



THE *BLUE LANDSCAPES*:  
A GROUP OF EARLY SIXTEENTH-CENTURY LANDSCAPE DRAWINGS  
RECONSIDERED

Part I

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## PREFACE

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My passion for landscape drawing started with a casual exercise at the University of Ghent (2008) on the unknown sixteenth-century artist Matthijs Cock. Triggered by the artist's obscurity, I started digging in his oeuvre - that substantially existed out of landscape drawings - in my first master thesis. It marked the beginning of a period of intense absorption into the undiscovered world of early sixteenth-century landscape drawings. Two years later, I graduate at the Utrecht University with a subject that is in fact very close to my first master's topic, about the landscape drawings attributed to Matthijs' father, Jan Wellens de Cock.

I would like to thank prof. dr. Karolien de Clippel, my supervisor at the Utrecht University for the successful growth of this master thesis. During my two years at the university, she stimulated me through her exactingness and critical mind in bringing up more structure in my research and driving me to extremes of perfection. I thank her for her intense reading and apt remarks on the script, her continuous availability to help, and the steering of my investigations, whenever necessary, in the right direction.

My gratitude goes no less to Stefaan Hautekeete, conservator of the Tekeningen kabinet of the Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten van België, who was an indispensable support in the exploration of drawn views on nature. As my supervisor during my internship, Stefaan not only encouraged me to continue with this subject, he also taught me the necessary skills for doing research in the medium of drawing. Many of the insights I make in this study come forth out of our fruitful discussions and his critical remarks on my script. I want to thank him for the stimulating working place in the drawings department and the lively conversations we had, next to the subject of landscape drawings.

I owe thanks to a lot more people: dr. Gert Jan van der Sman, dr. Jan Piet Filedt Kok, and Matthias Ubl, for their discussions on the difficult issues of my subject; dr. prof. em. Bert Meijer, dr. Giorgio Marini and other staff of galleries and museums for providing me with technical information of artworks; the staff of the different libraries I visited for their practical assistance; and last but not least my family and friends for their moral support, good cares and their passionate attempts in keeping my life structured during the final completion of this dissertation.

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## INTRODUCTION

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Few Netherlandish landscape drawings of the early sixteenth century are preserved today.<sup>1</sup> Those that do remain give little indications on the author, function or context, and as a consequence the research on many of them stagnated in stylistical analyses and hypothetical attributions in monographic studies. This Master thesis is a case study about a group of five early sixteenth-century landscape drawings that belong together regarding style, technique, size, composition and figure type. In the course of this study, we shall refer to them as the *Blue Landscapes*, a name that describes their collective subject and their paper color.<sup>2</sup> Some remarkable speculations have been made in the past about two of these drawings. The *Landscape with Saint Christopher* (cat. III.1, fig. F) has been designated as a rare preserved drawing by Joachim Patinir (c. 1480/1485 -1524),<sup>3</sup> while the *Riverlandscape with Saint Jerome* (cat. I. 4, fig. D) is nowadays considered as one of the earliest independent landscape drawings in the Netherlands.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, one has ascribed this drawing an innovating role in the genesis of landscape in the early sixteenth-century Netherlands.<sup>5</sup> The group as a whole, and the individual drawings forming part of it, have not been profoundly investigated and therefore these hypotheses lack a solid basis. A profound research of their composition, iconography and technique places them within the broader developments of landscape painting and the use of drawings in the sixteenth century. Through examining their dating, function and authorship, this master thesis reconsiders their putative attribution and their alleged importance for the genesis of landscape and the emancipation of landscape drawing.

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<sup>1</sup> In the early sixteenth century the Northern (nowadays the Netherlands) and Southern Netherlands (nowadays Flanders) still belonged together. The term 'Netherlandish' refers to both regions in this study.

<sup>2</sup> See my catalogue in the second volume for an extensive overview of the technical details and the published literature on the drawings.

<sup>3</sup> Ever since its first publication, in 1928 by L. von Baldass, scholars have considered this sheet as a possible drawing by Joachim Patinir, the first 'landscape painter in the Netherlands (see § 0.1). See my catalogue III. 1, for a list of authors that discuss this drawing.

<sup>4</sup> This function has been first proposed by L. Malke in Berlin 1975 and taken over by subsequent scholars, see my catalogue I. 4, for the list of authors that discuss this drawing. Independent drawings are drawings that are produced as an autonomous work of art, and were collected for its own sake. Other terms that designate this type of drawings are presentation drawings or autonomous drawings. See also § 0.2.

<sup>5</sup> Boon 1992 I, p. XVIII. Landscape painting in the Netherlands originated in the early sixteenth century. See also § 0.1.

### *State of research*

Until now, the attention devoted to the *Blue Landscapes* is almost entirely limited to discussions in collection or exhibition catalogues.<sup>6</sup> In these contributions, the main point of debate was the author of the group. In the 1928 catalogue of the Landesmuseum in Darmstadt, Freund described one of the sheets, the *Riverlandscape with Saint Jerome* (cat. I.4, fig. D) as a possible drawing by Jan Wellens de Cock.<sup>7</sup> This attribution was in 1964 taken over by Reznicek, who connected the Darmstadt drawing to two related drawings in Florence, the *Landscape with an imaginary city siege* (cat. I.1, fig. A) and the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (cat. I.2, fig. B).<sup>8</sup> Malke added in 1975 a new drawing, a *Landscape with Saint Christopher* sold at Christie's to the group.<sup>9</sup> Ever since its first mentioning, Jan Wellens de Cock's name has been considered as the most likely author for the group of drawings.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, scholars do admit that this attribution *can neither be proved nor disproved*.<sup>11</sup> Only one of the drawings discussed in relation to this group, the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* in the Louvre was considered to be by another hand, that of Joachim Patinir.<sup>12</sup> Beside the issue of attribution, art historians sporadically also discussed the function of the drawings, especially regarding the *Riverlandscape with Saint Jerome* (cat. I.4, fig. D). In 1975, Malke designated the drawing as an independent work of art, which art enthusiasts collected for its own sake.<sup>13</sup> This hypothesis had a great influence and has been repeated until today. In 2007, Stefaan Hautekeete proposed a similar function for the Louvre drawing (cat. III.1, fig. F).<sup>14</sup> In 2008, Giorgio Faggin mentioned the existence of a painting, whose composition corresponds exactly with that of the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (cat. I. 2, fig. B).<sup>15</sup> He argues

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<sup>6</sup> Exceptions are the sideways discussions on the *Blue Landscapes* in Franz 1969, Gibson 1987, Gibson 1989, Hautekeete 2007, and Vrij 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Freund 1928, nrs. 274/5.

<sup>8</sup> Reznicek 1964, pp. 15-16.

<sup>9</sup> L. Malke in Berlin 1975, p. 111-112.

<sup>10</sup> See my catalogue for the list of authors discussing the *Blue Landscapes*.

<sup>11</sup> First articulated by Hand in Washington /New York 1986-87, p. 110, and repeated by later scholars, see my catalogue.

<sup>12</sup> See note 2.

<sup>13</sup> See note 3.

<sup>14</sup> Hautekeete 2007, p. 147.

<sup>15</sup> G. Faggin in Kloek & Meijer 2008, p. 21.

that this *painting throws a new light upon the issue of the four related patiniresque drawings*, without actually reconsidering the drawings in the light of the new piece of evidence he found.<sup>16</sup>

Until today, the drawings' specific mutual relationship, their function and their place within the history of landscape painting and drawing have not been fully explored. This study takes Faggin's discovery as an opportunity to reopen and go further into the discussion. We will extend the *Blue Landscapes* with some other related artworks that provide a stimulant in the interpretation of their function and mutual relationship. The aim of this study is not so much to draw definitive conclusions but rather to create a discourse on the drawings that contextualizes them within the general development of landscape painting and the use of drawings in the sixteenth century. It thus offers the group a more specific place.

#### *Broader context*

In 1989, Maryan Ainsworth writes that *as a result of the dearth of Northern Renaissance drawings, what does remain has often been misunderstood insofar as authorship, date or purpose*.<sup>17</sup> She states that the use of new technical methods, such as Infrared Reflectography, allows to uncover the preparatory stages of paintings on the panel and that *through the availability of this new material [...] questions of authenticity, authorship and date, as well as the consideration of an artist's working method, may now be more fully investigated in the light of information provided by underdrawings*.<sup>18</sup> Technical examinations during the last years have given new insights in the preparatory stages of paintings and, more in particular, in the specific role of drawings in the production process. It provided new clues concerning the function, authorship and dating of the small amount of drawings that remain of the early sixteenth century.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *getta nuova luce sulla problematica inerenti ai quattro affini disegni patiniriana*. Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ainsworth 1989, p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> Id., pp. 5-6. Ainsworth describes Infrared Reflectography as *a video system responsive to the range of infrared light between 900 and 2000 nanometers. It can penetrate most pigments to reveal underdrawings in carbon black in the subsurface layers of the painting. The infrared reflectogram assembly, the visual document of the underdrawing, is recorded photographically from a monitor screen or [...] by computer from the digitized infrared signal*. Ainsworth 1989, p. 35, note 1.

<sup>19</sup> See Ainsworth 1989 for a methodology on the study of drawings in relation to underdrawings.

Technical research was in the context of this master thesis out of order. Stimulated by Ainsworth's ideas, this case study, however, does investigate the current hypotheses regarding the *authorship, date and purpose* of the *Blue Landscapes* and reconsiders them within the light of the new insights (technical) research achieved on the production of painting and the use of drawings in the sixteenth century. We thus hope to correct some earlier drawn conclusions regarding the above mentioned aspects.

### *Structure*

Apart from a preparatory chapter on the broader developments of drawings and landscape painting in the sixteenth century Netherlands, the structure of this study is divided according to the four aspects of the *Blue Landscapes* we will address and which are the coherence, dating, the purpose and the author of the *Blue Landscapes*. The first chapter introduces the reader to the *Blue Landscapes*. It discusses the group's coherence and proposes three new artworks as additions to the group. The second chapter treats the dating of the *Blue Landscapes* through placing their composition and iconography in the broader evolution of landscape painting in the sixteenth century. The third chapter discusses the function of the drawings through investigating their technique and comparing them to other early sixteenth-century drawings and their function in the production process of paintings. The last chapter deals with the difficult issue of attribution.

The *Blue Landscapes* are connected with two important upcoming phenomena in the early sixteenth century: the genesis of landscape on the one hand and the rising popularity of the medium of drawing as independent works of art on the other. Moreover, they belong to the earliest landscape drawings and thus stand at the very genesis of the newly arising genre of landscape drawing, which fully develops itself around the 1540s. A contribution on this so far neglected group of drawings therefore is more than necessary.



### 0. LANDSCAPES AND DRAWINGS IN THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY NETHERLANDS<sup>20</sup>

#### 0. 1. Landscapes<sup>21</sup>

In the early sixteenth century, Antwerp took over Bruges' role as most powerful city in the Netherlands. Through its fortunate location near the Schelde River, the city became an important trading center on an international level. Art flourished underneath this economic impulse. Many artists traveled to the city to make their career. The demand for art grew and a market came into being, which led to the production of paintings on a larger scale.<sup>22</sup> Painters started specializing in 'genres' to raise and speed up their production.<sup>23</sup> Landscape painting was one of these specializations.<sup>24</sup>

The representation of nature was on no account 'new' in the Netherlands. The richly detailed landscapes in the backgrounds of the paintings by the Flemish primitives, and especially the attention for nature in the illumination of Netherlandish manuscripts, such as the miniatures of the Master of the Getty Froissart in the *Trésor des histories* (c. 1475-80), prove that landscape painting was born out of an established tradition of representing nature.<sup>25</sup> From the sixteenth century onwards, the view on nature became an 'iconographical theme' *an sich* that received appreciation for its own sake. What used to be background became the main subject of representation, while the traditional figurative iconographical theme lost its importance. Painters chose their iconographical subject in function of depicting a wide panorama, and later in the century the moment came that they even left out any kind of iconographical theme. Cornelis Massijs' (c.1510/1- c.1556/7) tiny *Landscape* in the Antwerp Museum

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<sup>20</sup> This introductory chapter does not pretend to give a full overview on the phenomena of landscape and drawing in the sixteenth century. It only treats those developments that are important for the discourse of this study.

<sup>21</sup> For a recent and extensive overview on sixteenth-century landscape painting, see Essen 2003.

<sup>22</sup> See Vermeylen 2003 for a recent publication on the commercialization of art.

<sup>23</sup> On the appearance of genres in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, see Balis 1991.

<sup>24</sup> On the rise of the pictorial genre of landscape painting, see Silver 2006. Whether one in the sixteenth century saw landscape theoretically as an 'independent genre' is not clear. For a discussion regarding this subject, see Mander 1973 II, p. 538-539.

<sup>25</sup> London, British Library, ms. Augustus A V, see Kren 2007, fig. 56-57. Regarding the subject on landscape in Flemish illuminated manuscripts before Joachim Patinir, see Kren 2007.

Mayer van den Bergh is one of the earliest examples of 'pure landscape'.<sup>26</sup> In 1521, Marc Antonio Michiel (1484-1582) for the first time pronounced the word 'landscape' when noting the *molte tavolette de paesi* in the collection of Cardinal Grimani (1461-1523) in Venice.<sup>27</sup> A new type of specialization was born.

The first artist ever called 'landscape painter' was Joachim Patinir (c. 1480/1485 -1524).<sup>28</sup> His role in the genesis of the genre is primordial. He was the first to actually specialize in the subject. He started producing views on nature on a 'large scale' and established a type of composition that would dominate the genre until the middle of the century. Typical for these landscapes were their extremely high horizon and bird eye's perspective, a combination that evokes wide panoramas that seems to extend endlessly. Today they are known as 'world landscapes', as one tends to see the entire world in it. Through changing the ground tone from green in the foreground, to brown in the second plan and to blue in the far distance, the artist leads the eye of the viewer in the space. The natural elements consists out of enormous jagged rocks, large valleys with twisting rivers that disappear behind the horizon, a combination of realistic and 'fantastical' little dwellings posed on the top of the rocks or in the valleys, and a bunch of anecdotic little details scattered throughout the entire composition. His *Charon crossing the river Styx* (fig. 1) - no doubt the artist's masterpiece - marvelously illustrates this type of composition.<sup>29</sup>

Joachim Patinir obviously was not the only landscape painter at that time. Other contemporary specialists in the genre, however, took over his devices without demonstrating a 'personal' contribution. Their names remain nowadays unknown and scholars refer to them as 'follower of

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<sup>26</sup> Antwerp, Museum Mayer van den Bergh, see Gibson 1989, fig. 2.24.

<sup>27</sup> Gombrich 1953, p. 339. The word landscape was already in use before the sixteenth century, however only in a non-artistic way. Mander 1973 II, p. 538.

<sup>28</sup> Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) described Patinir in this manner in his travel diary on journey to the Netherlands in 1521. Rupprich 1956, p. 172. He literally wrote *maister Joachim der gut landschafft Mahler* (master Joachim the good landscape painter). Alejandro Vergara edited the most recent catalogue on the artist (Madrid 2007). For good quality pictures of Patinir's landscapes, we refer to this catalogue.

<sup>29</sup> Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, inv. P 1616, Madrid 2007, nr. 1.

Patinir', or 'Workshop of Patinir'.<sup>30</sup> The Master of the Female Half-Lengths (c. 1500-1530) is among these followers the artist with the most 'distinguished' artistic personality.<sup>31</sup>

The generation following on Patinir, called the *second generation* by Walter Gibson, adapted their forerunner's model in various ways.<sup>32</sup> Many more names came to us from artists of this younger generation, such as Lucas Gassel (1480/1500 - 1568/9), Jan van Amstel (c. 1490/1510 - c. 1542), Herri met de Bles (c. 1510- c.1566), Cornelis Massijs (c. 1510/1- c.1556/7), and Matthijs Cock (c. 1510 - c. 1547). Their landscapes gradually move towards a more limited view, with rustic or forest scenes, a lower view point, less attention for little details, a more unified space, and the introduction of realistic parts. *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness* by Cornelis Massijs illustrates these developments (fig. 2).<sup>33</sup> The composition shows how many aspects of the 'world landscape' remain present in the paintings of the second generation, such as the high horizon, the partial high viewpoint and the strange rock formations. The gradual movement towards realism reaches its climax with Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1526/1530- 1569), about whom Karel van Mander (1548-1606), the first Netherlandish art historian *avant la lettre*, wrote that he swallowed the rocks of the Alps to spit them out again in his works.<sup>34</sup>

Although the rise of the genre was not limited to the Netherlands - Germany (the Danube school) and the North of Italy (Venice) show a simultaneous liberation of views on nature - the fame of Netherlandish landscapes *à la* Patinir became internationally known.<sup>35</sup> In Italy, landscape was considered as the specialty of Netherlandish painters. Michelangelo's (1475-1564) famous complaint about the Flemish artists painting '*the green grass of the fields, the shadows of trees, and rivers and bridges, which they call landscapes*', and all done '*without reason or art, without symmetry or proportion, without skillful choice or boldness*', documents the presence and fame of the Flemish

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<sup>30</sup> Vergara makes a distinction between paintings by the master himself, paintings by Patinir and his workshop, and paintings by followers, that had no direct connection with the artist, see Vergara 2007, p. 29.

<sup>31</sup> See Koch's chapter on the artist in Koch 1968, pp. 56-65.

<sup>32</sup> Gibson 1989, p. 17.

<sup>33</sup> Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor schone Kunsten, inv. 830.

<sup>34</sup> Mander 1994/1996 I, p. 11, fol. 233.

<sup>35</sup> On the reception of the world landscape, see W. Gibson's chapter of the same name in Gibson 1989, pp. 37-47.

landscapes in Italy. It indicates that not everyone was as enthusiastic about their vistas.<sup>36</sup> Landscape paintings and painters traveled to the peninsula, and as a result, the Netherlandish landscape left its traces in Italian painting of that time.

## 0.2. Drawings

Few Netherlandish drawings from the fifteenth century have come to us and those that are preserved are limited in type. From the sixteenth century onwards, drawings survive in larger numbers and with a greater diversity in function. They circulated in three contexts.<sup>37</sup>

First, drawings were used in the preparation process of artworks. A division between preparatory drawings for paintings and for other media, such as glass painting, tapestry and prints should be made. According to William Robinson and Martha Wolff, preparatory sketches for paintings from the early sixteenth century are rare. They ascribe this lack to the practice at that time of preparing compositions on the ground layer of the work of art itself, in the underdrawing.<sup>38</sup> A type of preparatory drawing for paintings that did exist, already from the fifteenth century on, is the 'contract drawing', a kind of 'legal document' in which the patron and artist agreed on the appearance of an artwork. These drawings usually only contain the clear outlines of the composition. Pieter Pourbus' (1523/1524-1584) contract drawing for the Van Belle triptych shows how both the artist and the patron signed the drawing in order to confirm their agreement.<sup>39</sup> Around the middle of the sixteenth century, the Italian Renaissance introduced new types of drawings in the Netherlands. Figure, light and compositional studies became fashionable, following Italian precedents. Jan van Scorel's (1495-1562) *Christ blessing a child* (fig. 3), is an example of an early sixteenth century light study for a painting.<sup>40</sup> Preparatory drawings for artworks in other media, such as altarpieces, stained glasses, sculptures, prints or precious metalworks are 'patronen', also called model drawings, which usually represent

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<sup>36</sup> Francisco de Hollanda, *Dialogos de la Pintura* (1548); Quotation from the English edition, Hollanda 1928, p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> This overview is based on Robinson & Wolff's article *The functions of Drawings in the Netherlands in the sixteenth century*, see Robinson & Wolff 1986/1987.

<sup>38</sup> Id., p. 26. They mention as well the artists' preference for re-using traditional formulae instead of trying out new compositional 'experiments' as a possible cause.

<sup>39</sup> Paris, Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, see Id., fig. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum, inv. 1366.

completed compositions, or 'cartoons', which are fully scale models of the final artwork.<sup>41</sup> They served on the one hand as a direct model for the execution of the work of art, which usually happened by another artist and, on the other hand, as legal documents, similar to contract drawings, between the patron and artist. The high degree of elaboration of these drawings made them popular as collector items, and as such many are preserved.

Secondly, drawings served for making copies or excerpts of authoritative compositions in order to collect a corpus of motifs for new creations. These were sometimes collected in sketchbooks, such as the *Antwerp Sketchbook* of the Bles Workshop in the Berlin Kupferstichkabinett.<sup>42</sup> This sketchbook contains mainly landscapes, either whole or fragmentary compositions, with motifs from the backgrounds of the paintings by Patinir and his followers.

