

The 1902 exhibition, *Les Primitifs flamands*: scholarly fallout and art historical reflections

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At the time of the symposium honouring Linda Seidel, I remarked that my participation had its *raison d'être* in being the person there to have known her the longest, indeed from the very beginning of our graduate studies at Harvard.¹ Looking back on those days and the classes we actually took together, two stand out for their future significance. One, a seminar with Joachim Gaehde on Romanesque Art, was the springboard for what became Seidel's main area of expertise. The other, a lecture course on Early Netherlandish Painting, turned out to be an area of overlap in our work from which, accordingly, the following essay draws. Insofar as my subject, the Bruges exhibition of 1902: 'Les Primitifs flamands', is familiar to English speaking audiences, it is probably through Francis Haskell's *History and its Images*, published in 1993, where especially that show's effects on the Dutch historian, Johan Huizinga, are discussed.² Important for my own formation were references Haskell made to the 1902 exhibition in a series of lectures I had attended at the Collège de France already in the mid-1980s.³ Immediately this exhibition registered as something that needed to be factored into my own researches on the modern reception of Grünewald's *Isenheim Altarpiece*.⁴ But, more important, it was the first

¹'Challenging the Myths of Art History: A Symposium in Honor of Linda Seidel,' was held at Fordham University's Lincoln Center Campus, February 13, 2011; co-sponsored by Center for Medieval Studies and Department of Art History and Music, Fordham University; Division of Humanities, University of Chicago; Department of Art, DePauw University. Thanks go to Anne F. Harris, Cecily J. Hilsdale, Dawn Odell, Elizabeth Rodini and Rebecca Zorach for organizing the event, comprised of twenty-two short communications by former students of Seidel and four longer papers by senior colleagues. This essay expands on my lecture for that occasion. In what follows, all translations are mine except where otherwise indicated.

² Francis Haskell, *History and its Images*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993, Chap. 15, esp. 445-82.

³ At the invitation of André Chastel and Jacques Thuillier, this series of five lectures, starting on April 16, 1985, was entitled *L'Historien et les beaux-arts: des relations difficiles* and they clearly marked preparatory steps in the evolution of Haskell's above-mentioned book.

⁴ See Andrée Hayum, *The Isenheim Altarpiece: God's Medicine and the Painter's Vision*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989, Chap. 4, 135-6. I remain grateful to J. Patrice Marandel, at the time Curator of European Paintings at The Detroit Institute of Arts, for inviting me to participate in a symposium in October 1987, to commemorate the

time, altogether, that I became aware of the cultural impact an exhibition could have. Such considerations about the institutions of art were far from habitual a scant generation earlier, even at Harvard, with its then renowned museum course and its early successes in spawning some of the finest museum professionals in America. Furthermore, although Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann, who taught our Northern Art class, had come from the museum world in Holland for his first academic appointment in the U.S., neither Seidel nor I recall any mention being made of the 1902 exhibition. Erwin Panofsky's *Early Netherlandish Painting* of 1953 might be seen as setting this stage. For, apart from a few references to relevant catalogues in its bibliography, there is no discussion of the Bruges show in the actual text of Panofsky's magisterial study. This is all the more surprising given the acknowledgement, in the show's immediate aftermath, roundly expressed by scholars of different nationalities, of its importance for all future studies in this field.⁵ Moreover, Max Friedländer reflects on the 1902 exhibition when, more than twenty years after, he launched his multi-volume *Alt Niederländische Malerei* and, in a lecture at the close of 1943, Huizinga credits its role in his own evolution as a historian.⁶ Not to speak of the destination this exhibition became in its own time for contemporary artists, writers and critics – the Belgian, symbolist sculptor, George Minne, the French novelist and critic of Dutch ancestry, Joris-Karl Huysmans, Roger

opening of its newly renovated Northern European galleries, when I first began to explore the subject of the 1902 exhibition.

⁵ Apart from Belgian critics, among notable foreigners who reviewed the show were Max Friedländer, Hugo von Tschudi, Roger Fry and Adolfo Venturi. A check list for reproductions to be sold individually (*Bruckmanns Pigmentdrucke nach Gemälden Alter Meister auf der Ausstellung zu Brügge 1902*, Munich: F. Bruckmann, A-G., 1902), has a blurb on last page about Max Friedländer's commemorative volume (see note 9) which states, 'Netherlandish painting now stands at forefront of art studies' ('Die niederländische Malerei steht jetzt im Vordergrund der Kunstforschung'). In his memoirs, originally published in 1930, Wilhelm von Bode, who attended the exhibition, remarks that this 'most significant of old master exhibitions'; ('Diese bedeutendste Ausstellung alter Kunst'), 'served as a special stimulus for research' in this area; ('..hat auf die Forschung besonders anregend gewirkt.') Thomas W. Gaehtgens and Barbara Paul, eds, Wilhelm von Bode, *Mein Leben*, Vol. 1, Berlin: Nicolaische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1997, 298-99. If Haskell reclaims attention to this exhibition, we find further evidence of that renewed focus in Julien Chapuis, 'Early Netherlandish Painting: Shifting Perspectives', *From Van Eyck to Bruegel: Early Netherlandish Painting in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998, 3-21.

⁶ Max Friedländer, *Die Altniederländische Malerei*, Vol. 1, Berlin: Paul Cassirer, 1924, 15, refers here to the 'denkwürdigen (memorable/noteworthy) Brügger Leihausstellung von 1902'. Pieter Geyl and F.W.N. Hugenholtz, eds, Arnold J. Pomerans, trans, Johan Huizinga, 'My Path to History', *Dutch Civilization in the Seventeenth Century*, New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1968, 266-67.



Figures 1 and 2 catalogue *Exposition des Primitifs flamands et d'Art ancien*, Bruges, 1902, Hôtel Gruuthuuse, troisième section: Art ancien, installation shots of furniture and decorative arts.

Fry, Marcel Proust taking advantage of his improved health and the exhibition's postponed closing date to make the journey to Bruges.⁷

Insofar as this exhibition included furniture, sculpture, ivories, metalwork, medals, coins, tapestries, manuscripts, as well as paintings, it is the inheritor of those international expositions starting in London, 1851, Manchester 1857 and Paris 1855, 1867, 1889 that drew attention to a range of materials and the workmanship involved in their production and transformation into objects of use and embellishment. But the show's arrangement also reflected the prevailing separation and hierarchy of the mediums attendant to the growth of the museum as institution. Thus, presumably comprising the *Art ancien* of the full title: *Exposition des Primitifs flamands et d'Art ancien*, those objets d'art were assembled in the Hôtel Gruuthuuse (Figs 1 & 2), whereas, four hundred or so paintings were displayed separately in the Hôtel du Conseil Provincial (Figs 3 & 4).⁸ Just as the artistic values and the historical narratives conveyed in the early public art museum were articulated primarily through its painting collections, so the ensemble of paintings at Bruges

⁷ Philip Kolb, ed, Marcel Proust, *Correspondance*, Vol. 3, 1902-3, Paris: Librairie Plon, 1976, no. 81, letter to Alfred Vallette, 152-53. Having opened in mid-June, the exhibition was slated to close on 15 September 1902 but, given the attendance, it remained open until 5 October. Proust went on 2 October with his friend, Bertrand de Fénelon.

