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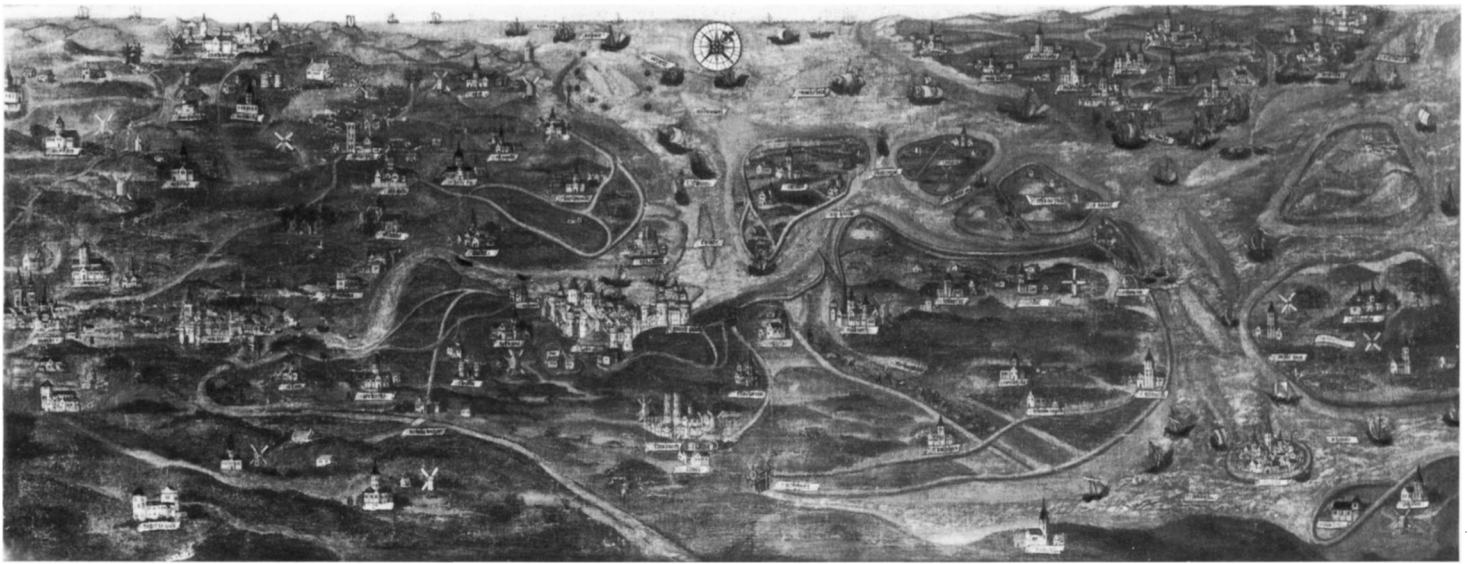
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# The landscape as legal document: Jan de Hervy's 'View of the Zwin'\*



22. *View of the Zwin*, by Jan de Hervy. Oil and tempera, 43.5 by 108.5 cm. (Stedelijk Musea, Arentshuis, Bruges).

MUCH of the current debate about the origin and function of landscape painting has focused on the conceptual and visual similarities between landscapes and maps.<sup>1</sup> This article concerns a painting which was created when the conventions of landscape and cartography were still being formed, and which has been assigned to both categories. It introduces several hitherto unpublished documents that reveal the name of the artist responsible for the painting and the specific context in which it was commissioned. From this, it is possible to draw conclusions about the painting's practical and symbolic functions, as well as its form.

The painting belongs to the municipal collections of Bruges, and is today exhibited in the Arentshuis (Fig.22). It is in a problematic state of preservation, having been cut down on the left side and repainted over much of the surface. Painted in oil and tempera on canvas, it depicts the landscape to the north and east of Bruges with special emphasis on the series of canals, locks, windmills and waterways of the area.<sup>2</sup> Landmarks and cities are identified by *tituli* in gothic script. The precise rendering of local monuments has led Dirk de Vos to draw attention to the painting's importance as a document of the architectural

heritage of Flanders.<sup>3</sup>

The area represented begins with Bruges at the left (Fig.23), and extends to Zeeland on the right. Most of the right half shows the western branches of the river Scheldt, the Honte and the Zwin, and their islands, mudflats and villages. Important landmarks include the cities of Damme, Blankenberge, Sluis, Aardenburgh (Fig.26), and the islands of Biervliet, Cadzand, and Walcheren (with the city of Middelburg). Coincidentally, most of the area pictured here also appears in the remaining fragment of Pieter Pourbus's map of the Franc of Bruges, commissioned in 1561.<sup>4</sup>