Thirdly, drawings circulated in an independent context, as autonomous works of art. Influenced by the rising popularity of printing in the sixteenth century and the circulating humanistic ideas about the 'genius' of the artist and *the original design as the truest manifestation of artistic individuality*, paper became appreciated as a medium for art itself. Artists created works of art on paper, which they signed and dated as 'real' artworks. They were sold or given away. These independent drawings, also called 'presentation sheets' mostly were 'finished' sheets, which are elaborated and painstakingly rendered compositions of high quality. An early example of an autonomous drawing in the Netherlands, is Jerome Bosch' (c.1450-1516) sheet the *Tree-man*.<sup>43</sup>

### 0.3. Landscape drawings

Of the small amount preserved early sixteenth-century drawings only few are landscape compositions. They provide little indications concerning their author, function or context and, so far, they almost solely have been discussed in the context of monographic studies that focused on issues of stylistical

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<sup>41</sup> Robinson & Wolff equate 'patronen' with cartoons (Id., p. 33), whereas Peter van den Brink considers 'patronen' as designs in the broadest sense of the word, which is *drawings of complete compositions, which can thus be distinguished from sketchbook sheets on which only individual figures or unfinished compositions can be seen*, Brink 2004/2005, p. 170. In this study, we will use the term 'model drawing' when referring to van den Brink's designation of 'patroon'.

<sup>42</sup> Berlin, Staatliche Museen Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. 79 C 2. For a thorough discussion on the sketchbook, see Bevers 1998.

<sup>43</sup> Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina, inv. 7876, see Antwerp 2002, nr. 40.

analysis and attribution.<sup>44</sup> A rare article that treats the changing function of landscape drawings in the course of the sixteenth century is by the hand of Walter Gibson.<sup>45</sup> In this article, he argues that early landscape artists, such as Patinir *were chiefly painters and produced only a few landscape drawings* and that therefore only a small amount of landscape drawings remain from that period.<sup>46</sup> Later on, around the 1540s, the representation of landscape became popular in finished drawings by Cornelis Massijs, Matthijs Cock or Pieter Brueghel the Elder.<sup>47</sup> Of these independent sheets, many more are preserved today. Gibson mentions the *Riverlandscape with Saint Jerome* (cat. I.4, fig. D) as one of the first independent landscape drawings. He argues that through its colorful technique *it imitated painted landscapes* and that it *functioned as a substitute for landscape painting*.<sup>48</sup> The drawing thus stands at the beginning of an evolution of a new genre, that of landscape drawing.

The *Blue Landscapes* are thus related to three new phenomena in the sixteenth-century Netherlands: the origin of landscape painting, the emancipation of drawing and the rise of a new genre, landscape drawing. The following chapters define where to place these drawings within these three evolutions.

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<sup>44</sup> Exceptions are the exhibition catalogues Berlin 1975 and Washington 1986/1987. The first gives an extensive overview of landscape drawing before and after Pieter Bruegel the Elder. The latter is innovating for discussing the function of sixteenth-century drawings. This catalogue also includes some landscape drawings, such as the *Riverlandscape with Saint Jerome* (Washington 1986/1987, nr. 33).

<sup>45</sup> Gibson 1987.

<sup>46</sup> *Id.*, p. 50.

<sup>47</sup> For the landscape drawings by Cornelis Massijs, see Zwollo 1965; for the drawings by Matthijs Cock, see D'haene forthcoming; for the landscape drawings by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, see New York/Rotterdam 2001. Regarding the finished landscape drawings by Matthijs Cock and Cornelis Massijs, see also § III. 2.

<sup>48</sup> Gibson 1987, p. 50.

## I. COHERENCE

### I. 1. The *Blue Landscapes*

#### *I.1.1. Presentation*

The *Blue Landscapes* are a group of five drawings that were brought together in the past because of a range of convincing similarities. They represent complete landscape compositions on a catching blue colored paper. Their combination of subject and technique set them apart from other contemporary drawings.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, the term *Blue Landscapes* suits well as a description for the group. They consist out of the following sheets:

(1) The *Landscape with an imaginary city under siege* (cat. I.1, fig. A) in the Uffizi in Florence, a landscape with in the background detailed scenes of an army besieging a city. In the foreground, two equestrians disappear out of the picture.

(2) The *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (cat. I. 2, fig. B) in the Horne collection in Florence, a drawing representing the moment that Jupiter, in the form of swan, conquers Leda. The scene is located on a plateau that stands out in a wide and rocky landscape.

(3) The *Riverlandscape with Saint Jerome* in the Landesmuseum in Darmstadt (cat. I.4, fig. D), which represents some remarkable rock formations with in the center a large cave where in a corner Saint Jerome studies at his desk. In the foreground a shepherd watches over his flock. The scene swarms in the light of a powerful sunset that is suggested behind the rock formations.

(4) The *Landscape with Saint Christopher* in the Louvre (cat. III.1, fig. F), a wide landscape with in the foreground two scenes from the life of Saint Christopher, his encounter with the devil disguised as a knight and his meeting with the child Jesus, which he carries on his back over the river.

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<sup>49</sup> See also III.1.

(5). The *Landscape with Saint Christopher* sold at Christie's in 1974 (cat. I.3, fig. C), whose composition is identical to the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* in the Louvre (fig. F).<sup>50</sup> Both sheets contain exactly the same information. The only difference is the different relation between the figures and the landscape. In the Louvre drawing (fig. F) the figures clearly draw out in front of the landscape, whereas they are much smaller in the Christie's drawing (fig. C), in which they disappear in an overruling landscape.

### I. 1.2. Coherence

Reznicek in 1964 was the first to link three drawings, the *Landscape with an imaginary city under siege* (cat. I.1, fig. A), the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (cat. I.2, fig. B) and the *Riverlandscape with Saint Jerome* (I.4, fig. D) to each other on the basis of their similar style and technique.<sup>51</sup> He attributed the group to Jan Wellens de Cock. Raghianti brings a year later another drawing in the same technique into contact with the group, the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* in the Louvre (cat. III.1, fig. F), which since its first publication was considered as an authentic drawing by Joachim Patinir.<sup>52</sup> In 1975, Malke adds a final drawing to the group, a drawing, sold at Christie's in 1974, a *Landscape with Saint Christopher* (cat. I.3, fig. C).<sup>53</sup> Scholars have ever since treated this group of drawings as a whole.<sup>54</sup> They noted the kinship between the *Blue Landscapes* in terms of subject, composition, style, technique, figure type and size. This chapter discusses the similarities between the drawings regarding these six aspects.

#### (1) Subject and Composition

The most obvious common characteristic of the *Blue Landscapes* is their focus on nature. Although human staffage is present in each one of them, the rocky landscape always plays the protagonist role. The irregular, jagged rocks divided over the surface determine the view. They take on strange and impossible forms, sometimes rounded off softly, as the outstanding rock in the background of the

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<sup>50</sup> Sale, Christie's, London, 26-27/11/1974, nr. 151.

<sup>51</sup> Reznicek 1964, p. 16.

<sup>52</sup> Raghianti 1965, p. 9. Baldass first published the drawing, see Baldass 1928.

<sup>53</sup> L. Malke in Berlin 1975, p. 112.

<sup>54</sup> For the bibliography of these drawings, see my catalogue in Part 2.



Christopher drawings (figs. C & F), and sometimes extremely raw and sharp in their contours, as in the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B). Typical is the ever-returning overhanging part, especially pronounced in the *River Landscape with Saint Jerome* (fig. D), where at the extreme right a considerable amount of rock with a tree on top of it, floats in the air. With the exception of this latter drawing, all landscapes have similar compositions. A *repoussoir motif* - a large and slim tree (the *Landscape with an imaginary city under siege* (fig. A)), an iconographic theme (the *Landscapes with Saint Christopher* (fig. C & F)), or a combination of both (the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B)) - catches the eye in the immediate foreground. Sequential rocks and diagonally running rivers lead the view into the distance. In the two sheets representing the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* (figs. C & F) and in the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B), these iconographic scenes stand out on a plateau in the foreground that gives out onto a broad panorama, seen from bird's eye perspective and with a high horizon. Contrary to the elevated composition, the landscape elements, the rocks, trees and little villages, are depicted as if they were seen at eye level. In the *Landscape with an imaginary city under siege* (fig. A), the viewpoint is much less elevated. The viewer looks almost at eye level onto the panorama - at least in the foreground. The foreground gradually switches into the second plan. In the representation of the background, the artist falls back on an unrealistic high viewpoint combined with a high horizon. The composition of the *River landscape with Saint Jerome* (fig. D) is different. The drawing's view on nature is limited to some enormous rocks placed in the centre of the composition. At the left, the spectator looks into the distance, which, nonetheless, still remains limited. The high horizon, on the other hand, does recall the other *Blue Landscapes*, as do the rugged rock formations.

## (2) Technique and style

The five drawings are executed in the same triple tonality technique.<sup>55</sup> Before shaping his compositions, the artist washed the surface of his paper with an intense blue color. The draughtsman consequently set out the outlines of the composition with pen (or brush) in a dark - brown to black - ink. He finishes

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<sup>55</sup> This technique designates the combination of pen and washes in dark ink, white heightening and color grounded paper. For a further discussion of this technique, see § III.1 & § III. 2.

with the application of dark wash and white heightening. The combination of these three colors creates a pictorial effect that brings the appearance of the drawings close to that of paintings.

Four of the five drawings are close in style to each other. The *Landscape with Saint Christopher* (fig. F) is different. A comparison between this latter drawing and the identical drawing sold at Christie's (fig. C), which does belong in style to the other *Blue Landscapes*, makes the differences explicit. Thin pen lines determine in the Louvre drawing (fig. F) the contours of the different elements, most clearly visible in the dwellings or the figures. Within these pen drawn contours, the artist models his volumes with his brush. The rock formations show how the artist skillfully creates voluminous cliffs by means of a variety of brushstrokes going from thin lines to broader washes. Subtly applied white heightening further increases their volume. This tendency towards the modeling use of wash and heightening also returns in the rendering of figures. The outstanding leg of Saint Christopher in the foreground (fig. F), marvelously illustrates how the draughtsman models with pen, wash and heightening in his modeling, in order to avoid the usual linearity of the medium of 'drawing'. In the Saint Christopher drawing sold at Christie's (fig. C) extensive wash and white heightening color up the composition rather than that it shapes elements. The artist does attempt to create volumes through wash and heightening, as is visible in the rock formations, but the effect is not convincing. His brushstrokes are ruder; the white heightening contrasts sharply with the surrounding dark parts. The artist's brush in the Christie's drawing (fig. C) thus works rather 'coloring' than 'modeling', as the washes and white heightening does achieve a colorful effect. The dissimilar handling of pen forms the greatest difference between the two Christopher drawings. Whereas the draughtsman in the Louvre sheet draws with a fluent and steady hand, the traces in the Christie's drawing are much more prudent, nervous and insecure. The artist creates short interrupted lines - sometimes almost dots - with a sharp character. The tiny drawn figures in the left foreground show how the artist's handling of the pen interferes with the clearness of their contours. The different drawing style in both drawings which nonetheless represent an identical composition, raises the idea that two separate hands were

responsible for their execution. The Christie's drawing is usually considered as a copy after the Louvre drawing, because of the latter's better quality and its greater precision.<sup>56</sup>

The other *Blue Landscapes* reveal the same interrupted and nervous pen traces as in the Christie's drawing (fig. C). In the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B) and the Uffizi drawing (fig. A), heightening and washes color up the composition in a similar way as in the Christie's drawing. Although the artist made an effort to create volume through the washing of his surface, volumes, for example the rock formations, remain flat on the surface. Wash colors up the tall tree trunks in the foreground of these drawings. In the Darmstadt drawing (fig. D), however, the artist models his volumes convincingly and in a pictorial manner. In suggesting the irregular surface of the rock formation, he plays with the soft gradations of tones, combining white heightening, dark washes and the blue color of the paper in a subtle manner. According to Giorgio Faggin, the outstanding quality of the latter sheet sets itself in style apart from the other drawings.<sup>57</sup> The pictorial quality of this drawing is remarkable indeed, and the elegant handling of the brush differs largely from the ruder washes in the other *Blue Landscapes*. However, when looking to the artist's pen traces, one recognizes the same interrupted and insecure lines - combined with regularly returning dots - as in the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B), the Uffizi drawing (fig. A) and the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* sold at Christie's (fig. C). The contours of the tree trunk at the left of Jerome's cave end abruptly when reaching the ground, without being actually grown together with it. Similar trunks reappear in the second plans of the Uffizi drawing (fig. A) and the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B). The tree tops on top of Jerome's cave have the same shapeless volumes as the trees dispersed in the Christie's drawing (fig. C), and the trunk of the tall tree that frames the left foreground is washed in a similar way as the tree that dominates in the foreground of the Uffizi and Horne drawing (figs. A & B). One should not doubt the same hand that made these four landscapes.

### (3) Figure type

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<sup>56</sup> J. Hand writes that the Christie's drawing *repeats* the Louvre drawing (J. Hand in Washington /New York 1986/1987, p. 110), whereas Hautekeete assumes that the Christie's drawing *is probably a copy of the drawing in the Louvre* (Hautekeete 2007, p. 143, note 42).

<sup>57</sup> G. Faggin in Kloek & Meijer 2008, p. 21.

The *Blue Landscapes* share a clear preference for the rendering of nature to the depiction of figures. In each landscape, the figuration only plays a smaller role. Their modeling reveals an artist that is more talented for representing natural elements than anatomic volumes: the horseman disappearing out of the picture in the Uffizi drawing bows his arm in an unrealistical manner above his head (fig. A); the head of Leda is set on her shoulders without working out her neck (fig. B); and the contours of the lion and figure of Saint Jerome are almost unrecognizable (fig. D).

#### (4) Size

The *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B), the *Landscape with an imaginary city under siege* (fig. A) and *the Riverlandscape with Saint Jerome* (fig. D) have more or less the same size, which varies between the 269 and 278 mm height and between 413 and 420 mm width.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, these sheets all reveal traces of three old folds made in the paper with quasi-identical intervals.<sup>59</sup> They document a collective history (they originated for example out of the same sketchbook, or were kept together in a collection). The *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B) and the Uffizi drawing (fig. A) bear an identical (non-autograph) hand written attribution to *Luca d'Olanda* in one of corners of the sheets. It also confirms that these drawings in the past were collected together. The Louvre sheet (fig. F) is in width some ten centimeters smaller than the abovementioned sheets (343 mm), whereas its height does correspond to them (270 mm). The drawing with the same composition sold at Christie's (fig. C) however shows at the right an extended part of some ten centimeters, which is missing in the Louvre drawing. Thus, the Louvre drawing (fig. F) originally might have been larger in length and correspond to the other drawings. The Christie's drawing, finally, is both in length and in width some 20 mm smaller and does not correspond in size with the other *Blue Landscapes*. The latter drawing bears an old attribution to Spinello Aretino at the back, which also indicates the sheet's previous stay in Italy.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> First remarked by Reznick 1964, p. 116. For their exact sizes, see my catalogue I. 1, I. 2 & I. 3.

<sup>59</sup> This latter observation went unnoticed before. I made the observation during my study trip in Florence on 27/07/2010. For the exact intervals between the folds, see my catalogue. I was unfortunately unable to see the drawing in Darmstadt, and therefore I do not have the exact intervals between the folds. Relying on the picture, the folds seem to have been made at the same distances as in the two other drawings.

<sup>60</sup> Sale, Christie's, London, 26-27/11/1974, nr. 151.

I. 2. Three additional artworks: the *Conversion of Saul*, *Leda and the Swan*, and the *Hilly Landscape*

The *Blue Landscapes* are traditionally seen as fixed entity. This paragraph proposes some additions to this group.

(1) The first work is the painting *Leda and the Swan* (cat. IV.1, fig. G). The composition of the painting is identical to the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* in the Horne collection (fig. B). In the foreground next to a tall and slim tree, Leda lies naked on the ground with Jupiter, transformed in a swan, next to her. He is ready to overpower his victim. Behind them, the view opens up a wide panorama with huge rock formations at the left and right of a large river that disappears in the distance. Giorgio Faggin mentions this painting for the first time in 2008.<sup>61</sup> He considers the drawing *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B) a copy after the painting. The author of the painting is unidentified and, relying on the Patiniresque composition, the previous attribution to Cornelis Massijs is superseded.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, the current location of the painting is unknown and the only available picture shows the painting in an unfortunate condition.

(2) A second addition is the painting the *Conversion of Saul*, sold at Sotheby's in 1983 (cat. IV.2, fig. H). Apart from the group of soldiers in the foreground, the composition is identical to that of the *Landscape with an imaginary city under siege* (fig. A). The background of the painting and drawing correspond into the very detail with each other, from the natural and architectural elements to the little figures spread over the surface. The painting reveals that the drawing originally might have been larger, as the scenes at the right of the composition extend further in the painting than in the drawing. Max Friedländer, who touched upon the work in an art gallery in Luzerne in 1926, lists it in his catalogue of the Antwerp

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<sup>61</sup> Faggin in W. Kloek & B. W. Meijer 2008, nr. 10. Faggin did not include an image of the painting in the catalogue and the some effort was necessary to find the picture. I would like to thank Prof. dr. Em. Bert Meijer for providing me with the image, as well as for the effort he took gathering more information about its current whereabouts, which unfortunately were unsuccessful.

<sup>62</sup> The painting was restored and attributed to Cornelis Massijs in 1987 when it belonged to Luigi de Nobili di Milano (Palazzo Litta), see Faggin in Kloek & Meijer 2008, p. 21.

Mannerists' paintings as a work made by *the putative Jan de Beer* (c. 1475-c. 1528).<sup>63</sup> Friedländer did not include the painting's picture in his catalogue and as its later whereabouts were unknown, the work was left out of any further research conducted on the artist. In 1983, the *Conversion of Saul* popped up again in a Sotheby's auction, where it was sold as Jan Mostaert (c.1465-1533).<sup>64</sup> As both the attribution to Jan de Beer and Jan Mostaert are objectionable, the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie at The Hague currently catalogues the painting as *Anonymous Southern Netherlands years 1530*.<sup>65</sup> The present location of the painting remains unfortunately unknown.<sup>66</sup>

(3) A final addition is the drawing *Hilly Landscape* in the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam (cat. II.2, fig. E). This anonymous drawing shows a landscape that in composition and especially in style comes close to the *Blue Landscapes*. The composition shares with the *Landscape with an imaginary city under siege* (fig. A) the combination of a viewpoint at eye level in the foreground with a bird's eye perspective and high horizon in the (right) background. A slender and tall tree with a curved trunk dominates the composition in a similar way as in the Uffizi and Horne drawing, and the softly rounded rock formation at the right reminds those in the Darmstadt and Uffizi drawing. Although the outlines of the composition are set in pen and dark ink, the artist foremost models the drawing with grey brush strokes. The little elegant brush modeling, which creates a coloring rather than a modeling effect, for example in the rock at the right, recalls that in the rocks of the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* and the *Landscape with an imaginary city under siege* (figs. A & B). Just as in these latter drawings, wash colors up the trunk of the tree in the front and creates the shadows of the trees on the ground in the distance. Although the drawing style is sketchy, the same handling of the pen is recognizable. The pen drawn contours exist out of nervous and interrupted lines. The outlines of the rock formation resemble that of the rock formations in the Darmstadt drawing (fig. D). Some of the smaller tree trunks reveal a

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<sup>63</sup> Friedländer 1967/1976 XI, p. 69, nr. 21.

<sup>64</sup> Sale, Sotheby's, London, 09/03/1983, nr. 7, as environment Jan Mostaert.

<sup>65</sup> The work does not give evidence of striking similarities with either the oeuvre of Jan Mostaert or Jan de Beer. Peter van den Brink, curator of the recent exhibition on the Antwerp Mannerists (Antwerp 2005), confirms that the painting does not have any relation with Jan de Beer in a written communication on 25/11/2010.

<sup>66</sup> It was sold on the auction in 1983 to the Rafael Valls Gallery in London. The Alexander Gallery in the United States - a partner of the latter gallery - sold the work in 1985. I owe this information to Mr. Toby Campbell of the Rafael Valls collection.

crack when approaching the ground, such as the little isolated tree standing on the hill on the second plan, on the left of the dominating tree in the foreground. Similar cracked trunks are characteristic for the Uffizi, Horne and Darmstadt drawing. Curved interrupted pen traces, further, form the contours of the tree tops, leaving their leafage in some cases rather shapeless. The drawing style of the drawing is so similar to that of the *Blue Landscapes* - with the exception of the drawing in the Louvre the same author seems responsible for the execution. The drawing until now remains unpublished and the author is unknown.<sup>67</sup>

### 1.3. Conclusion

The *Blue Landscapes* consist out of a group of five landscape drawings that share six common aspects. Their main cohesive factors no doubt are their specific subject, which is the representation of complete (fantastical) views on nature, and their triple tonality technique. Four of the five drawings the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* sold at Christie's (fig. C), the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B) and the *Landscape with an imaginary city siege* (fig. A) and the *Riverlandscape with Saint Jerome* (fig. D) are so close in style to each other the same hand seems responsible for their execution. The fact that three of these four latter drawings virtually have the same size further confirms this supposition. The *Landscape with Saint Christopher* in the Louvre (fig. F) stands in style apart from this group. Its similar technique, same width and perhaps originally also same length, however, do indicate that the drawing is connected to them and presumably originated in the same workshop. At last, the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B) and the two *Landscapes with Saint Christopher* (figs. C & F) have comparable compositions, whereas the Uffizi drawing (fig. A) fits into the group to a certain extent. The *Riverlandscape with Saint Jerome* (fig. D) is different in setting, although the rock formations and high horizon reveal that the drawing originated in the same environment as the others.