⁸ Baron de Vinck de Winnezele was president of the committee in charge of the *Art ancien*, whose catalogue speaks of this exhibit as *annexé à l'Exposition des Primitifs flamands*. M.A. Wauters headed the committee in charge of the paintings.

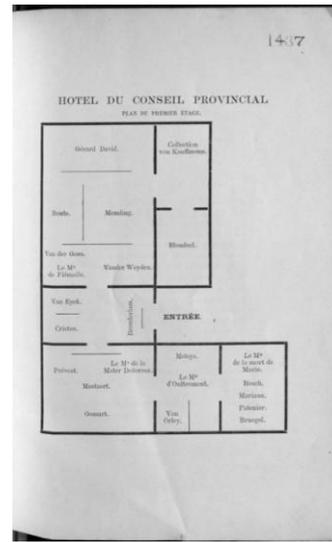
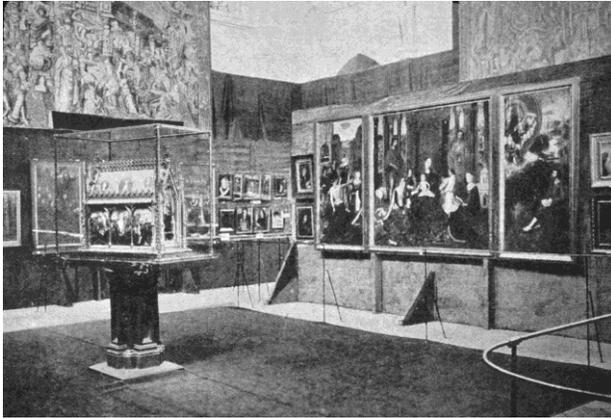


Figure 3 – catalogue *Exposition des Primitifs flamands et d'Art ancien*, Bruges, 1902, Hôtel du Conseil Provincial, première section: Tableaux, installation shot of paintings.

Fig. 4 – pamphlet *Les Primitifs flamands à Bruges*, Brussels: P. Weissenbruch, 1902, ground plan of painting exhibition.

provided nearly exclusive focus for the extensive critical reception of this exhibition.⁹ In a nomenclature that needs further discussion, these, the so-called 'Primitifs', will be my concern as well.

Given Seidel's publications, it's difficult to resist commencing with the most important picture *not* brought to Bruges in 1902, the very first example of the so-called 'early schools' of painting to have entered the National Gallery's collection in 1842.¹⁰ There was a simple reason that Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini* double portrait stayed at home. Though England can be credited with establishing the phenomenon of the loan exhibition, at the time, the National Gallery still held a firm policy against lending from its holdings. In specifying 'loan exhibition', i.e. 'Die Brügger *Leihausstellung* von 1902', the title of Max Friedländer's long review signals the problems peculiar to such temporary displays, which were faced by the original

⁹ Max J. Friedländer, *Meisterwerke der Niederländischen Malerei des XV und XVI Jahrhunderts auf der Ausstellung zu Brügge 1902*, Munich: F. Bruckmann A.-G., 1903. An introductory page asserts the privileged role of the paintings in the exhibition, many of which, as author indicates, were photographed for the first time, to which this folio volume of reproductions attests. See also note 5 above. Another set of reproductions, again, exclusively of paintings in the show and for sale individually was: *Catalogue des Reproductions Inaltérables au Charbon faites d'après les peintures ayant figuré à L'Exposition des Primitifs Flamands et d'Art Ancien à Bruges 1902*, Paris and New York: Maison Ad. Braun & Cie., 1903.

¹⁰ Linda Seidel, *Jan van Eyck's Arnolfini Portrait: Stories of an Icon*, Cambridge, New York, Oakleigh: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

organizers of *Les Primitifs flamands* at a point when the practice was not yet common.¹¹

Predictably, major disappointment resulted from works of art that could not be obtained. How would the uninitiated have reacted to the sturdy Madonna, then in the Brussels Somzée collection, presented at the Bruges exhibition as the only sure painting by its artist?¹² For some of those reviewing the show, like Friedländer (at the time assistant to Wilhelm Bode at Berlin's Gemäldegalerie), or Hugo von Tschudi (then director of the museum for nineteenth century and contemporary art, the Nationalgalerie, in Berlin), this one picture must have served as a synecdoche for a corpus of examples they, along with Bode and the Belgian art historian, Henri Hymans, had been instrumental in building during the preceding decade: Hugo von Tschudi had brought into play the large panels at Frankfurt's Städelsches Kunstinstitut, originally the wings of an altarpiece for a Cistercian monastery in Flémalle and thus associated with a 'Master of Flémalle', the same master as Wilhelm Bode's 'Maître de Mérode', Bode having connected the Somzée Madonna with the central section of a triptych then owned by the Comtesse de Mérode.¹³ While we can imagine the strictures about transporting the huge wings from Frankfurt, it remains puzzling why a small triptych from a private collection in nearby Brussels would not have been lent.¹⁴ In any event, here was an artistic identity in process of being constructed and perceived to be fundamental to any proper understanding of the stylistic genealogy of early fifteenth-century Northern art. That lineage, from teacher to pupil: Robert Campin, Jacques Daret, Rogier van der Weyden, in need of interpolation since, as consensus had it, Rogier was made visible in the exhibition more through the indelible stylistic and iconographic imprint left by his compositions on the work of others than by many original examples of his own.

As for Jan van Eyck, most of his paintings from within Belgium were to be seen in the exhibition. The improved viewing conditions provided by the simple move to the exhibition galleries of a work like the *Madonna with Canon Van der Paele* was a revelation acknowledged by Max Friedländer. At the same time, the failure

¹¹ Max J. Friedländer, 'Die Brügger Leihausstellung von 1902', *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, 26: 1903, 66-91; 147-75.

¹² Now called Follower of Robert Campin, *Virgin and Child before a Fire Screen*, c. 1440, Salting Bequest 1910, National Gallery of Art, London.

¹³ Hugo von Tschudi, 'Der Meister von Flémalle', *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, 19: 1, 1898, 8-34; 2, 89-116. Wilhelm Bode, 'La Renaissance au Musée de Berlin', *Gazette des Beaux Arts* (deuxième période), 35: 3, 1887, 204-220. Henri Hymans, 'Les Musées de Madrid. Le Musée du Prado. Les Écoles du Nord – Les Primitifs', *Gazette des Beaux Arts* (troisième période), 9: 5, 1893, 374-91.