The date 1561 is inscribed more-or-less in the centre of the painting (Fig.24), but any connexion this might suggest with Pourbus is undermined by de Vos's demonstration that the inscription is a later addition. The painting in fact depicts a canal-building project begun in 1501 by the city of Bruges to combat the silting of the Zwin, which was making it difficult for ocean-going vessels to reach the city's ports. Other schemes to improve this access had been undertaken in the late fifteenth century, without success.<sup>5</sup> In 1500, the city resolved to build another canal, the object of which was to link the Zwin to the Honte and,

\*The archival research for this essay was accomplished with the support of the Council for the International Exchange of Scholars, for which I am very grateful. A version was read at the symposium, 'In Search of the Netherlandish Tradition: Patterns of Continuity and Exchange', in October 1989. I would like to thank Rogier van Schoute, Dirk de Vos, Max Martens and Noel Geenaerts for their assistance.

<sup>1</sup>The debate has largely centred around S. ALPERS: *The Art of Describing. Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*, Chicago [1983]. For a recent study emphasising sixteenth-century developments, see W. GIBSON: 'Mirror of the Earth'. *The World Landscape in Sixteenth-Century Flemish Painting*, Princeton [1989], especially pp.48-59.

<sup>2</sup>D. DE VOS: *Brugge Musées Communales. Catalogue des Tableaux: 15<sup>e</sup> et 16<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Bruges [1979], no.0.1382, pp.33-34, with earlier bibliography. See also, D. WOLFFHAL: *The Beginnings of Netherlandish Canvas Painting: 1400-1530*, Cambridge [1989], no.23, p.51 and GIBSON, *op.cit.* at note 1 above, p.52. The technique

is variously described as oil or as tempera, although it seems to be a combination of these two media.

<sup>3</sup>DE VOS, *loc.cit.* at note 2 above. See also W.P. DE ZUTTER: 'De voormalige St.-Nicolaaskerk van Hannekenswerf (Zeeland)', *Gentse Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis*, XXIII [1973-75], pp.49-60.

<sup>4</sup>For the 1561 map by Pieter Pourbus, see P. HUVENNE: *Pierre Pourbus, Peintre brugeois 1524-1584*, exh.cat., Bruges [1984], 41. When the map was acquired at the Somzée sale in Brussels in 1904, it was attributed to Pourbus; see DE VOS, *loc.cit.* at note 2 above.

<sup>5</sup>On the history of Bruges's attempts to forestall the silting of the Zwin, see L. GILLIODTS-VAN SEVEREN: *Bruges Port de Mer. Étude historique sur l'état de cette question*, Bruges [1895] and, more recently, M. RYCKAERT and A. VAN DE WALLE: 'De Strijd voor het behoud van het Zwin', in V. VERMEERSCH *et.al.*: *Brugge en de Zee, van Bryggia tot Zeebrugge*, Antwerp [1982].

it was hoped, to improve the depth and tides of the Zwin. This project was called simply, the New Canal ('*nieuwe bedelf*' or '*ghedelf*'), and was planned for a spot south of Oostburg, across St Catharine's polder from Coksyde to Passeguele, where the ebb of the tide lasted two hours longer than it did at Sluis. It was thought that by connecting the main passage of the Zwin to this portion of the Scheldt, the ebb of the tide at the mouth of the Zwin could be similarly lengthened and the access of deep-water vessels improved. Work on the canal was completed by 1505.<sup>6</sup> Details in the Arentshuis painting point specifically to this enterprise: near the centre of the image a ditch with workmen busily digging and carting away dirt is shown; a label identifies the object of their labour as the '*nieuwe ghedelf*' (Fig.27).