Three artworks can be added to this group of drawings, on the basis of their similar style and / or composition.

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<sup>67</sup> The Boijmans Beuningen Museum is currently preparing a catalogue of its sixteenth-century Netherlandish drawings, in which the *Hilly Landscape* will be included. The drawing bears in the left corner a difficult readable monogram CB (?). It is (until now) impossible to identify this monogram.

The painting *Leda and the Swan* (fig. G) and the painting the *Conversion of Saul* (fig. H) have identical compositions to two of the *Blue Landscapes*. Although these paintings are anonymous and as such do not provide any indication towards the author of the *Blue Landscapes*, they do provide new clues towards their dating and function.

The third addition is the *Hilly Landscape* (fig. E). Although this drawing seems to be executed by the same hand as four of the five *Blue Landscapes*, this anonymous sheet does not help in identifying the author of the landscapes, nor does it assist in pointing out the function of them, given its fundamentally different drawing technique (on plain paper instead of blue). The composition, however, does give an indication about the dating of the *Blue Landscapes* and will therefore be further discussed solely in the next chapter that handles on this subject.



## II. DATING

Generally, scholars date the execution of the *Blue Landscapes* in the period ranging from the 1520s to the 1530s, or from the 1530s to the 1540s.<sup>68</sup> This chapter ties up their period of execution through placing their iconography and composition within the broader development of landscape painting in the sixteenth century.

### II. 1. Composition and landscape typology

In their composition and selection of landscape elements - the impressive rock formations in particular - the *Blue Landscapes* are inheritors of the world landscapes that were produced by Patinir and his followers at the beginning of the early sixteenth century. The plateau with the figures in the foreground that stand out above the landscape, the high horizon, the bird's eye viewpoint and the infinite panorama in the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B), its corresponding painting (fig. G) and the two drawings representing the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* (figs. C & F), bring these compositions close to the typical production of Joachim Patinir. *The steep cliff surmounted by a fortress, with a village below protected from the sea by a curving wall* at the left of the second plan of the Christopher drawings, reappears in two artworks from the second generation of Netherlandish landscape painters.<sup>69</sup> Although not identical, it occurs in the *Rest on the flight into Egypt* generally attributed to Mattijs Cock (fig. 4),<sup>70</sup> and on page 54 of the earlier mentioned *Antwerp Sketchbook* in Berlin (fig. 5), that is dated around 1535- 1543, and situated in the proximity of Herri met de Bles.<sup>71</sup>

The *Landscape with an imaginary city under siege* (fig. A) and its corresponding painting (fig. H) partially abandon the typical world landscape characteristics. The foreground is rendered at eye level and fits in with the rest of the landscape; the transition into the distance is gradual. In depicting the background, the artist falls back on the patiniresque bird's eye perspective and high horizon. The

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<sup>68</sup> Reznicek dates the drawings between 1520-1530 (Reznicek, 1964, p. 116), whereas Ragghianti places them somewhere in between 1530-1540, see Ragghianti 1965, p. 9. More recently, scholars argue that, if Jan Wellens de Cock's name is eliminated as author (whose activity until recently was estimated in the 1520s), the drawings should be dated around 1530-1540. First articulated by J. Hand in Washington /New York 1986/1987, p. 110. On the attribution of the *Blue Landscapes* to Jan Wellens de Cock, see § IV.1.

<sup>69</sup> Gibson 1989, p. 35.

<sup>70</sup> Antwerp Mayer van den Bergh Museum, inv. 36. Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Berlin, SMPK, inv. 79c2, p. 54. Hautekeete 2007, p. 143, note 43. See also § 0.2.

composition of the Darmstadt drawing removes itself even further from the traditionally world landscape. Instead of the usual wide panorama, a huge rock formation dominates the composition. A composition that comes close to the one in the Darmstadt drawing is Patinir's *Landscape with Saint Jerome* in the Louvre (fig. 6).<sup>72</sup> The latter painting equally focuses on a large rock formation placed in centre of the composition. The infinite space next to the rock formation, however, contrasts with the demarcated background of the Darmstadt drawing.

In comparison to the *Blue Landscapes* (apart from the Darmstadt drawing), the space in the additional drawing, the *Hilly Landscape* at the Museum Boijmans Beuningen (fig. E), is restricted. The view leads into the distance by means of two softly sloping hills placed astraddle after one another. In the foreground, the artist treats the elements seen from a naturalistic lower viewpoint. At the left, a little path leads to the edge of a wood, which is suggested outside the picture. The foreground gradually passes into the second plan, where a little dwelling - something in between a castle and farm - surrounded by trees, lies at the side of the water. The composition somehow recalls those of Matthijs Cock, for whom chains of mountains placed astraddle after one another was a typical device for creating space in his landscapes.<sup>73</sup> It occurs, in the combination of a path at the left leading into the woods, in his *Landscape with the Good Samaritan* (fig. 7).<sup>74</sup> The plateau in the foreground after which lies a pond leading to the dwelling in the centre of the composition, further, reminds Cock's *Landscape with a farm at the foot of a hill* in the Louvre (fig. 8).<sup>75</sup> As in the Uffizi drawing, the artist renders part of the background seen from a higher perspective than the rest of the landscape.

According to Karel Boon, the limited view on a piece of nature in the proximity of the viewer in the Darmstadt drawing creates an intimate type of landscape unfamiliar with that of Patinir.<sup>76</sup> He considers the author of this landscape, consequently, as an important actor in the genesis of landscape.<sup>77</sup> The space in the Darmstadt drawing indeed is more enclosed than in the compositions of Joachim Patinir. The whole of *Blue Landscapes* however points out that the author belongs to the early

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<sup>72</sup> Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. RF 2429.

<sup>73</sup> See D'haene forthcoming.

<sup>74</sup> Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, inv. 8677.

<sup>75</sup> Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, inv. 19.883.

<sup>76</sup> Boon 1992 I, p. XVIII.

<sup>77</sup> He believes the author of the sheet is Jan Wellens de Cock. For the attribution of the drawings to Jan Wellens de Cock, see § IV.1.

second generation of landscape painters rather than to Patinir's immediate environment. Although the *Blue Landscapes* strongly adhere to the world landscape tradition, they introduce at the same time more 'modern' devices that make their appearance more realistic, such as a lower viewpoint, softer hills, a more restricted view, and naturalistic dwellings instead of fantastic castles. Even the drawings with a more traditional character, the Christopher drawings, contain elements that circulated in the second generation. Therefore, John Hand correctly states that the rendering of space in the *Blue Landscapes* stands somewhere between that found in Patinir's middle period paintings and the drawings of Matthijs Cock and Cornelis Metsys.<sup>78</sup> For what concerns their composition, the drawings thus do not stand at the very genesis of landscape paintings, as Boon argued, but rather belong to a phase following closely on the 'first Netherlandish landscapes'. However, even within the second generation of landscape painters the *Riverlandscape with Saint Jerome* (fig. D) has a remarkable and atypical composition.

## II. 2. Iconography

### II. 2.1. *Leda and the Swan*

The Italian Renaissance meant a reintroduction of mythological scenery in art. In the Netherlands, this type of iconography appeared sporadically from the early sixteenth century on, Jan Gossaert's (c.1478 -1532) mythological decoration for the castle of 'Suytburg' (the Netherlands) as one of the earliest examples.<sup>79</sup> Lucas Gassel and Matthijs Cock started introducing mythological themes in their landscapes, from the 1530s on. Around the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, mythological figures frequently occupied Netherlandish landscape scenes.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Hand in Washington /New York 1986/1987, p. 110.

<sup>79</sup> Jan Gossaert decorated the castle on a commission of Filips of Burgundy in 1515. See Mengser 2002 for a recent monograph on the artist.

<sup>80</sup> Hieronymus Cock's (1518-1570) publication of the series *Landscapes with Biblical and Mythological Scenes* that consists out of etchings after his brother Matthijs Cock was in this respect of great influence. See Riggs 1977, figs II.A, 38-50.

In ancient art, the myth of Jupiter who transformed himself into a swan in order to seduce Leda was a popular theme. During the Renaissance, it underwent a revival through the rediscovering of Ovidius' *Metamorphoses* and it started to be widely depicted in Italy. In the sixteenth-century Netherlandish art the story of Leda and the Swan was an uncommon theme.<sup>81</sup> The few known examples, such as the representation by Vincent Sellaer (c.1490-1544/1564), show Leda embracing the swan upright, a type that finds its inspiration in Leonardo da Vinci's (1452-1519) representation of the topic.<sup>82</sup> These depictions have little in common with the representation of the theme in the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B) and its corresponding painting (fig. G). In these scenes, Leda lies on the ground, with the metamorphosed Jupiter in front of her. With her hand around his neck, she tries to stop the god in his attempt to overpower her. This 'lying type' of Leda and the swan was in Renaissance Italy the most popular pose for representing the protagonists of the story.<sup>83</sup> In these latter scenes, Leda usually is shown partially elevated and without the stretched arm that holds off the obtrusive swan in the Horne drawing. The type derived from rediscovered ancient representations on sarcophagus, in statues, scarabs or cameos.<sup>84</sup> One such sarcophagus was visible in Rome in the sixteenth century (fig. 9),<sup>85</sup> and artists traveling to the city, such as Jan Gossaert in 1508, might have copied the motif and brought it back to their home country.<sup>86</sup> This is a possible way of how the motif might have come to the Netherlands. Another feasible track of influence is its presence in one of the prints of the Venetian artist, Giulio Campagnola (1482-1515), which had a great impact in the Netherlands from the 1530s onwards.<sup>87</sup> An anonymous German drawing from the first half of the sixteenth century shows that the

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<sup>81</sup> Bull 2005, p. 170.

<sup>82</sup> Vincent Sellaer, *Leda and the swan*, Varsovie, Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawkie, see Bosque 1985, p. 202; For da Vinci's representation, see *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Knauer 1969, p. 17, note 18.

<sup>84</sup> Bober & Rubinstein 1986, nr. 5. Knauer 1969 illustrates many Renaissance artworks that reflect this motif.

<sup>85</sup> Bober & Rubinstein 1986, p. 54. The sarcophagus is nowadays lost. A sixteenth-century drawing by the Dutch humanist Stephanus Pighius (1520-1604) in his *Codex Pighianus* (Berlin, *Staatsbibliothek*, inv. Ms.Lat°61) documents the appearance of the sarcophagus.

<sup>86</sup> Jan Gossaert traveled to Rome in the retinue of the court diplomat Philip of Burgundy (1465-1424), who commissioned him to depict the antique monuments, see Herzog 1968, pp. 40-41, note 12.

<sup>87</sup> See Knauer 1969, fig. 42. Matthijs Cock was one of the earliest artists in the Netherlands demonstrating a clear influence of the Venetian prints of Giulio and Domenico Campagnola, see D'haene forthcoming.

type also appeared in the North.<sup>88</sup> The motif of Leda with an upholding arm is less frequent, although it does appear in Antique examples.<sup>89</sup> Apart from our drawings, no other Netherlandish 'lying' examples from the first half of the sixteenth century are - to my knowledge - known.

### *II. 2.2. The Conversion of Saul*

On his way to Damascus to fight the Christians, Saul was blinded by a strong flash of light, which made him fall off his horse.<sup>90</sup> Jesus appeared and asked him why Saul persecuted him. At that moment, Saul decided to change his life at that moment and became a fervent preacher of Christian faith. Representations in art usually portray the moment when Saul is falling off his horse. This is also the case in the *Conversion of Saul* (fig. H). In the foreground, Saul's horse kneels before God, who, high up in the sky threatens the horseman with a stretched finger. Saul makes a reluctant gesture with his arm, as if he wants to repel God's message. A knight rushes forward to offer help. At the left, the vanguard continues its track, whereas the retinue at the right waits for Saul. The discovery of the painting finally allows an identification of the subject of the Uffizi drawing (fig. A).<sup>91</sup> The city and human activity in the background now get a meaning. The city in the distance is Damascus. Left to the city, the army camp of Saul is full of human activity and prepares their attack of the city.

The iconography of the conversion of Saul is another topic that in the first half of the sixteenth century rarely appears in the Netherlands. Wieseman mentions Herri met de Bles' (1500/1510-c.1555) *Landscape with the conversion of Saul* in the Allen Memorial Art Museum, as one of the earliest representations of this theme (fig. 10).<sup>92</sup> Bles repeated the subject several times.<sup>93</sup> His representation

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<sup>88</sup> See Knauer 1969, fig. 41.

<sup>89</sup> An example is a Roman statue with Leda and the Swan in the Museo Archeologico in Venice, earlier on in the collection of Domenico Grimani (Bober & Rubinstein 1986, nr. 4).

<sup>90</sup> The Bible, *Acts of the Apostles*, 9, 3-7.

<sup>91</sup> G. Faggin already identified the background scenes as forming possibly part from the iconography of the *Conversion of Saul*. See, G. Faggin in Kloek & Meijer 2008, nr. 10.

<sup>92</sup> [http://www.oberlin.edu/amam/MetdeBles\\_Landscape.htm](http://www.oberlin.edu/amam/MetdeBles_Landscape.htm) (consulted on 22/09/2010). The other representations she mentions are the *Conversion of Saul* by Jan Swart van Groningen, before 1535 (formerly with R.W.P. de Vries, Amsterdam [1929]); by Pieter Coecke van Aelst, c. 1540s (Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. 11837); and by Jan Gossaert, before 1532 (Berlin, SMPK, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. 8484); and a print by Philips Galle (c. 1575) after a design by Maerten van Heemskerck (Hollstein 1994 II, p. 100, no. 407). Heemskerck's drawing, dated 1573, is in Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst.

<sup>93</sup> Chong 1998, note 19.

of the subject is not very similar to the *Conversion of Saul* sold at Sotheby's (fig. H). Interestingly, the underdrawing of Bles' composition reveals the Habsburg Eagle in on one of the flags of the retinue.<sup>94</sup> This motif reappears in the *Conversion of Saul* connected to the *Blue Landscapes* (fig. H). It alludes to the identification of the Habsburg monarch and king of the Netherlands, Charles V, with the converted Saul (who changed his name into Paul). Through this identification the king expressed his ambitions of being the ultimate defender of the Christian faith.

Another, recently discovered painting, attributed to the Master of the Female Half-Lengths (c. 1500-1530), proves that the theme did exist earlier on (fig. 11).<sup>95</sup> Although the composition and the general representation of the subject correspond to Bles' depiction, the specific gesture of Saul and his horse are similar to the ones in the *Conversion of Saul* sold at Sotheby's (fig. H). Another temporary and similar representation is the drawing with the *Conversion of Saul* by Jan Swart (1500-1560).<sup>96</sup> The representation of Saul raising his arm towards the sky and his horse making a fall down before God, derives from Dürer's representation of the theme in one of his prints (fig. 12).<sup>97</sup> The horse's position in the *Conversion of Saul* sold at Sotheby's (fig. H) was made up out of a combination of Saul's kneeling animal with the one bending his neck at the saint's left side in Dürer's print. The horseman with the turban holding up his shield and moving out of the picture at the right of Dürer's print returns in the Sotheby's painting where the man forms part of the riding vanguard at the left of the composition. As in Dürer's print his right arm is bowed, although the artist in the Sotheby's painting (fig. H) seems to have forgotten to depict his shield.

The dress code and figure type in the Sotheby's painting subscribe to those displayed in the paintings of the Antwerp Mannerists, a group of anonymous Antwerp artists in the early quarter of the sixteenth century.<sup>98</sup> Their work is characterized by mannerist figures, with little heads, elongated bodies and fanciful dresses. The headdress of Saul corresponds to that of Salomon in the triptych by the Master of the Salomonstriptych in The Hague,<sup>99</sup> while the armors and feathers bring to mind those

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<sup>94</sup> Id. p. 92.

<sup>95</sup> Germany, Private Collection. The painting was first published in the catalogue Essen 2003, nr. 7.

<sup>96</sup> R.W.P. de Vries sale, 1929, see Chong 1998, fig. 81.

<sup>97</sup> Albrecht Dürer, the *Conversion of Saul*, etching.

<sup>98</sup> See the catalogue of the recent exhibition on the Antwerp Mannerists, Antwerp 2005.

<sup>99</sup> The Hague, Koninklijk Kabinet van Schilderijen Mauritshuis, inv. 433, see Antwerp 2005, nr. 78.

of the soldier in the *Martyr death of four saints*, by the Master of 1518.<sup>100</sup> As this Mannerist 'trend' only covers a short period of the beginnings of the century - from 1505 to 1525 - the costumes provide an interesting indication towards the dating of the painting.<sup>101</sup> The figures in the depiction of the Master of the Female Half-Lengths, who was active in the same period, also have Antwerp Mannerist costumes, whereas the soldiers in Herri met de Bles' later version have Roman outfits which reveal Italian Renaissance influences that only became popular around the 1540s.

### *II. 2.3. Saint Christopher*

The iconography of Saint Christopher finds its inspiration in the story told by Jacobus de la Voragine in his *Golden Legend*.<sup>102</sup> Christopher was a giant who wanted to serve the most powerful man on earth. He served a mighty king, but soon discovered the latter's fear for evil. Once in the service of Satan, whom he met disguised as a knight, he witnessed the devil's dread for a cross placed at the side of a road. Christopher then decided to serve God. A hermit told him that if he acted well, one day the king of kings would appear for him in person. Christopher started a new life, transporting travelers safely to the other side of a dangerous river. One day he carried a child that became heavier each step he took. The giant told the child that he felt like bearing the entire world on his shoulders, whereupon the child revealed his identity as the Son of God.

In both the Louvre drawing (fig. F) and the sheet auctioned at Christie's (fig. C), Saint Christopher traverses a river in a wide panorama. He rests with both hands on his staff in order to support the heavy weight of Christ on his shoulders. Jesus holds up a globe that refers symbolically to Christopher's bearing of the entire world on his shoulders. This iconographical theme was introduced in the Netherlandish art in the fifteenth century. As the subject lends itself easily for the representation of nature it became in the early sixteenth century, one of the most popular themes in landscape

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<sup>100</sup> Berlin, SMPK, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. 13441, see Antwerp 2005, nr. 53.

<sup>101</sup> See for the dating of this group of artists, Born 2005, p. 11-13.

<sup>102</sup> Voragine 1993, pp. 405-409. The *Golden Legend* was a collection of Saint's lives compiled by Jacobus de la Voragine around 1260. In the sixteenth century, it became widespread and tremendously popular through the medium of printmaking.

painting.<sup>103</sup> Patinir portrayed the subject several times, as did other artists, such as Jan Wellens de Cock or Matthijs Cock.<sup>104</sup> Usually one finds next to the water the hermit who advised Christopher to mend his way, as for example in Patinir's famous depiction in the Escorial.<sup>105</sup> Instead of the hermit, the Christopher drawings (fig. C & D) represent a group of knights in the left foreground, who pass by the cross on a rock placed at the side of the water. This motif refers to Christopher's encounter with his earlier lord, the devil, disguised as a knight, who feared God. Christopher points with his arm in the direction of the cross and the scene in which the saint bears Jesus. He thus shows Satan the triumph of Christianity over evil. It alludes to the saint's repellent function from the evil at that time.<sup>106</sup> In traditional representations of the subject, smaller episodes in the background refer to the dangers of the world against which Christopher offers protection.<sup>107</sup> In the current representation(s), evil is expressed by the presence of Satan himself.

The depiction of this scene is rare in the sixteenth-century Netherlands.<sup>108</sup> Almost no other examples are known. A painting from slightly later proofs there was a small tradition in depicting this subject. This anonymous painting represents a similar combination of scenes in which Christopher, on the one hand, carrying Christ on his shoulders over the water, while in the other he stands at the side of the water, where a group of knights seem to flight for his presence (fig. 13).<sup>109</sup> This latter scene confirms the hypothesis that the theme refers to Christopher's repellent function against evil. In his article on the Christopher drawing in the Louvre, Baldass refers to a drawing in the British Museum, by Pieter Coecke van Aelst (1502-1550), that also depicts the encounter of Saint Christopher with Satan.<sup>110</sup> The scene however has little in common with the representation of the topic in the Christopher drawings (fig. C & F).