¹⁴ The owner's apprehensions about lending must have been alleviated by the very success of the 1902 exhibition since the Mérode triptych did appear in an exhibition in Bruges in 1907. See Henri Hymans, 'L'exposition de la Toison d'Or à Bruges', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, ser. 3, Vol. 38: 1907, 199-217, 296-314.

on the part of the organizers to realize their goal of reconstructing as an entity Jan Van Eyck's *Ghent Altarpiece* was much lamented. At that point divided up into three different locations (Ghent, Brussels, Berlin), only the panels of Adam and Eve from the upper story were finally sent from Brussels. These two monumental nudes were judged to be unsurpassed in their rendering. However, installed in isolation in the entry gallery, the two panels seemed to underscore the absence of other sections of the altarpiece and the dilemma posed by works of art removed from their original context. For this display, painters spanning the fifteenth century through the first half of the sixteenth, from Broederlam to Bruegel, could be studied, like a comprehensive survey course in Early Netherlandish Painting. Petrus Christus, Dieric Bouts and Hugo van der Goes were present with telling examples like the *St. Eligius*, now in the Lehman Collection at the Metropolitan Museum, the main section of Bouts' *Holy Sacrament Altarpiece* from the church of St. Peter's in Louvain, and Hugo van der Goes' *Death of the Virgin* in the Groeningemuseum in Bruges. Overall, however, Henri Hymans suggested that 'the Bruges exhibition was, one could say, the glorification of Memling and of Gérard David'.¹⁵ Born in Seligenstadt on the Main, Memling had become a citizen of Bruges. Here one had a veritable retrospective of some thirty or so works by this prolific, late fifteenth-century artist: the *Shrine of St. Ursula*, and the diptych portrait of *Martin van Nieuwenhove*, the *St. John* triptych all from the Hospital of St. John in Bruges. About Gérard David, who also worked in Bruges, one critic says, 'Long forgotten, it is to Mr. Weale that Gérard David owes his glorious resurrection'.¹⁶ To be seen were his *Baptism* triptych from the Groeningemuseum, the Rouen *Madonna with Angels* (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen), and around twenty other examples by this painter, who straddled the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and made manifest the increasing artistic exchanges during this period between northern and southern Europe.

Several of the issues emerging from this exhibition would still be taken up by Erwin Panofsky in his *Early Netherlandish Painting*. One was the establishment of a plausible chronology of early panel painting, of works, that is, antecedent to the Ghent altarpiece. Given Broederlam's example, could one write a separate and distinct history for panel painting as opposed to one that sought its derivation in the source of manuscript illumination? Then there was the question of the brothers Van Eyck and the place of the picture brought from England (now in the Boymans Van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam), *The Three Mary's at the Tomb*, in trying to articulate their separate identities. Beyond the need to formulate an accurate lineage, from teacher to pupil, within the Netherlandish sphere, was the attempt to illuminate the vectors of influence determining the stylistic vocabularies of artistic counterparts

¹⁵ '...l'exposition de Bruges fut, peut-on dire, la glorification de Memling et de Gérard David'. Henri Hymans, *L'Exposition des Primitifs flamands à Bruges*, Paris: Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1902, 52.

¹⁶ 'Longtemps oublié, Gérard David doit à M. Weale sa résurrection glorieuse'. Henri Frantz, 'L'Exposition des Primitifs flamands', *Les Arts*, 1: 7, August 1902, 27-34.

such as Martin Schongauer, Stefan Lochner, Conrad Witz, Antonello da Messina in neighboring Germany, France, Switzerland as well as in Italy and Spain.

Future research into the care and conservation of northern painting of a kind that was so conspicuously to flower at the Brussels Laboratoire under the aegis of Paul Coremans was a stated goal of the 1902 exhibition, and one is struck by the attentiveness to details of condition on the part of those first writing about the show.¹⁷ Von Tschudi allows as to how the general under-evaluation of the Eyckian *Three Marias at the Tomb* resulted from scholars' lack of awareness of the rubbing and retouching of the picture's surface.¹⁸ Friedländer notes the heavy, yellowed varnish then covering the Memling portraits of Tommaso and Maria Portinari (Metropolitan Museum of Art) and the questionable condition of the dark background behind the male figure. By contrast, he recognized an unusually fine state of preservation of Hugo van der Goes' *Death of the Virgin* where others had routinely decried its condition.¹⁹ Paradoxically, such scrutiny must have been stimulated by the stunning standard of technical workmanship these paintings presented – as an early National Gallery catalogue account of the *Arnolfini* portrait had already underscored, recommending 'our artists to find out with what oils so much finish and glazings were performed and yet preserve their freshness for nearly four centuries', a reaction affirmed in contemporary reviews with one critic marvelling at 'the faultlessness of a technique which surpasses in finish and expression all that has been accomplished afterwards in the days of the renaissance and of the eighteenth century'.²⁰ This response to technique was likely made the more urgent by the experience of Impressionism and it parallels the search for more systematic and exacting ways to apply paint to canvas on the part of contemporary artists, as with Seurat, whose Pointilliste method found fertile ground in Belgium.

The 1960 catalogue of the Detroit Museum's *Flanders in the Fifteenth Century* conveys a sense of the Bruges 1902 exhibition as a watershed in the loss of innocence with respect to the connoisseurship of Northern painting.²¹ Even if the official catalogue of the 1902 show by W.H. James Weale kept to the decorum of using lenders' attributions throughout (Fig. 5), having about 400 pictures together in one

¹⁷ Centre National de Recherches 'Primitifs flamands', Laboratoire Central des Musées de Belgique, *Studies in Conservation*, I, no. 1, Octobre 1952.

¹⁸ Hugo von Tschudi, 'Die Ausstellung altniederländischer Gemälde im Burlington Fine Arts Club', *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, 16: 1893, 100-16.

¹⁹ Max J. Friedländer, 'Die Brügger Leihausstellung von 1902', 81.

²⁰ George Foggo, *National Gallery: A Catalogue of the Pictures*, London: H.G. Clarke & Co., 1845, 57, no. 186. Octave Uzanne, 'The Exhibition of Primitive art at Bruges', *The Connoisseur*, IV: September-December 1902, 172-80.

²¹ *Flanders in the Fifteenth Century: Art and Civilization*, The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan & The Centre National de Recherches Primitifs Flamands, Brussels; Antwerp: L. Blondé, 1960, 28, 'The casual attributions to Dürer or some other vaguely remembered name belong to the era before the great exhibition of 1902 in Bruges', says Edgar P. Richardson in his introduction.

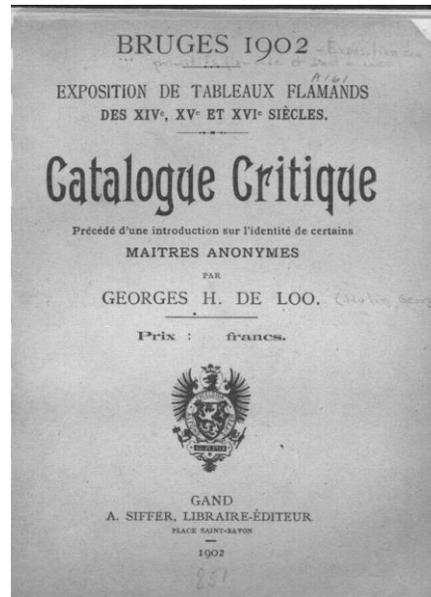
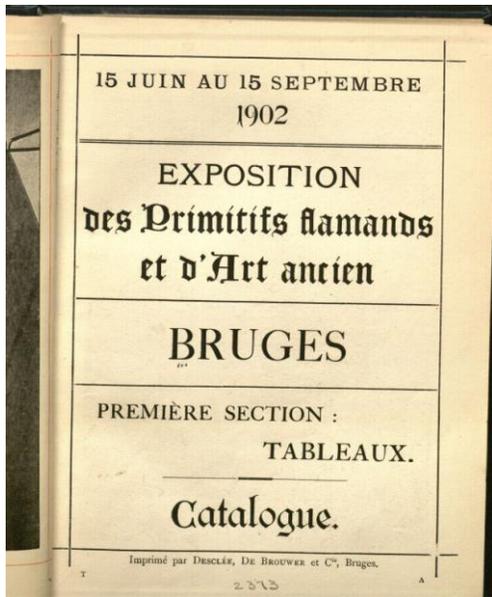


Figure 5 Title page, official catalogue, Bruges: Desclée, De Brouwer et Cie., 1902.