As part of the process of planning this public works project, the city of Bruges commissioned a number of sketches, drawings, and paintings of the affected area. One of the commissions was recorded in the city accounts for the year 1501-02: among the diverse expenditures for that year are entries concerning a painting – a '*pourtrature*' – of the new canal. One entry records a payment of three pounds ten shillings to the painter Jan de Hervy for 'rendering in portraiture in oil colours the new canal and other things'.<sup>7</sup> A second entry records the payment of a smaller sum (a tip?) to Jan de Hervy's assistants, and for 'enlarging the writing on the canal'.<sup>8</sup> A third records the cost of linen, 'for the painting of the Zwin'.<sup>9</sup> In technique, subject matter, and even the presence of inscriptions, the Arentshuis image answers to the description of the painting for which Jan de Hervy and his assistants were paid. The payment should serve as a *terminus ante quem*, the painting probably being commissioned when the project was conceived in 1500. Indeed, the inscribed date may originally have read 1501. Jan de Hervy's connexion with this project is recorded again in May 1509, when he made a site inspection of the canal in the company of city officials.<sup>10</sup>

Thus this image is a documented product of the workshop

of Jan de Hervy of Bruges, whose career has hitherto been known only from documents.<sup>11</sup> Hervy worked in Bruges from his entry into the guild in 1472 until his death in 1509; he served as an official of the guild in the 1490s and early 1500s.<sup>12</sup> In 1494, he contributed to the decoration of the Stadhuis.<sup>13</sup> He also worked for the court, being paid for work on the tomb of Mary of Burgundy in the choir of Notre Dame of Bruges in 1498 and 1502.<sup>14</sup> The documents suggest that Hervy was one of the more prominent of the many painters working in the city in this period. He joins a group of other distinguished local painters who made cartographic images, including Jan Provost,<sup>15</sup> Lancelot Blondeel and Pieter Pourbus.

The identification of this landscape as by Jan de Hervy allows certain inferences about his career to be made. For example, Hervy was probably a panel painter by trade and not a '*cleederscriver*', or painter on cloth, as the latter were forbidden by statute from painting in oils.<sup>16</sup> A reconstruction of his *œuvre* on the basis of this painting is problematic, however: the image is painted on canvas and not panel, which complicates stylistic comparison; and, as noted, its state of preservation is far from perfect.

The context in which Hervy received this commission reveals that the painting was meant to serve as an explanatory document in legal proceedings. Such images were used in hearings attended by surveyors, pilots, landowners, and public officials to determine the feasibility of a project.<sup>17</sup> Before giving his approval to the new canal in April 1501, Philip the Fair called together a group to study the 'inquiries, information, rewritings, depositions, drawings, and portraits' touching on the project.<sup>18</sup> Other records speak of sketches (*bewerpen*) and drawings (*patroonen*) made of the sites, in some cases specifying whether they were on paper or parchment.<sup>19</sup>

Historians of cartography are well aware of the use of regional depictions in legal proceedings; some of the earliest known maps were created either to serve as aids to negotiation or to record compromises regarding such matters

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.59; GILLIODTS-VAN SEVEREN, *op.cit.* at note 5 above, pp.51-86.

<sup>7</sup> Bruges, Stadsarchief, Stadrekening, 1501-1502, fol.80v: '*Item Jan dervy voor tscilderen ende in pourtrature te stellene van holye vaerwe tniuwe bedelf, ende ooc andere zaken iii L x S groten*'.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, fol.80v: '*Item de ghezellen van Jan dervy ende voor tgrosseren vanden gheschreft vanden bedelve iii S ii D groten*'. According to the *Middelnederlandsch woordenboek* (The Hague [1889], Vol.II, p.2193), the verb *grosseren* means to enlarge the writing of something, or by extension, to make a fair copy of something. It would seem from this that the original inscriptions on the painting were unsatisfactory and were redone.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, fol.80v: '*Item, voor XI ellen linwaerd omme de scilderye vanden zwene iii S viii d groten*'.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, Stadrekening, 1508-1509, fol.58: '*Meester Jacop vander Lende raed, Jacop snaggaert pencionaris, Meesters cornelis de banelare, ende antheunis pieters wercheden, ii L v S groten Ter causen van dat zij by laste vander Wet den XVen dach vander voornoemde maent [i.e., Meye] gheyst zyn mids gaders Jan dervy scildre, ter biervliet ter Nense ende daeromtrent op den stroom vanden hontle Omme inspectie te nemene vanden scorren ende watre, daerof questie ende proces es, tusschen mer Jeronimus lauwerin, ende dese stede, waromme zy ende elc sonderlinghe burgheweist hebben vier daghen, Te wetene meester Jacop vander leende voor zyn verterde kosten vanden zelven vier daghen viii S iiiii D groten mids dat hy niet meer hebben en twilde, de voornoemde snaggaert te iiiii S ii D sdaechs, ende de selve banelart ende pieters elc te ii S vi D groten sdaechs, Dus hier de voorseide ii L v S groten*'; and *ibid.*, fol.81-81v: '*Jan dervy scildre xxxiii S groten hem byder wet gheordonneert thebbene mids dat hij ten verzoucke vander zelver wet met eeneghe ghedeputeerde gheyst es ter passeghuele te biervliet ende daer omtrent der onte, omme in pourtraturen te stellene de scorren ende landen commende naer tniuwe ghedelf enz. Dus hier de voorseide xxxiii S groten*'.