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<sup>103</sup> For an overview of early sixteenth century representations, see Glück 1950, p. 36-47 and Madrid 2007, p. 277, notes 13 and 14.

<sup>104</sup> Jan Wellens de Cock, *Saint Christopher*, Germany Private Collection, see Friedländer 1967/1976 XI, fig. 104. The entire attributed oeuvre of Jan Wellens de Cock however today is questionable, see also § IV.1; Matthijs Cock, *Landscape with Saint Christopher* in Amsterdam, Collection Regteren Altena (currently preserved in the Rijksmuseum), see Gibson 1989, fig. 2.65.

<sup>105</sup> Madrid, Real Monasteria de San Lorenzo del Escorial, inv. 10014400, see Madrid 2007, nr. 17.

<sup>106</sup> Antwerp 2004, p. 120.

<sup>107</sup> Madrid 2007, p. 271.

<sup>108</sup> Réau 1955/1959 III, p. 304-305.

<sup>109</sup> Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, inv. 849. Antwerp 2004, nr. 17.

<sup>110</sup> London, British Museum, Prints and Drawings Department, inv. 0380202, Baldass 1918, p. 23, fig. 1.



In his travel diary of the Netherlands, Albrecht Dürer wrote about giving *4 christoffel auff graw papir verhoch* to Joachim Patinir.<sup>111</sup> These 'christoffels' have - according to our current knowledge - not been preserved and, therefore, it is not clear if Dürer gave four different sheets or just one sheet with four studies to the Antwerp artist. A sheet in the Kupferstichkabinett of Berlin gives us an idea of how these figures might have looked like (fig. 14).<sup>112</sup> The similar linear representation with the Saint Christopher figure in the two *Landscapes with Saint Christopher* in the Louvre and sold at Christie's (figs. F & C) is striking, and it is clear that the draughtsman must have known these, or similar figures by Dürer.<sup>113</sup> This has led in the past to the hypothesis that the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* in the Louvre, was by the hand of Joachim Patinir.<sup>114</sup>

#### II. 2.4. Saint Jerome

The life of Saint Jerome is another story that became popular in the sixteenth century through the legends told by Jacobus de la Voragine.<sup>115</sup> It was especially popular in Netherlandish landscape painting, as the story of the saint who retired in the wilderness (actually a desert) perfectly suited the rocky world landscapes of the patiniresque tradition. It is Joachim Patinir's most frequently depicted theme. Two different types of Saint Jerome's iconography are discernable in his landscapes.<sup>116</sup> On the one hand, he appears on his knees, meditating before a crucifix and (sometimes) beating his chest with a rock in penitence, as in the panel in the centre of the triptych in the Metropolitan in New York.<sup>117</sup> In other scenes, he extracts the thorn from a lion's paw, as for example in the depiction in the Prado.<sup>118</sup> Both scenes derive from Jerome's period of penitence in the Syrian Desert.

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<sup>111</sup> Rupprich 1956/1969 I, p. 172.

<sup>112</sup> Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. n. KdZ 4477.

<sup>113</sup> This was first remarked by Lugt 1968, p. 45.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*; Wood 1998, p. 110. See also § IV.2.

<sup>115</sup> Voragine 1993, p. 18.

<sup>116</sup> Madrid 2007, p. 294 -295.

<sup>117</sup> New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 1936 (36.14a-c), see Madrid 2007, nr. 19.

<sup>118</sup> Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, inv. P 1614, see Madrid 2007, nr. 20. Both stories go back to the legend of Saint Jerome in the Golden Legend and belong to the most popular scenes that were represented in art. (Reau 1955/1959 III, p. 740-741). The first type derives from the story in which the saint, who retired in the desert dreamed every night of naked dancing young girls. As penitence, he beats his chest with a stone day and night. The other type refers to the story in which Saint Jerome deliberates a lion of a thorn in his paw, after which he stayed in service of Saint Jerome.

In the Darmstadt drawing (fig. D), Saint Jerome is depicted while studying at his desk in a huge cave. Next to stairs that lead upwards in the grotto, an almost unidentifiable lion walks towards his master.<sup>119</sup> His crucifix is located outside the cave, in the left foreground. The iconographical type of Saint Jerome studying at his desk appears in the Netherlands from the early sixteenth century onwards. Albrecht Dürer's depiction, which focuses on the saint sitting in his study room, bent over his books and pointing to a skull, symbol of mortality, had a high influence in the Netherlands.<sup>120</sup> This type however has little in common with the Darmstadt drawing (fig. D). Its iconography rather seems inspired by Albrecht Altdorfer's (ca. 1480 - 1538) representation of the subject (fig.15).<sup>121</sup> Similar to the *Riverlandscape with Saint Jerome* (fig. D), the saint is studying at his desk in a cave with two 'windows' in the back wall.<sup>122</sup> Whereas in Altdorfer's print the scene centers on Jerome himself, the latter figure in the Darmstadt drawing is overruled by the unusual rock formations and the shepherd with his sheep, which attracts much more the eye of the viewer. The presence of the latter introduces a lyrical note into the landscape that is highly unusual and innovative for the early sixteenth century. Shepherds with flocks do appear sporadically in Patinir's backgrounds, for example in his earlier mentioned *Landscape with Saint Jerome* in the Louvre (fig. 6). In these landscapes, the penitent and meditative aspect evoked by Saint Jerome in the foreground set the dominant tone.<sup>123</sup> The empathically presence of the shepherd with his sheep in the Darmstadt drawing seems an early introduction of the 'pastoral' in Netherlandish landscapes, a tendency that was to be fully developed by Matthijs and Hieronymus Cock in the earlier discussed *Landscapes with Biblical and Mythological Scenes*.<sup>124</sup> Another remarkable aspect about this motif is the alphorn that rests on the shepherd's shoulders. To my knowledge, no other early sixteenth-century representations of an alphorn are preserved from the Netherlands. Nor does the motif occur in German prints or drawings, whose

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<sup>119</sup> W. Robinson first remarked the presence of the lion in the Darmstadt drawing. (Washington/New York 1986/1987, p. 110, note 1).

<sup>120</sup> Anzelewsky 1980, fig. 205.

<sup>121</sup> Altdorfer, *Saint Jerome in the cave*, woodcut.

<sup>122</sup> L. Marke compares these holes with the surreal image of two eyes above an irregular, gaping mouth. L. Marke in Berlin 1975, p. 111-112.

<sup>123</sup> R. Falkenberg even interprets the world landscape as *an image of the Pilgrimage of life*, see Falkenberg 1988.

<sup>124</sup> See note 80.

iconography earlier on in this chapter proved to have an important influence in the *Blue Landscapes*.<sup>125</sup> One should think of a journey of the artist to the Alps in order to explain the presence of this motif in the Darmstadt drawing.

The idealistic and poetical tone created through the presence of the shepherd with his sheep in the foreground strongly contrasts with the lugubrious and dark cave on the little island in which Saint Jerome secludes himself from the rest of the world. An enlightened little bridge symbolically connects his 'hermitage' to the lighthearted outer world. This symbolical tension raises the expressive value of this pictorial sheet and exceeds other contemporary representations of the topic.

### II. 3. Conclusion

The analysis of the composition and the iconography of the *Blue Landscapes* and the three additions in this chapter gave several clues regarding their period of execution. Nonetheless, it remains difficult to pinpoint an exact date. The most valuable indications towards their dating are on the one hand their connection with the Antwerp mannerists, which were active from 1505 until 1525, the resemblance to Joachim Patinir's landscape compositions, but even more to his earliest followers, and the renewing iconography in comparison to other early sixteenth century landscapes. We propose the years between 1520 - 1535 as the period in which the group of art works originated. These dates are flexible. Joachim Patinir started his activities as a painter in the year 1515. The choice for the year 1520 as a *terminus postquem* indicates that the *Blue Landscapes* belong to a slightly later phase than Patinir's earliest achievements. The year 1535 as a *terminus antequem* derives from the fact that on the one hand, the Antwerp mannerists reached their climax in 1525, after which the style slackened, and on the other hand, that the compositions prepare, but still not fully control, the renewals of the artists of the second generation, such as Matthijs Cock, that were active from the 1535s onwards.

The influence of Albrecht Dürer's (and other German artists) prints on the iconography of the *Blue Landscapes* is remarkably. It reveals that the dissemination of Dürer's prints - according to Schmid

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<sup>125</sup> On the appearance of alphorns in visual art, almost no literature is written. According to C. D. Vignau, who took a doctor's degree with her study on the origin and use of the alphorn, *the earliest evidence of "alphorn" playing in the Allgäu region [near the Alps] is said to be a representation in the chapel of St. Anna in Rohrmoos, Tiefenbach, near Oberstdorf, Upper Allgäu.* The altar dates from 1568 but Vignau argues that the alphornplayer was painted later on in the painting. (Vignau 2008, p. 180)

between some 70 000- 175 000 woodcuts and 20 000 to 50 000 engravings circulated - and the artist's travel to the Netherlands in 1521, during which he met some of Antwerp's most prominent artists, gave a renewing impulse to the traditional iconography and compositions of the Flemish landscapes.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Schmid 1996, pp. 32, 37.

### III. FUNCTION

Few scholars discussed the function of the *Blue Landscapes*. Solely the Darmstadt drawing (fig. D) received attention in this respect. Its extraordinary pictorial quality let Malke in 1975 believe that this *finished work of art was a collector item similar to a grisaille or a painting*.<sup>127</sup> This hypothesis has been taken over by subsequent scholars and the drawing today has the reputation of being one of the earliest independent landscape drawings in the Netherlands.<sup>128</sup> In 2007, Stefaan Hautekeete proposed a similar function for the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* in the Louvre (fig F).<sup>129</sup> Regarding the other *Blue Landscapes*, almost no comments on their function were made. Reznicek in 1964 proposes that the *Landscape with an imaginary city under siege* (fig. A) *probably was an example or a model for a painted version*.<sup>130</sup> Further, Faggin considered the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* as a copy after the painting *Leda and the Swan*.<sup>131</sup>

This chapter examines the function of the *Blue Landscapes*. The triple tonality technique of these drawings - by which we mean the combination of blue colored paper, brown to black ink and wash, and white heightening - is remarkable. This colorfulness has played an important role in considering the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* in the Louvre (fig. F) and the *Riverlandscape with Saint Jerome* (fig. D) as autonomous drawings.<sup>132</sup>

In his article on 'colored ground' landscape drawings in the Netherlands, Christopher Wood states that the great advantage of the triple tonality technique is that it makes artists able to *capture tonal variations and nuances*.<sup>133</sup> He expresses the belief that *there was little point in using the colored*

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<sup>127</sup> *Eine so durchgearbeitete und malerisch angelegte Komposition was als abgeschlossenes Kunstwerk Samelobjekt wie eine Grisaille oder rein Gemälde*. L. Malke in Berlin 1975, p. 111.

<sup>128</sup> Gibson 1987, p. 50. Wood mentions the drawing as an *independent, presentable, semi-formal work of art* (Wood 1998, p. 111, see also § III.2), while G. Faggin quotes L. Malke in discussing the drawing in the 2008 Uffizi catalogue, see G. Faggin in Kloek & Meijer 2008, p. 21. See also § 0.3.

<sup>129</sup> Hautekeete 2007, p. 147.

<sup>130</sup> Reznicek 1964, p. 16.

<sup>131</sup> See § I.2.

<sup>132</sup> See notes 128 and 129.

<sup>133</sup> Wood 1998, p. 101. With the term colored ground he refers to *drawings done with pen or brush on paper coated with an opaque colored ground, and then heightened with white gouache or body color*. He prefers this term in order to distinguish them from *drawings on tinted paper and from drawings that generate chiaroscuro effects by other means, such as the use of large areas of [...] wash as a ground for light effects*. Ibid. In this thesis, we follow this designation. Drawings that generate chiaroscuro effects by means of washes, are in this thesis indicated as *chiaroscuro drawings*. There

ground unless one were interested in working out problems of light and shade or capturing preexisting, already worked out solutions.<sup>134</sup> Wood distinguishes three main functions regarding the use of these drawings.<sup>135</sup> The first function relates to its various connections with paintings or works of art in other media. The artist either chose the technique for copying motifs from paintings in order to record and preserve tonal effects, or as a type of preliminary model drawing for artworks in other media, that contained indications on the 'distributions of painterly tone'. Secondly, the triple tonality technique was used for life drawing, as the technique allowed a great plasticity and vitality in the modeling of human figures and drapery. Thirdly, the technique was used for creating autonomous drawings, independent works of art that were often signed and dated. Thus, the *Blue Landscapes* either can be copies, preparatory studies or independent works of art. An examination of the practice of drawing on prepared paper in the fifteenth and early sixteenth-century Netherlands gives an insight in the reasons why the author(s) of the *Blue Landscapes* might have chose to work in this technique.

### III. 1. The triple tonality technique in the Netherlands

The Netherlandish practice of colored ground drawings dates back to the fifteenth century, when some of the Flemish Primitives, Hugo van der Goes (c.1440-1482) in particular, started working in this colorful technique instead of the dominant objective and linear drawing style, practiced by Rogier van der Weyden (c.1400-1464) and his followers.<sup>136</sup> In these grounded sheets, artists modeled figures and draperies by means of white highlights, which they usually applied with the tip of the brush in short parallel and crosshatched dashes, or sometimes in little dots, as for example in the *Christ on the cross* by Hugo van de Goes.<sup>137</sup> They thus followed current Florentine practices, in which the technique was

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never has been written an integral history of the technique. For literature relating to technique see Id., p. 114, note 2. Peter van den Brink more recently discusses the technique in his article on the use of drawings in early Antwerp workshops, see Brink 2004/2005, esp. pp. 170-173.

<sup>134</sup> Wood 1998, p. 102.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Antwerp 2002, p. 18. On the drawings of Rogier van der Weyden, see Buck 2009.

<sup>137</sup> Windsor Castle, Royal library, inv. 12951, see Antwerpen 2002, nr. 31. The precise function of these colored ground drawings, or the reason for the application of this colorful technique is until now not very clear. Van der Goes' *Christ on the cross* has been suggested as a preparatory study for a painting, whereas his famous drawing of *Jacob and Rachel* (cf. infra) has been suggested by turns as a

popular for life drawing.<sup>138</sup> Van der Goes' *Jacob and Rachel* marvelously (fig. 16) illustrates how the three-color scheme raised the expressive scope of the graphical medium.<sup>139</sup> The medium gained attractiveness in the early sixteenth century. The technique was especially popular for model drawings for art works in other media, such as glass paintings or precious metalwork. These drawings conveyed information about light and dark values to the specialized artists in the other workshop that was responsible for executing the actual work.<sup>140</sup> The designs for glass roundels by Jan de Beer, or the models for metalwork by a follower of Jan Gossaert, are examples of these practices.<sup>141</sup> The technique further served for the preparation of miniatures, as the execution of illuminations requires - similar to the working on coated paper - a practice of working upward from a dark ground to lighter tones.<sup>142</sup> The recent study of Van den Brink also showed the popularity of colored ground drawings in the painting workshops of the Antwerp Mannerists.<sup>143</sup> The *Christ on the cross* (fig. 17) by the Master of 1518 (active c. 1510-1530), for example, was according to Peter van den Brink a workshop model, perhaps made by the master himself, but more probably by a collaborator in the workshop.<sup>144</sup> White heightening, applied in pronounced parallel hatchings, models the composition, from the prominent figures in the foreground to the sketchy city in the distance. The folds of the drapery of the soldier with the turban, which also returns in the painting related to the drawing, nicely illustrate how modeling with white heightening matches with that in painting.<sup>145</sup>

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preparation for a painting, a mural painting, and even a glass painting. Antwerp 2002, p. 18. See on this issue also Buck 2001, p. 38.

<sup>138</sup> How this typical Italian technique reached the Netherlands is not clear yet. F. Koreny suggests that Italian coated sheets came to the Netherlands through Italian merchants. In the case of Van der Goes he insinuates that the artist made a trip to Italy. Antwerp 2002, pp. 123-124. The Italian use of the triple tonality technique was especially popular in drawings by Filippo Lippi and his circle, see New York 1998a.

<sup>139</sup> Oxford, Christ Church Picture Gallery, inv. 1335.

<sup>140</sup> Glass painting and metal works were usually executed by specialized artists, see Wood 1998, p. 109. See also § 0.2.

<sup>141</sup> For the roundels of Jan de Beer, see Antwerp 2005, nr. 31-32, 36-38; for the model drawings of the follower of Jan Gossaert, see Antwerp 2005, nr. 15 & 16.

<sup>142</sup> Wood 1998, p. 109.

<sup>143</sup> Brink 2004/2005, pp. 159-233.

<sup>144</sup> Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, inv. R.F. 29.058. P. van den Brink in Antwerp 2005, p. 140.

<sup>145</sup> For the painted version, see Antwerp 2005, nr. 56, fig. 1. There is no direct relationship between painting and drawing. See id., p. 140.

Netherlandish landscape drawings on colored ground occur rarely in the early sixteenth century.<sup>146</sup> In his study on this topic, Wood noted that the key group is found in the *Errera Sketchbook* in Brussels, which contains about a dozen of sheets on coated paper.<sup>147</sup> These drawings mainly represent natural motifs, such as trees, or larger parts of landscape compositions. A good example is page 29 of the sketchbook (fig. 18). The artist's main preoccupation here is not to depict a balanced landscape composition, but the study of one specific type of natural motifs, trees - their foliage in particular. By means of little blobs of white body color the artist renders the leaflets of the trees. Other tree compositions, in and outside the *Errera Sketchbook*, reveal a similar manner of evoking foliage by means of white body color applied in stippling technique on a dark underground.<sup>148</sup> Wood describes this practice as *a dress rehearsal for the act of painting*, as the stippling technique comes near to the *alla prima* technique of rendering foliage in paintings, by means of applying lighter tones upon (the still wet) darker undertones.<sup>149</sup> The drawings are presumably inspired on existing paintings but during their creation converted into *independent exercises*, thus removing themselves *one step away from the prior models and one step closer to a new painting*.<sup>150</sup> Other Antwerp drawings from that time, among them the *Landscape with an imaginary city under siege* (fig. A) and the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B), show a comparable conception of tree foliage.

The *Blue Landscapes* form a unique and at the same time remarkably coherent group in the Netherlandish tradition of drawing on colored paper in four ways.

First, their specific type of subject/composition is exceptional. Although we pointed above to the existence of other 'nature' representations, the *Blue Landscapes* differ from these earlier examples in portraying fully worked out *patiniresque* landscape compositions.

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<sup>146</sup> We should of course keep in mind that only a part of the actual number of drawings has been preserved.

<sup>147</sup> Brussels, Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten van België, Tekeningen kabinet, inv. 4630. The sketchbook consists out of 84 folios, mainly representing partial or complete landscape compositions. The function and origin of this sketchbook is still subject of discussion, see Brussels 2000, nr. 36. Wood further takes into consideration two loose landscape sheets on colored ground related to the drawings in the *Errera Sketchbook*, one in the Graphische Sammlung Albertina (Vienna), inv. 26450 (Wood 1998, fig. 86) and the other formerly in the Randall Collection in Montreal (Wood 1998, fig. 82).

<sup>148</sup> For the drawings outside the *Errera sketchbook*, see the note above.

<sup>149</sup> Wood 1998, p. 112.

<sup>150</sup> Id., p. 104.



Further, the application of white highlights is different. The abovementioned examples illustrate a typical preference for heightening by means of fine parallel or crossed hatchings with the tip of the brush. This type of modeling also characterizes Leda in the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B), or the hilly ground on the second plan of the composition.<sup>151</sup> Apart from these limited zones, the artist handles the broad surface of the brush in order to create fully covering zones of white body color. The white air and water surfaces in all five the compositions illustrate this different use of technique.

A third remarkable fact is the existence of two paintings, the *Leda and the Swan* (fig. H) and the *Conversion of Saul* (fig. I) with exactly the same composition as two of the *Blue Landscapes* (respectively the Horne and Firenze drawings, figs. B & A). We noted before the general correlation between the triple tonality technique and the modeling in paintings. The foliage studies simulate the painted rendering of leafage, whereas the modeling of the folds and figures in the *Christ on the cross* by the Master of 1518 (fig. 17) resembles that of the related painting. In these cases, there is no question of an exact correspondence between both media. A comparison between the Uffizi sheet (fig. A) and the *Conversion of Saul* (fig. I) reveals that the distribution of highlights in the drawing almost precisely corresponds to the places where lighter tones have been applied in the painting. The analogue division of highlights in the dominant right rock of both compositions best suits as an example (fig. 19). The painting with *Leda and the Swan* (fig. G), despite its difficult readability, as well reveals lighter tones in places where the related drawing (fig. B) has been heightened, such as for example in the rock formations.