Figure 6 Title page, Georges Hulin de Loo, *Catalogue Critique*, Ghent: A. Siffer, 1902.

place provided an unprecedented opportunity for close comparative viewing.²² Indeed, the unofficial, *Catalogue Critique* (Fig. 6), by Georges Hulin de Loo shows a weighing and measuring of individual artists' styles and a sharpening of the tools of connoisseurship that would soon be brought to a level thus far operative only for Italian Renaissance painting.²³ At the Bruges exhibition, several pictures moved from anonymity to the clear light of identifiable style, as with the handsome female portrait now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., ascribed by Hulin de Loo to Rogier van der Weyden.²⁴ But it was also a time to strip away false identities for the purpose of future re-evaluation. Thus, Hulin de Loo deemed a *Consecration of St. Thomas of Canterbury*, 'Inconnu brugeois, fin du XV siècle', where, adhering to the inscription on the panel, the official catalogue called it Jan Van Eyck;²⁵ and the attribution of a small *Lamentation*, now in the Frick Collection, is changed from Antonello da Messina to 'unknown master, possibly School of Avignon, second half

²² W.H. James Weale, *Exposition des Primitifs flamands et d'Art ancien*, Première section: Tableaux, Bruges: Desclée, De Brouwer et Cie., 1902.

²³ George Hulin de Loo, *Bruges 1902 Exposition de Tableaux Flamands, Catalogue Critique*, Ghent: A. Siffer, 1902. In terms of Italy, the 1890s had seen Giovanni Morelli outlining his 'scientific' method of detecting the individual hand of an artist. Bernard Berenson's *Rudiments of Connoisseurship* first appeared in 1902 with drawings becoming the medium for his connoisseurship studies in his *Drawings of the Florentine Painters*, 1903.

²⁴ Hulin de Loo, *Catalogue Critique*, 1902, 25, no. 108. Weale, 1902, 44, no. 108 as 'inconnu'. At the time, this portrait was in collection of Duke of Anhalt in Woerlitz.

²⁵ Hulin de Loo, *Catalogue Critique*, 1902, 3, no. 8; Weale, 1902, 3-4, no. 8.

of fifteenth century'.²⁶ Indeed, one of the most impressive aspects of this chapter in the history of connoisseurship was a realistic appraisal of the paucity of documentary and biographical evidence about these northern artists and a remarkable tolerance for the ambiguity of the anonymous master.²⁷ 'Until some lucky coincidence leads us onto the right track, we will, according to good practice, need to be satisfied with a *Master of St. Aegedius*', von Tschudi had remarked about two panels shown at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, an acknowledged precursor to the Bruges show.²⁸ A prefatory section in Hulin de Loo's catalogue, 'De l'identité de certains maîtres anonymes', resists the impulse to bestow an artist's name even for certain picture groupings judged by him to be by the same hand. Equally impressive was a sense of shared scholarly mission: In Bode's evaluation of the Somzée Madonna, he credits Henri Hymans for bringing the Mérode altarpiece to his attention.²⁹ Friedländer expresses admiration for the attributions in Hulin de Loo's critical catalogue, uses von Tschudi's evaluation of the Eyckian *Three Mariés at the Tomb* as a point of departure and cites Scheibler and Bode as having first connected a *Deposition* in the Brussels Museum to the career of Petrus Christus.³⁰ On such connoisseurship questions, these scholars acknowledged and built upon each other's contributions, a modus operandi less than characteristic in parallel studies of Italian art at this time, which tended to foreground the personal prowess of a given critic in his determination of the style of an identifiable master.

As for more general response to the pictures in Bruges, some remarked on their sense of piety; one writer expressed awareness of the seeming contradiction in his juxtaposition of the two words 'réalisme mystique' to identify that coupling of meticulous representational style with promised levels of deeper significance.³¹ Many proclaimed the inadequacy of words, the impossibility of language to capture the essence of these paintings. Thus, we should invoke one scholar who did find words, even if, like the Arnolfini double portrait, he did not make it to Bruges. I am thinking of Alois Riegl, whose book-length article on the Dutch group portrait first

²⁶ Weale, 1902, 14-15, no. 32; Hulin de Loo, *Catalogue Critique*, 1902, 9, no. 32.

²⁷ Uzanne, *The Connoisseur*, Sept.-Dec. 1902, 180, refers to 'these mysterious craftsmen, about whom so little has been revealed to us', [and about whom] 'even the most extensive knowledge is but a topography of ignorance'.

²⁸ Hugo von Tschudi, 'Die Ausstellung altniederländischer Gemälde im Burlington Fine Arts Club', *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, 16: 1893, 100-16, 'Man wird, bis ein glücklicher Zufall auf die richtige Spur führt, sich wohl nach guten Brauch mit dem "Meister des hl. Aegidius" begnügen müssen'.

²⁹ Wilhelm Bode, 'La Renaissance au Musée de Berlin', Vol. 35, 3, 1 Mar. 1887, 218; Hugo von Tschudi, 'Der Meister von Flémalle', 1898, 8-34 speaks of Bode having already associated the Somzée Madonna with the Mérode Altarpiece.

³⁰ Max Friedländer, 'Die Brügger Leihausstellung von 1902', 68-9.

³¹ Octave Maus, 'Les Primitifs Flamands', *L'Art Moderne*, 28, 13 July, 1902, 233-235.

appeared in the same year as the Bruges exhibition.³² If it seems amiss to turn to this study of what is a predominantly seventeenth-century subject genre, it should be recalled that Riegl begins his considerations with a remarkable account of the figural group at the left side of the narratives of *The Legend of the Relics of St. John the Baptist* by the Dutch painter of the late fifteenth-century, Geertgen tot Sint Jans. Visitors to Bruges became acquainted with Geertgen through a small picture then in an English private collection, now in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, the endearing, *St. John in the Wilderness*, in which the saint sits before the viewer in isolated puzzlement. Although Riegl laments the difficulties in tracking down the source materials for his overall project 'in far-away Holland', Geertgen's huge wing of the *Burning of the Bones of St. John*, the work with which the Viennese scholar begins, was close at hand at the local, *Kunsthistorisches Museum* where he obviously gave it his sustained attention.³³

As Riegl meditates on this exemplary prototype for the group portrait, a genre he sees as predicated on the refinement individual portraiture had already attained at the hands of Northern European painters, he begins to posit the characteristics of Geertgen's *Burning of the Bones of St. John* in terms comparative with those of Italian art. Thus, on the rendition of space, [Italian art]:

strives mainly after the rendering of the spatial, cubic appearance of individual things (figures) ...: hence its development of linear perspective.... Northern art, beginning with the brothers Van Eyck, strives mainly at the rendering of what is between the figures, that is the free space....; hence the cultivation of aerial perspective...³⁴ [Or, on the behavior of figures in Italian art]: all parts of the individual body as following one willful impulse and in showing all figures of a story involved in one single action. [By contrast, in

³² Alois Riegl, 'Das holländische Gruppenporträt', *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, 23: nos.3-4, 1902, 71-278. First published as a book posthumously; *Das holländische Gruppenporträt*, Vienna: Österreichische Staatsdruckerei, 1931.