<sup>11</sup> For previous attempts to identify the author of this painting, see DE VOS, *loc.cit.* at note 2 above, and J. MERTENS: 'Een Zestiende-eeuwse kaart van het Oostvrije bewaard op het Rijksarchief te Brugge', *Tijdschrift van de Belgische Vereniging voor*

*Aardrijkskundige Studies* [1982], pp.228-29.

<sup>12</sup> For Jan de Hervy see C. VAN DEN HAUTE: *La Corporation des Peintres de Bruges*, Bruges [1913], pp.17, 199b and *passim*. Hervy's death date is not recorded in the guild documents published by van den Haute, but his widow is mentioned in 1513: see J. WILSON: 'The participation of painters in the Bruges 'pand' market', *THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE*, CXXV [1983], pp.476-79. The present author is preparing a study of Hervy's career based on documentary research.

<sup>13</sup> A. JANSSENS DE BISTHOVEN: 'Het beeldhouwwerk van het Brugsche Stadhuis', *Gentsche Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis*, X [1944], Documents XLIX and L.

<sup>14</sup> For the tomb of Mary of Burgundy, see A. ROBERTS: 'The Chronology and Political Significance of the Tomb of Mary of Burgundy', *Art Bulletin*, LXXI [1989], pp.376-400.

<sup>15</sup> The city accounts of Bruges for 1513-14 mention payment to Jan Provost for 'acht quarten inhoudende den leghere van den Zwene, den ghestanden van den Zwartten Gate, Passegheule en de nieuwen bedelve, mits den polders, prochien ende steden daer omtrent . . .'. See MERTENS, *loc.cit.* at note 11 above, p.229.

<sup>16</sup> WOLFFTHAL, *op.cit.* in note 2 above, pp.6-8.

<sup>17</sup> The records of these hearings, along with payment records for various aspects of the project, are preserved at the Stadsarchief of Bruges, no.256, 'Canal de Damme à Sluis, 1500-75'. There are also numerous indications of payments for this project in the city accounts. Much of this material has been published by GILLIODTS-VAN SEVEREN, *op.cit.* at note 5 above, pp.43-89.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.56-57: '*ces choses considerées et veues en nostre conseil pour ce notablement assemble, les enquestes, informations, rescriptures, depositions, patrons et pourtraictures baillans entendement et esclarchissement de ceste dicte matiere . . .*'.

<sup>19</sup> For example, a payment was recorded in the city accounts for 1499 to 'Cornelis Fieric scildre, ter causen van eenen patroon by hem ghemaect nopende den ghedelve l'Oostburch'; another payment was recorded in 1500 as 'Betaelt eenen scildre voor twee bewerpen by hem ghemaect van den ghedelve van den Zwene, deene in pappiere, dandre in parchemine' (*ibid.*, p.54).



23. Detail of Fig. 22.



24. Detail of Fig. 22.

of property as water rights, boundary disputes, or fishing rights.<sup>20</sup> These images take many forms: some are diagrams in which the names of places are arranged in analogy to their physical relationships, as in a map of Zeeland dated 1307, now in Lille.<sup>21</sup> A more pictorial example executed in 1468 during a dispute over tolls on the Scheldt and preserved in the State Archive of Brussels, depicts the

western branches of the river recording its course and the buildings along its shores.<sup>22</sup> Several surviving images used in legal proceedings were executed in oils on canvas, such as the *View of Overschie* (near Rotterdam).<sup>23</sup> Perhaps it was common to use this medium for such images.