The fourth difference is that the idea behind the application of the white highlights in the *Blue Landscapes* not only concerns the modeling of the volumes *an sich*, but that in some cases they correspond to the reflection of natural light in the landscape. The source of light, the sun, is never present. Instead, the artist suggests her emanating light in various parts of the landscape. Especially the air and rivers wallow in the glow of the sun. Rather than a bright and omnipresent midday light, the artist creates the poetical tones of a late afternoon sun whose softened radiations only reach specific parts of the landscape. Heightened zones in the drawings correspond to the specific spots where the sun

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<sup>151</sup> It was unfortunately not possible to get hold of a good reproduction of the drawing. I noted the use of cross and parallel hatchings during my visit to the Horne Collection (Florence) on 27/07/2010. They are however not visible on the current reproduction (fig. B).

lightens up the landscape in the paintings. The white highlights simulate sunny radiance on the top of the mountains in the far distance of the *Landscape with an imaginary city siege* (fig. A). The reflection of the sun on the upper part of the little tower of the rock castle in the *Conversion of Saul* (fig. H) is also indicated in the related drawing (fig. 19). As noted earlier on, the attention for the reflection of natural light is taken to its extreme in the Darmstadt drawing (fig. D). The artist suggests the presence of the sun behind the rocky island. The sunlight is mirrored in the landscape through its soft reflection in the rocks. Stronger emanations of sunlight fall through the breaks in the rock, lightening up the little bridge leading to the rocky island and parts of the cross at the right. It brings up the idea that the artist must have been studying outdoors the effects of aerial light in order to be able to evoke this lively impression of a sunset evening.<sup>152</sup>

A few other sixteenth-century Netherlandish outdoor scenes indicate the presence of natural light in a similar way. The Master of 1518, for instance, repeatedly colors up the air just above the horizon by means of white parallel dashes. They are as well visible in the earlier mentioned *Christ on the cross* (fig. 17). In his drawings, however, the sunlight is not mirrored in the modeling of the figures and draperies in the composition. The white hatchings that model Leda or the stippling in the trees in the same drawing (fig. B) show that the application of highlights in the *Blue Landscapes* as well does not only correspond to the light-dark contrast effectuated by the sun. White heightening thus served several functions at once.

Regarding the Netherlandish use of colored ground drawings, Wood pointed to the influence of similar German practices at that time.<sup>153</sup> In this region, drawing on coated paper was a well established tradition in the fifteenth century, when the medium served the purpose of preparatory studies. At the turn of the century, artists discovered the painterly possibilities of the technique for making independent artworks. They set the grounded drawing free from workshop practices and turned it into an autonomous work of art through stylization, framing, signing and dating. Lucas Cranach (1472 - 1553), Albrecht Altdorfer (ca. 1480 - 1538) and Wolf Huber (ca. 1490 - 1553) amongst others richly explored this

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<sup>152</sup> Studying outdoors was at that time by no means a common practice. Only from the 1540's on Netherlandish landscapes, such as those by Matthijs Cock, introduce 'realistic' parts in their 'fantastic compositions' which indicates that they had been studying real nature. See D'haene forthcoming.

<sup>153</sup> Wood 1998, p. 107-109.

technique in making independent masterpieces on paper. Especially popular were colored landscapes and foliage studies, such as Altdorfer's sheet *Dead Pyramus* (fig. 20).<sup>154</sup> Wood points to the influence of this German practice in the Netherlands, which must have reached the region through the circulation of drawings, such as the four *Saint Christophers, heightened on gray paper* that Dürer gave to Patinir,<sup>155</sup> and chiaroscuro woodcuts.

The use of white heightening and its relation with the reflection of light as well is retraceable to German predecessors, Albrecht Dürer's achievements on colored ground paper in specific. Although several sheets give evidence of the artist's preoccupation with atmospherical sunlight, we refer to two examples in particular.

The first case in point is a sheet in Berlin, dated 1510, representing the *Battle of Samson against the Philistines* (fig. 21).<sup>156</sup> In this sheet, which is part of the project drawings for the tombs of Ulrich (1441-1510) and Georg (1453-1506) Fugger in Augsburg, Dürer's study of the reflection of the daylight in the tower in the distance is remarkable. Similar to the *Blue Landscapes*, he heightens the air partially with the broad surface of the brush. The side of the tower turned to the sun wallows in the reflection of the daylight, whereas in the shady side, the dark color of the grounded paper predominates in the volume, slightly interrupted by fine white traces. White highlights do not only serve the purpose of indicating the reflection of natural light, but also model figures and the foliage of the trees not conform the natural division of light and shadow. Just as in the *Blue Landscapes*, white heightening served In German practices several functions at the time. Christopher Wood in his study on Albrecht Altdorfer declares this *confusion of descriptive tasks* also a *central theme in Altdorfer's work*.<sup>157</sup>

The second example is a strongly damaged sheet in the Uffizi, representing the *Calvary*, and dated 1505.<sup>158</sup> The artist suggests with a broad brush the source of natural light coming from behind the

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<sup>154</sup> Berlin, SMPK, Kupferstichkabinett.

<sup>155</sup> See § II.2.3.

<sup>156</sup> Berlin, SMPK, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. W 488.

<sup>157</sup> Wood 1993, p. 77.

<sup>158</sup> Firenze, Galleria degli Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, inv. 8406. This sheet is severely damaged and we therefore did not provide an illustration. The further discussed copy (fig. 22), is almost identical to the original sheet and a good illustration of how the original sheet looks like.

Golgotha. The light colors up the air, the top of the mountain in the distance, and the crucified Jesus.<sup>159</sup> This example is interesting as its circulation in the Netherlands is attested through various copies in the medium of painting, print and drawing.<sup>160</sup> One of them is a drawing executed in the same technique in the Louvre (fig. 22).<sup>161</sup> This copy carefully follows the original.<sup>162</sup> Interestingly, the drawing style of this sheet comes remarkably close to that of the *Blue Landscapes* - at least for what concerns the landscape part. The rendering of the tree tops of at the upper right by means of white dots spread in groups over the surface, combined with contours of curved continuous pen traces, is similar to the trees in the second plan of the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B). The conception of the smaller trees around the Holy City recall in their pronounced trunks and leafage created by curving contours, the smaller trees in the *Landscape with an imaginary city siege* (fig. A), the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B), the *Riverlandscape with Saint Jerome* (fig. D), and even in the *Hilly Landscape* (fig. E). Most striking are the similar interrupted sharp pen traces, which are best visible in the little hill to the left of the crucified Son of God. The nervous lines that model the ground around the hill remind of the sharp handling of pen in the Darmstadt drawing. The contours of Jerusalem, further, consists out of short lines - dots - that also characterizes the figures of Satan and his retinue in the Christopher drawing sold at Christie's (fig. C). These similarities make an attribution of this copy to the author of the *Blue Landscapes* plausible.<sup>163</sup>

### III. 2. The *Blue Landscapes* as autonomous drawings?

According to Wood, the Netherlanders not only used the triple tonality technique for copies or preparatory drawings, they also took over from the Germans *the appeal and value of the independent*

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<sup>159</sup> The sheet is closely related to an influential series of eleven 1503 -1504 dated drawings, called the *Green Passion*. All of them are prepared in the same white and dark technique and demonstrate a similar attention for the presence of aerial light through broad white brushstrokes in the air. It is not clear whether they were originally intended as 'independent sheets' or preparations for other artworks. See Madrid 2005, nr. 35.

<sup>160</sup> For a recent discussion of the sheet and its influence in the Netherlands, see Filedt Kok 1996, pp. 335-359.

<sup>161</sup> Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, inv. 18.640.

<sup>162</sup> Filedt Kok 1996, pp. 338-339.

<sup>163</sup> I only came to this insight - which was stimulated by Stefaan Hautekeete - near the end of my research. I therefore did not had the possibility to further investigate the specific relationship between the drawing and the *Blue Landscapes*, nor to obtain a better photograph of it.

drawing.<sup>164</sup> He reasons that *after 1530 we encounter occasional finished drawings on colored ground that can only be understood as independent, presentable, semi-formal works of art*, and he especially mentions the *Riverlandscape with Saint Jerome* in Darmstadt (fig. D) as an example.<sup>165</sup> For some other drawings by the Antwerp Mannerists that are not directly related to works of art in other media, a similar independent function has been suggested.<sup>166</sup> An outstanding example - also because it demonstrates an unusual attention for nature within the group of Antwerp Mannerist drawings - is the *Penitent Saint Jerome* ascribed by Peter van den Brink to Jan de Beer (fig. 23).<sup>167</sup> The artist placed the saint in a painstakingly rendered landscape. Even the smallest details, such as the little stones and plants that cover the foreground, are worked out care- and skillfully. Every element tallies within the clear composition. Other examples of 'autonomous drawings' are the anonymous *Lamentation* in the Louvre,<sup>168</sup> the *Tree of Jesse*,<sup>169</sup> and two large sheets with *Augustus and the Tiburtine Sibyl* in Copenhagen<sup>170</sup> and Göttingen.<sup>171</sup> Both John Hand and Van den Brink emphasize the high quality and degree of elaboration of these autonomous works of art.<sup>172</sup> The letter that Joris Hoefnagel (1542 - 1600) wrote in 1579 to the Florentine collector Niccolò Gaddi, in which he praises some drawings that he offers to the latter as *tutti disegni d'importancia et finiti*, attests the sixteenth-century preference for 'finished' sheets as collector items.<sup>173</sup> Hoefnagel mentions Patinir's name among the authors of these sheets.

An (intended) autonomous function is objectionable for at least three of the *Blue Landscapes*, namely the *Landscape with an imaginary city under siege* (fig. A), the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B) and the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* sold at Christie's (fig. C). Compared to the

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<sup>164</sup> Wood 1998, p. 110-111.

<sup>165</sup> Id., p. 111.

<sup>166</sup> Brink 2004/2005, p. 170.

<sup>167</sup> London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, inv. 1912.12.14.6. Van den Brink argues that the drawing either is a finished work or a model drawing. Van den Brink in Antwerp 2005, p. 116.

<sup>168</sup> Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, inv. INV 18.890, see Antwerp 2005, nr. 48.

<sup>169</sup> Berlin, SMPK, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. 12492, see Antwerp 2005, nr. 47.

<sup>170</sup> Copenhagen, Kongelige Kobberstiksamling, inv. KKSgb6583, see Antwerp 2005, nr. 49, fig. 1.

<sup>171</sup> Göttingen, Kunstsammlungen der Universität, Sammlung Uffenbach, inv. H 270, see Antwerp 2005, nr. 49. Van den Brink mentions these sheets in Brink 2004/2005, p.170.

<sup>172</sup> Robinson & Wolff 1986-87, p. 34; Brink 2004/2005, p. 170.

<sup>173</sup> Held 1963, p. 79.

abovementioned *Penitent Saint Jerome* (fig. 23), the author of these landscapes did not spend as much care in working out the composition into the very detail, nor to the precise execution of his works. The artist mainly focuses on the delineation of the contours. Apart from the necessary figures for the story, the landscapes give an empty impression. The presence of Saul's disappearing vanguard in the foreground of the Uffizi drawing mismatches the absence of the principal scene itself and gives the drawing an unfinished touch. The application of white heightening, furthermore, is in some cases careless and the amount of body color badly divided. The aerial heightening in the Uffizi drawing runs into the tops of the delineated mountains (fig. 19), whereas in 'finished drawings', such as the *Penitent Saint Jerome* (fig. 23), the indication of the air fits perfectly with the demarcation of the mountains against the horizon. The white blob on the top of the beak of the swan is out of proportion; the white heightening on the rocks on the second plan of the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* sold at Christie's not balanced (fig. C). Some inaccuracies are retraceable in their executions. Judging on the various corrections in the contours, the figure of Leda has been reworked several times. On the second plan, just beside the tall tree in the foreground a black drawn figure seems to rest with his back against something that looks like an unfinished tree trunk. On top of the spot, the artist drew fine parallel lines in white body color, suggesting overgrowth - as were it to cover up this erroneous part.<sup>174</sup> Especially the working out of the Uffizi drawing (fig. A) reveals imperfections. The river that runs diagonally through the landscape does not have a fluent continuation. Next to the large rock formation, the river bends and disappears behind some trees. When coming back in sight, she does not reconnect in a logical way with the earlier flow. In the foreground, the river abruptly disappears into the ground. The branching off in both the larger and smaller trees does not tally (fig. 19). The delineation of the houses surrounding the open place within the walls of the city (fig. 36) is unclear. The square volume on top of the gallery next to the open place is awkward, and it is difficult to guess its specific meaning. The execution of these landscapes seems to give a raw impression of how the composition generally should look like, without spending much effort on a perfect or elaborated execution. Therefore, they barely can be intended as independent works of art. Instead, the existence of two identical paintings and the striking

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<sup>174</sup> I noted this observation when I saw the drawing in Florence on 27/07/10. The white heightening unfortunately is invisible on the current reproduction. See also note 151.

correspondence between the white heightening in the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B) and the Uffizi drawing (fig. A) and the lighter tones in these related artworks, suggests that these drawings had a function in their production process. In the case of the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* sold at Christie's the existence of an identical drawing from a better quality (the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* in the Louvre) calls the 'finished' status of the lesser drawing into question.

The Darmstadt (fig. D) and Louvre (fig. F) drawings, on the other hand, are careful in execution. The artist worked out the compositions in terms of both workmanship and pictorial qualities. We already described the subtle way of modeling through gradual tone transitions ranging from the color of the grounded paper over darker washes to white heightening in the figure of Saint Christopher (fig. F) or in the rock formations in the *Riverlandscape with Saint Jerome* (fig. D). The supposition that these are autonomous works of art does seem acceptable - at first sight. Some details however hamper in taking this hypothesis for evident. First, the Darmstadt drawing is not as 'finished' and successfully executed as one might first think. The little dwelling at the end of the spit of land left from the rocks is build up in a ramshackle way (fig. 24). The tree in front of the door has a strange and forced knack in his trunk. The tree trunk to the right of the dwelling is even more appealing: the artist only drew the trunk without finishing off the top of the tree. The execution of the little tree standing against the right opening of the cave is awkward, as is the crown of the tree standing at the left of the ruin on top of the cave. The *Saint Christopher* in the Louvre (fig. F), on the other hand, is well finished and skillfully executed. The artist however mainly focuses on the contours and the general outlines of the composition, without spending attention to the elaboration of, for example, the internal division of the little dwellings. Apart from some little figures just before the gap in the wall and two others walking towards the church on the peninsula further in the distance, there is no human scenery present in the landscape. Just as the other *Blue Landscapes*, these drawings do not reveal the fully elaboration of 'finished sheets', such as the *Penitent Saint Jerome* (fig. 23). The landscape in the Louvre drawing (fig. F), instead, gives an 'empty' impression, similar to the *Landscape with a city under siege* (fig. A) or the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B).

The lack of a signature or date further questions the autonomous status of the *Blue Landscapes*. The absence of inscriptions (names and dates) in Netherlandish 'finished' drawings let Van den Brink

believe that, contrary to *German colleagues [...] Antwerp artists - with one or two exceptions - hardly ever put their signature on a drawing.*<sup>175</sup> The signed landscape drawings of Matthijs Cock and Cornelis Massijs however indicate that the Antwerp practice of signing finished sheets regularly appeared only slightly later on.<sup>176</sup> Although his work never has been mentioned in this context, Matthijs Cock's oeuvre provides some interesting examples of colored ground landscape drawings, which come close to the German concept of 'independent' drawings.<sup>177</sup> Drawings such as the earlier mentioned *Landscape with the Good Samaritan* (fig. 7) or *Landscape with a farm at the foot of a hill* (fig. 8) reveal the artist's inclination for the triple tonality technique, in which highlights do not solely cover the foliage of the trees, but color up the entire surface as if it were paintings on paper. The refined draughtmanship, the finished outlook and the presence of a signature and / or the date of creation make their independent status complete. The oeuvre of Cornelis Massijs as well is illustrative as, besides making independent drawings, the artist also was active in making prints for the market, another upcoming art form around the 1540s that indicates the rising popularity of paper as a suitable support for autonomous works of art.<sup>178</sup>

The specific status of the finished 'non-signed' drawings, such as the *Penitent Saint Jerome* (fig. 23) is difficult to determine as they do have the quality of autonomous drawings, but lack a confirming signature - and *what makes a study into a picture, if not the signature?*<sup>179</sup> In the case of the Darmstadt drawing (fig. D), the apparent 'unfinished' state further troubles the intended independent function, while the general focus on the outlines of the composition in the Louvre drawing (fig. F) conflicts with the high degree of elaboration in other finished drawings. Both aspects call up the question whether the drawings - similar to the other three *Blue Landscapes* - originally were preparatory steps for paintings.

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<sup>175</sup> Brink 2004/2005, p. 170.

<sup>176</sup> Matthijs Cock's dated drawings range from 1537 until 1544; Cornelis Massijs was active in Antwerp in the years 1530 and 1540. For his finished drawings by Cornelis Massijs, see Zwollo 1965, fig. 4-6.

<sup>177</sup> The reason for this omission is that his drawings never have been catalogued nor fully investigated. I am currently preparing an article on his drawing oeuvre, with the support of Stefaan Hautekeete, conservator of the Tekeningen kabinet, of the Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten van België, see D'haene forthcoming.

<sup>178</sup> See regarding this subject, Jan van der Stock's study on the introduction of printmaking in Antwerp in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, see Stock 1998.

<sup>179</sup> Wood 1993, p. 110.



Interesting in this respect is the research of Ellen Konowitz on the drawings of Dirk Vellert (c. 1480/5-1547).<sup>180</sup> Konowitz explains how the latter's elaborated - 'finished' - colored ground roundel drawings served multiple functions. On the one hand, they were part of the production process for glass paintings: they gave precise information on the light and dark values to the glass painter who was responsible for executing the actual work; they functioned as a kind of 'stock patterns' from which clients were free to choose; and they lay at the basis of new compositions.<sup>181</sup> The fact that many of them are preserved today indicates that collectors recuperated them as 'independent works of art' once the production process was finished.<sup>182</sup> Wood argues in a similar way that the drawing with a *Cliff with Castle*, which he attributes to Altdorfer, *might have begun as a model drawing, intended for future application. But [that] the date promoted the drawing into a work.*<sup>183</sup>

These examples show that the function of elaborated drawings was not univocal and that their 'finished' quality not necessarily meant an (intended) 'autonomous' status. Van den Brink notes that they *should be possibly regarded as autonomous works of art, just like many other drawings on prepared paper, which does not, however, rule out the possibility that they also functioned as workshop models.*<sup>184</sup> It shows that at least some of the preserved autonomous drawings originally were related to the production process of other works of art, rather than that they were made for commercial purposes, such as the signed drawings of Matthijs Cock or Cornelis Massijs clearly are. We should thus make a division between 'intended autonomous drawings' and 'recuperated autonomous drawings'. The semi-finished status of the *Blue Landscapes* presumes an origin of the drawings in the production process, rather than an intended autonomous function. The coherence with the other *Blue Landscapes* whose relation with paintings is clear, supports this idea. The fact that they are preserved today, however, show that the *Blue Landscapes* were recuperated as independent works of art. The early attribution - probably seventeenth century - to *Luca d'Olanda*, written on the drawing with *Leda and the Swan* and the *Landscape with a city siege* indicates that they were already considered as autonomous

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<sup>180</sup> Konowitz 1990/1991, pp. 143-152. This author is currently preparing a monograph on the artist.

<sup>181</sup> *Id.*, p. 152.

<sup>182</sup> Early collectors, especially during that period were mostly artists themselves. One of the most famous collectors of artworks on paper was Albrecht Dürer himself. On the early appreciation of drawings, see Held 1963.

<sup>183</sup> Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Wood 1993, p. 109 & fig. 72.

<sup>184</sup> Brink 2004/2005, p. 172.

works in that period. The quotation of Joris Hoefnagel (cf. supra) revealed that Patinir made drawings - presumably landscape compositions - which in the second half of the sixteenth century already circulated as 'finished' sheets. As we do not know exactly what was understood at that time as 'finished', we should not exclude the possibility that all five landscapes already soon circulated underneath that definition.

### III. 3. The *Blue Landscapes* in the production process of paintings

In the previous paragraph, we listed the following visual observations for doubting an 'intended' autonomous status of the drawings: (1) the existence of two paintings that correspond exactly with two of the *Blue Landscapes*, not only in theme, but also in the application of lighter tones; (2) the emptiness and focus on general outlines; (3) the lesser care for precision and workmanship in some of the drawings; (4) the lack of an autographical signature or dating. The next paragraph explain these deviations through assigning the *Blue Landscapes* a place within the production process of paintings. An examination of the general role of drawings in the painter's workshop first is necessary.