³³ These preliminary words by Riegl 'daß fast das gesamte, überaus reichhaltige Untersuchungsmaterial im fernen Holland aufzusuchen war..' were probably written before the Bruges exhibition had opened. But they illuminate the perceived sense of distances between countries within Europe that could still prevail, which renders the movement of pictures and people that did occur in the context of such an exhibition all the more remarkable.

³⁴ For the quotations from this section of Riegl's essay, I have used the translation by Stephen S. Kayser included in: W. Eugene Kleinbauer, *Modern Perspectives in Western Art History*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971, 124-38. Riegl, 1931, 23, 'Die erste strebt vornehmlich nach Wiedergabe der kubisch räumlichen Erscheinung der Einzeldinge (Figuren)...daher ihre Ausbildung der Linienperspektive,...Die nordische Kunst strebt von den Brüdern van Eyck an vornehmlich nach Wiedergabe des zwischen den Figuren Befindlichen, des freien Raumes,daher ihre Ausbildung der Luftperspektive,...

the north]: If one looks here for an action as an utterance of will in the Italian manner, the scene remains incomprehensible; what takes place instead is rather a mental intercommunication in which emotion and attention play a much greater role than the will, ..;³⁵ [and later in the passage]...In deliberately suppressing the impulse of will, early Dutch art did not arrive at unity through subordination, to be sure, but at a much deeper subjectivity of psychic expression.³⁶

Even though the comparative structure of such sections of Riegl's essay seems balanced and objective, a brilliant phenomenological analysis of two national styles, the Northern mode of vision does come across as more subtle, more resonant with meaning, more congenial to contemporary experience, in what turns out to be a celebration of Northern art. So too, in spite of the well-known encomiums artists such as Jan Van Eyck and Roger van der Weyden had received on Italian soil during their own lifetimes, this exhibition was envisaged as redressing the critical neglect of these same masters in posterity's hands.³⁷ In terms of art politics, and in line with Riegl's *paragone*, by showing off this panoply of northern artistic styles, *Les Primitifs Flamands* was mounting a campaign against that absent protagonist, Italian art.

By 1902, the 'primitifs' in *Les Primitifs flamands* did refer to the art of both northern and southern Europe: An 1860 entry to the journals of the Goncourt brothers, 'J'ai possédé dans ce regard toutes les vierges des primitifs allemands'.³⁸ Indeed, even what seems to be its earliest usage for the *livret* accompanying a special exhibition at the Musée Napoléon (rededicated Louvre), contains some northern artists. Staged in 1814 by Napoleon's minister of the arts, Dominique

³⁵ Riegl, 1931, 13, 'Sucht man darin eine Handlung als Willensakt nach italienischer Weise, so bleibt sie unverständlich; an ihrer Stelle ist vielmehr ein psychischer Wechselverkehr getreten, in dem Gefühl und Aufmerksamkeit eine wichtigere Rolle spielen als der Wille...'

³⁶ Riegl, 1931, 18, 'Indem sie den Willensausdruck bewußt zurückdrängte, gelangte sie allerdings zu keiner Einheit durch Subordination, aber zu einer weit tieferen Subjectivität des psychischen Ausdrucks.'

³⁷ Hymans, *L'Exposition des Primitifs Flamands*, 5, vividly presents the painters in the Bruges show in common protest against 'l'injuste méconnaissance de leurs droits à l'admiration de la postérité' ('the unjust disregard of their rights to posterity's admiration'). Two sequential reviews of the exhibition, unsigned but, attributed to Roger Fry (*The Atheneum*, 13 & 20: Sept. 1902, 355; 388), their attention to the show notwithstanding, suggest some of this animus against the art of the north; the writer remarks that Mr. Weale had rescued Gerard David 'from well-deserved oblivion'. Such biases are expressed directly in Fry's letter written from Bruges to Mary Berenson advising her not to bother making the trip with B.B. and singling out for special praise the one picture in the exhibition - the Provençale *Pietà* (see pages 8-9) - whose quality he explains in terms of the impact of Italian art on its sense of form. Denys Sutton, ed, *Letters of Roger Fry*, Vol. 1, New York: Random House, 1972, 191, no. 106.

³⁸ Robert Ricatte, ed, Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, *Journal: mémoires de la vie littéraire*, Vol. 1, 8 September 1860, Paris: Fasquelle: Flammarion, 1956, 339.

Vivant Denon, its 'tableaux des écoles primitives....', included 'Germany and several...other different schools'.³⁹ But it is important to realize that first and most copiously came the Italian examples and it was Italian painting to which this designation was initially deemed relevant. The idea of Italy as wellspring of Western culture infused the earliest public museums where Raphael was the treasured core of a 'visible history of art'.⁴⁰ The *écoles primitives* – trecento and quattrocento altarpieces such as Cimabue's *Enthroned Madonna and Child* and Fra Angelico's *Coronation of the Virgin* – works that preceded the canonical achievements of Raphael and the High Renaissance, became stepping-stones for this narrative sequence and fuelled a compelling notion of progress in charting a course for the visual arts. Part of the problem in matching up Northern art with this narrative model was the lack of as clear a boundary between an early and a high Renaissance style. In fact, the span of the 1902, *Exposition des Primitifs flamands* reached well into the sixteenth century, encompassing works by Quentin Metsys, Joachim Patinir, Bruegel, even if those artists attracted considerably less attention at the Bruges exhibition than its earlier, fifteenth-century masters. Moreover, prevailing artistic canons could work at cross-purposes with growing impulses to accommodate alternate stylistic modes, as the documentation for the founding of Munich's Pinakothek had already revealed. In honouring a classical and Mediterranean ideal of form, April 7th, birthday of the 'immortal Raphael', was chosen for its groundbreaking ceremony in 1826.⁴¹ But a decade later, the first published catalogue applauds the acquisition of the renowned Boisseree brothers' collection, whose early Netherlandish and fifteenth-century German pictures served to show – as Georg von Dillis, its first director, writes – 'that Germany too could take heart in having her *own* foundational school', one which, by implication, would later flourish, and whose historical development might posit an Albrecht Dürer in the culminating place of Raphael.⁴²

Without question, it was this orientation toward the 'primitives' that rendered the Bruges exhibition a compelling model for a cluster of shows around Europe that would shortly follow its lead and which, correspondingly, paid homage to a particular region or locality by focusing on the earliest phases of its production in the visual arts. Thus it was with Siena, 1904, the setting in its Palazzo Pubblico praised as a revelatory context for distinguishing those fourteenth- and fifteenth-

³⁹ The complete title: *Notice des Tableaux des Écoles Primitives de l'Italie, de L'Allemagne, et de plusieurs autres tableaux de différentes Écoles*, Paris: L.P. Dubray, 1814.

⁴⁰ To project 'eine sichtbare Geschichte der Kunst' was the goal of Christian von Mechel's plans of 1781 in reorganizing the picture collection of Vienna's Imperial Gallery, *Verzeichniß der Gemälde der kaiserlich königlichen Bilder Gallerie*, Wien: Rudolf Gräfer älter, 1783, xi.

⁴¹ Georg von Dillis, *Verzeichnis der Gemaelde in der königlichen Pinakothek zu München*, München: 1938, vii, 'des unsterblichen Raphael'. Founding documents also in appendix of Peter Böttger, *Die alte Pinakothek in München*, Munich: Prestel, 1972.