Its function accounts for both the technical and visual character of Jan de Hervy's image. Canvas was probably preferred because of its relative cheapness, portability, and the speed of execution it allowed. By the standards of many other canvas paintings, the three and a half pounds Hervy received was a generous payment; Wolfthal reports valuations of three, six and eight shillings for canvas paintings in Brussels in 1505.<sup>24</sup> Its cost may reflect that it was outside Hervy's usual practice: he had to do more than repeat a composition from his workshop's stock. If his architectural renderings are truly accurate, he must have done research in the field, traversing the region to record individual locales.<sup>25</sup> By contrast, when he was paid in 1509 for depicting Biervliet and Passegeule, he received only twenty-four shillings.<sup>26</sup>

The Arentshuis painting presents a general view of the area affected by the proposed canal; during the hearings, it would have been supplemented by other, more detailed images, usually drawings, some done by specialists. The city accounts for the same year (1501-02) record the payment of three pounds to the carpenter Anthonis Pieters for drawing and depicting the depths and shallows of the Zwin near Sluis and the surrounding area, including the '*nieuwe bedelf*'. This sum included payment for taking soundings of the channels and estimating the wood necessary for the sluice at Coksyde, and the drawings were therefore most probably rather technical.<sup>27</sup>

Hervy's task was to compose a synthetic picture of an entire region in terms that would be legible to specialists (e.g., hydraulic engineers and pilots) and laymen alike. To do so, he combined the traditions of panel painters with other late medieval conventions. If Hervy eschewed the perspectival devices and mountainous horizons found in the landscapes of such Bruges artists as Hans Memling and Gerard David, he must have studied the town views which often appear in panel paintings and manuscripts of the period. For example, the anonymous master of the Legend of St Lucy frequently included accurate views of Bruges in his paintings; his Triptych of the Lamentation in Minneapolis was probably painted shortly before the Arentshuis landscape (Fig. 25),<sup>28</sup> and its cityscape is comparable to the depictions of Sluis and Aardenburg, which are the best-preserved city views in the Arentshuis painting

<sup>20</sup>The cartographic literature on this topic is quite large. See P.D.A. HARVEY: *The History of Topographic Maps*, London [1980], pp.84-98; K. ZANDVLIET: *De Groote Waereld in't Klein Geschildert*, Alphen aan den Rijn [1985], p.8; P.D.A. HARVEY: 'Local and Regional Cartography in Medieval Europe', in J.B. HARLEY and D. WOODWARD: *A History of Cartography, Volume 1. Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient and Medieval Europe*, Chicago and London [1987], pp.489-93; A.H. HUSSEN: *Jurisprudentie en Kartografie*, Brussels [1974].

<sup>21</sup>HARVEY, *op.cit.* at note 20 above [1987], Fig.20.6, pp.470-71.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, Fig.20.24, p.488; M.K.E. GOTTSCHALK and W.S. UNGER: 'De oudste kaarten der waterwegen tussen Brabant, Vlaanderen en Zeeland', *Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*, 67 [1950], pp.146-64.

<sup>23</sup>This painting, in the Algemeen Rijksarchief in the Hague, has been dated c.1500-12. See ZANDVLIET, *op.cit.* at note 20 above, Fig.2, p.9 and M. DONKERSLOOT-DE VRIJ: *Topografische Kaarten van Nederland voor 1750*, Groningen [1981], p.223.

<sup>24</sup>WOLFTHAL, *op.cit.* at note 2 above, p.21.

<sup>25</sup>The publisher of Jacopo de'Barbari's woodcut panorama of Venice claimed that the labour of producing an exact representation was incredible and took

the artist three years; see J. SCHULZ: 'Jacopo de' Barbari's View of Venice: Map Making, City Views, and Moralized Geography before the year 1500', *Art Bulletin*, LVIII [1978], p.428.

<sup>26</sup>See note 10 above.