#### III. 3.1. *Workshop practices and the role of drawings in the production process of landscapes*

Robinson and Wolff explained the lack of fifteenth and sixteenth-century Netherlandish preparatory drawings by declaring that Northern artists rather prepared their compositions in the underdrawing of the paintings themselves.<sup>185</sup> Both authors opposed this Netherlandish practice to the working method of Italian artists, whose greater amount of preparatory studies reveals their preference for preparing paintings on paper. Ever since the renewing 1986 exhibition on the function of drawings in the age of Bruegel, the increasing use of modern technologies, such as Infrared Reflectography, for the investigation of what happened underneath the painted surface have brought our knowledge on preparatory underdrawing into acceleration.<sup>186</sup> It allowed researchers to determine more specifically the role of drawings in the production process.<sup>187</sup> Regarding the production of landscapes in early sixteenth-

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<sup>185</sup> See § 0.2.

<sup>186</sup> For a definition of Infrared Reflectography, see note 17. For literature on the technique and its use for arthistorical research, see Ainsworth 1989, p. 35, note 1.

<sup>187</sup> See Ainsworth 1989 for a methodology on the comparative study of underdrawings and drawings.

century Antwerp, especially the 1995 symposium on the *Road to Calvary* by Herri met de Bles, and the 2007 catalogue on Joachim Patinir, offer instructive insights.<sup>188</sup> These studies reveal that underdrawing complemented rather than substituted the use of preparatory drawings in the production process. Joachim Patinir's typical manner of preparing a painting in the underdrawing consists out of a schematic and loose indication of the compositional features of the landscape. These summary indications suggest that the artist made use of other 'models', presumably on paper, as guideline in the execution.<sup>189</sup> Masterpieces by his hand, as the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* in the Escorial or the *Landscape with Saint Jerome* in the Prado, are prepared in this manner.<sup>190</sup> Other paintings by the master and his workshop, such as the middle panel of the *Triptych with Saint Jerome, Saint John, Saint Anthony and Mary Magdalene*, which is a replica of the painting of the same subject in the Prado, reveal in the underdrawing carefully outlined contours, which are closely followed in the execution of the paint layers.<sup>191</sup> Alejandro Vergara suggests the use of drawn copies where many elements were outlined but not fully articulated for transferring one composition to another.<sup>192</sup> Final interesting examples are the chiaroscuro drawings by Jan van Scorel (1495 -1562). In her study on the latter artist, Molly Faries points out that next to elaborated underdrawing the artist made use of *chiaroscuro drawings* as a separate guide for the indication of light and shadow in the painting.<sup>193</sup> We already earlier mentioned *Christ blessing a child* (fig. 3) as an example of such a preparatory 'light study'.<sup>194</sup>

Workshop practices in the sixteenth century were tuned to speeding up the production of paintings for the market.<sup>195</sup> Collaboration and the division of labor were common practices. They occurred on a vertical and horizontal level. Jan van der Stock, defines the early sixteenth century workshop as *a group practice that subscribed to a sort of contract of employment, but which did not*

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<sup>188</sup> Rosasco, Muller & Marrow 1998; Madrid 2007; other studies that sideways discuss the production of landscapes are Antwerp 2005; Ainsworth 1998; Brink manuscripts; Faries 1975; Faries 1983; Hand 2004 and Leeflang forthcoming.

<sup>189</sup> A. Vergara in Madrid 2007, p. 276.

<sup>190</sup> Madrid, Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo Escorial, inv. 10014400, see Madrid 2007, nr. 17; Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, P 1614; Madrid 2007, nr. 20.

<sup>191</sup> Switzerland, Private collection, see Madrid 2007, nr. 23.

<sup>192</sup> Madrid 2007, p. 321.

<sup>193</sup> Faries 1975 & Faries 1982. For a definition of the term *chiaroscuro drawings*, see note 133.

<sup>194</sup> See § 0.2.

<sup>195</sup> For a recent study on early sixteenth century workshop practices on the basis of IRR-research, see Leeflang 2004/2005. Stock 1998 treats the same subject based upon the research of archival documents.

*necessarily imply permanence or a particular place.*<sup>196</sup> Masters had their own workshop in which they worked together with assistants with a status going from pupil to journeyman (collaboration on a vertical level), while at the same time they could be temporarily employed in the workshop of other artists (collaboration on a horizontal level). The horizontal division of labor not only happened for the production of artworks in media such as tapestry or glass painting, where a specialized artist worked out the model designed by masters of painting workshops.<sup>197</sup> It also occurred within the genre of painting itself. Landscape painters traditionally worked together with figure painters and *vice versa*. Joachim Patinir's collaboration with 'figure painter' Quinten Massijs' (1466-1530) in the *Temptation of Saint Anthony* is a many cited example.<sup>198</sup> The co-operation with landscape specialists inversely has been suggested for Joos van Cleve (c. 1485 -1540/1), Bernard van Orley (1491/2-1542) and Pieter Coecke van Aelst (1502 - 1550).<sup>199</sup> A common practice in the execution of these figure-landscape paintings was to first paint the landscapes around the underdrawn figures, whereafter the protagonists were worked out in the paint layers.<sup>200</sup> This method has been suggested for Joos van Cleve,<sup>201</sup> Joachim Patinir,<sup>202</sup> and some Antwerp Mannerists, such as the Master of 1518<sup>203</sup> and Jan de Beer.<sup>204</sup>

Drawings were involved in both the vertical and horizontal collaboration process. On a vertical level, the master was, for example, responsible for making up a model drawing, which had to be closely followed by his assistants during the execution of the actual artwork. An example is the drawing with

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<sup>196</sup> *Een samenwerkingsverband dat steunt op een soort arbeidsovereenkomst, maar niet noodzakelijk een plaatsbepaling of permanentie inhoudt*. Stock 1993, p. 52. Translation of M. Leeflang in Leeflang 2004/2005, p. 234. Stock 1998 and Leeflang 2004/2005 indicate that these collaborations in- and outside the workshop were extremely complex.

<sup>197</sup> See als § 0.2.

<sup>198</sup> Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, inv. P1615, see Madrid 2007, nr. 14.

<sup>199</sup> Brink 2004/2005, p. 169. Micha Leeflang is currently preparing an article on the landscape specialists in the workshop of Joos van Cleve, see Leeflang forthcoming. His collaboration has already been discussed by Ainsworth in New York 1998b, nrs. 95 & 96; Brink 2001, pp. 30, 42 and Hand 2004, p. 37-69. Peter van den Brink, in Brink 2000, suggests that Pieter Coecke van Aelst might have worked with a landscape specialist, although Linda Jansen, who is preparing a thesis on the artist, states that there is no reason to assume this, see Brink 2004/2005, p. 169, note 29. The painter Jan Tons has already in seventeenth century sources been suggested as a landscape painter active in the workshop Bernard van Orley, see *Ibid*.

<sup>200</sup> Brink manuscript, nr. 6; as articulated by Dan Ewing in Antwerp 2005, p. 82.

<sup>201</sup> Ainsworth in New York 1998b, nrs. 95-96.

<sup>202</sup> Vergara 2007, p. 31. Vergara only came across one example in which the figures preceded the landscape in the painting process.

<sup>203</sup> London 2002, p. 164- 169.

<sup>204</sup> D. Ewing in Antwerp 2005, p. 82.

*David and Batseba* attributed to Lucas Gassel (fig. 25), whom Ainsworth considers as *produced as a design for prospective clients to see and for workshop members to consult, on the theme of David and Bathsheba*.<sup>205</sup> For Jan de Beer's painting the *Christ on the cross* (fig. 27) a landscape specialist was involved for the execution of the background.<sup>206</sup> As the IRR only reveals underdrawing for the figures in the foreground, the collaborating artist must have prepared the landscape on paper.<sup>207</sup> Interestingly, a copy of the original preparatory drawing (fig. 26) for the castle in the background is preserved.<sup>208</sup> Dan Ewing argues that Jan de Beer gave the original example to the collaborating landscape specialist to process the castle in the landscape background.<sup>209</sup> It provides an example of the use of drawings in the horizontal collaboration of artists.

Thus, instead of arguing - as Gibson did - that Patinir and his contemporaries only produced few landscapes,<sup>210</sup> we should state that landscape drawings did exist in the early sixteenth century and that they were involved in the production process of paintings in several ways, supplementary to the preparation in the underdrawing. The few preserved landscape drawings do not imply they never existed, but that the majority of drawings were not considered valuable enough - or perhaps were too severely damaged of multiple use - to be recuperated once the production process was finished.

### III. 3.2. *The Blue Landscapes as preparatory studies for paintings*

The small amount of preserved preparatory drawings makes it difficult to determine the possible function of the *Blue Landscapes* in the production process of paintings. The discovery of two paintings that are identical to two of the *Blue Landscapes* makes the drawings' role in the preparatory phase of paintings plausible. Unfortunately, the poor state of preservation of *Leda and the Swan* (fig. G) hampers in drawing conclusions regarding its precise relationship with the corresponding drawing in the Horne collection (fig. B). The better condition of the painting with the *Conversion of Saul* (fig. H), on the other

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<sup>205</sup> Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, inv. 19202. Ainsworth 1998, p. 122. See also § III.3.2

<sup>206</sup> Antwerp 2005, p. 82.

<sup>207</sup> A similar observation has been made for two paintings by Joos van Cleve in which a specialist was responsible for the execution of the landscape, see Ainsworth in New York 1998b, nrs. 95-96.

<sup>208</sup> Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina, inv. 3199; Cologne, Kolumba, inv. M18. For a further discussion of these works, see § III.3.2.

<sup>209</sup> D. Ewing in Antwerp 2005, p. 82.

<sup>210</sup> See § 0.3.

hand, does allow to make some visual observations towards its relationship with the identical drawing in the Uffizi (fig. A). The previous paragraph made clear that the technical investigation of underdrawings allows to determine more precisely the role of drawings in the production process. In the absence of information on the underdrawing of the *Conversion of Saul*, this paragraph compares the paintings' visual relationship with the Uffizi drawing to that of other landscape drawings and paintings for whom technical examinations are available. It thus interprets the connection between the *Conversion of Saul* and the *Landscape with an imaginary city siege* within the context of the current available knowledge on the role of landscape drawings in the production process. Where possible the relationship between the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* and its corresponding painting will be involved in the discussion.

The most obvious visual difference between the *Conversion of Saul* (fig. H) and the Uffizi drawing (fig. A) is that the latter only represents the landscape setting with smaller iconographic scenes, while leaving out the central theme of the composition. Another drawing and painting demonstrating a similar relationship is the *Landscape for a Road to Calvary* (fig. 28) in Berlin and a painting by Herri met de Bles, the *Road to Calvary* in Princeton (fig. 30).<sup>211</sup> The painted version represents Christ carrying the cross in the midst of a large procession that accompanies the 'King of the Jews' to the Golgotha, which is represented on the top of the hill on the left. In the near distance lays Jerusalem, recognizable at the large temple that emerges in the middle of the city. The related drawing in Berlin (fig. 28) only represents the landscape and architectural setting of the painting, while leaving open the space for the procession. Holm Bevers lists four arguments why the drawing, together with two sheets from the Berlin sketchbook, fol. 31 r. and 32 r., (figs. 31 & 32) which also are related to the painting, should be regarded as *ricordi after a Bles composition, [and] not preparatory studies for the Princeton panel*.<sup>212</sup> His arguments, however, mostly concern the sheets in the sketchbook (figs. 31 & 32), which represent each a part of the Princeton painting. The IRR-examination has shown striking correspondences between the underdrawing of the Princeton panel and the drawings in the sketchbook, on places where the painting

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<sup>211</sup> Berlin, SMPK, inv. KdZ 5525; Princeton, University Art Museum, inv. 50-I.

<sup>212</sup> Berlin, SMPK, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. 79 C 2, fol. 31 r & 32 r. Bevers discusses the relation of the tree drawings with the Princeton panel in Bevers 1998, pp. 46- 48. Robert Koch, who first published the painting in Princeton in 1955, considered all three the drawings as preparatory studies, see Koch 1955 (1998).

itself is different.<sup>213</sup> Although these observations pointed in the direction of the drawings as preparatory studies, Bevers convincingly argues that these drawings are copies instead of preparations. He explains that the rather weak and stiff drawing style of the sketchbook drawings is typical for *ricordi* and that it, further, was not very likely that an artist would prepare a painting on two separated sheets. He argues that *the draftsmen of the Berlin album could have had access to preparatory material for the painting - either another drawn study, a copy of that, or the wooden panel with the already existing underdrawing.*<sup>214</sup> The specific status of the loose Berlin drawing (fig. 28) remains undefined throughout his argumentation. Only two of his arguments (partly) concern this drawing. The first argument is the difference in style with the sketchbook sheets. This observation indicates that at least one of the compositions (the one divided over two sheets in the Berlin sketchbook (figs. 31 & 32) or the loose sheet in Berlin (fig. 28)) is a copy indeed. As the above reasoning convincingly demonstrated that the sketchbook sheets are copies, Bevers' argument does not at all exclude the loose Berlin drawing from being a preparatory study. The author's other motive that concerns the Berlin drawing is *the extreme rarity of preparatory drawings in which the artist worked out the placement and interaction of figures, or the landscape and architectural setting at that time in the Netherlands.*<sup>215</sup> Referring to Robinson's and Wolff's article, he doubts that artists made preparatory studies for paintings on paper to any large extent and he repeats as a reason the presumed typical Northern practice of preparing paintings in the underdrawing. We already pointed out above Robinson's and Wolff's superseded view regarding the so called 'substituting' function of Netherlandish underdrawing.<sup>216</sup>

Thus, none of Bevers' arguments excludes the possibility of the Berlin *Landscape for a Road to Calvary* (fig. 28) as a preparatory study for the Princeton panel (fig. 30). What is more, contrary to the two sketchbook sheets (figs. 31 & 32), this latter sketch (fig. 28) is, according to Robert Koch, of a good quality and drawn with free and unhesitating strokes.<sup>217</sup> The recent discovered connection between the representation of Jerusalem in the latter drawing (fig. 28) and in a miniature from the *Arenberg Missal*

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<sup>213</sup> For the technical analysis of the painting and a discussion on the relation between the three related drawings and the underdrawing, see Muller 1998, esp. pp. 28-32.

<sup>214</sup> Bevers 1998, p. 48.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> See § III.3.1.

<sup>217</sup> Koch 1955 (1998), p. 15.

(fig. 29), dated around 1524, brings its probability as a preparatory drawing even closer at hand.<sup>218</sup> Elizabeth Morrison and Thomas Kren point to the presence of a similar *short curving wall surmounted by a few buildings [which] forms a loop around a small open area just behind the double-towered city gate at the center of the composition* in both the miniature (fig. 29) and the Berlin drawing (fig. 28).<sup>219</sup> They state that *the curving wall is not found in any of the aforementioned paintings, including the Princeton Bles*.<sup>220</sup> Further, they indicate the similar hilltop castle at the left of the temple and to the parallel *second wall [which] is bisected by a round tower and [which] intersects the multitiered temple at the third level*. Although a comparable architectural setting re-occurs in numerous early sixteenth-century Netherlandish works, this peculiar combination of details only occurs in the miniature (fig. 29) and the Berlin drawing (fig. 28).<sup>221</sup> The architectural setting in the *Landscape for a Road to Calvary* (fig. 28) thus goes back to an earlier representation, perhaps the one in the *Arenberg Missal* but - as Kren and Morrison suggests - plausibly to an influential painting done before 1524. As this motif does occur in the Berlin drawing (fig. 28), but not in the related 'Princeton Bles' (fig. 30), it seems more likely to consider the sheet as a preparatory study, setting out the landscape and architectural setting for the *Princeton* painting, rather than as a copy after the painting. Regarding the absence of the figures in the Berlin sheet (fig. 28), Robert Koch - who also considers the drawing as a preparatory study - argues that it *would suggest, but by no means prove that Bles employed someone else to add the figures*.<sup>222</sup> The fact that the underdrawing in the part of the landscape is much looser than for the figures might also point in that direction.<sup>223</sup>

The *Landscape for a Road to Calvary* (fig. 28) thus might be a preparatory study for the Princeton panel (fig. 30). Whereas the draughtsman did not work out the actual theme of the composition in the *Landscape for a Road to Calvary* (fig. 28), which is Christ's bearing of the cross, he

<sup>218</sup> Private Collection, see Los Angeles / London 2003 / 2004, nr. 170.

<sup>219</sup> Kren & Morrison in Los Angeles / London 2003 / 2004, p. 512.

<sup>220</sup> Id., p. 512, note 6.

<sup>221</sup> See Id., p. 511 for an overview of the art works that represent a similar setting. Apart from the hilltop castle and the round tower that bisects the second wall, the sketchbook sheets (figs. 31 & 32) also display comparable details - albeit it in a less striking similar way. As these sheets are more closely related to the underdrawing of the Princeton painting rather than to the actual painting, it reinforces the hypothesis of the loose Berlin drawing (fig. 28) as (related to) a preparatory study for the painting.

<sup>222</sup> Koch 1955 (1998), p. 15.

<sup>223</sup> See note 213.



did represent some smaller events that happened at another point of time in the same story.<sup>224</sup> On the top of the rock at the left, the spectator sees the event that chronologically follows on the bearing of the cross in the Passion, which is the Crucifixion itself. At the right of the composition, at the entrance of the city, the artist drew some people coming out of the city in order to queue up the procession. Therefore, the composition does not only seem to prepare the landscape and architectural setting for the painting, but also the smaller iconographic background scenes related to the story. The earlier cited copy after an original drawing by Jan de Beer (fig. 26) shows another example of a 'preparatory' drawing that represents the secondary iconography together with the architectural setting, while leaving out the central theme of the composition - in this case the crucifixion of Jesus. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus are placed in front of the 'fantastic' city of Jerusalem (fig. 26). The protagonists of the *Christ on the Cross* (fig. 27) have not been represented. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus are traditionally included in the crucifixion's scene, although they generally appear in the foreground. In Jan de Beer's painting (fig. 27), they are removed from the central event. They appear in the second plan - or what we might consider as the 'background'. The inclusion of these background figures in the preparatory drawing with the city of Jerusalem (fig. 26) is interesting, especially because - as we have seen before - the corresponding landscape part in the painting (fig. 27) is not underdrawn and painted by another hand than the foreground.<sup>225</sup> The collaborating landscape artist thus worked with a preparatory drawing - presumably the original version of the sheet in Vienna (fig. 26) - on which the necessary background iconography - the city of Jerusalem and the figures of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus - was indicated.

The absence of the central theme in the *Landscape with an imaginary city under siege* (fig. A) versus the presence of the secondary scenes in the background might point to a similar working method. In the Uffizi drawing (fig. A), the background scenes are explicitly present. The combined landscape and cityscape is swarming with little figures and elements that refer to the story of the conversion of Saul. Close ups of the drawing show vivid little figures in full action. They carry out exactly the same actions

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<sup>224</sup> The *coexistence of several events in one composition*, which is called *simultaneous representation*, occurs often in Northern landscape painting. Kofuku 1998, p. 114. The author discusses in his article at length the simultaneous representations in the workshop of Herri met de Bles.

<sup>225</sup> See § III.1.

as in the corresponding scenes in the painting, although in a slightly different manner. The specific positioning of the group of soldiers in front of the encampment differs in drawing and painting (fig. 33). Whereas the figures are arranged in a circle in the drawing, one of the figures in the painting (fig. H) has been put behind another. The painted man walking alone in the middle of the bridge in the direction of the entrance of the city is not represented in the drawing (fig. 34). The interaction between the figures on top of the dominant rock as well has been changed: in the painting the figure at the right makes a bending gesture in front of the left figure. In the drawing, instead, it appears that the left figure approaches the one at the right (fig. 19). The two men behind these figures seem more involved in the scene in the drawing than in the painting. The figure in the rock underneath the scene bends out of its niche in the painting, whereas he remains erected in the drawing. The bridge over which Saul's retinue disappears out of the picture, as well is different. In the painting, the retinue is further advanced on the bridge. The path for a short moment leads straight into the distance, whereafter it bends over diagonally and disappears out of the picture. Even though a part of the scene has been cut of by the border of the picture in the drawing, one notices that the direction of the path here runs immediately diagonally, without introducing the starting point of the bridge from the straight viewpoint of the spectator. Apart from these little differences the drawing follows the painting carefully, into the very detail. It recalls the model drawing *David and Batseba* attributed to Lucas Gassel (fig. 25) which in subject is related to several paintings that probably were executed after the drawing.<sup>226</sup> Although the compositions in these artworks are identical, the little figures in the foreground are slightly different in all versions.<sup>227</sup>

Another remarkable observation regarding the *Landscape with an imaginary city under siege* (fig. A) is the absence of the deers, which wander around in front of the large rock formation in the painting (fig. H). The absence of these animals, which do not belong to the actual iconography of the story of the conversion of Saul, stands in contrast to the detailed representation of all other scenes that do illustrate Saul's life. The drawing thus - apart from the central theme - only seems to comprise all secondary iconographic scenes necessary for the course of the story. It provides a reason to believe that the drawing precedes the painting in a similar way as the 'preparatory' drawing of Jan de Beer (fig. 26) goes

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<sup>226</sup> See also § III. 3.1.