⁴² Georg von Dillis, *Verzeichnis der Gemaelde*, xx, 'dass auch Teutschland sich einer ursprünglichen Schule erfreuen dürfe,...

century pictures from their better known Florentine counterparts.⁴³ Frequently, early pictures from German speaking Europe had been treated in one stylistic continuum with Early Netherlandish painting but, at Düsseldorf, 1904, works by Stefan Lochner, Albert Altdorfer, Lucas Cranach were meant to convey that early German and Austrian painting could stand up to the level of quality found among the Italian and Netherlandish 'primitives'.⁴⁴ The grandest follow-up to Bruges and the one closest to home: Paris, 1904, *Les Primitifs français*, was motivated by the desire to single out the French components of Northern painting, along with the provincial variants of its style.⁴⁵ At long last, works such as those by Jean Malouel, Jean Fouquet, Engherrand Quarton, the Master of Moulin, could be rescued from previous indifference even on the part of France's own scholars.⁴⁶

It is not surprising that these implied and overt controversies about the relative characteristics and merits of regional or national styles to be observed in the arena of art and culture should reflect contemporary conditions in the broader realm of national politics. Unification movements marked nineteenth-century Europe, Bismarck consolidating a German empire and the united kingdom of Italian states being forged. Rising national tensions between France and Germany had their outlet in the Franco-Prussian war. National consciousness also accompanied the democratization of some of Europe's smaller states including Belgium. Accordingly, the Belgian art journal, *Les Arts anciens de Flandre*, founded under the aegis of king and country in 1904 to commemorate the 1902 exhibition (Fig. 7), proclaims the purpose of the show to have been a celebration of the national patrimony.⁴⁷ The

⁴³ *Mostra dell' Antica Arte Senese - Catalogo Generale Illustrato*, Siena: Sordomuti di L. Lazzeri, 1904; Corrado Ricci, *Il Palazzo Pubblico di Siena e la Mostra d' Antica Arte Senese*, Bergamo: Istituto Italiano d'Arti Grafiche, 1904. *Il Segreto della civiltà – La Mostra dell' Arte Senese del 1904 cento anni dopo*, a cura di Giuseppe Cantelli, Lucia Simona Pacchierotti, Beatrice Pulcinelli, Siena: Protagon Editori, 2005. In a variation on this pattern of 'local' celebrations, 1904 also saw an exhibition of Sienese masters at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in London. See Elisa Camporeale, 'L'Esposizione di arte senese del 1904 al Burlington Fine Arts Club di Londra', *Il Segreto della civiltà*, 2005, 485-517.

⁴⁴ Paul Clemen & Eduard Firmenich-Richartz, *Meisterwerke Westdeutscher Malerei auf der Kunsthistorischen Ausstellung zu Düsseldorf 1904*, München: F. Bruckmann A.-G., 1905.

⁴⁵ Henri Bouchot, *L'Exposition des Primitifs Français*, Palais du Louvre et Bibliothèque Nationale, Avril, 1904, Paris: Librairie Centrale des Beaux-arts, 1904-05. Georges Lafenestre, *Les Primitifs à Bruges et à Paris 1900-1902-1904*, Paris: Librairie de L'art ancien et modern, 1904.

⁴⁶ See George Lafenestre's preface to 1904 catalogue, especially XII-XIV. Hulin de Loo, *Catalogue Critique, 1902*, 9, also makes this point. *Primitifs français – Découvertes et redécouvertes*, Louvre 27 Février au 17 Mai 2004, par Dominique Thiébaud, Philippe Lorentz, François-René Martin, Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2004.

⁴⁷ The title page of first volume, published in 1905, states: 'Association Pour La Publication des Monuments de L'Art Flamand. Fondée en souvenir de L'Exposition des Primitifs Flamands et d'Art Ancien de 1902 à Bruges'. As in the case of the hundred-year commemorative catalogues of Siena and Paris, 1904, a more modest publication on the

introduction to Henri Hymans' small book on Bruges and Ypres of 1903 also rings this nationalistic chord:

Acquiring its autonomy only in recent times, within its designated confines, Belgium nonetheless constitutes a nation in the true sense of the word: one whose organization as well as customs and institutions – their idea going back centuries – are avowed in its splendid monuments, where a past of singular grandeur survives, whether considered from a political, military, artistic, commercial or industrial point of view.⁴⁸

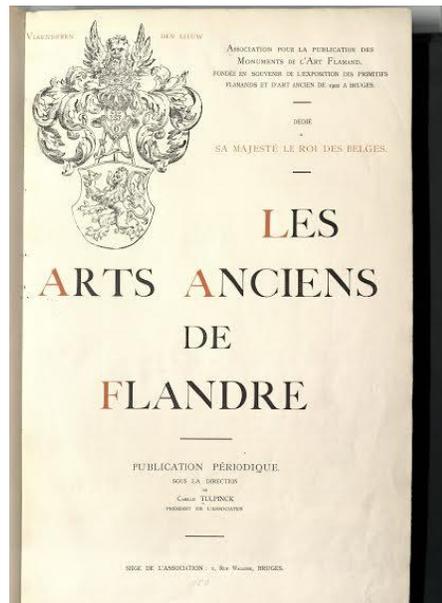


Figure 7 Title page, first issue of journal, *Les Arts Anciens de Flandre*, 1905.

Thus too, the 'Flamands' in the show's title had certain critics parsing the designation, one that Hulin de Loo justifies as having come to embrace the geographically broader territory before the split between Holland and Belgium. But

Bruges exhibition is: *Impact 1902 revisited: early Flemish and ancient art exhibition: Bruges, 15 June-15 September*, Vlaanderen: Openbaar Kunstbezit in Vlaanderen, 2002.

⁴⁸ Henri Hymans, *Bruges & Ypres*, Paris: H. Laurens, Éditeur, 1901, I, 'Entrée tardivement en possession de son autonomie, la Belgique n'en constitue pas moins, dans ses frontières idéales, une nation au sens vrai du mot, dont l'organisme, autant que les moeurs et les institutions, dont le principe remonte haut dans les siècles, s'accusent en des monuments fastueux, où survit un passé de singulière grandeur, qu'on l'envisage au point de vue politique, guerrier, artistique, commercial ou industriel'.

he also allows that 'École Néerlandaise' and not just 'École Flamande' could rightly have been employed.⁴⁹

It is interesting in this context to reflect on Haskell's account of the confessed impact, years later, of the 1902 exhibition on Huizinga's practice as a historian. Using the visual arts as tangible evidence, the Dutch historian saw in early Netherlandish painting and Van Eyck's realism, in particular, not the beginning of a development but a final flowering of the Gothic era – striking in its contrast to the above-mentioned conception of the 'primitives' as evidence of a nation or a region's innate creativity and potential for continuing and viable future production in the visual arts. Huizinga's positing of such a decline might be understood as the other side of the coin of a defensive attitude, not only about 'Flamand', but also about 'primitive' expressed in certain critical responses to the Bruges exhibition. During the course of the nineteenth century, the dictionary definition for 'primitive' had confined itself to the idea of an originary or primary condition or state in the purely historical sense (*primitive église*), the Nouveau Larousse Illustré adding – in the years spanning the Bruges show (1898-1904) – the term's direct application to art history: those artists who preceded the High Renaissance masters.⁵⁰ But, a new-found confidence in the quality of many of the works displayed at Bruges also occasionally provoked questions regarding the appropriateness of the title's 'primitifs' and indicates that more derogatory implications, as of an underdeveloped and thus inferior state, had by this time crept into its meaning, traits that would ultimately cause 'primitive' to be expunged from the vocabulary of the social sciences.⁵¹

