cornelis Willemsz.,? Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Photo from Bruyn, “De Abdij van Egmon (II)”, 212.

Fig. 25, 26) Cornelis Willemsz., *Saint Mary Magdalene* and *Saint Catherine.* Size unknown, current whereabouts unknown. Photo from Bruyn, "Over de betekenis van het werk van Jan van Scorel (I)", 119.

Fig. 27) Jan van Scorel, *Mary Magdalene*, 1525 – 1535, oil on panel, 66,3 x 76 cm. Amsterdam: Rijksmseum Amsterdam. Inv. Nr. SK-A-372.

Fig. 28) Cornelis Willemsz., *Mary Magdalene* size unknown, current whereabouts unknown. Photo: RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History.

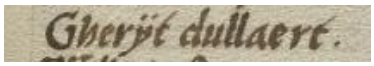

Fig. 29) “Gheryt dullaert”

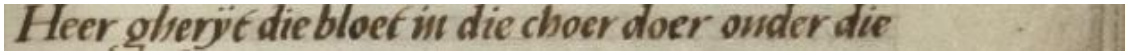

Fig. 30) “Heer Gheryt”

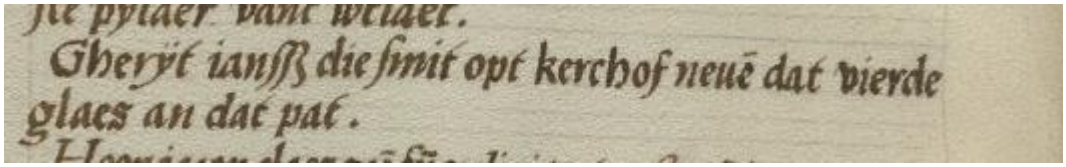

Fig. 31) “Ghery Jans die smit”.

Fig. 32) Geertgen tot Sint Jans, *John the Baptist in the Wilderness*. oil on panel, 42 x 28 cm. Berlin: Gemäilde galerie. Inv. Nr. 1631.

Fig. 33) Geertgen tot Sint Jans, *Christ as the Man of Sorrows*, oil on panel, 26 x 25 cm. Utrecht Catharijneconvent.

Fig. 34) detail of *The lamentation of Christ*.

Fig. 35) Detail of *Christ as the Man of Sorrows*.

Fig. 36) Detail of *St John the Baptist in the Wilderness*.

Fig. 37) detail of *Saint Petrus*.

Illustration credits

Fig. 1. Liber Memoriarum 1570, 35 verso.

Fig. 2. Liber Memoriarum 1570, 42 verso.

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Fig. 9. Liber Memoriarum 1570, 2 verso.

Fig. 10. Liber Memoriarum 1570, 19 verso .

Fig. 11. Liber Memoriarum 1570, 26 recto.

Fig. 12. Liber Memoriarum 1570, 18 verso.

Fig. 13. Liber Memoriarum 1570, 17 recto

Fig. 14. Liber Memoriarum 1570, 25 verso.

Fig. 15. Liber Memoriarum 1570, 19 verso.

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Fig. 17. Downloaded 23-05-2019.
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Fig. 18. Downloaded 23-05-2019.
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Fig. 19. RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History

Fig. 20 – 24. Bruyn 1966, 212.

Fig. 25, 26. Bruyn 1983, 119.

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Fig. 28. RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History

Fig. 29. Liber Memoriarum 1570, 18 verso.

Fig. 30. Liber Memoriarum 1570, 23 verso.

Fig. 31. Liber Memoriarum 1570, 25 verso.

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Fig. 33. Received from the Catharijneconvent.

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Fig. 35. Received form the Catharijneconvent.

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Fig. 37. Downloaded 23-05-2019.
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