<sup>27</sup>'Antheunis Pieters themmerman de somme van iii lb grot. de welke hem by myn heeren vander wet toegeheylt waren ter causen ende over zekere dachvaerden by hem ghedaen, in dat hij alle de conduyten diepten ende ondiepten van den Zwene ter Sluis metten landen daer ontrent liggende midsgaders ooc inieuwe bedelf heeft doen bewerpen ende stellen in scilderye: hier inne begrepen den aerbeyt by hem ghedaen int stellen in gheschryfte de steke van den houtte vander sluse die gheleyt zal worden inden Cocxydschen dyc omme tzuueren van den watre van den voorseiden bedelve...'; GILLIODTS-VAN SEVEREN, *op.cit.* at note 5 above, pp.64-65.

<sup>28</sup>For this triptych, see M.J. FRIEDLÄNDER: *Early Netherlandish Painting*, New York and Leiden [1972], Vol.VIa, no.141 and *Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Catalogue of European Paintings* [1970], pp.130-31. A date for this painting between 1493 and 1499/1501 is based on the form of the Belfry of Bruges depicted prominently in the city view; N. VERHAEGEN: 'Le maître de la Légende de Sainte Lucie: Précisions sur son œuvre', *Bulletin Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique*, II [1959], pp.79-82.

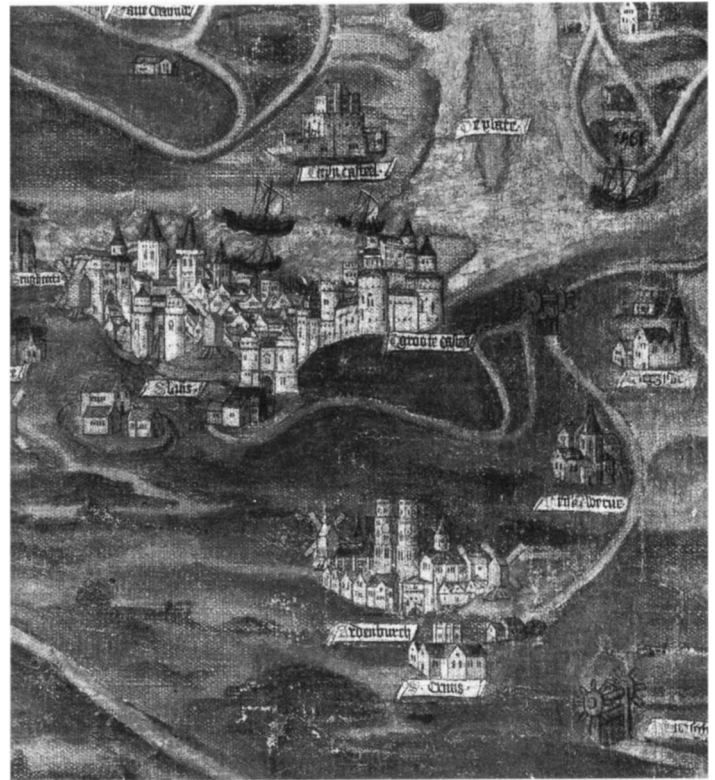


25. Detail of the *Pietà with Saints John the Baptist and Catherine of Alexandria*, by the Master of the Saint Lucy Legend. Panel, 99.7 by 158.1 cm. (whole). (The Minneapolis Institute of Arts).

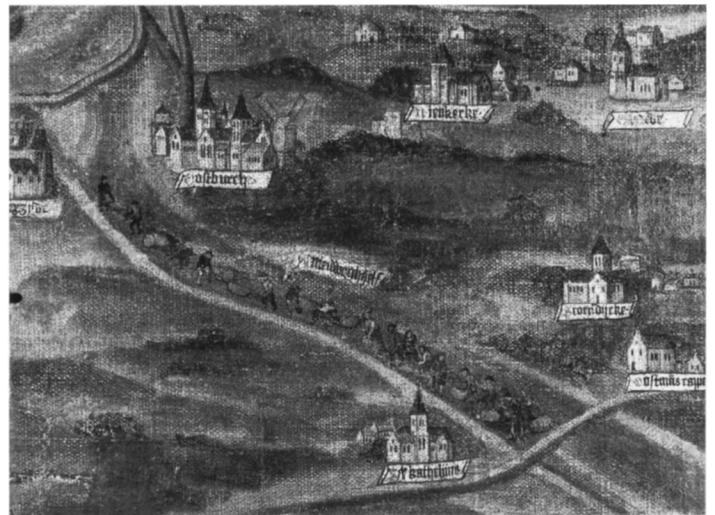
(Figs.25 and 26). The manner of depicting windows, the stepped and inverted-Y gables, and the proportions of towers are quite similar in these two works. Throughout the Arentshuis landscape, buildings are rendered from oblique angles to suggest three dimensions, and forms are consistently rendered as if lit from the left with their right portions shadowed.

But while some elements of the painting reveal Jan de Hervy's knowledge of the painter's craft, its structure and conceptual basis are rooted in contemporary map-making practices. The region is rendered from a panoramic aerial viewpoint, with the horizon line at the top of the picture's field. The landscape is laid out in a flat plane and does not attempt illusionistic depth. (The image is not oriented to the north as modern maps are; instead the upper border is the coastline of Flanders, to the west-northwest, about 45 degrees off true north.)<sup>29</sup> The artist has distorted the path of the waterways and shifted the earth tones to describe the gently rolling topography of the region, but he rarely integrates the architectural elements into the landscape: cities and buildings are portrayed as if seen straight on and pinned to a backdrop of earth. Neither trees nor forests block the views of the waterways and cities. Numerous printed and manuscript maps provide prototypes for this arrangement. Hervy probably had earlier 'portraits' of this very area to consult.<sup>30</sup>

To depict the mudflats, sandbars and river banks, Hervy probably studied the sea charts and pilot guides (or *rutters*) used by sea captains and pilots to navigate the Zwin.<sup>31</sup> No manuscript versions of these guides survive, but printed examples such as Willem Janszoon Blaeu's *Le Flambeau de la navigation* (1625) indicate their probable appearance (Fig.28). Such models would account for several idiosyncrasies in Hervy's painting, such as the rendering of shallows, sandbars, and other navigational hazards, the presence of buoys at the mouth of the Zwin, and the



26. Detail of Fig.22.



27. Detail of Fig.22.

inclusion of the one explicitly cartographic sign on the painting, the compass rose floating amidst the ships at sea (Fig.22). This object was not standard in regional maps or city views of this period, becoming common in land maps only in the mid-sixteenth century. It was, however, usual in sea-charts and portolan charts, where it assisted the mariner in plotting his course. Hervy's compass rose corresponds in shape to those found on sea-charts of the second half of the fifteenth century, suggesting the date of his model.<sup>32</sup>

Charts and pilot books may have also informed Hervy's detailed rendering of church towers and other highly visible landmarks. Mariners used such landmarks as points of

<sup>29</sup>This accords with contemporary map-making practice; see ALPERS, *op.cit.* at note 1 above, p.121.

<sup>30</sup>The Zwin had been rendered 'en pourtraicture' in 1470, when a project focused on the Zwartegat was underway; GILLIODTS-VAN SEVEREN, *op.cit.* at note 5 above, p.45. Hervy may have also known the 1468 map of the Scheldt now in the Brussels State Archive, discussed above.

<sup>31</sup>On pilot guides, see R. PUTMAN: *Early Sea Charts*, New York [1983] and C. KOEMAN: *Atlantes Neerlandici. Bibliography of terrestrial, maritime and celestial*

*atlases and pilot books published in the Netherlands up to 1880*, Vol.IV, Amsterdam [1970].

<sup>32</sup>On compass (or wind) roses, see T. CAMPBELL: 'Portolan Charts from the Late Thirteenth Century to 1500', in HARLEY and WOODWARD, *op.cit.* at note 20 above, pp.395-96. The compass rose with 32 points became commonplace on sea-charts in the second half of the fifteenth century. The fleur-de-lis pointing towards the north, still contained within the disk of the compass, is a stylistic element that dates Hervy's putative model to before the 1490s.



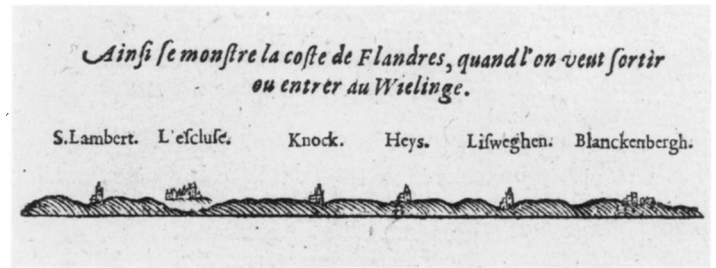


28. Detail showing the coast of Flanders from an engraved chart in Willem Janszoon Blaeu's *Le Flambeau de la Navigation*, Amsterdam, 1625, p.54.

reference in navigation, as another image from Blaeu's pilot guide attests<sup>33</sup> (Fig.30). Since sea-captains and canal pilots testified in the public hearings, the painter was evidently addressing a specific audience in this way. Svetlana Alpers has suggested a similar correspondence in later landscape painting;<sup>34</sup> this example suggests a motive for the painter's use of such conventions.

To represent legibly many different towns in a single visual field, Hervy uses a shorthand technique in which specific architectural monuments stand for each place. One genre of image which informs Hervy's pictograms is the municipal seal, which often shows the skylines of late medieval cities in abbreviated, but recognisable form. Examples of such seals survive from many cities of Northern Europe, including Bruges, Hervy's native Valenciennes, and Douai (Fig.29).<sup>35</sup> These glyphs usually depict the walls or gates of the town or the towers of local monuments, but their function is to embody the political entities that used them. Adapting their conventions seems an appropriate strategy for an image to be used in a public hearing. These considerations remind us that the structures in the landscape represent not mere buildings, but communities.<sup>36</sup>

The new canal was crucial for the commercial viability of Bruges as a port, literally a last ditch effort to preserve the city's economy. Hervy's image records the city's attempt to impose its will not only on the natural landscape, but on



30. Coast of Flanders, woodcut from Willem Janszoon Blaeu's *Le Flambeau de la Navigation*, Amsterdam, 1625, p.63.

the social landscape, as the city had to enforce the project on the other communities and landholders in the area. It was thwarted in both enterprises: even after the canal was finished, its opening was delayed by legal challenges, and it was destroyed by a storm in 1509. Only in 1516 was a remade canal opened, but it failed to have the salutary effects on the Zwin that had been predicted. In addition to its use in the public hearings held when the canal was being debated, the Arentshuis painting was probably used in the legal suits after the canal had been built.

Jan de Hervy's painting cannot, then, be seen as a monument to the civic pride or authority of the city, as such views are often considered.<sup>37</sup> It is a practical image born of crisis. Yet it is not an objective rendering of the area: though it was commissioned by Bruges, the city occupies a very small part of the painting, the greater part being taken up with the waterways and islands of Zeeland, reflecting the city's dependence on these outlets to the sea. Nor is the region rendered to any sort of scale: instead, the relative distances have been altered to emphasise the canal. Finally, although it was commissioned when the canal project was merely under discussion, the painting depicts numerous ships easily plying these difficult waters, as if the intended benefits had already been achieved. Jan de Hervy's portrait of the Zwin records not what the landscape around Bruges looked like, but how the city hoped it would be.



29. Cast of the seal of the City of Douai. Fourteenth century. 6.7 cm. diam. (Archives Nationales, Paris).

<sup>33</sup>Blaeu's illustrations are accompanied by a verbal description of the towers visible as the ship passes the coast: *Le Flambeau de la Navigation*, Amsterdam [1625], p.63.

<sup>34</sup>ALPERS, *op.cit.* at note 1 above, p.142.

<sup>35</sup>For the seals of Valenciennes and Douai, see B. BEDOS: *Corpus des sceaux français du Moyen Age. I, Les sceaux des villes*, Paris [1980], nos.705 and 250. The record of Jan de Hervy's entry into the guild at Bruges gives his birthplace as Valenciennes; VAN DEN HAUTE, *op.cit.* at note 12 above, p.17. A document of 1281 in the Municipal Library of Rouen bears the seal of Bruges depicting the town hall; Rouen Bibliothèque Municipale, MS. Leber 5650.

<sup>36</sup>The social dimensions of landscape painting have been explored by D. COSGROVE: *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, London and Sydney [1984], among others. For a discussion of the political and social impact of canal building by the cities of Flanders in the fourteenth century, see D. NICHOLAS: *Town and Countryside: Social, Economic, and Political Tensions in Fourteenth-Century Flanders*, Bruges [1971], pp.126-41.

<sup>37</sup>See, for example, the discussion in R. KAGAN: 'Philip II and the Art of the Cityscape', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XVII [1986], pp.115, 123-25; WOODWARD, *op.cit.* at note 20 above, p.493.