

# MIGRATION OF ARCHITECTS IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE<sup>1</sup>

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*As far as Prague where the Emperor resides, as well as in other large cities, there are few architects or learned people with authority and expertise. In fact, the construction of buildings is principally undertaken by certain master builders who travel from Italy to those places and decide on things their own way. Thus the results are rough or even worse ...<sup>2</sup>*

(Vincenzo Scamozzi 1615)

## SUMMARY

This paper focuses on the diffusion of architectural inventions from the Low Countries to other parts of Europe, especially to the Baltic region and Scandinavia, from the late fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth century. Multiple pathways connected the architecture of the Low Countries with the world and various mechanisms of transmission can be discerned, such as the migration of building masters and sculptors who worked as architects abroad, networks of foreign patrons inviting Netherlandish artists, printed models and the role of foreign architects who visited the Low Countries for professional reasons. The paper discusses such questions as why experts from the Low Countries were called upon and what made them successful abroad. Were their design skills merely a spinoff of other, more important arts such as hydraulic engineering and fortification? Or did Netherlandish architecture possess particularly compelling traits that could also be studied by foreign architects? Did the attraction lie in qualities that were explicitly perceived as ‘Netherlandish’? Or were the Netherlandish examples regarded as favourite models of an international architectural

1 The first part of this paper is based on my introduction to *Architects without Borders: Migration of Architects and Architectural Ideas in Europe 1400–1700*. Ed. by Konrad Ottenheim. Mantova, 2014, 7–13; the second part, on my chapter on “Travelling architects from the Low Countries and their patrons”, in: *The Low Countries at the Crossroads: Netherlandish Architecture as an Export Product in Early Modern Europe (1480–1680)* (Architectura Moderna 8). Ed. by Konrad Ottenheim & Krista De Jonge. Turnhout, 2013, 55–88.

2 Scamozzi, Vincenzo. *L’Idea della Architettura Universale*, Venice 1615, Book III, 251 (quote from the English edition: Scamozzi, Vincenzo. *Venetian Architect: The Idea of a Universal Architecture. III, Villas and Country Estates*. Amsterdam, 2003, 98).

style desired by rulers, nobility and civic authorities who sought to keep up appearances among their peers?

When the famous Venetian architect Vincenzo Scamozzi was in Salzburg working on his designs for a new cathedral and the renovation of the prince-bishop's palace,<sup>3</sup> he found himself surrounded by numerous craftsmen of northern Italian origin, the *maestri comacini*.<sup>4</sup> Apparently, he was not quite convinced by the level of expertise of these craftsmen, as the quote above from his treatise of 1615 indicates. Scamozzi's complaint about the quality of his fellow countrymen he had met abroad, both in Austria and Bohemia, illustrates the two categories of emigrant architects in early modern Europe. On the one hand, there were a few star architects, such as Scamozzi himself, who were invited by monarchs, noblemen and other esteemed patrons for prestigious building commissions. On the other hand, there were large groups of travelling architects, building masters, stone carvers and stucco workers who lacked international fame but were well organised and often highly skilled – in contrast to what Scamozzi had to say about them. While many star architects enjoyed positions as court artists, others were treated as mere craftsmen, sometimes working on the same prestigious projects, but sometimes also for more humble patrons.

## ROVING RENAISSANCE ARCHITECTS, A EUROPEAN PHENOMENON

Migration of artists has always been essential to the diffusion of new inventions, and so was the role of Italian artists to the dissemination of *all'antica* architecture in early modern Europe.<sup>5</sup> The first well-documented wave of Italian sculptors and stone carvers working abroad dates from the second half of the fifteenth century. Their first patrons were the courts of

3 For Scamozzi in Salzburg, see: Lippmann, Wolfgang. *Der Salzburger Dom 1598–1630. Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Auftraggeber und des kulturgeschichtlichen Umfeldes*. Weimar, 1999, 137–155.

4 For the *comacini* working in Salzburg around 1600, see: Ponn-Lettner, Gudrun. "Die Bautätigkeit der Maestri Comacini in Salzburg. Das Neugebäude im österreichischen Kontext"; *Strategien der Macht. Hof und Residenz in Salzburg um 1600 – Architektur, Repräsentation und Verwaltung unter Fürstbischof Wolf Dietrich von Raitenau 1587 bis 1611/12*. Ed. by Gerhard Ammerer and Ingonda Hanneschläger. Salzburg, 2011, 371–404; Rottensteiner, Margareta. "Die Arbeiten der Familie Castelli für den Salzburger Hof unter Fürstbischof Wolf Dietrich und die Bedeutung ihrer Stuckarbeiten in den Prunkräumen des Neugebäudes". In: *Ibidem*, 405–436; Bstieler, Stephan. "Oberitalienische Stuckateure im Dienste erzbischöflicher Repräsentation: Giacomo Bertolotto, Pietro und Antonio Castello, Giovanni Passarini, Bernardo Bertinalli und Giovanni Battista Orsolino". In: *Ibidem*, 437–466. For their activities in Poland, see: Arciszewska, Barbara. "Architectural Crossroads: Migration of Architects and Building Trade Professionals in Early Modern Poland 1500–1700". In: *Architects without Borders: Migration of Architects and Architectural Ideas in Europe 1400–1700*. Ed. by Konrad Ottenheim. Mantova, 2014, 60–75.

5 The bibliography on migrant architects from Italy is too extensive to be summarised here, starting with various volumes in the series *L'opera del genio italiano all'estero* (1933–1962) up to more recent publications, such as: *Architetti e ingegneri militari italiani all'estero dal XV al XVIII secolo*, 2 vols. Ed. by Marino Viganò. Livorno, 1994–1999; *Crocevia e capitale della migrazione artistica: forestieri a Bologna e bolognesi nel mondo (secoli XV–XVIII)*. Ed. by Sabine Frommel. Bologna, 2010. A critical survey of the historiography of this topic would be most welcome.

Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>6</sup> In the 1470s and 1480s, the Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus invited various Italian masters to his court in Buda, some of them even mediated by Lorenzo il Magnifico.<sup>7</sup> Their main task was the transformation of the royal residence on the Buda Hill into a true *all'antica* residence comparable, for instance, to the ducal palace of Urbino (fig. 1).<sup>8</sup>



1. Capital from the palace of King Matthias Corvinus at Buda, c. 1480s. Budapest Történi Múzeum.

Photo: Konrad Ottenheym

Chimenti Camici (his presence in Buda is mentioned by Vasari), Giovanni Dalmata, Tommaso Fiamberti, Giovanni Ricci and Gregorio di Lorenzo (a pupil of Desiderio da Settignano) were among the first masters to travel to

6 Bialostocki, Jan. *The Art of the Renaissance in Eastern Europe*. Ithaca (NY), Oxford, 1976; Kaufmann, Thomas DaCosta. *Court, Cloister and City: The Art and Culture of Central Europe 1450–1800*. London, 1995.

7 *Matthias Corvinus, the King: Tradition and Renewal in the Hungarian Royal Court 1458–1490*. Exh. Cat. Budapest History Museum. Ed. by Peter Farbaky et al. Budapest, 2008; Török, Gyöngyi. “Die Vermittlerrolle Ungarns in der mitteleuropäischen Renaissance”. In: *Úsvit renesance na Moravě za vlády Matyáše Korvína a Vladislava Jagellonského (1479–1516) v širších souvislostech* (Historická Olomouc XVII). Ed. by Ivo Hlobil, Marek Perutka. Olomouc, 2009, 87–103.

8 Farbaky, Peter. “Chimenti Camici, a Florentine woodworker-architect, and the Early Renaissance reconstruction of the royal palace in Buda during the reign of Matthias Corvinus (ca. 1470–1490)”. In: *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz*. 50, 2006, 215–256.

Hungary. For some, the stay at the court in Buda was just a stepping stone for a career even further east. For instance, Ridolfo Aristotele Fioravanti from Bologna is documented to have travelled to Buda in 1468, and just a few years later, in 1475, he was invited to Moscow to construct the new Cathedral of the Dormition of the Virgin in the Kremlin.<sup>9</sup> He was followed by various other Italian architects, such as Marco Ruffo and Pietro Antonio



2. Alessandro Pasqualini.  
Tower of St Nicholas' Church,  
c. 1535,  
IJsselstein (The Netherlands).  
Photo: Konrad Ottenheim

Solari, who built the new banqueting hall of the Kremlin palace, the so called 'Faceted Palace', whose diamond-shaped rustica antedates Biago Rossetti's famous Palazzo dei Diamanti (1492) in Ferrara.<sup>10</sup>

Whereas in Buda and Moscow Italians were already responsible for prestigious architecture *all'antica* in the 1470s, the courts of Western Europe invited their first Italian architects in the early sixteenth century. Any survey of Renaissance architecture in Europe points to the important contribution

<sup>9</sup> Shvidkovsky, Dmitry. *Russian Architecture and the West*. New Haven–London, 2007, 80–91.

<sup>10</sup> Shvidkovsky 2007, 91–98. For earlier observations of Italian architecture by Russians, see: Rossi, Federica. "Italy in the view of the Russians at the Council of Ferrara and Florence in 1438–1439". In: *Architects without Borders: Migration of Architects and Architectural Ideas in Europe 1400–1700*. Ed. by Konrad Ottenheim. Mantova, 2014, 40–47.



of these artists to the development of an *all'antica* style outside Italy, such as Torrigiani's tomb for the English king Henry VII in Westminster Cathedral, Primaticcio's work at the French court of Fontainebleau and Paris, the marble courtyard imported from Genova in the castle of La Calahorra in Spain, Giulio Romano's contribution to the Residenz of Landshut (Bavaria), and Alessandro Pasqualini's citadel and palace in Jülich for the Duke of Guelders