Notwithstanding those particular reservations, the exhibition's title, *Les Primitifs flamands*, reveals the extent to which 'Primitifs' had achieved a comprehensible set of meanings and associations for the general public when applied to Renaissance art. Informed by the definitions in successive, French language dictionaries during the course of the nineteenth century, 'primitifs', as referring to those pre-High Renaissance pictures, had by 1902 come to be used also in English (*Italian Primitives in the Jarves Collection*), Italian (*I Primitivi Veneziani*) and, to a lesser extent, German. Moreover, its gradual shift from adjective to noun – *Les Écoles primitives/Les Primitifs flamands* – may be symptomatic of certain unstated conditions and connotations of the term that are also worth rehearsing. That it applied to painting as a medium was concretized in Bruges' two-part title – *Primitifs flamands* and *Art ancien* – with the concomitant apportioning of displayed works: paintings (*primitifs*) in one building, the decorative arts (*art ancien*) in another. The

⁴⁹ Hulin de Loo, *Catalogue Critique*, 1902, VIII; XII-XIII. 'le terme Flamand a pris une extension beaucoup plus vaste, s'appliquant à tout l'ensemble des Pay-Bas.'

⁵⁰ *Nouveau Larousse illustré*, Vol. 7, Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1898-1904, 31-2. 'Artistes, peintres ou sculpteurs qui ont précédé les maîtres de la grande époque'. I am indebted to a stimulating conversation with the late Nicole Loraux who first suggested tracking the lexical history of this term, especially in its rich, French language, accretions.

⁵¹ Georges Lafenestre, *Les Primitifs à Bruges et à Paris*, 1904, 7-8.

prevalent Italian, fourteenth- and fifteenth-century examples had mainly been devotional works, often gold-ground paintings, tempera on panel, nearly always fragments of larger structures, that is to say, portable objects which, to join the preserve of the 'primitive', were removed from their original contexts to new, artificial settings. Let us recall in this regard that the special exhibition at the Musée Napoléon, whose livret had first used the term *les écoles primitives*, was comprised of works brought back by Napoleon from conquered territories.⁵² Moreover, it was not just Napoleon but also private citizens, especially the English and also the French (i.e. William Young Ottley; François Caumont), who started accumulating these early schools of painting in the late-eighteenth century during voyages or residencies abroad. At the turn of the twentieth century, along with the renewed appreciation of Early Netherlandish painting that made the Bruges exhibition both possible and welcome, those conditions of appropriation and deracination of art works came under the added pressure of a burgeoning market, with its growing network of dealers and experts feeding the appetites of new collectors, not only in Europe but increasingly in the United States.⁵³ Nothing conveys the latter situation more clearly than to cite three important early Netherlandish pictures that had made their way into American collections more than a decade before the exhibition in Bruges: the small *Lamentation* by Petrus Christus, purchased by Henry Marquand in 1889, the same year as Henry Lee Higginson acquired Rogier van der Weyden's *St. Luke Painting the Virgin*, Jan van Eyck's tiny *St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata* entering the Philadelphia collection of John G. Johnson in 1893.⁵⁴ Granted American public spiritedness and, apart from the obvious need to increase the holdings of those recently founded American museums, the perception of a special educational value for these 'primitives' seems quickly to have destined them in their new owners' minds for the public domain, with Marquand and Higginson donating those

⁵²See pp. 11-12 and note 39.

⁵³In this regard, an illuminating letter of 13 May 1901 from Adolfo Venturi asks Allan Marquand at Princeton to send him American art news for his journal, *L'Arte*, 'As now America absorbs the greater part of the art works of the European markets,..'. Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, 'Princeton: The Beginnings Under Marquand' in Craig Hugh Smyth & Peter M. Lukehart, eds, *The Early Years of Art History in the United States*, Princeton: Department of Art and Archaeology, 1993, 11. Given the exposure to the northern 'primitives' that the Bruges exhibition afforded, their resultant popularity and marketability would, not surprisingly, also at times beget forgeries, a situation identified by Maryan W. Ainsworth in: 'Caveat Emptor: An Early twentieth-century workshop for Flemish Primitives', *Apollo*, Vol. 153, June 2001, 20-29, with Max Friedländer repeatedly cautioning against this danger even as he lent his expertise to various private collectors and dealers, not only in Europe but also New York, during the 1910s and 1920s.

⁵⁴For the entry of Early Netherlandish paintings into American collections, see Edgar P. Richardson, 'Flemish Primitives in American Collections', *Flanders in the Fifteenth Century*, 27-30; and Everett Fahy, 'How the Pictures got here', *From Van Eyck to Bruegel*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998, 62-75.

pictures almost immediately to the Metropolitan and Boston Museums, and Johnson's painting later bequeathed to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Even Europe's more established art institutions, however rich their collections, were sometimes deemed lacking in what, after Bruges, came to be considered key artists from this period. Accordingly, Georges Lafenestre applauds the Louvre's purchase from a private collection in Montpellier in 1902 of its first painting by Geertgen, *The Raising of the Lazarus*.⁵⁵ Furthermore, in contemporary accounts, recurring anxieties about works of art being sold off and changing hands, especially in the aftermath of such an exhibition, were kept at bay and satisfaction expressed when such pictures found the stable and accessible new home of a public institution, as had occurred when the Musée Royal in Brussels purchased Roger van der Weyden's *Pietà* in 1899 at the Genoese Pallavicini-Grimaldi sale.⁵⁶

Comfort about such stability was not what Joris-Karl Huysmans experienced. When, shortly after his visit to the Bruges exhibition with the cleric, Abbé Mugnier, Huysmans published *Trois Primitifs*, he was clearly responding to the piety expressed in those northern paintings and the sense of Christian faith that seemed to shape their imagery.⁵⁷ Especially as the preceding years had him immersing himself in church history and liturgy, turning to the remnants of Catholic life in France and even exploring monastic retreat. To judge by the second essay in *Trois Primitifs*, which contrasts a full-length nursing Madonna by the Master of Flémalle to an Italian, female allegorical portrait, Huysmans was all the more taken aback by the modern displacement such a devotional work could undergo, this Madonna and Child having landed in a prospering, post-industrial, urban context where, divorced from other segments of its original altarpiece structure and from the cult values and practices that gave the panel its meaning, it now hung in Frankfurt's Städelsches Institut.

⁵⁵ Georges Lafenestre, 'Les Peintres hollandais au Musée du Louvre 1900', *Les Primitifs à Bruges et à Paris*, 1904, 231. Though this picture was not on display in Bruges, its acquisition by the Louvre in 1902 was undoubtedly stimulated by the show. Indeed, Geertgen's *St. John in the Wilderness*, lent to the Bruges exhibition by the London collector, Percy Macquoid, Esq., entered Berlin's Gemäldegalerie later that same year. Suzanne Laemers, 'De lieveling van Max Friedländer: *Johannes de Doper in de wildernis* door Geertgen tot Sint Jans', in: Charles Dumas, Jan Kosten, Eric Jan Sluijter, Nicolette C. Sluijter, eds, *Liber Amicorum Marijke de Kinkelder*, The Hague, 2013, 243-50, for Friedländer's role in the Berlin acquisition.

⁵⁶ Georges Lafenestre, 'Les Vieux Maîtres à Bruges, 1902', *Les Primitifs à Bruges et à Paris*, 1904, 113.

⁵⁷ *Journal de L'Abbé Mugnier* (1879-1939), Paris: Mercure de France, 1985, 134, entry of 15 September 1902, refers to having just gone with Huysmans to the Bruges exhibition. J.-K. Huysmans, 'Le Maître de Flémalle et la Florentine du Musée de Francfort-sur-le-Mein', *Trois Primitifs*, Paris: A. Messein, 1905, 57-106. Presumably the title of this book by Huysmans derives from that of the exhibition; a note on page 92 of the aforementioned essay refers to Flémalle's seated *Madonna and Child* (then in the Somzée collection) as having been seen in the Bruges exhibition.

However impressed by the exhibition as, in turn, Johan Huizinga had been, his impulses as a historian took him beyond the confines of any such display. In his effort to illuminate a passage in Franco-Flemish history, he felt impelled to sift through a general and variegated visual culture. In this respect, not necessarily in its interpretive results, it is in harmony with Linda Seidel's study of the *Arnolfini Portrait*, which evaluates Van Eyck's small panel as embedded in the material culture of its time wherein a pendant, a document seal, a manuscript, mirror, or tapestry, and Van Eyck's portrait painting participate on equal footing. At the same time, more in line with those two scholars who reviewed the exhibition, Max Friedländer and Hugo von Tschudi, an optimistic view of the generative capacity of the early schools is, at least, implicit in her involvement in Northern painting and with it, the call for a concomitantly vital critical engagement on her – and their – parts. Memoirs written by Friedländer in Amsterdam, where he had fled Nazi Germany, shed light on this issue. He distinguishes between the radical nature of those earliest twentieth century studies of German painting and 'more recent' predilections for German art based on 'biased, nationalistic boasting'.⁵⁸ To drive home his point, in an interesting twist, he reports that, in Berlin at least, it had been Jewish collectors and researchers who began early on to occupy themselves with German and northern art in general, while 'art-loving Aryans' [his words] kept to the Italian Renaissance.⁵⁹ That is to say: the freedom, even risk, in making what was clearly perceived to be an anti-canonical choice on the part of those Berlin collectors and researchers, was deemed less likely to occur from within society's mainstream. Hewing to Max Friedländer's sociology, Hugo von Tschudi, as the name itself conveys, makes an improbable comrade here, but he was a kindred spirit. In 1902, apart from his review of the Bruges exhibition, he published an essay on Manet (Fig.

⁵⁸Max J. Friedländer, 'Lippman', Rudolf M. Heilbrunn, ed, *Erinnerungen und Aufzeichnungen*, Mainz and Berlin: Florian Kupferberg, 1967, 67-68, 'Dieser Umstand steht in Widerspruch gegen die neuerdings aufgekommene tendenziöse nationalistische Prahlerei.' *Reminiscences and Reflections*, trans. Ruth S. Magurn, Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society LTD, 1969, 94-96.

⁵⁹Max J. Friedländer, Rudolf M. Heilbrunn, ed, 1967, 67-68, 'Ich mache auf den Umstand aufmerksam, daß es wenigstens in Berlin Juden waren, die sich mit deutscher Kunst zu beschäftigen begannen als Forscher und Sammler....während die kunstfreundlichen 'Arier' vorwiegend der italienischen Renaissance ihre Teilnahme zuwandten....' Here, for rhetorical effect, Friedländer limits this observation to German painting but I take the liberty of extending his comment to include Early Netherlandish art. As mentioned earlier, the two areas were usually linked in terms of the history of taste. Friedländer's own scholarly practice embraced the two fields and in this very remembrance of the former head of the Kupferstichkabinett, Friedländer refers to Lippmann as having formed a second collection during his Berlin years: 'acquiring Early Netherlandish and Early German paintings at a time when these things were not yet highly appreciated' (...hat er in Berlin wiederum eine Sammlung angelegt, altniederländische und altdeutsche Gemälde erworben zu einer Zeit, in der diese Dinge noch nicht hoch geschätzt wurden').

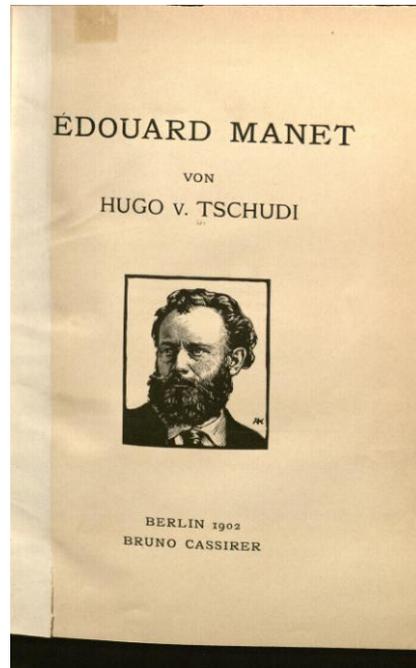


Figure 8 Title page, Hugo von Tschudi, *Édouard Manet*, Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1902.

8). Moreover, the ‘deeper subjectivity of psychic expression’ that Alois Riegl had seen in the Northern pictorial world must have been what drew von Tschudi to the works of Vincent van Gogh, whom he championed along with his earlier studies on the Master of Flémalle.⁶⁰ Indeed, during the years spanning the Bruges exhibition, von Tschudi’s legendary directorship of the Nationalgalerie in Berlin was marked by public conflicts that ensued from his continuing commitment to acquire ‘foreign’, especially French Impressionist and post-Impressionist, paintings for an institution dedicated to the future of German art, conflicts that eventually cost him his position.⁶¹ No better way, it would seem, to pay homage to Seidel’s academic career,

⁶⁰ Barbara Paul, *Hugo von Tschudi und die moderne französische Kunst im deutschen Kaiserreich*, Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1993, 206, reports that between April 1903 and November 1907, von Tschudi bought no fewer than 8 paintings and 9 drawings by Van Gogh, both for himself and for the Nationalgalerie.

⁶¹Peter Paret, ‘The Tschudi Affair’, *Journal of Modern History*, 53, 4, 1981, 589-618. Johann Georg Prinz von Hohenzollern and Peter-Klaus Schuster, eds, *Manet bis Van Gogh: Hugo von Tschudi und der Kampf um die Moderne*, Munich and New York: Prestel, 1996. In terms of my discussion of Friedländer’s comments about Jewish scholars and collectors in Berlin being first to turn their attention to the northern ‘primitives’, see a fascinating parallel in the article in this volume: Stefan Pucks, ‘Von Manet zu Matisse – Die Sammler der französischen Moderne in Berlin um 1900’, 386-90, for an account of the prominent community of Jewish bankers and industrialists in Berlin who were purchasing French Impressionist and Post-Impressionist pictures for their own collections as well as supporting von Tschudi’s efforts in acquiring them for the Nationalgalerie.

Andrée Hayum

The 1902 exhibition, *Les Primitifs flamands*: scholarly
fallout and art historical reflections

to her own work, as well as that of her many devoted students than to invoke the careers of these modern museum men, who revealed the study of early Netherlandish painting to be at criticism's cutting-edge.

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