<sup>227</sup> For a discussion of the relationship between this drawing and the identical paintings, see Ainsworth 1998, p. 121-122.

before the painting with the *Christ on the Cross* (fig. 27). When following this argumentation, the presence of the disappearing retinue in the left foreground should be explained in correspondence to the attendance of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus: they form part of the 'secondary' scenes that the artist prepared in the background drawing. For both the painting of the *Road to Calvary* by Herri met de Bles and the *Christ on the cross* by Jan de Beer, the collaboration with another hand has been suggested for the execution of respectively the figures and the landscape.<sup>228</sup> The absence of the main iconographic scenes in these presumed preparatory studies indicates that the drawings served foremost the collaborating landscape artist in executing his part of the painting. A comparable nonappearance of the central theme in the Uffizi drawing might imply the involvement of a specialized hand for the execution of the main figures in the painting. Similar to the Jan de Beer's drawing, the Uffizi sheet might have been a model (or a copy after a model) for the landscape painter on which the latter based his composition.

As already mentioned before, the unfortunate condition of the painting representing *Leda and the Swan* (fig. G) hampers in making thorough interpretations about its exact relationship to the identical drawing in the Horne collection (fig. B). It is however possible to say something about the figures of Leda and the swan in both artworks. In the Horne drawing, Leda lies on a plateau that arises above the landscape. The transition between her head and shoulders looks constrained. Her leg at the bottom is weakly suggested underneath her upper leg. Although the figure already is poorly proportioned in the drawing, the rendering of Leda's anatomy is even more unluckily executed in the painting (fig. G). The hips of Leda are as broad as her belly, whereas in the drawing the contours of the figure broaden more realistically at the place of Leda's thighs. Her second leg has disappeared completely in the painting. Here more than in the drawing the spectator has the feeling that the figures are painted upon the landscape, without being actually integrated. Given the fact the execution of the figures is more convincingly in the drawing than in the painting, it is more likely to assume that the drawing preceded the painting instead of *vice versa*. The painting has been executed on walnut instead of oak, the traditional type of wood used in the Netherlands.<sup>229</sup> Although paintings on walnut do occur rarely in the

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<sup>228</sup> See earlier in this paragraph.

<sup>229</sup> Knut 1980, p. 17. The author discusses in his first chapter the use of wood as support of paintings.

Netherlands, an example is Herri met de Bles' roundel with the *Earthly Paradise*,<sup>230</sup> this sort of wood was more typical for Italy - although it certainly was not used to any large extent. It is thus possible that the painting originated in Italy, perhaps after the drawing arrived on the peninsula. It confirms in any case the likelihood that the drawing originated earlier than the painting.

### III. 3.3 *The Blue Landscapes as light studies*

The Uffizi drawing (fig. A) differs from Jan de Beer's (fig. 26) and Herri met de Bles' (fig. 26) preparatory drawings in two noticeable ways: (1) its triple tonality technique and (2) its illegibility in some parts of the composition.

(1) Through its triple tonality, the Uffizi (fig. A) drawing by far exceeds the other drawings, in which the artist solely used a sober combination of pen and ink, in pictorial qualities. The earlier discussed correspondence between the heightening and the lighter tones in the related painting let belief that the specific function of the drawing is connected to this aspect. We here want to propose the possible role of the drawing as a kind of light study for the painting. This theory is on the one hand supported by the sixteenth-century practice of landscape painting, and on the other through the observations made in the previous paragraph on the use of the triple tonality technique in the Netherlands.<sup>231</sup>

When looking at early sixteenth-century landscape painting - Joachim Patinir's compositions taken as example - Netherlandish views on nature reveal a strong awareness of natural light effects and reflections. A beautiful example is the earlier mentioned *Charon crossing the river Styx* (fig. 1).<sup>232</sup> Here, the source of light is suggested behind the hills in a similar way as described in the *Blue Landscapes*. The bright white color that surrounds the mountains gradually turns into blue in the parts of the air further removed from the mountains, after which the sun is covered. The water(s) reflect the light of sun more strongly as the view draws near the horizon. The artist represents the firelight of the underworld through indicating its reflections with light tones against the dark ruinesque architecture. Other paintings by Joachim Patinir - or by other landscape painters - as well reveal this interest in the reflection of light.

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<sup>230</sup> Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. A 780, see Namur 2000, nr. 1.

<sup>231</sup> See § III.1 & III.2.

<sup>232</sup> See § 0.3.

Alejandro Vergara mentions that in *nearly all of Patinir's paintings a horizontal band of bright light extends from side to side just above the horizon. In some paintings this band is painted with a white colour, only slightly tainted with blue. In other works it is painted in pure white, but we perceive it as blue because of the colour of the surrounding areas. It reproduces the effect of the light of early dawn or of the last minutes of dusk, when bright light shines from beyond the visible contours of the earth.*<sup>233</sup>

The blue sky in the *Blue Landscapes* intermingles in a similar way with the sunlight. Contemporary Netherlandish art theory as well spends attention to the natural reflections of light in landscape painting. Karel van Mander (1548-1606) writes in his theoretical treatise on how to paint landscape: *Let us now [...] strip the air of clouds and represent it cloudless, and at the top with [blue] azure or smalt; and when we go down we gradually use lighter colors so that the closest point to the earth always has the most light.*<sup>234</sup> He also discusses other natural light effects retraceable in the *Blue Landscapes* and their corresponding paintings: *Besides one should darken the cities entirely or half, shaded through clouds. One should besides not forget to represent in the reflecting water the color of the sky.*<sup>235</sup>

Out of the painting's practice and theory speaks the importance of the natural reflection of light in landscapes. Painters in some way must have practiced these light effects in order to execute them realistically in their paintings. A medium that perfectly suits the indication of lighter tones is the grounded drawing. As we have seen before, the use of white heightening in grounded drawings, such as the tree studies in the *Errera sketchbook* (fig. 18) or the *Christ on the cross* (fig. 17) especially served for preparing or *rehearsing* the act of painting. These drawings functioned as studies for the division of light and shade - light and dark tones - in paintings. Interesting in this respect is the Master of 1518's typical practice of indicating sunlight in his grounded model drawings with white horizontal dashes just

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<sup>233</sup> Vergara 2007, p. 45.

<sup>234</sup> *Laet ons nu de loch van wolcken ontlijven en somtijts gheheel suyverlijck verstaten, en op't schoonst over asuyren oft smalten [...] en hoe leegher hoe lichter soet verdrijven op dat naest d'aersch elementighe swaerheyt zy altijdts gehevoeght d'aldermeeste claerheyt.* Mander 1973 I, p. 208. Translation of the author, inspired on Hessel Miedema's Dutch transcription (see Mander 1973 I, p. 209). According to Miedema this phenomenon has been discussed by Leonardo Da Vinci in his *Treatise on Painting* (Vinci 1956, nr. 226, 227) and trickled down in the sixteenth century through the Netherlands. Mander 1973 II, p. 546).

<sup>235</sup> *Daer neffens salmen oock bedimsternissen somtijts gheheel somtijts half maer de steden beschaduwet van wolcken. Noch salmen gissen t'spieghelnc water niet te missen t'hemels aenschijns verwen.* Mander 1973 I, p. 207. Translation of the author, inspired on Hessel Miedema's Dutch transcription (see Mander 1973 I, p. 206).

above the horizon (fig. 17). Similar traces in charcoal indicate the sunlight in his underdrawings, although here the connection between these lines and the sunlight is much less clear because of the underdrawings' lack of pictoriality. It indicates a direct relation between the master's light studies on grounded paper and the preparation of the painting on the panel itself. The underdrawing in this case acts as an intermediary that brings over the light study from the drawing to the painting. Jan van Scorel's abovementioned *chiaroscuro* drawings also document the occurrence of 'light studies' - although in a different technique - next to the preparation of the painting in the underdrawing.<sup>236</sup> We can thus assume that both grounded and *chiaroscuro* drawings served a similar purpose of studying light and dark values.<sup>237</sup> The cases of Jan van Scorel and the Master of 1518 show that these drawings preceded and were complimentary to the (eventual) preparation of the painting in the underdrawing.

The Uffizi drawing thus might have been such a light study (or a copy after a light study) - just as the other *Blue Landscapes*, which all reveal a similar attention for light effects. The manner of suggesting the incidence of light through the gap in the cave of Saint Jerome in the Darmstadt drawing (fig. D) by means of applying intense white heightening at the side wall(s) of the break, strongly resembles the reflection of the firelight through the hole in the rock in the *Burning of Sodom* (fig. 35) by Joachim Patinir.<sup>238</sup> If it were not for the subject, the drawing could have been a preparatory study for the painting. In comparison to the other color grounded light studies mentioned above, the *Blue Landscapes'* explicit blue color is remarkable. The use of blue as grounding color was not very frequent in the sixteenth-century Netherlands. Artists generally preferred a brown-greenish tone of paper.<sup>239</sup> The

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<sup>236</sup> See § 0.2 & § III.3.1.

<sup>237</sup> *Chiaroscuro drawings* became popular in Antwerp around 1520. According to Robinson and Wolff, it substituted the earlier common practice of drawing on colored ground paper. Van den Brink in this respect mentions how Dirk Vellert probably changed his practice of using prepared paper for washed drawing, *to keep pace with other artists of the period following 1520 when chiaroscuro drawings began to make way, slowly but surely for washed drawings*. (Brink 2004/2005, p. 172. Brink uses the term *chiaroscuro drawing* for drawings to which we refer as colored ground drawing, see note 133).

<sup>238</sup> Exterior panels of the *Triptych with St. Jerome, St. John and St. Anthony and Mary Magdalene*, Switzerland, private collection.

<sup>239</sup> Antwerp 2002, p. 124. F. Koreny writes that Albrecht Dürer when traveling through the Netherlands in a few cases changed his usual practice of working on green or blue prepared paper for the brownish color, typical in the Netherlands. Van den Brink mentions in Antwerp 2005, p. 136 the *Martyr's death of four saints* by the Master of 1518 (Berlin, SMPK, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. 13441, Antwerp 2005, nr. 53) and two drawings with designs for decoration in Vienna (Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina, inv. 7835 & 7836, see Antwerp 2005, nrs. 15 & 16) as exceptional for their striking light blue ground

choice for a blue ground tone in the *Blue Landscapes* has the advantage of evoking a realistical aerial atmosphere with a dominant blue sky, which even glimmers through the sunlight near the horizon. Both art theory and practice demonstrated the importance of a gradual transition of blue to lighter tones in the air of landscapes. The blue paper lends itself perfectly for practicing the intermingling of these specific colors. Further, we saw how in landscape paintings some light effects were achieved by means of applying lighter tones upon darker ones, for example for rendering the firelight in the *Burning of Sodom* (fig. 35) or in *Charon crossing the river Styx* (fig. 1). Just as for miniatures and the rendering of foliage in painting, the colored ground drawing allowed 'rehearsing' this act of painting through applying white tones upon a darkened underground.

(2) The second difference with de Beer's (fig. 26) and Bles' (fig. 28) preparatory sheets, is the Uffizi drawing's (fig. A) illegibility in some parts of the landscape. Although the other preparatory studies by no means are finished compositions, the outlined design tallies. It indicates that the artist knew the exact circumstances of what he was drawing. The Uffizi drawing, on the other hand, reveals parts where we might doubt this 'know-how' of the executor. We already discussed some of these unclear parts when arguing that the drawing hardly could have been 'intended' as an autonomous drawing.<sup>240</sup> These eligibilities give the impression that the draughtsman did not know or 'understand' what was he was drawing. The *Landscape with an imaginary city under siege* (fig. A) thus seems a copy rather than an 'authentic' preparatory light study. A similar status can be argued for the drawing with *Leda and the Swan* (fig. B) and the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* (fig. C). The poor execution of the Horne drawing (fig. B) - the corrected contours of the figure, or the badly divided white heightening in the figure of the swan - makes the drawing not very likely an original preparation for a painting. In the case of the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* sold at Christie's (fig. C), the existence of an identical sheet - the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* in the Louvre (fig. F) - that clearly exceeds the first sheet in workmanship, proofs its status as a copy (fig. C) - perhaps even after the Louvre drawing itself. The copy on grounded paper after Dürer's famous *Calvary* (fig. 22), attests the practice of copying colored ground

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tone. We however should keep in mind that the observation of color is a subjective matter.

Interpretations on this topic therefore should be treated with caution.

<sup>240</sup> See § III.2.

drawings in the Netherlands. The Darmstadt drawing is of a better quality. The remarkable and convincing rendering of light effects show that the artist was more interested in this particular aspect than in any other, such as finishing off natural elements or working out the figures. Despite its 'imperfections', this drawing thus certainly might have been an original light study. The Christopher drawing as well could be an authentic preparatory light study or model drawing. The artist skillfully worked out the volumes and without any inaccuracies. Its focus on outlines and 'emptiness' recalls Vergara's suggestion of the use of drawn copies where many elements were outlined but not fully articulated in the workshop of Joachim Patinir.<sup>241</sup>

### III. 4. Conclusion

According to Wood's explanation of functions of colored ground drawings in the sixteenth century, the *Blue Landscapes* either can be preparatory studies, copies after paintings, or independent drawings. Collector's traces pointed out that the drawings already early on circulated as 'autonomous drawings'. Four arguments, however, contested an 'intended' function of these drawings as independent works of art: (1) the existence of two identical paintings; (2) the emptiness and focus on general outlines, (3) the lesser care for precision and workmanship in some of the drawings; (4) the lack of an autographical signature or dating. These aspects were explained through assigning the drawings a role within the production process of paintings. In their attention for the reflections of natural light and the similar distribution of lighter tones in the drawings and their corresponding paintings, the *Blue Landscapes* revealed themselves as preparatory light studies. The general use of colored ground drawings for working out solutions for light and dark divisions in paintings and the strong awareness for natural light in the Netherlandish tradition of landscape painting confirms this hypothesis. Because of their poor quality and inaccuracies, the *Landscape with an imaginary city under siege*, the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* and the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* sold at Christie's, however are regarded as copies rather than original preparatory studies.

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<sup>241</sup> See § III.3.1.



This chapter revealed the influence of contemporary artistic practices in Germany in the Netherlands. Netherlandish artists apparently did not only take over the Germans' formal and iconographical aspects, but also their drawing technique. It indicates that German prints and drawings circulated in the Netherlands. These drawings could have been intended either as autonomous drawings or as model drawings that were turned into independent works of art once the production process was finished. The *Blue Landscapes* document the influence of this practice in the Netherlands.

Earlier on, we quoted Gibson, who stated that the *Riverlandscape with Saint Jerome* (fig. D) was one of the first independent drawings and that its pictoriality substituted that of paintings.<sup>242</sup> This chapter pointed out that the first independent drawings definitely did not originate as such, but that they were recuperated from the production process for artworks in other media. Therefore, their pictoriality attests their previous function as preparatory studies rather than that it served for legitimizing the drawings' independent status.

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<sup>242</sup> See § 0.3.

#### IV. ATTRIBUTION

The previous chapter illustrated the relativity of the concept of 'authorship' in early sixteenth-century Antwerp workshops. Various hands were involved in the execution of one single artwork. Studio practices and collaboration between different or within one workshop(s) were complex.<sup>243</sup> Preparatory drawings were often made by someone else than the final artwork. Depending on the drawings' function and importance, they were executed by the master or an assistant in the workshop. Besides, many copies were made for collecting motifs for new compositions or for practicing the artist's skills. These practices make connoisseurship and the recognizing of hands in drawings a difficult - and in some cases perhaps even irrelevant - business. As mentioned before, the Italian Renaissance changed, on the other hand, in the course of the sixteenth century the traditional vision on drawings as a medium solely useful for the production of other artworks.<sup>244</sup> Humanistic ideas about *the original design as the truest manifestation of artistic individuality* trickled down through the Netherlands and made that drawings became appreciated for their own sake. Signatures, dates and frames turned them into 'real artworks'. For these 'independent drawings', authorship is an important aspect.

The previous chapters touched upon the following indications, important for the attribution of the *Blue Landscapes*:

(1) Four of the five drawings, which reveal affinities in terms of subject, composition, style, technique, figure type and size are made by the same hand. The *Landscape with Saint Christopher* in the *Louvre* (fig. F) is different in style. Its identical subject with one of the four other *Blue Landscapes*, its identical triple tonality technique, and its supposed originally similar dimensions that the drawing presumably originated in the same workshop.

(2) Three artworks, which are in style or subject related to the *Blue Landscapes*, were added to the group. Given the current workshop practices, it is not very likely that the *Conversion of Saul* (fig. H) and *Leda and the Swan* (fig. G) are made by the same hand as their corresponding drawings - especially since these are identified as copies. Similarities in style and composition indicate that the *Hilly Landscape*

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<sup>243</sup> See § III.3.1.

<sup>244</sup> See § 0.2.

(fig. E) has the same author as four of the five *Blue Landscapes*. This author also might have executed the copy after Dürer's *Calvary* (fig. 22). All of these artworks are anonymous and provide little clues regarding the responsible artist.

(3) Iconographic and compositional features indicate that the *Blue Landscapes* belong to an Antwerp workshop of the early sixteenth century, active around 1520-1535, which had connections with the Antwerp mannerists. Some remarkable iconographic motifs pointed to a possible travel of the artist through the Alps.

This chapter discusses the attribution of the *Blue Landscapes* and their additions. The abovementioned observations made clear that the drawings are not retraceable to one single hand. Their similarities might point, however, in the direction of a same workshop. The lack of signature on the *Blue Landscapes* confirms the status of the drawings as a workshop product rather than the achievement of one artist in particular. Therefore, this chapter investigates the group's belonging to a workshop and not to one specific artist.

#### IV. 1. Jan Wellens de Cock's workshop and the *Blue Landscapes*

In discussions on the author of the *Blue Landscapes*, Jan Wellens de Cock (c. 1481(?) - 1521) usually comes up as the 'most likely candidate'. His name first was proposed by Freund in 1928, on the basis of an inscription on the *Riverlandscape wit Saint Hieronymus* (fig. D), which the scholar read as 'cocq'.<sup>245</sup> Once further investigations led to the connection of the Darmstadt drawing with the Uffizi (fig. A), the Horne (fig. B) and the Christie's (fig. C) drawings, scholars took over Jan Wellens' name as possible responsible artist for these artworks as well.<sup>246</sup> Although they point to the similarities with Jan Wellens' oeuvre, they admit that the attribution to the artist cannot be consolidated nor rejected.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Freund 1928, p. 274, as articulated by Reznicek 1964, p. 16.

<sup>246</sup> Reznicek 1964, p. 64; Lugt 1968, p. 45-46; L. Malke in Berlin 1975, p. 112; J. Hand in Washington /New York 1986-87, p. 110; Bergsträsser 1979, nr. 42; Gibson 1989, p. 35; Darmstadt 1992, nr. 1; Märker & Bergsträsser 1998, nr. 21; Hautekeete 2007, 144. Malke's addition of the Christie's drawing (Berlin 1975, p. 112) has been taken over by J. Hand in Washington /New York 1986-87, p. 110; Gibson 1989, p. 35; Darmstadt 1992, nr. 1; Märker & Bergsträsser 1998, nr. 21; Hautekeete only mentions the drawing as a copy after the *Louvre* drawing, see Hautekeete 2007, p. 143, note 42. G. Faggin in Kloek & Meijer 2008, p. 20 -21, mentions the coherence between the drawings in the Uffizi, Horne and the

Jan Wellens de Cock's oeuvre is one of the most problematic cases in early sixteenth-century Netherlandish art history. Some archival records attest the painter's activities in Antwerp around 1500 - 1520.<sup>248</sup> The *Liggeren*, which registered the members of the Painter's Guild in Antwerp in the sixteenth century, document the master's importance through the registration of two apprentices in his workshop (in 1506 and 1516), and his appointment as deacon of the guild in 1520.<sup>249</sup> Nonetheless, indications on the artist's works are scarce. The sole point of departure is a *Pictum J. Kock* signed etching, which has been used as a guide in constructing an oeuvre around the artist.<sup>250</sup> Protagonists in the discussion on Jan Wellens de Cock's life and oeuvre are Max Friedländer, Nicolas Beets, Godfridus Hoogewerff, Walter Gibson and Jan Piet Filedt Kok.<sup>251</sup> They ascribed and rejected various artworks and discussed his possible origin from Leiden.<sup>252</sup> Jan van der Stock's recent discovery of the artist's early date of decease as soon as 1521 casts doubts upon the entire attributed oeuvre.<sup>253</sup> The assembled artworks in fact should be dated later than this year, in the period 1520-1530.<sup>254</sup> A reconsideration of the artist's life and oeuvre

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sheet sold at Christie's, but considers them as 'environment of Joachim Patinir'. He only considers the sheet in Darmstadt as from Jan Wellens de Cock's hand. The *Louvre* drawing (fig. F) is considered to be made by Patinir, see IV.2.

