Quality, Risk and Uncertainty and the Market for Brussels Tapestry, 1450-1750*

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for Guy Delmarcel's 72nd birthday

1. Introduction: 'La tapisserie n'est pas un chose comme seroite le pintures'

In his *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkonst* (Introduction to the higher school of the art of painting) (1678), Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627-1678) described tapestry as one of painting's 'natural children', yet it was 'disinherited because of the slowness and difficulties typical of crafts'.[1]

Van Hoogstraten was certainly right in stating that tapestry production was exceptionally time-consuming; the process was so laborious, an Italian nuncio remarked in 1610, that 'it transforms even the most impatient man into a stoic'.[2] This applied to all European production centres, but especially to Brussels where tapestry of the highest quality was woven, mainly for export. Brussels weavers operated low-warp looms. These consisted of two rollers, between which uncoloured threads, known as warp threads, were stretched horizontally. The weavers passed handheld shuttles with coloured threads, known as weft threads, through the small spaces between the warps, creating a woven version of the full-scale, coloured design, known as the cartoon. This was then cut into strips which were placed underneath the warp threads. Skilled weavers could produce about half a square meter of tapestry per month, so any high-quality Brussels tapestry of about four meters high by six meters wide would have taken three to four weavers about seven months to finish.[3]

Van Hoogstraten was also right in observing that tapestry producers (*tapissiers*) faced many difficulties and challenges. The biggest hurdle undoubtedly was the financing of production and, because weaving was exceptionally time-consuming, the labour cost was substantial. In around 1700 the production of one Brussels tapestry cost a workshop

* I would like to thank all the members of the *Art Markets in Europe* research team for the stimulating discussions throughout the years, and in particular Neil De Marchi and Sophie Raux for their constructive criticism of the first version of this essay.

1 'But I will leave aside embroidery, tapestry and joining pieces of fabric together (because the painter's hand is too noble for this), even though these are the natural children of painting, yet they are disinherited because of the slowness and difficulties typical of crafts'; Samuel Van Hoogstraten, *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkonst: anders de zichtbaere werelt* (Rotterdam: F. van Hoogstraten, 1678), pp. 340-41.

2 Cited by Guy Delmarcel *et al.*, *Vlaamse wandtapijten: Vijf eeuwen traditie* (Mechelen: Stichting De Wit, 1995), p. 13.

3 Cf. Thomas P. Campbell, 'The Art and Magnificence of Renaissance Tapestries', in *Tapestry in the Renaissance: Art and Magnificence,* ed. by Thomas P. Campbell, exhib. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 6; and Koenraad Brosens, 'Tapestry: Luxurious Art, Collaborative Industry', in *The Blackwell Companion to Renaissance and Baroque Art,* ed. by Babette Bohn and James Saslow (Oxford: Blackwell, 2013), p. 297.

director at least fl. 500 in wages;[4] the labour cost of a set of eight tapestries could easily reach fl. 4,000 – the price of a coach, the method of transport of the elite, cost around fl. 1,000. Over and above the wages was the cost of purchasing the materials required to produce tapestries. Wool was used for the warp threads and most of the coloured weft threads. Prices unfortunately are not known, but coloured threads were bought from dyers whose unique technical knowledge made their products costly. Brussels tapestries also had expensive silk threads, and the finest pieces were woven with precious silver and gilt metal-wrapped threads.

Tapestry producers not only had to invest in labour and material, but also in cartoons. These were drawn or painted on paper or linen or, from the seventeenth century on, often on canvas. In the early eighteenth century, when the daily wage of a skilled craftsman amounted to fl. 1 to 1½, a set of eight new cartoons cost about fl. 2,300.[5] Understandably, cartoons were cherished goods. They took a lot of wear and tear during the weaving but were carefully restored, retouched, modified, and copied across the centuries. In short, the industry was especially capital-intensive and thus very different from the production of paintings, as stressed by Brussels tapestry producer François van den Hecke (1595/96-1675). In 1654 he stated that *la tapisserie n'est pas un chose comme seroite le pintures*, and he specified that 'if a painter has twenty guilders, he can execute ten thousand paintings and more. By contrast, to produce one single tapestry, a workshop manager constantly needs a lot of money'.[6]

Obviously, Van den Hecke was exaggerating, but the hyperbole can easily be explained: the agitated *tapissier* was addressing a client who kept on postponing payment. In any case, Van den Hecke's comment brings us to the second major obstacle tapestry producers had to face, namely, the recovery of the invested capital, which was often slow and uncertain. Sometimes the investments were not recovered at all, as when customers and patrons defaulted or died before completion of a commission, or when sets that had been made on spec remained unsold. Archival evidence shows that Van den Hecke was not the first or the last Brussels tapestry producer confronted with default by clients who, given the amounts involved, cast a shadow over the operations and even the existence of a workshop. For example, in the early 1520s, shortly after he had delivered Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles* series for the Sistine Chapel (1515-1521), *tapissier* Pieter van Edingen, also known as Pieter van Aelst (*c.* 1450-1533), was heavily indebted to the Fuggers, the rich Augsburg bankers, and was forced to pawn seven tapestries of his freshly woven *Honors* series.[7] In 1699 Don Fernando de Aragón (1644-1713) commissioned a six-part set depicting the *History of the House of Moncada* from Brussels *tapissier* Albert Auwercx (1629-1709). Auwercx completed the set between 1700 and 1703 but, because Don Fernando did not pay, the series remained stored for many years in the Auwercx workshop as idle capital. It was only between 1714 and 1718, a few years after Albert Auwercx's death that Don Fernando's

4 Koenraad Brosens, *A contextual study of Brussels tapestry, 1670-1770. The dye works and tapestry workshop of Urbanus Leyniers* (1674-1747) (Brussels: Paleis der Academien, 2004), pp. 51-2.
5 Brosens, *A contextual study,* pp. 44-5.
6 Jarmila Blažková and Erik Duverger, *Les Tapisseries d'Octavio Piccolomini et le marchand anversois Louis Malo.* (St.-Amandsberg: Centre interuniversitaire d'étude de l'histoire de la tapisserie flamande, 1970), p. 61.
7 Guy Delmarcel, *Los Honores* (Ghent: Snoeck-Ducaju, 2000), p. 9.

daughter, Catalina de Moncada, started to buy the tapestries one at a time.[8] The Portuguese politician, Don Luiz da Cunha (1662-1749), also turned out to be a poor payer. In 1727, Brussels *tapissier* Urbanus Leyniers (1674-1747) delivered a set to him that was never completely paid for in Leyniers's lifetime, and, in 1749, his children were still trying to obtain the sum of fl. 3,323 from Da Cunha.[9]

These few examples make it clear that *tapissiers* not only needed to have a significant amount of capital at their disposal; they also – and perhaps even more especially – had to guard their credit-worthiness carefully and needed easy access to cheap credit to tide them over recurring cash-flow problems.

Quality issues formed the third major challenge that confronted Brussels *tapissiers*. Tapestry producers had to find a way to remove, or at least minimise, all doubt and uncertainty in the minds of potential customers about the quality of their products. Ultimately quality was a function of the interaction between a number of factors that were not simple to reproduce or measure. It depended on the quality of the dyed wool and silk; the number of warps per centimetre (which determined the precision of detail and the fineness of the weave); the quality and condition of the cartoon; and, last but not least, the skill of the weavers.[10] To reduce uncertainty about the quality for prospective buyers, *tapissiers* not only had to control and supervise local production; they had also to guard against and prevent counterfeit tapestries of an inferior quality to Brussels tapestries from entering the market.

Given all these challenges – the capital intensive and risky nature of the industry, information shortages and asymmetries (with the potential to render a market non-functional, as per Akerlof)[11] – it is something of a miracle that Brussels tapestry producers were able to steer the industry through the early modern period as successfully as they did. The central question of this essay thus arises: how did Brussels *tapissiers* succeed in controlling and managing the risks and uncertainties in their business as well as the quality of their product?

As straightforward as the question may be, it has never been asked. Art history has long held Van Hoogstraten's view that tapestry is an art of lesser importance because it is basically labour-intensive and therefore lacks the swiftness and genius that is typical of true art, i.e. painting. Tapestry became completely encapsulated in the decorative arts and as such was long overlooked by art historians. It was only in the 1970s and 1980s that tapestry research began to mature. As a recent overview of thirty-five years of tapestry scholarship has shown, the agenda has been mainly geared towards challenging and correcting the traditional notion that tapestry is merely decorative.[12] The pictorial possibilities and qualities of the medium were rightly highlighted and emphasis laid on the fact that throughout the late medieval and early modern period, European ecclesiastical and secular rulers used

8 Guy Delmarcel, Margarita García Calvo and Koenraad Brosens, 'Spanish Family Pride in Flemish Wool and Silk: The Moncada and their Baroque Tapestry Collection', in *Tapestry in the Baroque. New Aspects of Production and Patronage,* ed. by Thomas P. Campbell and Elizabeth Cleland (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; London – New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 284-315.

9 Brosens, *A contextual study*, p. 47.

10 Campbell, 'The Art and Magnificence', p. 6.

11 George A. Akerlof, 'The Market for 'Lemons': Quality Uncertainty and the Market Mechanism', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 84 (1970), pp. 488-500.

12 Pascal-François Bertrand and Guy Delmarcel, 'L'histoire de la tapisserie, 1500-1700. Trente-cinq ans de recherche', *Perspective. La revue de l'INHA*, 2 (2008), pp. 227-50.

high-quality figurative tapestries as eye-catching vehicles for expressing wealth and power, and for conveying dynastic claims and political ambitions.[13] Given the ambition of this research agenda, it should not be surprising that very little attention has been paid so far to the economic dimension of the medium.[14]

This essay, however, offers an initial exploration of this dimension by defining and analysing the economic institutions created by Brussels *tapissiers* and the entrepreneurial strategies they employed to control and manage the risks and uncertainties as well as the quality of their product. I shall argue that, over time, the Brussels *tapissiers* developed and relied on three institutions and strategies that complemented and supplemented each other. The oldest of these, discussed in the next section, is the normative framework in which tapestry production and trade was rooted; namely, the ordinances issued by the Brussels tapestry corporation, the city council and the central government. I will demonstrate that while this framework was a necessary and valuable attempt to tackle the challenges, it was inadequate. I will go on to propose that the Antwerp and Brussels *tapissierspanden*, as combination retail outlets and credit companies, were in a better position to address the insecurities faced by prospective buyers and producers alike. Moreover, these institutions supported a particularly effective strategy, adopted by Brussels *tapissiers,* to address the problem of credit, credit worthiness and an imbalance in information: they developed interconnected regional and international networks. The way these networks functioned, and their importance to the industry, will be discussed in the final section of the essay.

While discussing the institutions and strategies, we should keep in mind the impatient François van den Hecke and his statement that *la tapisserie n'est pas un chose comme seroite le pintures*. It is clear that the amount of capital and credit which circulated in the Brussels tapestry industry and the European tapestry market limited the number of active actors. The price of a Brussels set could reach extraordinary levels: Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles* series for the Sistine Chapel, for example, cost more than five times the amount Michelangelo was paid for frescoing the famous ceiling,[15] and for the amount that Henry VIII spent on a Brussels *Story of David* series in 1528 he could have bought a new battleship.[16]

13 See, for example, Campbell, 'The Art and Magnificence'; Pascal-François Bertrand, *Les tapisseries des Barberini et la décoration d'intérieur dans la Rome baroque* (Studies in Western Tapestry, 2), (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005); Thomas P. Campbell, *Henry VIII and the Art of Majesty* (New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 2007); *Threads of Splendor: Tapestry in the Baroque,* ed. by Thomas P. Campbell, exhib. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 2007); and *Gli arazzi dei Gonzaga nel Rinascimento*, ed. by Guy Delmarcel and Clifford M. Brown (Milan: Skira, 2010).

14 Several of my own studies focus on Brussels *tapissiers* and their entrepreneurial behaviour, but do not offer a bird's eye view of this issue: Koenraad Brosens, 'Charles Le Brun's *Meleager and Atalanta* and Brussels Tapestry *c*. 1675', *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, 11 (2003-2004), pp. 5-37; Koenraad Brosens, *A contextual study*; Koenraad Brosens, 'Nouvelles données sur l'*Histoire de Cléopâtre* de Poerson. Le réseau Parent et la tapisserie bruxelloise à la française', *Revue belge d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art/Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Oudheidkunde en Kunstgeschiedenis*, 74 (2005), pp. 63-77; Koenraad Brosens, 'Bruxelles/Paris/Bruxelles. Charles de La Fontaine et la diffusion des modèles des tapisseries de Charles Poerson à Bruxelles, 1650-1675', *Revue belge d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art/Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Oudheidkunde en Kunstgeschiedenis*, 76 (2007), pp. 43-60; Koenraad Brosens and Veerle De Laet, 'Matthijs Roelandts, Joris Leemans and Lanceloot Lefebure Unearthed. New Data on Brussels Baroque Tapestry', *The Burlington Magazine*, 151 (2009), pp. 360-67; Koenraad Brosens, 'New Light on the Raes Workshop in Brussels and Rubens's *Achilles* series', in Campbell and Cleland, *Tapestry in the Baroque,* pp. 20-33; and Koenraad Brosens, 'Revisiting Brussels Tapestry, 1700-1740. New Data on *Tapissiers* Albert Auwercx and Judocus de Vos', *Textile History*, 43 (2012), pp. 180-96.

15 Thomas P. Campbell, 'The Acts of the Apostles Tapestries and Raphael's Cartoons', in Campbell, *Tapestry in the Renaissance,* p. 198.

16 Campbell, *Henry VIII*, p. 146.

It is therefore unsurprising that Brussels tapestries were usually beyond the reach of the bourgeoisie in Europe. As a consequence, the rise of these groups, evolutions in their buying power and changes in their consumption patterns that had a strong impact on the market for Flemish paintings, hardly influenced the demand for Brussels tapestries. The organisation and development of the tapestry market and the entrepreneurial strategies developed by Brussels *tapissiers* differed significantly from the changing structures of the European market for paintings and from the ways in which painters and art dealers marketed their goods. Auctions, for example, played a crucial role in the development of the market for paintings, but were only of marginal importance for the Brussels tapestry producers.[17] This essay will highlight a number of remarkable differences between the two markets.

2. The normative framework

The archives of the Brussels tapestry corporation were not preserved. The oldest records were lost, probably in 1690 when the meeting room of the *tapissiers*, housing their archives, was destroyed by fire.[18] Eighteenth-century archival material has not been found either. Fortunately, the ordinances that concerned the organisation of the industry and its trade were also registered in the municipal records and those of the *Lakengilde* (Textile Guild), the institution that supervised all Brussels corporations that were involved in the production and marketing of textiles. These are now in the Brussels City Archives. Most of these ordinances were accurately published – as I verified in the course of research done for this essay – by Alphonse Wauters, director of the Brussels City Archives during the second half of the nineteenth century, as part of his pioneering study (1878)[19] on Brussels tapestry.

By 1306, Brussels *tapissiers* had been grouped in a body that was part of the corporation of the linen weavers, also known as the *kleine ambacht* (small corporation).[20] In or shortly after 1418, the *tapissiers* were detached from the *kleine ambacht*, only to become a subdivision of the *grote ambacht* ('large corporation') of the wool weavers. As the number of *tapissiers* rose, they broke away from the *grote ambacht* and ultimately formed an autonomous corporation in 1448 or 1449. This growth and eventual independence of the Brussels tapestry industry shows that business was booming in the first half of the fifteenth century. This development was encouraged by, and in turn encouraged, the growth and organisation of regional and international markets for luxury goods in Bergen-op-Zoom, Bruges and Antwerp, where Brussels *tapissiers* were able to market their products during the annual

17 Studies focusing on the development and impact of auctions are particularly numerous; for an extensive bibliography, see Dries Lyna, 'The Cultural Construction of Value: Art Auctions in Antwerp and Brussels (1700-1794)' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Antwerp, 2010), pp. 349-72. For auctions and tapestry, see Koenraad Brosens, 'Wie durft daerop bieden? Tapestry cartoons, preparatory sketches and tapestries at auction, 1650-1750', in *Art auctions and dealers. The dissemination of Netherlandish painting during the Ancien Régime*, ed. by Dries Lyna, Filip Vermeylen and Hans Vlieghe (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), pp. 83-96.

18 Brussels, *Stadsarchief* (hereafter SAB), *Register der Tresorije* (hereafter RT), 1305, fol. 153v-154r.

19 Alphonse Wauters, *Les tapisseries bruxelloises. Essai historique sur les tapisseries et les tapissiers de haute et de basse-lice de Bruxelles* (Brussels: Impr. de Ve. Julien Baertsoen, Succr. de Bols-Wittouch, 1878). All regulations were recorded in Flemish; Wauters discussed what he believed to be the most important features in French.

20 This brief sketch of the development of the Brussels tapestry corporation is based on Felicien Favresse, 'Le complexe des métiers du tissage à Bruxelles pendant les XIV^{e} et XV^{e} siècles', *Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire/Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Philologie en Geschiedenis*, 27 (1949), pp. 61-84, and Sophie Schneebalg-Perelman, 'Les débuts de la tapisserie bruxelloise au XIV^{e} siècle et son importance durant la première moitié du XV^{e} siècle', *Annales de la Société Royale d'Archéologie de Bruxelles*, 55 (1978), pp. 27-51.

and biannual fairs, that were obviously important for the regional and international trade in paintings. Given the value and vulnerability of tapestry, it is likely that pieces were exhibited in buildings with the floor space and height to hang tapestries, specifically in the *pand* (premises) of the Dominicans (*Predikherenpand*) in Antwerp from 1445 onwards, and the *pand* of the Augustinians in Bruges from 1495 onwards.[21]

Needless to say, an independent profession had to have statutes. In April 1451, the *tapissiers*' statutes were approved by the Brussels City Council.[22] The ordinance had twenty-seven stipulations that can be divided into four groups. One group laid down working days and times; a second divided the members into three categories (apprentices, workmen and independent masters); a third determined members' rights and obligations; and, finally, the fourth, and by far the largest group, comprised the detailed stipulations that aimed to guarantee that Brussels tapestries were of a high quality. Quality control was in the hands of the deans of the corporation who assessed and attached seals of approval to the pieces in the chapel of Saint Christopher, located in the vicinity of the church of Our Lady of the Chapel. It should be emphasised that the 1451 ordinance was not intended to ensure the socio-economic equality or solidarity of the members of the three groups, or between the groups themselves for that matter, since there were neither quotas on looms or output nor restrictions on collaborations or subcontracting. This probably reflects the fact that, around the time that the ordinance was recorded, tapestry production was controlled by a small group of wealthy entrepreneurs who were not themselves heads of workshops, but had an interest in being free to operate as they chose. These entrepreneurs acquired a stock of cartoons and sets of tapestries and acted as trustworthy financial brokers between small-scale workshops on the one hand, and royal and noble households on the other.[23]

In light of the emphasis on quality, the 1451 ordinance may be viewed as an institution that aimed to reduce uncertainties or doubts that prospective buyers might have had about the quality of the products – an institution that tried to reduce the distance between buyers and sellers,[24] which was significant since Brussels tapestry was first and foremost an export product. However, the effectiveness of the ordinance was not as great as had been hoped. By 1475, the Brussels corporation was forced to draft a second ordinance, once again focussing on quality.[25] The most striking stipulation in 1475 concerned the quality checks carried out by the deans. From that time on, checks would take place while the tap-

21 Dora Schlugleit, 'De Predikherenpand en St-Niklaasgilde te Antwerpen (1445-1553)', *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis*, 29 (1938), pp. 99-119; J. Versyp, *De geschiedenis van de tapijtkunst te Brugge* (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1954), p. 164; Cornelis J.F. Slootmans, 'Les marchands brabançons et, plus spécialement, les marchands bruxellois aux foires de Berg-op-Zoom, d'après les données d'archives de Berg-op-Zoom', *Cahiers bruxellois*, 8 (1963), pp. 13-64; Dan Ewing, 'Marketing Art in Antwerp, 1460-1560: Our Lady's *Pand*', *The Art Bulletin*, 72 (1990), pp. 560-61.

22 SAB, *Registre alwaer geregistreert staen diversche ordonnantien raeckende verscheyden ambachten,* 1447, fol. 43r-45v. Published by Wauters, *Les tapisseries bruxelloises*, pp. 33-40.

23 Lorne Campbell, 'The Art Market in the Southern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century', *Burlington Magazine*, 118 (1976), p. 194. The most famous of these producers is Pasquier Grenier (d. 1493) from Tournai. As the city's wine importer, he could raise sufficient venture capital to engage in tapestry production and trade on an unprecedented scale. Grenier became one of the key suppliers to the European courts, had stocks in Antwerp and Bruges, and he subcontracted the weaving of sets based on his cartoons to workshop managers in various towns. See Jean Lestocquoy, *Deux siècles de l'histoire de la tapisserie (1300-1500): Paris, Arras, Lille, Tournai, Bruxelles* (Arras: Commission départementale des monuments historiques du Pas-de-Calais, 1978), pp. 71-80.

24 See Bo Gustafsson, 'The Rise and Economic Behaviour of Medieval Craft Guilds. An Economic-Theoretical Interpretation', *The Scandinavian Economic History Review and Economy and History*, 35 (1987), pp. 9-10.

25 SAB, *Registre alwaer geregistreert staen diversche ordonnantien raeckende verscheyden ambachten,* 1447, fol. 138r-139r. Published by Wauters, *Les tapisseries bruxelloises*, pp. 46-47.

estries were still in the looms. This measure was aimed at differentiating between Brussels tapestries and imported counterfeit pieces.[26]

With this framework in place, Brussels became the undisputed centre of high-quality tapestry production in Europe from 1475 onward, thanks in part to a decision taken by the Burgundian dukes to exchange Lille for Brussels as their primary city of residence, and in part to the French occupation of Arras and Tournai, which had disastrous consequences for the flourishing tapestry industry in both those cities.[27] However, quality remained a thorny issue as evidenced by a complaint lodged by a number of tapestry dealers, acting on behalf of Spanish and Portuguese merchants, and filed with the deans of the Brussels *Lakengilde* in 1525.[28] The complaints were related to some Brussels workshop directors who had apparently been marketing tapestries of inferior quality. Parts of the scenes were painted, not woven, and fragments were sewn together to create larger tapestries. Also, according to those lodging the complaints, workshop directors sometimes pilfered materials and copied the cartoons that were made available to them by the producers. The 1525 complaint indicates not only the usual opportunism that threatens all normative frameworks, but also the attempts by the Brussels workshop directors to break free from the brokers, to find ways to circumvent them so that they could operate as producers in their own right.

Their opportunistic entrepreneurial behaviour brought these workshop directors into conflict not only with international traders and producers, but also with a large group of Brussels weavers and less powerful masters who rightly feared that quality deterioration would damage the industry and consequently their own positions. Members of this group were very vulnerable to sudden changes in their economic circumstances, with little margin to absorb the unexpected. This is illustrated by the case of Jan de Roy. In 1519, he lost his creditworthiness, and sank under the weight of his debts, as a result of health problems following an accident with a horse and carriage that occurred on his way back from the annual market at Bergen-op-Zoom.[29] In 1528 the Brussels City Council tried to reduce tensions between the director-producers, on the one hand, and the less powerful masters and workmen, on the other, by issuing an ordinance that clearly shows the nature of the conflict.[30] The first group, who dominated the corporation management, had one demand: to increase the number of workmen by reducing the length of training. The other faction feared, however, that this would have ruinous consequences for product quality, particularly since quality checks had become less stringent over the years. The City Council grasped that quality had to be safeguarded at all costs to secure the future and development of an industry that was crucial to the city's economy, and so they sided with the less powerful masters and workmen. For this reason, they decided that tapestries made in Brussels had to

26 In 1473 seals were abolished for fiscal reasons, but the quality check in the chapel of Saint Christopher remained in place; SAB, *Registre alwaer geregistreert staen diversche ordonnantien raeckende verscheyden ambachten,* 1447, fol. 109v-111r. Published by Wauters, *Les tapisseries bruxelloises,* pp. 42-45.

27 Thomas P. Campbell, 'Netherlandish Production and the Rise of Brussels, 1480-1515', in Campbell, *Art and Magnificence*, pp. 131-45.

28 SAB, *Register der Laeckengulde,* 1436, fol. 160r-162v. Published by Wauters, *Les tapisseries bruxelloises*, pp. 134-38.

29 Edmond Roobaert, 'De Brusselse tapijtindustrie rond 1520. Tapijthandelaars, grotere en kleinere weefateliers, legwerkers in loondienst en kartonschilders', *Revue belge d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art/Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Oudheidkunde en Kunstgeschiedenis*, 71 (2002), pp. 4-46, offers a unique insight into how production and trade were organised in Brussels at around 1520. See also Edmand Roobaert, 'De kunstenaarsfamilie De Mol. Een onderzoek naar de sociale achtergrond van de Brusselse kunstenaars en legwerkers in de 16de eeuw', *Eigen Schoon en De Brabander*, 85 (2002), pp. 193-248.

30 SAB, *Register der Laeckengulde,* 1436, fol. 156r-159v. Published by Wauters, *Les tapisseries bruxelloises*, pp. 144-49.

carry the city's mark ('B∇B') and the mark of the entrepreneur who had financed the production.[31] Brussels tapestry thereby became a branded product and producers were linked directly with their wares, in the hope that abuse would be minimised or even eradicated.[32]

However, in 1539 buyers of Brussels tapestries accused Brussels *tapissiers* of continuing to paint instead of weaving elements in the tapestries.[33] This fraudulent practice accelerated the production process and enhanced the pictorial effect of the pieces, but the paints used were not colourfast and they integrated badly with the wool and silk. During checks carried out by commissioners appointed by the Habsburg court, it emerged that not only Brussels pieces, but also tapestries from Oudenaarde and Enghien had been touched up with paint. To restore calm and clarify things, Charles V drafted the *Ordonnance impériale sur l'industrie de la tapisserie aux Pays-Bas* in 1544.[34] This ordinance comprised no less than ninety stipulations with which the tapestry industry in the Southern Netherlands, and all those involved in the trade had to comply. These stipulations concerned, among other things, the painting of elements, and obligated all centres and producers to weave a producer's mark into their products. The announcement and implementation of this Imperial edict was rapid in centres where the city council understood the need to protect its small army of tapestry weavers and, by extension, their city's economy. In Antwerp, on the other hand, where production was of minor importance, the edict was seen as a hindrance to free trade. Antwerp was eventually forced to publish the *Ordonnance impériale*, but only in 1562, and only after the Brussels *tapissiers* had lodged a complaint.[35]

Along with the *Ordonnance impériale* came an end to the series of ordinances that were clearly intended to define a standard end-product; buyers had to ensure that Brussels tapestries were the most durable and colourful pieces available. This preoccupation with materials, techniques and quality checks is missing from the normative framework developed by Flemish painters.[36] The explanation for this is simple: the quality of the Flemish and Antwerp paintings school lay primarily in their *painterly* qualities, i.e., their image and form, and not in the materials used. Investments in materials were low and the resources were limited[37] which meant that painters had fewer opportunities and reasons to commit fraud during the production process. Moreover, paintings that did not age well as a result of fraudulent or inexpert use of materials and techniques could be retouched relatively simply and cheaply, or auctioned off by their owners. Tapestry owners did not have this

31 Isabelle Van Tichelen and Guy Delmarcel, 'Merken en handtekeningen op Vlaamse wandtapijten. Een methodische bijdrage', in *Merken opmerken. Merk- en meestertekens op kunstwerken in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden en het Prinsbisdom Luik. Typologie en methode*, ed. by Christine van Vlierden and Maurits Smeyers (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1990), pp. 1-22; Isabelle Van Tichelen and Guy Delmarcel, 'Marks and Signatures on Ancient Flemish Tapestries. A Methodological Contribution', in *Conservation Research. Studies of Fifteenth- to Nineteenth-Century Tapestry* (Studies in the History of Art, 42), ed. by Lotus Stack (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1993), pp. 57-70.

32 Akerlof, 'The Market for "Lemons"', pp. 499-500.

33 Sophie Schneebalg-Perelman, 'Le retouchage dans la tapisserie bruxelloise ou les origines de l'édit impérial de 1544', *Annales de la Société Royale d'Archéologie de Bruxelles*, 50 (1961), pp. 191-210.

34 Jules Lameere and Henri Simont, *Recueil des ordonnances des Pays-Bas. Deuxième série, 1506-1700* (Brussels: J. Goemaere, 1910), V, pp. 40-50.

35 Jean Denucé, *Antwerpsche tapijtkunst en handel* (Bronnen voor de geschiedenis van de Vlaamsche kunst, 4), (Antwerp: De Sikkel, 1936), p. 20.

36 Katlijne Van der Stighelen and Filip Vermeylen, 'The Antwerp Guild of Saint Luke and the Marketing of Paintings, 1400-1700', in *Mapping Markets for Paintings in Europe 1450-1750,* ed. by Neil De Marchi and Hans J. Van Miegroet (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp. 191-92.

37 Marten Jan Bok, 'Pricing the Unpriced: How Dutch Seventeenth-Century Painters determined the Selling Price of their Work', in *Art Markets in Europe, 1400-1800*, ed. by Michael North and David Ormrod (Aldershot: Ashagte, 1998), p. 105.

option given that a second-hand market for tapestries did not exist and it was not possible to restore tapestries without spoiling the visual effects or damaging the warp and/or weft threads.

It is of course not very likely that the Imperial ordinance was efficacious and succeeded in removing all uncertainty about quality from the minds of the less well-informed agents. Even if this was the case, these regulations could not offer any insight whatsoever into changes in customer preferences or solvability, nor did they constitute a buffer against financial setbacks. In short, the normative framework was a much-needed attempt – or rather, a string of attempts – to regulate the industry, but it fell far short of guaranteeing a functioning market. Nevertheless, as I will show in the next section, producers developed and nurtured a second institution that allowed them to pass on private information to dealers and prospective buyers while, at the same time, gathering information about these players. This institution was the *tapissierspand*, which became a keystone of the business in both Antwerp and Brussels.

3. The Antwerp and Brussels *tapissierspanden*

The *Predikherenpand* in Antwerp was, as noted, the single most important sales outlet for both Brussels and Flemish tapestry generally. There *tapissiers, meerseniers* (merchants of *objet d'arts*) and jewellers sold their wares for the duration of the *Sinksenmarkt* (Pentecost Fair) and the *Bamismarkt* (St Bavo's Fair) held in October.[38] But the *Predikherenpand* was not alone. There was as well *De Vette Hinne* (The Fat Hen), which opened near Our Lady's Church, as a *pand* selling tapestries exclusively, from Antwerp and elsewhere, and only during fairs.[39] By 1523, this *pand* was operating all year round; it remained operational until about 1560.

In 1549, when it was feared that the Dominicans' plan to build a new church would mean the end of the *Predikherenpand*, the Antwerp City Council decided to establish a new *tapissierspand*.[40] Several potential locations were proposed, one of which was the top floor of the New Bourse, which opened in 1532 and which, since 1540, had housed the *schilderspand* (Painters' Premises). Eventually it was decided to move the *meerseniers* and the jewellers only to the Bourse, and to build a large new *tapissierspand* (measuring 37 × 80 m) on the other side of the Meir, in the Schuttershoven. While the building was underway, several ordinances were issued that determined, among other things, that this *pand* would be the exclusive outlet for *all* tapestries in Antwerp (1552), and that a tax would be levied on all pieces in the *pand* (1553). In a nice protective move, the rate of tax on Brussels

38 Schlugleit, 'De Predikherenpand en St-Niklaasgilde', pp. 99-119; Ewing, 'Marketing Art in Antwerp', pp. 560-61.

39 Ewing, 'Marketing Art in Antwerp', p. 568.

40 The Antwerp *tapissierspand* is invariably mentioned in literature on early modern art markets in the south of the Netherlands, yet a current, critical study of this *pand* is missing; for this reason, Alison Evans' thesis (Duke University) is eagerly awaited. Its objective is to analyse the importance and functionality of this institute. The most detailed information there is about this *pand* is put forward in Fernand Donnet, 'Les tapisseries de Bruxelles, Enghien et Audenarde pendant la furie espagnole (1576)', *Annales de la Société d'Archéologie de Bruxelles*, 8 (1894), pp. 444-47 (especially note 1). Curiously, Donnet's article is seldom cited in other literature, such as Ewing, 'Marketing Art in Antwerp', 577, note 130. For more on the *tapissierspand* see Denucé, *Antwerpsche tapijtkunst*, pp. xx-xxvii; Hugo Soly, *Urbanisme en kapitalisme te Antwerpen in de 16de eeuw. De stedebouwkundige en industriële ondernemingen van Gilbert van Schoonbeke* (Brussels: Gemeentekrediet van België, 1977), pp. 221-22; Alfons K.L. Thijs, *Van 'werkwinkel' tot 'fabriek'. De textielnijverheid te Antwerpen (Einde 15de-begin 19de eeuw)* (Brussels: Gemeentekrediet, 1981), pp. 116-17; Filip Vermeylen, *Painting for the Market. Commercialization of Art in Antwerp's Golden Age* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), pp. 47-48.

tapestries – the most expensive ones that would be sold at the *pand* – was set at double that of other Flemish pieces. In 1554, the stalls in the premises were assigned by lottery, and the institution began to function as a central marketplace.

One might be forgiven for thinking that the political and religious unrest that took place in the final decades of the sixteenth century would have hindered commercial activities in the *pand*.[41] However, Flemish tapestry was first and foremost a desirable export product which, at that point in time, had no international competition worth mentioning, and, as such, fluctuations in domestic demand, while impacting severely on the market for paintings, were of little importance. As opposed to the *schilderspand*, which towards the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century slowly bled to death,[42] the Antwerp *tapissierspand* remained operational until around 1700. Admittedly by then it had lost some of its appeal, as evidenced by an Antwerp tapestry dealer's claim that he had done no trade in the *pand* between 1650 and 1675.[43] Even so, powerful Brussels and Antwerp *tapissiers* such as François van den Hecke and Michel Wauters (d. 1679) continued to use the *pand* in Antwerp until their deaths.[44]

The diminishing appeal of the Antwerp *pand* is also demonstrated in a document recorded by Brussels *tapissiers* in 1655. They complained that a large number of the sets that lay in the Antwerp *pand* remained unsold.[45] The tapestry producers added that prospective buyers came sooner to Brussels than to Antwerp, and that the frequent trips to Antwerp were a nuisance, both for themselves and their customers. It should be emphasised that the Brussels *tapissiers* only had a problem with the *pand*'s location, not with the institution *per se*; on the contrary, they asked for permission from the Council of Brabant to open a *tapissierspand* in Brussels. They emphasised that this would not mean that they would no longer use the Antwerp *pand* – a promise that François van den Hecke upheld fully.[46] One year later, the Brussels *pand* was opened in the former fencing school, adjacent to the City Hall.[47] In 1657, an ordinance was published that regulated how the *pand* operated.[48] The premises, which opened daily to be of greatest service to sellers and buyers alike, clearly had two goals. First, product quality had to be guaranteed and a stop put to the 'various abuses [...] that threatened many buyers and clouded the lustre of Brussels tapestries'. Hence, all Brussels pieces would forthwith be inspected and sealed in the *pand*, and sets could only be displayed and sold in the building or in the producer's own workshop. Secondly, the *pand* was also to function as a credit institution. *Tapissiers* could pledge their sets made on spec in

41 The *pand* was plundered during the Sack of Antwerp by unpaid Spanish troops from the city's fortress in 1576; Donnet, 'Les tapisseries de Bruxelles', pp. 442-76.

42 Vermeylen, *Painting for the Market*, pp. 116-118.

43 Erik Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw*. Vol. 10: 1674-1680 (Fontes Historiae Artis Neerlandicae/Bronnen voor de Kunstgeschiedenis van de Nederlanden 1), (Brussels: Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, 1999), p. 39.

44 Erik Duverger, 'Patronen voor tapijtwerk in het sterfhuis van François van den Hecke', *Artes Textiles*, 10 (1981), p. 234; Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen*, pp. 492-97. In 1669, three 'workers in the tapissiers *pandt*' signed a contract listing their rights and obligations; Fernand Donnet, 'Documents pour servir à l'histoire des ateliers de tapisserie de Bruxelles, Audenarde, Anvers, etc.', *Annales de la Société d'Archéologie de Bruxelles*, 11 (1897), pp. 63-64.

45 SAB, RT, 1297, fol. 124r-126r. The Brussels *pand* has not been closely studied; see Wauters, *Les tapisseries bruxelloises*, pp. 230-32 and Brosens, 'Nouvelles données sur l'*Histoire de Cléopâtre*', pp. 71-73.

46 Duverger, 'Patronen voor tapijtwerk', p. 234.

47 SAB, RT, 1297, fol. 124r-126r.

48 SAB, *Publicatieboeck van de gepubliceerde ordonnantien beginnende 31 julij 1654, geyndt 3a julij 1659,* 1320, fol. 288v-291r; SAB, RT, 1297, fol. 204r-205v.

the *pand*, 'as was happening in Antwerp'.[49] Jean-François de Grousseliers, the *pand* manager, and his brother-in-law François van Coppenolle (d. 1701)[50] promised the city authorities to provide fl. 20,000 to take sets in pledge and as such to provide *tapissiers* with capital in expectation of selling their sets that were stored in the *pand*.[51] To date, there is no known archivalia that throws light on the interest rates charged on these loans although what is clear is that Jean-François de Grousseliers received a commission of 10% for each set sold.

In 1658, it was determined that Brussels tapestries could also be shown and sold elsewhere, provided they had been sealed in the *pand*.[52] In this way, the *tapissiers* were able to avoid paying De Grousseliers his commission, but they sweetened the pill by supporting him in his application for tax relief in 1658.[53] According to the application, which was successful, the value of the tapestries stored in the *pand* amounted to a staggering fl. 130,000; it also showed that De Grousseliers had already lent various *tapissiers* an amount totalling fl. 30,000. In 1661, the Brussels *tapissiers* stated that producers and dealers from 'Gendt, Oudenaerden, Engien, and indeed even those from Antwerp itself' used the *pand* a great deal, and that is why the *tapissiers* asked and received permission from the city authorities to tax all pieces that came from outside Brussels.[54]

The bombardment of Brussels by French troops in 1695, and the ensuing fire, destroyed all the buildings in the vicinity of the *Grote Markt* (Main Square), including the building that housed the *pand*.[55] According to eye-witness accounts at the time, all the tapestries stored in the *pand* were destroyed by the fire,[56] but other documents report that De Grousseliers was able to save at least a few pieces.[57] Whatever the case may be, it is unlikely that a new *pand* was established after the fire, since no mention is made of this in known documents recorded after 1695. Between 1703 and 1705, however, when Brussels was under French rule (1702 to 1706), a partial substitute was established, the *commerciecaemer* (chamber of commerce) which, it was hoped, would stimulate production by offering *tapissiers* the option of pledging tapestry sets.[58]

This information makes it clear that Brussels, and indeed Flemish tapestry entrepreneurs in general, continued to use and value their *tapissierspanden* throughout the seventeenth century, contrary to the Flemish painters who had abandoned their *schilderspand* in Antwerp by the end of the sixteenth century. Filip Vermeylen has suggested that the lack of interest shown by the painters in their *pand* was not only a reflection of the prevailing market in art; rather, it showed that a new way to market paintings, involving

49 SAB, RT, 1297, fol. 124r.

50 Van Coppenolle was a son of the Oudenaarde/Ghent tapestry producer Daniel II van Coppenolle (d. 1659) and himself a major art dealer in Brussels. The inventory recorded after his death in 1701 reveals that he had about 300 paintings in storage; Brussels, *Rijksarchief* (hereafter RAB), *Notariaat Generaal van Brabant* (hereafter NGB), 2416, 28 July 1701.

51 Wauters, *Les tapisseries bruxelloises*, p. 231.

52 SAB, *Publicatieboeck van de gepubliceerde ordonnantien beginnende 31 julij 1654, geyndt 3a julij 1659,* 1320, fol. 408r-411v.

53 SAB, RT, 1297, fol. 323r-323v.

54 SAB, RT, 1298, fol. 257v-259r.

55 Maurice Culot *et al., Le bombardement de Bruxelles par Louis XIV et la reconstruction qui s'en suivit, 1695-1700* (Brussels: Aux Archives d'architecture moderne, 1992).

56 In September 1695, the Antwerp tapestry entrepreneur Cornelis de Wael wrote a letter to his agent in London, stating that all tapestries 'under Grosselier have been burned'; Erik Duverger, *Documenten betreffende de Antwerpse tapijthandelaar Cornelis de Wael, erfgenaam van de firma Wauters* (Brussels: Brussel Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, 2008), II, pp. 18-19 (Doc. 1191).

57 RAB, NGB, 1644, 7 November 1695; Duverger, *Documenten betreffende,* De Wael, II, pp. 42-43 (Docs. 1261 and 1262).

58 Brosens, *A contextual study of Brussels tapestry*, p. 25.

international dealers, was more efficient and had thereby rendered the *pand* obsolete.[59] In this volume, Neil De Marchi, Sandra van Ginhoven and Hans J. Van Miegroet elucidate the impact of these traders which reduced the financial risks of a large group of Antwerp painters that worked for piece wages or day wages, and that did not have to invest in materials and wait a long time to be paid.

As the following section will reveal, Brussels *tapissiers*, too, developed international networks from the last decades of the sixteenth century onwards but, as noted above, they had good reasons to keep the *pand* in Antwerp going and open a second one in Brussels – motives that the Antwerp painters and dealers in paintings did not have. For a start, the *tapissiers* understood that central marketplaces provided an excellent opportunity to supervise quality, much more so than ordinances; moreover, it enabled them to demonstrate to potential buyers the various levels of quality, and to learn about customer requirements and demands without having to run the risks entailed in sending samples of their costly and fragile goods abroad.[60] Secondly, the *panden* also functioned as credit institutions and, as such, a crucial buffer that softened the insecurity and slow recovery of capital invested in sets made on spec. Brussels *tapissiers* specifically mentioned these two reasons – quality and credit – when they established their *pand*, but there was also a third – less tangible but equally important – reason why tapestry producers benefited from a permanent regional crossing and face-to-face contact point: the *pand* engendered trust. There is no doubt that repeated and systematic contacts between the *tapissiers* from Brussels, tapestry merchants from Antwerp and Oudenaarde, and local agents led to informal communication that cost nothing and this, in turn, was indispensable for building trust. As the literature in economic sociology convincingly shows, trust spreads and minimises uncertainty and risk because it can be transformed into exchanges of information, mutual financial and organisational aid, and incidental or structural cooperation.[61] This free social interaction between the various players can be seen as the glue that linked the regional and international networks that were crucial to managing the trade and industry, and to reducing risks and uncertainties inherent in the business, from the time of the *panden* until around 1700, and even after they had closed. The following section will discuss this.

4. Interlocking local, regional and international networks

Recent literature on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Brussels *tapissiers* has clearly shown that production and distribution were firmly embedded in social networks

59 Vermeylen, *Painting for the Market*, p. 118.

60 In 1714, the Antwerp tapestry entrepreneur Cornelis de Wael did not want to send one of his sets to Germany to be put up for sale because 'the Germans there do not take much care of them and do not attach enough value to them'; Duverger, *Documenten betreffende,* De Wael, II, p. 421 (Doc. 2082).

61 As is convincingly shown in Granovetter's analysis of business groups (Mark Granovetter, 'Coase revisited: business groups in the modern economy', *Industrial and Corporate Change*, 4 (1995), pp. 93-130), Perrow's study of 'small firm networks' (Charles Perrow, 'Small firm networks', in *Explorations in Economic Sociology*, ed. by Richard Swedberg (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1993), pp. 277-402), Uzzi's examination of subcontracting relationships in the New York garment industry (Brian Uzzi, 'The sources and consequences of embeddedness for the economic performance of organizations: the network effect', *American Sociological Review*, 61 (1996), pp. 674-98; Brian Uzzi, 'Networks and the paradox of embeddedness', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 42 (1997), pp. 35-67), and Dulsrud and Grønhaug's analysis of the Norwegian and Danish fish export-import business (Arne Dulsrud and Kjell Grønhaug, 'Is Friendship Consistent with Competitive Market Exchange? A Microsociological Analysis of the Fish Export-Import Business', *Acta Sociologica*, 20 (2007), pp. 7-19).

geographically concentrated in the parishes adjacent to Our Lady of the Chapel and *Sint Goriks*.[62] The importance of these networks, characterised by their spirit of mutual goodwill and trust, is difficult to overstate. Brussels *tapissiers* managed to shape a moral community in which individual successes, such as the granting of tax relief by the City Council or landing a major commission that would directly or indirectly benefit the various *tapissiers* and the industry as a whole, and in which the impact of the unpredictable as well as inevitable individual set-backs, such as defaulting buyers or long-term illness, were spread over the various network members.[63] Just like the ordinances, these social networks did not aim to create socio-economic equality between the actors but, unlike the ordinances, the networks generated and guaranteed solidarity between the *tapissiers* and as such offered financial flexibility and access to cheap credit.

Interestingly, patterns of behaviour within the moral community rendered the ordinances redundant, up to a point. For example, in 1699 the Peemans, Van den Hecke and De Vos workshops were co-producing an unidentified series that had been commissioned by the Forchondt firm.[64] A document reveals that, in order to meet the deadline, the Van den Hecke weavers worked day and night, just like those employed by De Vos who also continued weaving on *sondagen ende heylige dagen* (on high days and holidays). The laconic tone of the statement suggests that this was standard practice, even though the age-old guild regulations strictly forbade weaving *des avonts na die achterste clocke* (at night, after the last sounding of the bell), and *op sondage oft op heyle dage die men gebiede in de heylege kerke te vieren* (on Sundays or saint's days that must be celebrated in church).[65]

Despite all of this, the industry should not be represented as being overly socially minded. Psychological complexities certainly influenced the interpersonal ties, which were neither identical nor constant and, while the networks obviously generated trust, there was also room for distrust, opportunism, and disorder, and this could sometimes constrain rather than facilitate economic activity.[66] Conflicts within the Brussels industry were also self-evident,[67] and the strength of the moral community must have fluctuated over time, but despite this the network seems to have been the foundation upon which the principle of the trade and industry rested from about 1550 onward.

Much as our insight into the networks of most Brussels *tapissiers* is as yet episodic, it is safe to assume that workshop directors-producers were the ones who developed the

62 Brosens, *A contextual study of Brussels tapestry*; Brosens, 'Nouvelles données sur l'*Histoire de Cléopâtre*'; Brosens, 'Bruxelles/Paris/Bruxelles'; Brosens, 'New Light on the Raes Workshop'; and Brosens, 'Revisiting Brussels tapestry'. In his 1944 *The Great Transformation*, Karl Polanyi (1886-1964) introduced the notion of 'embeddedness' to argue that in pre-capitalist times the economy was an organic part of society as it was embedded in social, religious and political institutes. Therefore, Polanyi claimed, phenomena such as trade and money were inspired by other motives than mere profit making. Mark Granovetter in his seminal 'Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness', *The American Journal of Sociology*, 91 (1985), pp. 481-510 argued that in capitalist societies, too, economic action is embedded in social networks, and as such launched the 'New Economic Sociology' that is pivotal to the analyses of economic behaviour in social networks.

63 Koenraad Brosens, 'The organisation of seventeenth-century tapestry production in Brussels and Paris. A comparative view', *De Zeventiende Eeuw*, 20 (2004), pp. 274-77.

64 Denucé, *Antwerpsche tapijtkunst*, pp. 384-85.

65 Wauters, *Les tapisseries bruxelloises*, pp. 37 and 39.

66 Granovetter, 'Economic Action and Social Structure', pp. 491-93 and Ronald S. Burt, 'Bandwith and Echo: Trust, Information and Gossip in Social Networks', in *Networks and Markets,* ed. by James E. Rauch and Alessandra Casella (New York: Russell Sage, 2001), pp. 30-75.

67 In 1671, for example, *tapissier* Matthijs de Broe had a dispute with the widow of Daniel Eggermans after he had employed one of Eggermans's former weavers, Peter Lodys; RAB, NGB, 1964, 3 September 1671.

regional and international dimension of these networks, certainly after the opening of the Antwerp *pand* in around the middle of the sixteenth century. The literature emphasises the fact that the new *pand* worked as a magnet for Oudenaarde *tapissiers* who saw an effective market for their standardised pieces; important entrepreneurs from Oudenaarde generally had family members living permanently, or at least semi-permanently, in Antwerp, some of whom were given freedom of the city during the second half of the sixteenth century in order to stimulate trade.[68] But it is worth emphasising that some Brussels *tapissiers* also moved to Antwerp at around the same time, and that several of the most important Brussels workshops directors-producers stayed in Antwerp for some time.[69] These included Frans Geubels (d. 1578), his son Jacques Geubels the Elder (d. in or shortly after 1604), and Jan I Raes (1574-1651) who belonged to the closely-knit Brussels network and also had good ties with Antwerp entrepreneurs who had shops in the *pand*, including Hendrik Vranckx, François Sweerts I and his son François II (1567-1629).[70]

Throughout the second half of the sixteenth century, the power of the Antwerp-Brussels-Oudenaarde production and trading complex, with the Antwerp *pand* at its centre, overshadowed tapestry production elsewhere in Europe. However, during the closing decades of the sixteenth century, as hinted at earlier, this well-oiled machine was threatened by religious intolerance and the immediate consequences of the civil war. Many Flemish tapestry producers, dealers and weavers moved abroad where they were warmly welcomed by potentates and local authorities because of the invaluable artistic and technological expertise that they brought with them. As a result, between 1570 and 1620, 'Flemish' tapestry workshops mushroomed everywhere in Europe.[71] Obviously this loss of human capital damaged the Flemish industry, and Flemish tapestry lost a part of its international market. However, most of the newly established workshops operated on a small scale and the goods they produced fluctuated in quality, thus they were not a serious threat to the Flemish production system. Moreover, the exodus also had positive effects on the trade in Flemish tapestry – just as did the exodus of Flemish painters and art dealers on the trade in Flemish paintings.[72] Naturally, exiled *tapissiers* stayed in touch with their families and colleagues who had remained in the Southern Netherlands, which thus accelerated the speed at which information spread, as well as improving the reliability and quality of information that, in turn, was linked to (and could be tested against) the information buzzing around the Antwerp *pand*. The *émigrés* also constituted a trade link between the old and the new home bases; transporting the tapestries remained a risky business, but the assurance that the pieces, once in place, would be preserved and displayed in the best possible circumstances, by family members or reliable contacts, must have persuaded those who stayed behind to send unsold tapestries abroad.

68 Fernand Donnet, 'Documents pour servir à l'histoire des ateliers de tapisserie de Bruxelles, Audenarde, Anvers, etc.', *Annales de la Société d'Archéologie de Bruxelles*, 10 (1896), pp. 299-303; Vermeylen, *Painting for the Market,* p. 89; Martine Vanwelden, *Productie van wandtapijten in de regio Oudenaarde: een symbiose tussen stad en platteland (15de tot 17de eeuw),* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2006), pp. 204-13.

69 Donnet, 'Documents pour servir à l'histoire des ateliers' (1896), pp. 285-98; Donnet, 'Documents pour servir à l'histoire des ateliers' (1897), pp. 67, 78-79; Thijs, *Van 'werkwinkel' tot 'fabriek'*, p. 119.

70 Brosens, 'New Light on the Raes Workshop', pp. 24-25.

71 *Flemish Tapestry Weavers Abroad. Emigration and the Founding of Manufactories in Europe* (Symbolae Facultatis litterarum et philosophiae Lovaniensis. Series B, 1), ed. by Guy Delmarcel (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002); and Thomas P. Campbell, 'Disruption and Diaspora: Tapestry Weaving in Northern Europe, 1570-1600', in Campbell, *Threads of Splendor*, pp. 17-27.

72 Vermeylen, *Painting for the Market*, pp. 100-107.

The crucial role that expatriates were able to play in developing and securing a share of the foreign market for Brussels and Flemish tapestry is well illustrated by the business dealings of Marc de Comans (Coymans) (1563-1644) and his brother-in-law Frans van der Plancken/François de la Planche (1573-1627). De la Planche was an Oudenaarde tapestry producer who supplied subcontractors with raw materials and cartoons, and sold tapestries at the Antwerp *tapissierspand* or, in some cases, exported them directly to France.[73] Marc de Comans belonged to an Antwerp family of textile entrepreneurs and financiers, and was described as a businessman and a speculator 'whose credit is well regarded at the exchange here [in Antwerp] and who does a lot of business at the exchange'.[74] In 1601, they concluded a contract, together with Marc's elder brother, Hieronymus Comans (1560-1630), who had moved to France at the end of the sixteenth century and had been appointed *conseiller du roi* to set up a tapestry workshop in Paris.[75] This was part of Henry IV's master plan to revamp tapestry production in France. The French king also established several important Parisian high-warp weavers in the Louvre, and issued an embargo on the importing of Flemish tapestries to protect the new Parisian production system.[76] Interestingly, in this volume, Mickaël Szanto emphasised that Henry IV choose not to protect the Parisian painters, as he continued the import of Flemish paintings. The most obvious reason why the French king differentiated between tapestries and paintings was the difference in the revenue that left the country through the export of the works of art. However, throughout the first half of the seventeenth century, Marc de Comans, François de la Planche and Comans's son-in-law, Adrien Cockx, broke the embargo by importing Flemish tapestries on a grand scale.[77] This brought them into conflict with the Parisian corporation of *maîtres et marchands tapissiers*, which had dominated the import and distribution of Flemish and French tapestries in Paris prior to 1600, and who were equally indifferent to the royal embargo after 1600.[78] With the support of the City Council and several ordinances, the *maîtres et marchands tapissiers* tried to stem the flow of de Comans and de la Planche's trade activities, among other things by obligating the Flemish exiles to brand tapestries made in Paris with a city mark (a 'P' for Paris and the *fleur-de-lis*) so that these could be differentiated from imported pieces. Predictably these attempts to force

73 Jozef Duverger, 'Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van de Oudenaardse tapijtkunst en tapijthandel', *Artes Textiles*, 1 (1953), pp. 39-44; Jozef Duverger, 'De Oudenaardse tapijtweversfamilie Van der Plancken alias Marotte vóór 1601', *Artes Textiles*, 8 (1974), pp. 65-70; Vanwelden, *Productie van wandtapijten*, p. 213.

74 Duverger, 'De Oudenaardse tapijtweversfamilie', p. 69. For the Comans family, see L.-A. de La Morinerie, 'Les Comans, directeurs de la Manufacture de tapisseries de Gobelins', *Revue nobiliaire historique et biographique*, 3 (1867), pp. 1-12; L. A., 'Épitaphe de Thomas de Comans à Tonnay-Charente', *Bulletin de la société des archives historiques. Revue de la Saintonge & de l'Aunis*, 11 (1891), pp. 310-12; and R.M.A. de Jong, 'Jeronimus Coymans, een dynamisch koopman in de 16de eeuw te Antwerpen', *Vlaamse Stam*, 33 (1997), pp. 191-96.

75 Hieronymus Comans withdrew as a business associate in 1608; Jules Guiffrey, 'Notes et documents sur les origines de la Manufacture des Gobelins et sur les autres ateliers parisiens pendant la première moitié du dix-septième siècle', in *Etat général des tapisseries de la Manufacture des Gobelins depuis son origine jusqu'à nos jours, 1600-1900. Tome premier: Les ateliers parisiens au dix-septième siècle, 1601-1662*, ed. by Maurice Fenaille (Paris: Hachette, 1923), p. 35.

76 Jules Guiffrey, 'Les manufactures parisiennes de tapisseries au XVII[e] siècle', *Mémoires de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France*, 19 (1892), pp. 52-114.

77 Koenraad Brosens, 'Les importations des tapisseries flamandes en France, 1600-1650. Un nouveau regard sur Marc de Comans et François de La Planche', in *La tapisserie hier et aujourd'hui*, ed. by Arnauld Brejon de Lavergnée and Jean Vittet (Paris: Ecole du Louvre, 2011), pp. 35-42.

78 Koenraad Brosens, 'Autour de la rue Saint Martin. Les importations et la distribution des tapisseries flamandes à Paris, 1600-1650', in *L'objet d'art en France du XVI[e] au XVIII[e] siècle. Actes du colloque international organisé par l'Université Michel de Montaigne-Bordeaux 3 (12-14 janvier 2006)*, ed. by Patrick Michel and Marc Favreau (Bordeaux, 2007), pp. 129-40. For the corporation, see Jules Deville, *Recueil de documents et de statuts relatifs à la corporation des tapissiers de 1258 à 1875. Réflexions concernant cette corporation* (Paris: A.Chaix, 1875).

de Comans and de la Planche into a normative framework were unsuccessful; they simply put the Parisian mark onto the imported pieces.[79] At the same time, it was symptomatic of the multi-faceted world of the marketing of tapestries that besides the conflicts, strategic alliances also existed between Flemish *émigrés* and certain *maîtres et marchands tapissiers,* including Jean Gaboury, Antoine de Mesvilliers (of Mainviliers) and Jacques Cottart, who had also imported Brussels tapestries into Paris – sometimes together with Antwerp tapestry dealer Gillis van der Burcht.[80] While the Pont Notre-Dame was the heart of the picture trade in Paris in this period,[81] the network in which the Flemish-Parisian tapestry trade during the first half of the seventeenth century was anchored also had a definite geographical centre, namely the *Rue Saint Martin* in the commercial heart of Paris, where protagonists like Adrien Cockx and Jacques Cottart had their storage facilities.[82]

The abiding success of Flemish tapestry in the Parisian and French markets in the first half of the seventeenth century is in contrast to the waning popularity of Flemish paintings in France in this period.[83] It comes as no surprise therefore that exiled painting dealers extended their commercial radius. Antoon Goetkint/Antoine Bonenfant (d. 1644), son of Antwerp painter and art dealer Peter Goetkint (d. 1583), oversaw not only his trade in paintings, but also the production and distribution of luxury goods such as cabinets, mirrors and tapestries, from his home in the *Rue Saint Martin*.[84] Bonenfant had purchased royal permission to import Flemish tapestries, and worked together with various entrepreneurs and financiers in order to finance his trade activities. One of these partners was Edme Cottart, who may have been related to Jacques Cottart.[85] Bonenfant and Cottart also tried to work out a system that would allow them to identify and confiscate illegally imported pieces, i.e., those imported by exiled Flemish and Parisian art dealers who were not members of the corporation: all Flemish tapestries marketed in Paris would thenceforth be required to carry two seals: the corporation's and Bonenfant and Cottart's.[86] It is highly unlikely that this attempt to control things – just like all the others – was successful. Be that as it may, after the death of Antoine Bonenfant, his relative Jean Valdor (1616-1675) – Valdor's mother-in-law Sarah Goetkint (1575-1644) was Antoine's sister – developed a similar

79 This is why the *tapissiers* lodged another complaint in 1612 against de Comans and De La Planche. They did not mince their words: 'Those who run the Saint-Marcel tapestry workshop have imported large quantities of tapestry hangings from outside the kingdom, which they disguise as their own products and sell as such'.

80 Brosens, 'Autour de la rue Saint Martin', pp. 134-35.

81 As discussed by Mickaël Szanto in this volume.

82 Henri Lemoine, *La rue Saint Martin. Des origines à nos jours* (Paris, 1997), pp. 47-50; Brosens, 'Autour de la rue Saint Martin', pp. 129-40.

83 Vermeylen, *Painting for the Market*, pp. 115-16.

84 For Antoine Goetkint and the Goetkint family, see Jules Guiffrey, 'Antoine Bonenfans, ébéniste et fabricant de cabinet (1635)', *Nouvelles archives de l'art français* (1890), pp. 146-47; Jean Denucé, *Brieven en documenten betreffende Jan Breugel I en II* (*Bronnen voor de geschiedenis van de Vlaamsche kunst*, 3) (Antwerp – The Hague, 1924), passim; Alexis Merle du Bourg and Mickael Szanto, '*A. Bonenfant excudit.* Une firme d'édition d'estampes flamandes à Paris sous Louis XIII', *Revue de l'Art*, 131 (2001), pp. 25-46; Mickael Szanto, '*Libertas artibus restituta*. La foire Saint-Germain et le commerce des tableaux, des frères Goetkindt à Jean Valdor (1600-1660)', in *Economia e arte secc. XIII-XVIII. Atti della 'Trentratreesima Settimani di Studi' 30 aprile-4 maggio 2000*, ed. by S. Cavaciocchi (Firenze: Le Monnier, 2002), pp. 149-85; and Mickael Szanto, 'Le commerce d'art à Paris sous le règne de Louis XIII. Heur et malheurs de la firme Bonenfant', *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France*, 129 (2002), pp. 69-91. For the many faceted commercial activities of the Bonenfant brothers, see also Erik Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw. Vol. 4: 1636-1642* (*Fontes Historiae Artis Neerlandicae/ Bronnen voor de Kunstgeschiedenis van de Nederlanden,* 1) (Brussels: Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, 1989), pp. 134-40.

85 Roland Baetens, *De nazomer van Antwerpens welvaart. De diaspora en het handelshuis De Groote tijdens de eerste helft der 17de eeuw* (Brussels, 1976), I, p. 124; Szanto, 'Libertas artibus restituta', p. 87.

86 Brosens, 'Autour de la rue Saint Martin', pp. 137-38.

multifaceted business strategy in which the production and trade in Flemish and French tapestry held an important place.[87]

So far, archival documents fail to clarify precisely the position and significance of the Brussels *tapissiers* within the Parisian networks that had been developed by de Comans/de la Planche/Cockx, Bonenfant and Valdor. What is clear, however, is that by 1640 at the latest, Brussels workshop directors-producers systematically introduced into their network tapestry entrepreneurs who most probably came from France or present day Wallonia. They did this, among other things, by supporting their applications for tax relief.[88] It is therefore no coincidence that the opening and flourishing of the Brussels *tapissierspand* took place in this period. The industry of French entrepreneurs in Antwerp and Brussels *panden* emerges in a letter written in 1678 in which a local agent complains that he was unable to find decent sets made on spec in either Antwerp or Brussels, *à cause des Français, qui achètent tout ce qu'ils trouvent à vendre sans beaucoup marchander le prix*.[89]

After the Antwerp and Brussels *panden* closed, around 1700, and the foreign agents had disappeared, the regional and international networks were the only remaining lifelines of the Brussels and Flemish trade and industry, which meant that maintaining and developing these networks was vitally important. It is perhaps unsurprising that Brus sels *tapissier* Judocus de Vos (1661-1734) and Antwerp tapestry entrepreneur Nicolaas Naulaerts (d. 1703) decided in 1702 to formalise their old working partnership in an integrated firm.[90] Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, Brussels tapestry entrepreneurs such as De Vos and Urbanus Leyniers (1674-1747) went on countless trips abroad, especially to France, to satisfy demand for Flemish tapestries. That the demand at this time remained strong, as opposed to the demand for eighteenth-century Flemish paintings,[91] is demonstrated among other things by a statement made by an official of the French Finance Department (1715). He emphasised that domestic production was suffering because of Flemish tapestry imports.[92] Indeed, other documents make it clear that traders from Paris encouraged Antwerp tapestry dealer Cornelis de Wael to send them Flemish, and particularly Brussels, sets given that it was easy to find buyers for these (1719).[93] Inventory

87 Valdor's father-in-law was the Antwerp painter Abraham Janssen van Nuyssen (*c*. 1571/75-1632). See J. Vander Auwera, 'All in the family. Abraham Janssen (Liège? 1571/75-Antwerp 1632) and his relations in the Antwerp art trade', in *Art Auctions and Dealers*, pp. 26 and 36. For Valdor, see Koenraad Brosens, *Rubens: The Constantine Series* (*Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard,* 13.3) (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2011), pp. 102-07.

88 Charles de La Fontaine: 11 September 1646 (SAB, RT, 1294) and 17 December 1650 (SAB, RT, 1294); Jean Cottart and Gilles de Glabbais: 7 December 1646 (SAB, RT, 1294); Antoine Tanton: 15 December 1649 (SAB, RT, 1295); Charles le Lièvre: 24 March 1654 (SAB, RT, 1296); Adrien Parent: 21 March 1675 (SAB, RT, 1301); René le Roux: 10 February 1677 (SAB, RT, 1301); Guillaume Foulon: 24 November 1681 (SAB, RT, 1303). See also Brosens, 'Nouvelles données sur l'*Histoire de Cléopâtre*' and Brosens, 'Autour de la rue Saint Martin'.

89 Ferdinand Mencik, 'Dokumente zur Geschichte der kaiserlichen Tapezereisammlung, aus dem gräfl. Harrachschen Archive', *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, 30 (1911-1912), p. XXXVIII.

90 Brosens, 'Revisiting Brussels tapestry'.

91 See Mickaël Szanto's essay in this volume.

92 The official reported 'L'empressement qu'on continue d'avoir pour tirer les tapisseries de Bruxelles, d'Anvers et d'Oudenarde fait arriver la décadence des manufactures de tapisseries établies dans le royaume avec tant de soins et de dépenses à présente et prochaine, il n'est pas possible quelles puissent se soutenir, à la cause de la prédilection qu'on a en France pour tout ce qui est Étranger', cited in Koenraad Brosens, 'The maîtres et marchands tapissiers of the rue de la Verrerie. Marketing Flemish and French Tapestry in Paris around 1725', *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, 12, 2 (Spring–Summer 2005), p. 23, note 7.

93 The Parisian dealers Houzeau and Fighe stated that 'Les tapisseries se vendent bien icy surtout celles de Bruxelles'; Duverger, *Documenten betreffende,* De Wael, v II, p. 494 (Doc. 2258).

lists belonging to powerful *maîtres et marchands tapissiers* like Nicolas Le Roy (d. 1749) and Julien Barerere (d. in or shortly after 1738), fulltime agents of Judocus de Vos and Urbanus Leyniers who lived in the *rue* and the *quartier de la Verrerie* close to the *rue Saint Martin,* illustrate the success of Brussels and Flemish tapestries in Paris in the first half of the eighteenth century.[94]

While the 'French' networks developed by the Flemish and Brussels tapestry entrepreneurs between 1600 and 1750 have been studied relatively well, insights into those that the Brussels *tapissiers* allowed in the Dutch, English, German, Italian and Spanish markets are less refined or non-existent at this point – but clearly the essays of Isabella Cecchini, Natalia Gozzano, and Claartje Rasterhoff and Filip Vermeylen in this volume contribute to our understanding of the scope and architecture of these production and trade networks.

5. Concluding remarks

In this essay I have explored what I believe were the primary economic institutions and strategies developed by Brussels tapestry entrepreneurs to control quality and to combat risk and uncertainty – the most important mechanisms that made industry and trade possible. The difference between the capital and credit that circulated in, on the one hand, the Brussels tapestry industry and trade, and, on the other hand, in the market for Flemish paintings was significant, so that the mechanisms developed by *tapissiers* and dealers in paintings predictably also differ.

The ordinances issued by the Brussels tapestry corporation, the City Council and central government were the oldest of these institutions. They were characterised by a strong focus on material quality – a concern that was not voiced nearly as much in the ordinances issued by Flemish painters who had fewer opportunities and reasons to commit fraud with materials and techniques. From around 1550 onwards both Brussels *tapissiers* and their clients benefited from the buzzing centre of the Antwerp *tapissierpand*: a place where quality and information could be established and assessed, and where credit and creditworthiness could be created and found. Much more so than the ordinances, this was the appropriate tool to protect the functioning of the market and, when Antwerp in the middle of the seventeenth century became less important in the European city network, Brussels *tapissiers* opened a new *pand* in their city. Both *panden* remained in use as market places and credit institutions throughout the seventeenth century, while painters had long since left their *pand*, and international traders began to structure and dominate the market for paintings to a significant extent. Brussels *tapissers*, too, formed interlocking local, regional and international networks, and, just like the *panden*, these networks formed places where information, trust and credit could be found. Each of these three tools deserves more attention, but it is clear that their impact on the functioning of the trade and industry, as well as artistic developments, should be studied as interwoven components.

94 Brosens, 'The maîtres et marchands tapissiers of the rue de la Verrerie', pp. 3-18.