3. Esteban de Obray and  
Juan de Talavera.  
Entrance portal of  
the church of Santa María,  
1525, Catalayud (Spain).  
Photo: Konrad Ottenheim

and his tower of St Nicholas' church at IJsselstein (The Netherlands) (fig. 2). Notwithstanding the importance and high quality of these works, the exclusive focus on 'genius' Italian artists narrows the view on the phenomenon of migration of architects as such. It then seems that the roving careers of these artists were almost an exception, contrasting with 'traditional' sedentary building masters and craftsmen. In addition, artistic migration during the Renaissance then seems to be restricted to the Italian masters introducing *all'antica* architectural grammar and ornaments into the Gothic world north of the Alps. For a better understanding of how architectural ideas were transmitted during this period, it is essential to widen the view to artists from other countries who moved around Europe alongside the Italian masters. They too might have been



4. Nicolas Roy and Peter Flemishman. Falkland Palace, south wing, 1538–1542, Fife (Scotland).  
Photo: Konrad Ottenheim



5. Hans van Paeschen, Anthonis van Opbergen, Hans van Steenwinckel and others.  
Kronborg Castle, 1574–1586, Helsingør (Denmark). Photo: Konrad Ottenheim

invited by a local authority, or they might have been looking for new clients on their own initiative.

To mention just a few well-studied cases, in the sixteenth century there were well-established artistic connections between Normandy and Aragon, between France and Scotland, and between the Low Countries and Denmark.

In the 1510s the French cardinal Georges d'Amboise stimulated the creation of *all'antica* workshops in Normandy with the commission of his grand Chateau de Gaillon, attracting various highly skilled sculptors and masters of stone carving from Lombardy.<sup>11</sup> Later, several masters trained in Normandy travelled in search of new commissions to other parts of France and abroad to Aragon, where in 1525 Esteban de Obray from Normandy worked with Juan de Talavera on the magnificent and richly sculpted entrance portal of the church of Santa Maria de Catalayud (fig. 3).<sup>12</sup> We find important examples of close international connections also further north: in 1537–1541, the southern wing of Falkland Palace, one of the sixteenth-century residences of the Scottish king, was built by the French building master Nicolas Roy of Paris, assisted by the sculptor Peter Flemishman, apparently from the Low Countries (fig. 4).<sup>13</sup> In 1574 the Danish king Frederick II commissioned the complete reconstruction of his castle at Elsinore at the Sound and invited a whole team of building masters from the Low Countries, including Hans van Paeschen, Hans van Steenwinckel and the fortification engineer Anthonis van Opbergen (fig. 5).<sup>14</sup> The building site of Kronborg became a new hub for the dissemination of building masters from Germany and the Low Countries to the lands around the Baltic Sea, especially to the cities of Danzig/Gdańsk, Riga and Reval/Tallinn.

## QUANTIFYING MIGRATION OF EARLY MODERN BUILDING MASTERS

The numbers of emigrant artists in early modern Europe, their origins and their destinations demonstrate that the few well-studied Italians were just part of a much more complex international network. In 1986 the Belgian historian Wilfrid Brulez and his students published facts and figures on travelling artists in the early modern period,<sup>15</sup> based on one-third of all artists mentioned in Thieme-Becker's *Künstlerlexikon*.<sup>16</sup> Though Brulez's biased sources were rightly criticised (Thieme-Becker is based on older scholarly publications in which Italy, Germany and France are the best-studied regions, neglecting

11 *L'architecture de la Renaissance en Normandie*, 2 vols. Ed. by Bernard Beck et al. Caen, 2003.

12 Ibáñez Fernández, Javier. *La portada de Santa Maria de Catalayud. Estudio documental y artístico*. Catalayud: Centro de Estudios Bilbilitanos, 2012; Ibáñez Fernández, Javier. "Renaissance à la française dans le Quinientos aragonais". In: *Les échanges artistiques entre la France et l'Espagne (XV<sup>e</sup>-fin XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles)*. Ed. by Julien Lugand. Perpignan, 2012, 55–81.

13 Dunbar, John G. "Some sixteenth-century French parallels for the Palace of Falkland". In: *Review of Scottish Culture*, 7, 1991, 3–8; McKean, Charles. *The Scottish Chateau: The Country House of Renaissance Scotland*. Stroud, 2001.

14 Johannsen, Hugo. "Stonemasons in Denmark from the reigns of Frederik II (1559–1588) and Christian IV (1588–1648). The Emergence and Antecedents of the Renaissance Portal". In: *Masters, Meanings & Models. Studies in the Art and Architecture of the Renaissance in Denmark: Essays published in Honour of Hugo Johannsen*. Ed. by Michael Andersen, Ebbe Nyborg, Mogens Vedso. Copenhagen: National Museum of Denmark, 2010, 160–183.

15 Brulez, Wilfrid. *Cultuur en getal: aspecten van de relatie economie-maatschappij-cultuur in Europa tussen 1400 en 1800*. Amsterdam, 1986.

16 *Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, 37 vols. Started by Ulrich Thieme & Felix Becker. Leipzig, 1907–1950.



many other parts of Europe),<sup>17</sup> even today his research provides a general overview of artistic migration between c. 1400 and 1800. About 18% of the total of 80,000 artists were migrants, 15,000 persons altogether.<sup>18</sup> A closer look at the countries of origin shows that there was a complex network of multinational artistic exchange, in which the most prominent were those coming from German lands, the Low Countries, Italy and France:

**Artists migrating within Europe between 1400 and 1800, ordered by country of origin<sup>19</sup>**

Germany and Austria	25%
Low Countries	21.5%
Italy	19.7%
France	15.5%
Switzerland	3.7%
Spain	3.4%
England	3.3%
Others	7.9%

A closer look at the destinations of the four most important emigrant groups reveals the importance of the connections with Italy but also shows the multiplicity of other contacts that existed in early modern Europe:

**Destinations of migrating artists ordered by country of origin (left column), indicating the rate of all migrating artists from that country<sup>20</sup>**

	Italy	Germany	France	Low Countries	Spain	Austria	England	Other destinations
Germans	21.4		14.3	11	1.1	15	6.3	30.9%
Italians		17.6	22.8	4.4	13.9	12.6	7.6	21.1%
French	45.3	9.9		9.3	4.3	1.8	11.1	18.3%
Netherlanders	24.7	13.9	18.8		3.6	3.5	11	24.5%

Brulez also made an overview of the number of migrating artists divided into periods of 50 years, by year of birth. This figure, excerpted below, clearly shows that the Italians had the lead in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In

<sup>17</sup> Bok, Marten Jan. Review of W. Brulez's *Cultuur en getal, aspecten van de relatie economie-maatschappij-cultuur in Europa tussen 1400 en 1800*. In: *Simiolus*, 18, 1988, 63–68.

<sup>18</sup> Brulez 1986, 40.

<sup>19</sup> Brulez 1986, 40–41. This does not include 'national' migrations within Italy, France and Germany according to the current state borders (the use of modern nation-states as places of origin of artists of this period is one of the shortcomings of this study, admitted by Brulez himself).

<sup>20</sup> Excerpt from Brulez 1986, 42, fig. 9.



the sixteenth century, however, Italy was challenged in this position: from the late sixteenth century, the largest group came from the Low Countries, and from the late seventeenth century onward, the Germans and the French became the dominant groups.

**Total number of artists emigrating between 1400 and 1800, ordered by year of birth<sup>21</sup>**

	Germans and Austrians	Italians	French	Netherlanders
1400–1450	96	141	45	60
1450–1500	147	225	39	90
1500–1550	198	339	102	375
1550–1600	336	324	144	603
1600–1650	426	342	396	918
1650–1700	660	366	441	414
1700–1750	930	366	579	288

These numbers of travelling artists include all kinds of artists; among them, painters formed the largest group. According to Brulez, some 13% of all migrants were building masters. This figure might be biased because the lack of a clear-cut distinction between architecture and sculpture meant that architects could also be found among sculptors (16.5% of all migrants). Indeed, many sculptors, such as Cornelis Floris, Willem Boy and Philip Brandin, are documented to have designed micro-architecture as well as full-scale buildings.<sup>22</sup> Half of the sculptors may have been involved in building projects (a guess), which brings the number of artists connected with architecture up to about 20% of all migrating artists, or about 3,000 persons. The real number of travelling masters working in architecture must have been considerably higher because Brulez’s research is certain to have missed an even greater group of lesser-known craftsmen that are not mentioned in Thieme-Becker.

These numbers, notwithstanding the biased sources they are based on, illustrate the international complexity of artistic exchange in the late medieval and early modern period. The geography of the exchange network also makes clear that the traditional model of a dominant cultural centre and a dependant periphery does not illuminate the phenomenon. As other scholars have vigorously argued in the last two decades, the idea of the

<sup>21</sup> Excerpt from the overview by Brulez 1986, 42, fig. 8. His numbers are tripled here since Brulez investigated one third of all artists in Thieme-Becker.

<sup>22</sup> Ottenheim, Konrad. “Sculptors’ Architecture. The International Scope of Cornelis Floris and Hendrick de Keyser”. In: Ottenheim & De Jonge 2013, 102–127.

Renaissance as a single style based on the art and architecture of Rome and Florence, a style imitated on various levels of artistic quality elsewhere in Italy and Europe, obscures the true, pluralistic character of the search for *all'antica* architecture.<sup>23</sup> Though the Italian artists were very important in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Europe had other centres of innovation too, with other examples of antique architecture, other interpretations of antique texts and other ideas about the appropriate style in architecture. Artists originating from Florence, Venice or Lombardy and working abroad did not create mere copies of examples they knew from home. The same is true of Antwerp or Amsterdam in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Northern Europe. By introducing new architectural language in other parts of Northern and Central Europe, building masters and sculptors from those regions also contributed to the changes in local art and architecture and so became part of new cultural centres. In consequence, designs by masters from the Low Countries in Denmark, Sweden or the Baltic area are also not straight copies of buildings of Antwerp or Amsterdam. Migrating masters became part of local artistic networks abroad, not merely copying models from home but integrating their knowledge and adapting it to the local traditions and demands.

## MIGRATING BUILDING MASTERS FROM THE LOW COUNTRIES

The aforementioned statistics regarded merely one aspect of mobility among many. Indeed, the migration of building masters is most evident. However, architectural practices travelled in other, more indirect ways as well, as the example of the diffusion of Netherlandish architecture and architectural ideas during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may demonstrate. Thus, the direct transmission of Netherlandish architecture by actual migration as described above should be distinguished from the more indirect transmission achieved through working with models from the Low Countries. Both foreign artists who had received some training in the Low Countries and those who knew the Netherlandish models from printed sources only, could be influenced by Netherlandish architecture. In the past, research questions have been limited because they centred on naming the architects of important buildings. Past research has especially focused on finding well-known names in an effort to create new art heroes. Today, the main question is not *who*

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23 Castelnovo, Enrico & Carlo Ginzburg. "Centre and Periphery". In: *History of Italian Art*, vol. 1. Ed. by Peter Burke. Cambridge, 1994, 29–112; *Reframing the Renaissance*. Ed. by Claire Farago. New Haven–London, 1995; Guillaume, Jean. "Avant-propos: Renaissance ou Renaissances?". In: *L'invention de la Renaissance. La réception des formes 'à l'antique' au début de la Renaissance* (De Architectura 9). Paris, 2003, 7–8; Kaufmann, Thomas DaCosta. *Toward a Geography of Art*. Chicago–London, 2004; Kaufmann, Thomas DaCosta. "Acculturation, Transculturation, Cultural Difference and Diffusion: Assessing the Assimilation of the Renaissance". In: *Unity and Discontinuity. Architectural Relations between the Southern and Northern Low Countries 1530–1700* (Architectura Moderna 5). Ed. by Krista De Jonge & Konrad Ottenheim. Turnhout, 2007, 339–349.

served as architect of a particular building, but *how* the Netherlandish sources were introduced and adapted.

In 2013 the results of a joint research project of architectural historians of the universities of Leuven (Belgium) and Utrecht (The Netherlands) and various colleagues from elsewhere were published. This book, *The Low Countries at the Crossroads: Netherlandish Architecture as an Export Product in Early Modern Europe (1480–1680)*, focuses on the mechanisms of diffusion of architectural ideas from the Low Countries to other parts of Europe.<sup>24</sup> It doesn't make sense to try to summarise this volume at full length. Instead, here I will just highlight some of its headlines.

Along with study visits of foreign architects to the Low Countries, the role of printed sources and of course the international networks of patrons, especially of the nobility and commercial magnates, migration of Netherlandish architects and sculptors is one of the important ways in which artistic knowledge spread. It illustrates the reasons for artistic emigration, which can be grouped in three categories. First are the 'push' factors that made people leave their homeland, such as the threat of war or an overcrowded art market at home. Second are the 'pull' factors, such as the attraction of new patrons and possibilities of a successful career abroad, both on invitation and on private initiative. The third kind of reasons for leaving home (perhaps not for emigration in a proper sense) are the educational travels, undertaken either as a compulsory part of the guild system or by the will of an important patron who needed an architect at home with international taste and experience, or even by the artists' own choice.

## MIGRATING ON INVITATION

Regarding the various mechanisms diffusing Netherlandish architects and architectural ideas in other parts of Europe, there is a prime role of the foreign patrons, their relationships to the Low Countries and amongst themselves, and some of their major commissions.<sup>25</sup> Artists profited from the many interwoven personal and political connections of their patrons. Once invited and established in a court position abroad, artists also received commissions from the patron's family members as well as from his peers at other courts. For example, the histories of migrating Netherlandish artists in the sixteenth century illustrated this kind of exchange between the courts of Copenhagen, Königsberg and Mecklenburg, as well as the mobility

24 *The Low Countries at the Crossroads: Netherlandish Architecture as an Export Product in Early Modern Europe (1480–1680)* (Architectura Moderna 8). Ed. by Konrad Ottenheim & Krista De Jonge. Turnhout, 2013. In the same year an international volume on the migration of Netherlandish painters and sculptors was published: *Art and Migration: Netherlandish Artists on the Move, 1400–1750*. Ed. by Frits Scholten, Joanna Woodall, Dulcia Meijers. *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek (NKJ) / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 63, 2013.

25 See also: Scholten, Frits & Joanna Woodall. "Netherlandish Artists on the Move". In: *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek (NKJ) / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 63, 2013, 6–39; Koomen, Arjan de. "Una cosa non meno meravigliosa che honorata: The expansion of Netherlandish sculptors in sixteenth-century Europe". In: *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek (NKJ) / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 63, 2013, 82–109; Kavalier, Ethan Matt. "The diaspora of Netherlandish sculptors in the second half of the sixteenth century". In: Ottenheim & De Jonge 2013, 89–101.

between various courts in central Germany. Invitations to Netherlandish sculptor-architects mainly involved isolated objects like funeral monuments. Epitaphs and royal tombs were pieces of micro architecture not too distant from ‘real’ building elements such as chimneypieces, entrance gates, window frames, staircases and rood lofts. Such ‘architectural pieces’ could elegantly enhance even crude residential buildings. The prestige of such monuments influenced the development of architecture in the region, as did the few



6. Justus Vingboons. Façade of Riddarhus, the parliament building of the Swedish nobility, 1653–1656, Stockholm. Photo: Konrad Ottenheim

real building sites dominated by architects from the Low Countries, such as Kronborg in Denmark (1574–1586), the modernisation of the Tre Kronor, the royal palace in Stockholm (between 1577 and first half of the seventeenth century), and the Riddarhus, also in Stockholm (1650s, fig. 6). The size and complexity of these projects attracted experienced craftsmen, who by default created genuine epicentres of Netherlandish architecture abroad. Simultaneously, these Netherlandish building masters and stonemasons also received commissions from local noblemen for smaller projects that further stimulated the diffusion of the Netherlandish architectural vocabulary in the region.

Some of these foreign rulers engaged intermediaries as cultural agents who advertised and selected artists in the Low Countries, such as Jakob Binck (1500–1568), court painter in Copenhagen since 1546, who introduced the work of



Cornelis Floris to the courts of the King of Denmark (the tomb for Frederick I in Schleswig) and the Duke of Prussia (the epitaph of Duchess Dorothea in Königsberg).<sup>26</sup> These two funeral monuments introduced Cornelis Floris's qualities to the leading circles around the Baltic Sea. Other commissions followed. Later important agents, central to artistic connections between the Scandinavian–Baltic region and the Low Countries were Pieter Isaacsz (1568–1625)<sup>27</sup>, Dirk Roodenburg (c. 1570–1644), who was in contact with Hendrick de Keyser's studio in Amsterdam,<sup>28</sup> and Peter Trotzig (1613–1679), who negotiated with the Amsterdam architect Justus Vingboons regarding the work on the Riddarhus,<sup>29</sup> to name just a few.

Cornelis Floris himself did not travel. The prestigious monuments were created in Antwerp. Complicated funeral monuments were packed in wooden crates and shipped in pieces. These shipments were accompanied by a skilled journeyman who knew how to put the pieces together correctly, could repair the damage caused during the transportation, and could produce on site the monument's foundation using local stone. This practice continued over decades but became less reliable in the late 1560s, when the political and economic situation in the Low Countries changed dramatically and people began seeking new opportunities abroad. Several of Cornelis Floris's assistants who were sent abroad did not return after their work was finished. Instead, they tried to begin new careers with a 'Cornelis Floris look-alike workshop', such as Willem van den Blocke, who moved to Gdańsk after his job for Cornelis Floris in Königsberg was finished.<sup>30</sup> Gert van Egen, who supervised the installation of Floris's royal funeral monument in Roskilde, was invited by the Danish king to stay. He became the sculptor to the court in Copenhagen.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to these artists, who were sent abroad to accompany Cornelis Floris's work but never returned, other workshop co-operators left Antwerp because they accepted commissions personally offered to them. In most cases, becoming a successful artist at a foreign court meant being more than just a capable sculptor because genuine art commissions were rare. The ability to design buildings and fortifications and supervise their construction was

26 Binck's letters are published by Hermann Ehrenberg in: *Die Kunst am Hofe der Herzöge von Preussen*. Leipzig–Berlin, 1899; also quoted in: Roggen, Domien & Jan Withof. "Cornelis Floris". In: *Gentse Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis*, 8, 1942, 79–171.

27 *Pieter Isaacsz (1568–1625). Court Painter, Art Dealer and Spy*. Ed. by Badeloch Noldus & Juliette Roding. Turnhout, 2007.

28 Worp, J. A. "Dirk Rodenburg". In: *Oud Holland* 13 (1895), 65–90, 143–173, 209–237.

29 Noldus, Badeloch. *Trade in Good Taste. Relations in Architecture and Culture between the Dutch Republic and the Baltic World in the Seventeenth Century* (Architectura Moderna 2). Turnhout: Brepols, 2004, 111–119.

30 Skibiński, Franciszek. *Willem van den Blocke. A Sculptor from the Low Countries in the Baltic Region*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2021, 37–79.

31 Johannsen, Hugo. "Dignity and Dynasty. On the history and meaning of the royal funeral monuments for Christian III, Frederik II and Christian IV in the cathedral of Roskilde". In: Andersen et al. 2010, 117–149; Johannsen, Hugo. "Stonemasons in Denmark from the reigns of Frederik II (1559–1588) and Christian IV (1588–1648). The emergence and antecedents of the Renaissance portal". In: Andersen et al. 2010, 160–83 (169).

necessary as well. For example, the contract for the new court artist at Kassel in 1577 explained that his duties were ‘to direct a building site, to demolish, to design, to sculpt, and to work in plaster as well as trass mortar’.<sup>32</sup> Apparently, the journeymen of Cornelis Floris’s workshop possessed a good reputation that gave them the opportunity to start their own careers abroad.

## MIGRATION WITHOUT INVITATION

While numerous architects and sculptors from the Low Countries were summoned by cultural agents, others who were seeking employment opportunities abroad emigrated without any formal invitation. In most cases, the former life at home of these travelling artists and the individual reasons for their emigration remain unknown. Often, the migration of artists has been mentioned only incidentally in the sources, with their eventual successes or failures abroad left undocumented. Generally, only those who began new workshops or joined guilds appear in the archival documents.

The routes chosen by various masters differed, yet a general pattern can be discerned. Those who were not invited by a court initially moved to a larger city, like Norwich, London, Emden or Hamburg, that enjoyed good connections with the Low Countries. Some artists found professional opportunities in these cities and stayed. Naturally, not all refugees could be employed in the closest cities. After a temporary stay, most immigrants moved further on to, for example, the Netherlandish community in Elsinore at the Sound, or further east to Gdańsk or Riga.<sup>33</sup> Emigrants from the Low Countries found these free cities more attractive than the Scandinavian cities of Copenhagen and Stockholm. While the reasons for this preference were not documented, perhaps both capital cities were reluctant to receive foreign craftsmen without royal invitation. Whatever the case, major mercantile cities like Hamburg, Gdańsk and Riga had the advantage of not being dominated by a single court. Instead, patricians and prosperous merchants offered a broader circle of future clients to migrating artists. In the last decades of the sixteenth century, the stream of Netherlandish artists emigrating to Gdańsk increased when the Vroom and Van der Meer families arrived from the southern Low Countries (and Van den Blocke from Königsberg). They assumed various functions within the city’s building team and founded genuine dynasties of sculptors, stonemasons and architects that would dominate the city’s architecture for the next century.<sup>34</sup>

32 “... mit Bauen anzugeben, abzureissen, Visierungen zu stellen, bildhauen, Gips auszuschneiden, Estrich zu schlagen, im Trass zu arbeiten”; contract with Willem Vernukken, 1 May 1577 (Marburg Staatsarchiv), quoted in: Kramm, Walter. “Die beiden ersten Kassler Hofbildhauerwerkstätten im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert”. In: *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft*, 8–9, 1936, 362.

33 Tonnesen, Allan. *Helsingørs udenlandske borgere og indbyggere ca. 1550–1600* (Byhistoriske Skrifter 3). Ringe: Misteltenen, 1985.

34 Tylicki, Jacek. “The Van den Blocke family in Gdańsk and in Central Europe”. In: Ottenheim & De Jonge 2013, 142–157; Skibiński 2021.

Little is known about the international mobility of ordinary craftsmen from the Low Countries, the probable difficulties inherent to becoming a member of the local guild, and the struggles associated with working in local building teams. For architects, especially in comparison to painters and sculptors, employment in a foreign country was nearly impossible without a network of patrons, family members, traders in stone and wood, and a reliable team of craftsmen. Acceptance came only with extraordinary qualities that attracted the attention of the new patrons. Therefore, architects promoted themselves as specialists in a new style, or as experts in disciplines related to architecture, such as water engineering, military engineering or stone trading.

## FAMILY NETWORKS

Artists who had gained prominent positions abroad became anchors to the newly arrived countrymen. Stonemasons and building masters in the Low Countries traditionally operated in family clans, and some of them successfully maintained their close ties abroad whilst living and working in Northern Europe, especially along the route of Mechelen–Denmark–Gdańsk.<sup>35</sup> This might explain the professional success of some of these families such as the Van Duerne/Doren, van den Blocke, Van Egen and Van Opbergen. They all earned their money as sculptors, architects, fortification engineers and stone traders, thus keeping control of the shipping and delivery of their building materials as well as securing the best training for their sons by sending them as journeymen to related workshops.

In addition to the connections between Netherlandish workshops abroad, many of these families also maintained contact with their home country. Families sent their sons as apprentices or journeymen to relatives in the southern or northern Low Countries, or to other renowned masters. Thus, the second or even third generation of emigrants, who were often born abroad, became acquainted with their (grand)fathers' homeland and its art and architecture. The travels of Jacob van den Blocke (1577–1653), for instance, are well documented.<sup>36</sup> He was born in 1577 in Königsberg (Prussia) as the son of Willem van den Blocke. He was trained as a carpenter and in 1588, at the age of eleven, he travelled to Emden to work with a German master carpenter for four years. In 1592 he returned to Gdańsk, and during his journey years from 1595 to 1600 he travelled to Holland, Copenhagen, Königsberg and Elbląg. When he returned to Gdańsk in 1600, he was accepted as a master in the guild. Even the third generation of the van den Blocke family stayed in contact with the Low Countries by completing their professional training

35 Skibiński, Franciszek. "Early-modern Netherlandish Sculptors in Danzig and East-Central Europe: A Study in Dissemination through Interrelation and Workshop Practice". In: *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek (NKJ) / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 63, 2013, 110–135; Skibiński, Franciszek. "The expansion of Gdańsk and the rise of taste for Netherlandish sculpture in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth in the sixteenth and seventeenth century". In: Ottenheim & De Jonge 2013, 158–176.

36 Cuny, Georg. *Danzigs Kunst und Kultur im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, vol. 1: *Baugeschichtliches. Danzigs Künstler mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der beiden Andreas Schlüter*. Frankfurt am Main, 1910, 49–50.

in Holland. In 1634 Jacob van den Blocke the Younger sailed from Gdańsk to Amsterdam where he expected to train as a carpenter; unfortunately, he died on the voyage.<sup>37</sup> The final phase of the education of Hans and Laurens van Steenwinckel was comparable. After their father Hans the Elder, the Danish Royal Building Master, died in 1600, the brothers were sent abroad for several years with royal permission, before they were qualified to take over their father's position. During this period, they stayed in Holland for some time, presumably also in Hendrick de Keyser's workshop.<sup>38</sup>

## REASONS FOR SUCCESS ABROAD

The reasons for the success of the Netherlandish stonemasons, sculptors and architects abroad are hard to define. Most often a conjunction of different factors rather than a single cause will have been at play. Among these were definitely the availability of precious building materials as well as the logistics and infrastructure of the workshops. These together must have resulted in a competitive power to be reckoned with, the cornerstone upon which the fame of the Netherlandish workshops within international circles of ruling nobility and civic elites abroad was based.

In 1563, Cornelis Floris mentioned in a letter two major problems in daily workshop practice that might cause delay in finishing the commissions: availability of good quality stone and the absence of competent assistants.<sup>39</sup> Artists working elsewhere in Europe would have encountered the same problems. Delivering precious commissions in due time was important for gaining favour at foreign courts. In order to comply with the time schedule of production, it was necessary to secure both the availability of raw materials, especially of stone, and the contribution of capable journeymen and assistants. For the latter, family members were the most reliable source; for the former, a close connection to the stone trade network was essential.

Thus, the availability of stone must have been another key to success. In the plains of northern Germany, northern Poland and the Baltic region, all stone had to be imported and connections to quarries or with the established stone traders were essential for success. In Sweden and Denmark, sandstone and granite were available locally, but this was not what was wanted for more prestigious commissions. From the mid-sixteenth century onwards, the combined use of black, red and white marble was regarded as a clear reference to Roman antiquity and to imperial/royal prestige. As a result, these precious materials gained enormous popularity among the highest class of patrons of architecture and micro architecture, such as tombs and rood lofts. In Northern

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<sup>37</sup> Cuny 1910, 50.

<sup>38</sup> Johannsen, Hugo. "The Steenwinckels: the success story of a Netherlandish immigrant family in Denmark". In: Ottenheim & De Jonge 2013, 128–141.

<sup>39</sup> Letter of 19 september 1563 (Brussels, Algemeen Rijksarchief), published at full length in: Huysmans, Antoinette & Jan Van Damme, Carl Van de Velde, Christine Van Mulders. *Cornelis Floris 1514–1575: beeldhouwer, architect, ontwerper*. Brussels, 1996, 245–246.



Europe, the epicentre for the quarrying and trading of these marble-like stones was situated in the southern Low Countries (even for those works designed and supervised by Italians, for instance, the funeral chapels in Freiberg and Vilnius).

Cornelis Floris and former assistants from his workshops took the lead in the design and production of these sumptuous architectural structures and their accompanying sculptures. Their logistics, with better connections to the quarries and better control of the sea transport, must have outreached those of their Italian competitors working in Northern Europe. Both those who were invited by a ruler or member of the high nobility and those settling abroad on their own initiative, maintained connections with colleagues and family at home. These networks were kept alive over several generations. For sculptors of funerary monuments, it was essential to keep in touch with the traders in red and black marble from the southern Low Countries, one of the backbones of their success. This may be one of the major reasons why Netherlandish artists were mostly working at places that were in contact with the sea. It was only in places like Cracow and Lviv,<sup>40</sup> where local quarries with stone of comparable quality were to be found, that Netherlandish building masters and sculptors could establish a career independent from the logistic lifeline with the Low Countries.

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<sup>40</sup> See, for instance: Lipińska, Aleksandra. "Eastern Outpost: The Sculptors Herman Van Hutte and Hendrik Horst in Lviv c. 1560–1610". In: *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek (NKJ) / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 63, 2013, 136–169.

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