<sup>247</sup> First articulated by Hand in Washington /New York 1986-87, p. 110, and repeated by later scholars, see my catalogue.

<sup>248</sup> For a short summarize of the 'factual knowledge' on the artist, see Antwerp 2005, p. 224.

<sup>249</sup> Rombouts/Van Lerijs 1961, pp. 65, 87, 94. The employment of apprentices was an investment as the money that these pupils paid for their training did not meet the master's costs. Leeflang 2004-2005, p. 239. The position of deacon, further, required a good reputation and sufficient capital for honoring specific occasions. Id., p. 240. Both records point in the direction that Jan Wellens' workshop ran successful.

<sup>250</sup> Franz 1969, fig. 105.

<sup>251</sup> Friedländer 1914/15; Friedländer 1918; Friedländer 1933; Beets 1935-36; Hoogewerff III 1936; pp. 353-366; Friedländer 1949; Friedländer 1978; W. Gibson 1977; Filedt Kok 1996. Recently, a new monograph on the author has appeared by the hand of R. De Vrij, see Vrij 2008. This study summarizes what has been written on the artist rather than offering new insights on his problematical life and oeuvre.

<sup>252</sup> Friedländer identified the in 1503 in the *Liggeren* accepted master *Jan van Leyen* with Jan de Cock, Friedländer 1918, p. 68. Ever since, scholars have speculated about his possible origin and education in the city of Leiden. See note 12. See for a brief discussion on the literature on the artist, Born 2005, p. 18 note 43. De Vrij also spends much attention to the written literature on the artist, see Vrij 2008, esp. Chapter one, *The putative Jan de Cock*.

<sup>253</sup> Stock 1998, Appendix 1, p. 258-259.

<sup>254</sup> J.P. Filedt Kok expressed his doubts on the attribution of the entire oeuvre to the artist because of this early date of decease in a lecture given at the conference organized by the VLAC (Vlaams Academisch Centrum) on the *Current Research in early 16th Century Northern Painting* in Brussels (Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts) on 2/06/2010, and in a personal conversation in Amsterdam on 13/08/2010.

therefore is required at present, based upon the 'factual knowledge' provided through recently published archival documents and those that still remain to be discovered in the archives.<sup>255</sup>

These current developments also challenge the attribution of the *Blue Landscapes* to the artist. Jan Wellens de Cock's early death conflicts with the date of the drawings' execution earlier proposed in this study, between 1520 and 1540.<sup>256</sup> Especially the advanced composition of the *Hilly Landscape* (fig. E) that bears close resemblance to the type of landscapes that originated from the 1540s onwards, makes the involvement of Jan Wellens de Cock's workshop not very likely - not to say: impossible. Freund's argument about the handwritten attribution 'cocq' on the *Darmstadt* drawing, further, should be put into perspective: a closer examination of the inscription only reveals a clear reading of the first letters 'co', whereas the other part is illegible.<sup>257</sup> Moreover, the inscription is an attribution from an early collector rather than an autograph signature of the artist. The *Blue Landscapes* however do reveal, to some extent, similarities with artworks before considered as Jan Wellens de Cock. Stefaan Hautekeete rightly observes about the Louvre drawing (fig. F) that *the knight seen in profile, who extends his arm rather theatrically, recalls the armed figure of St Christopher seated on a similar horse as he points to the infernal knights on the outer wings of de Cock's Calvary Triptych* (fig. 37).<sup>258</sup> Jan Piet Filedt Kok, currently one of the main authorities regarding the 'putative Jan Wellens de Cock' and the painting school of Leiden, further, recognizes a similarity between the figures - and especially the feathered cuirasses - in the triptych mentioned by Hautekeete (fig. 36) and the *Conversion of Saul* (fig. H).<sup>259</sup> However, he correctly argues that these similarities point to a collective origin in Antwerp rather than to the same hand. The complex rock landscape in the background of the *Blue Landscapes* fits in his eyes more closely - but not entirely - with the world landscapes of Patinir, than with that of Jan Wellens de Cock.

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<sup>255</sup> See note 7. A. Born mentions in the exhibition catalogue on the Antwerp Mannerists a new archival document as early as 1492 in which the artist already occurs, see Born 2005, p. 12 and p. 18, note 45. She owes this information to Prof. M. Martens of the University of Ghent.

<sup>256</sup> See § II.3.

<sup>257</sup> I - unfortunately - only have seen the drawing in reproductions.

<sup>258</sup> Hautekeete 2007, p. 145. The *Calvary triptych* is in Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. SK-A-1598 (in loan to the Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht, inv. 5334). The similarities between the figure type in the Louvre drawing and the oeuvre attributed to Jan Wellens de Cock first has been noted by Koch 1968, see Gibson 1989, p. 14 and note 110.

<sup>259</sup> Written communication with J. P. Filedt Kok on 13/07/2010.

Consequently, there is not a single argument in favor of an attribution of the *Blue Landscapes* to the workshop of Jan Wellens de Cock. Furthermore, the early death date of the latter makes his involvement quasi-impossible. The current attribution should be omitted.

#### IV. 2. Joachim Patinir's workshop and the *Blue Landscapes*

In 1928, Ludwig von Baldass brought for the first time into attention the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* in the Louvre.<sup>260</sup> He considered the sheet as an original drawing by Joachim Patinir.<sup>261</sup> This attribution ever since has been repeated,<sup>262</sup> and the most recent article on Joachim Patinir's draughtsmanship still indexes the drawing as possibly by the artist's hand.<sup>263</sup>

The most obvious argument for the attribution to Patinir in the past was of course the composition of the Louvre drawing's landscape, which comes close to Patinir's world landscapes. Gibson considered the drawing as a copy by an anonymous artist from Patinir's immediate circle after a lost composition made by the master shortly before the *Temptation of St. Anthony*.<sup>264</sup> Another motive is the fact that the theme and technique of the drawing calls in mind Albrecht Dürer's description of the *4 christoffel auff graw papir verhoch* that he gave to Patinir during his visit to Antwerp.<sup>265</sup> To these arguments, Stefaan Hautekeete added the observation that the artist's modeling in the drawing, for example in the *central peak [...] with gradation of brown wash contrasting with the blue ground-tone and highlights in white body-color, usually applied in fine vertical dashes* - resembles Patinir's handling of the oil technique.<sup>266</sup>

Against these arguments can be stated that - and we here follow Hautekeete's argumentation - the prints of Dürer were widespread at the beginning of the sixteenth century and that Patinir's type of landscape compositions knew a great imitation. The figure type of the four knights and the saint does

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<sup>260</sup> Baldass 1928.

<sup>261</sup> Id., p. 23.

<sup>262</sup> F. Lugt in Lugt 1968, nr. 151; M. Friedländer in oral communication (see Lugt 1968, nr. 151); C. L. Raghianti, in Raghianti 1965, attributes the drawing to an Antwerp master active around 1530.

<sup>263</sup> Hautekeete 2007, esp. pp. 142- 145.

<sup>264</sup> Gibson 1989, p. 35. For the painting of Saint Anthony, see 199.

<sup>265</sup> Lugt 1968, nr. 151; Wood 1998, p. 110. See also § II.2.3.

<sup>266</sup> Hautekeete 2007, p. 144.

not correspond to Patinir's usual human staffage, but rather to those of the Antwerp Mannerists.<sup>267</sup> The mannerist figures in the *Conversion of Saul* (fig. H) also demonstrate that the group of drawings had a certain connection with the Antwerp Mannerists. Although collaboration with this group of artists has been documented for other landscape painters, such as the Master of the Female Half-Lengths or Lucas Gassel, the oeuvre of Joachim Patinir and workshop does not provide evidences to assume a similar practice.<sup>268</sup> The iconographical analysis earlier in this study, pointed out the rarity of the represented scene in the Louvre drawing in early sixteenth-century landscape painting. Patinir's repertory consists out of a traditional selection of themes, such as the *Flight to Egypt*, *Saint Christopher traversing the River*, and *Saint Jerome in the wilderness*.<sup>269</sup> The representation of the encounter between the Saint Christopher and the devil disguised as a knight does not suit Patinir's usual production. All *Blue Landscapes* probably, further, originated out of the same workshop. The other *Blue Landscapes* even less suit Patinir's production: the first attempts to let go the traditional world landscape and the renewing iconography - the story of Leda and the Swan, the story of Saul and the pastoral motif in the Darmstadt drawing - do not fit in with the image that scholars nowadays have about Patinir.

#### IV. 3. Other possibilities?

In the past scholars proposed two more artists as author of (part of) the *Blue Landscapes*. Ragghianti mentions in 1965 Lucas Gassel's name as an option.<sup>270</sup> The old handwritten attributions *Luca d'Olanda* on the Horne and Uffizi drawings might refer to this artist, although this name generally is identified with Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533).<sup>271</sup> As mentioned above, Lucas Gassel worked together with Antwerp

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<sup>267</sup> This was already noted by Koch 1968; see Gibson 1989, p. 14 and note 110.

<sup>268</sup> Alejandro Vergara does suspect a co-operation between Patinir and the Antwerp Mannerist Jan de Beer (c. 1475- c.1528) in the latter's *Adoration of the Shepherds Triptych* (Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum- Fondation Corboud, inv. 480, see Antwerp 2005, nr. 19). Vergara 2007, p. 33. Regarding the Lucas Gassel's collaboration with the Antwerp Mannerists, see Gibson 1989, p. 19. For that of the Master of the Female Half Lengths, see Koch 1968, pp. 63-64.

<sup>269</sup> See Madrid 2007, this catalogue gives a good overview of his typical iconography.

<sup>270</sup> Ragghianti 1965, p. 9.

<sup>271</sup> Paris 1991, p. 78-79. In the catalogue of the donation of collector E. Santarelli to the Uffizi in 1866, the drawing was recorded as 'Luca di Leida', Santarelli 1870, p. 581, nr. 1.

Mannerists.<sup>272</sup> His compositions belong to the 'early phase' of the second generation of Netherlandish landscape painters, which are still closely connected to Patinir's typology. His landscapes demonstrate a comparable early interest in mythology and pastoral motifs, for example in his *Landscape with Shepherds* and in the nowadays lost *Mercury and Argus*.<sup>273</sup> There is, however, no direct link between the *Blue Landscapes* and Lucas Gassel's workshop. The master's drawing style, attested through some identified autograph drawings, further, is very different from the cautious and pictorial manner of modeling in the *Blue Landscapes*.<sup>274</sup> The similarities between the *Blue Landscapes* and his work therefore rather indicate the gradual introduction of new motifs in the landscapes following on Patinir, through contacts with other regions - Germany and Italy in particular. After Ragghianti, Lucas Gassel's name never has been repeated.

The other artist proposed as author for the *Blue Landscapes* is Matthijs Cock. As indicated, John Hand considers the rendering of space in the *Blue Landscapes somewhere between that found in Patinir's middle period paintings and the drawings of Matthijs Cock and Cornelis Metsys*.<sup>275</sup> Stefaan Hautekeete states that *from the point of view of drawing technique alone, the drawings are closer to those of Matthijs Cock, who also modeled with dashes of varying thickness made with the tip of the brush [...] and who had a preference for using wash*.<sup>276</sup> These similarities even let some scholars think that the drawings were originally done by Matthijs Cock's hand.<sup>277</sup> These thoughts are undoubtedly caused by the current lack of a thorough study on the artist.<sup>278</sup> Although Hand and Hautekeete correctly observe the *Blue Landscapes'* similarities with Matthijs Cock in drawing technique and composition, the differences for both aspects remain greater than their similarities. As Hand himself adds to his observation: *in his feeling of the flinty structure and jagged, vigorous power of the fantastic rock forms*

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<sup>272</sup> Gibson 1989, p. 19. Beside Lucas Gassel, the Master of the Female Half Lengths, another master that worked in Patinir's close environment, also worked together with this group of artists, See Koch 1968, pp. 63-64.

<sup>273</sup> Vordensteyn, Schoten-Antwerp, De Pret-Roose Collection, see Gibson 1989, fig. 2.1; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, nowadays lost, see Gibson 1989, fig. 2.11.

<sup>274</sup> See for an overview of Lucas Gassel's drawings, Berlin 1975, nrs. 155-160.

<sup>275</sup> J. Hand in Washington /New York 1986-87, p. 110. See also § 2.1.

<sup>276</sup> Hautekeete 2007, p. 146.

<sup>277</sup> Faggin in Kloek & Meijer 2008, p. 21 and Vrij 2009, p. 207.

<sup>278</sup> See note 177.



[the artist] (...) is closer to Patinir than Matthijs Cock.<sup>279</sup> Matthijs Cock's freehanded and exuberant drawing technique further differs immensely from the insecure and nervous pen traces in the *Blue Landscapes*, or the restrained handling of the pen in the Louvre drawing. An attribution to the artist therefore is out of question.

None of the attributions made in the past turned out acceptable. With the current state of information, it is at present difficult to retrace the workshop where the *Blue Landscapes* originated. This is not strange if we keep in mind the little knowledge scholars nowadays have about early sixteenth century landscape painters and - especially - their drawings. As already indicated, many landscape painters who worked in Patinir's margins remain nowadays unknown.<sup>280</sup> Therefore, we propose the provisional designation *Workshop of the Blue Landscapes* for referring to the workshop where the *Blue Landscapes* and the three - possibly four - additions originated. This name allows us to refer to a group of artworks that to a certain extent belongs together, but that are not necessarily made by the same hand. It is a suitable name in the anticipation of more indications about the actual executor(s).

#### IV. 4. Conclusion

This final chapter reconsidered the attributions until now proposed for the *Blue Landscapes*. The two names most currently given did not prove any longer acceptable. Since currently an alternative is lacking, we must fall back on John Hand's statement regarding the attribution of the *Darmstadt* drawing: *If the name of Jan Wellens de Cock is eliminated, then the River Landscape with Saint Jerome is best given to an anonymous Antwerp artist working in the style of Patinir.*<sup>281</sup> However, instead of one artist, we should rather think of a workshop responsible for the *Blue Landscapes* and its additions. We here chose to refer to them as the *Workshop of the Blue Landscapes*.

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<sup>279</sup> See note 279.

<sup>280</sup> See § 0.1.

<sup>281</sup> J. Hand in Washington /New York 1986/1987, p. 110.

## CONCLUSION

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This master thesis investigated a group of landscape drawings, here called the *Blue Landscapes*, whose main cohesive factors are their composition and triple tonality technique. Each chapter focused on one particular aspect of the *Blue Landscapes*, which were their coherence, dating, function and attribution in particular. The contextualization of the group within the broader development of landscape painting and the use of drawings in the sixteenth century allowed a reconsideration of the current hypotheses regarding these aspects.

The first chapter introduced the *Blue Landscapes* and discussed their common characteristics. Three new works of art are taken into account as possible additions to the group. The *Hilly Landscape* (fig. E) comes in style and composition so close to four of the five *Blue Landscapes*, that it betrays a same hand for its execution. The paintings of *Leda and the Swan* (fig. G) and the *Conversion of Saul* (fig. H) have compositions that are identical to respectively the drawing with *Leda and the Swan* (fig. B) and that with *an imaginary city under siege* (fig. A). Future research should consider the drawn copy after Dürer's *Calvary* (fig. 22), which is in style and technique similar to the *Blue Landscapes* as a possible fourth addition to the group.

The second chapter determined the date of execution of the *Blue Landscapes* through placing the drawings' iconography and composition within the broader development of sixteenth-century Netherlandish landscape painting. In the rendering of space, the *Blue Landscapes* stand in between the creations by Joachim Patinir and that of second generation painters, such as Matthijs Cock or Cornelis Massijs. Compared to the traditional themes in the early sixteenth-century landscape paintings by Patinir and his environment, the iconography of the *Blue Landscapes* proved renewing and more closely fitting with that of the second generation. Based on the influences of Patinir's followers for the execution of the landscape and that of the Antwerp Mannerist's for the figures, the *Blue Landscapes* could be dated between 1520 and 1535. They thus do not stand at the very genesis of landscape painting, but belong to a next stage of the genre.

Wood's division of the three contexts in which triple tonality drawings circulated, served as the main framework in sorting out the function of the drawings in the third chapter. Four observations

led to the conclusion that none of the *Blue Landscapes* are *intended autonomous drawings*. These arguments were (1) the existence of two paintings that correspond exactly with two of the *Blue Landscapes*; (2) the emptiness and focus on general outlines; (3) the lesser care for precision and workmanship in some of the drawings; (4) the lack of an autographical signature or dating. These aspects let belief that the drawings played a role in the production process of paintings. This idea was further supported by the examination of the use of the triple tonality technique for the *Blue Landscapes*. In two cases the application of white heightening on the blue paper not only almost exactly coincided with the intermingling of these tones in corresponding paintings, they also visualize the reflections of natural light in the landscapes. The attention for the reflection of natural light in landscapes proved a strong tradition in the sixteenth-century Netherlands. It was even discussed in contemporary theoretical treatises. Given the general use of grounded drawings in the Netherlands for working out solutions for light and dark divisions in paintings, and the comparable appearance of other preparatory drawings, both on colored and 'white' paper, the *Blue Landscapes* could have functioned as preparatory light studies for landscape paintings. The high quality of the *Riverlandscape with Saint Jerome* (fig. D) and the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* in the Louvre (fig. F) let belief that these are original drawings. The lesser quality and unclear parts in the *Landscape with Leda and the Swan* (fig. B), the *Landscape with an imaginary city siege* (fig. A) and the existence of a better version of the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* sold at Christie's (fig. C), indicate that they are copies rather than authentic drawings. The copy in the Louvre after Dürer's *Calvary* (fig. 22) attests the practice of copying independent or preparatory colored ground drawings in the Netherlands. Although not intended as autonomous drawings, the early annotations and collector's traces indicate that the *Blue Landscapes* were recuperated as independent drawings once the production process was finished. The pictorial qualities of the drawings might have played a major role in this recuperation process. As a consequence, the intention of the *Blue Landscapes* differs from the autonomous landscape drawings that started to be produced around the 1540s by artists such as Cornelis Massijs and Matthijs Cock, and which led to the creation of a new genre, that of landscape drawing. One should thus be cautious when proposing the *Riverlandscape with Saint Jerome* and the *Landscape with Saint Christopher* as independent drawings.

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In the last chapter, discussing the authorship of the *Blue Landscapes*, the current attribution to either Joachim Patinir or Jan Wellens de Cock was dismissed on the basis of several aspects. The choice of subject in the *Blue Landscapes* does not cope with the traditional scenery in Patinir's landscapes, while the recently discovered early death date of Jan Wellens de Cock makes that not a single argument speaks in favor of an attribution to this latter artist. With the current information available, the identification of the author of the landscape drawings is difficult. Given sixteenth-century workshop practices, we also should be cautious with the supposition that the artist responsible for the execution of the paintings, *Leda and the Swan* and the *Conversion of Saul* also executed the corresponding drawings, especially since the latter have been identified as copies. Until further research gives more indications about the precise relationship between these artworks, this entire group has, therefore, been attributed to the *workshop of the Blue Landscapes*. As such, the relationship between the artworks is indicated without expecting them to be by the same hand.

Remarkable are the German - and especially Albrecht Dürer's - influences in both the iconography and the use of technique in the *Blue Landscapes*. Its iconography proved renewing in comparison to other contemporary landscapes and many representations were retraceable to German forerunners. The practice of drawing on colored ground paper was in the German Danube school an established tradition and it was here that the triple tonality drawings first were set free from workshop practices and turned into an independent works of art. This case study thus revealed how German prints and grounded drawings circulated in the Netherlands and provided a renewing impulse to early sixteenth-century Netherlandish art by introducing renaissance ideas and iconography before coming directly from the Italian peninsula around the 1540s.

Although this study offered new insights into the dating, function and attribution of the *Blue Landscapes*, it did not provide sure answers. Therefore, its relevance lies in two aspects in particular. Firstly, it brings under discussion an interesting group of drawings that before only sporadically received attention and, secondly, it provides some new information and insights that questioned current hypotheses. This study adds an so far neglected group of art works to the history of landscape painting, that hopefully will be taken into account in future research.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

SMPK: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz