

confrontait l'image, mais avec la vivante qui lui ressemblait. Mystérieuse identification de ces deux visages. C'avait été comme une pitié du sort offrant des points de repère à sa mémoire, se mettant de connivence avec lui contre l'oubli, substituant une estampe fraîche à celle qui pâlissait, déjà jaunie et piquée par le temps.

Hugues possédait maintenant de la disparue une vision toute nette et toute neuve. Il n'avait qu'à contempler en sa mémoire le vieux quai de l'autre jour, dans le soir qui tombe, et s'avancant vers lui une femme qui a la figure de la morte. Il n'avait plus besoin de regarder en arrière, loin, dans le recul des années; il lui suffisait de songer au dernier ou au pénultième soir. C'était tout proche et tout simple maintenant. Son œil avait emmagasiné le cher visage une nouvelle fois; la récente empreinte s'était fusionnée avec l'ancienne, se fortifiant l'une par l'autre, en une ressem-

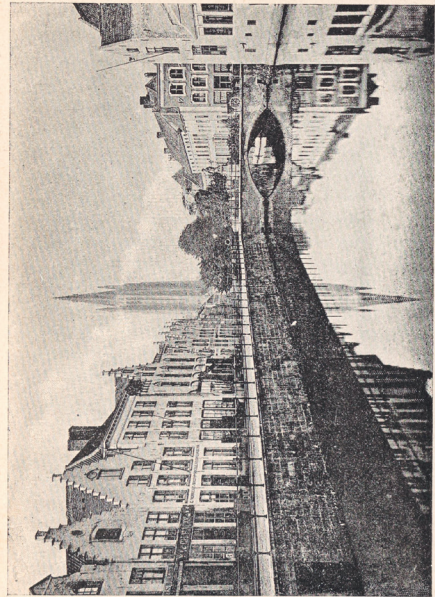


fig. 1 The first edition of Georges Rodenbach's *Bruges-la-morte* (1892) with half-tone photographs.

Between Symbolism and the Picturesque

fig. 1

When picture postcards reproduce symbolist art, is a paradox inherent?¹ Both the picture postcard and symbolism experienced their golden age at the end of the nineteenth century. The picture postcard, intended for a large (and largely female) tourist audience, is a modern, mass-produced, trivial medium for communication, and a collectable.² The apparent superficiality of the postcard suggests it is at odds with the serious pursuits of the symbolist movement, which originated as a reaction to modernity and used ambiguous symbols to reference deeper or higher truths or ideals. However, one of the first symbolist novels, Georges Rodenbach's *Bruges-la-Morte* of 1892, was initially illustrated with thirty-five half-tone reproductions of stock photographs, the kind that also appeared on picture postcards.³ Moreover, photographs like these served as a basis for several artworks by Fernand Khnopff, the first visual artist to be called a symbolist.⁴ Although much has been written about Rodenbach's careful selection of deserted street views and ripple-free canals, discussions of symbolism generally do not conceptualize the position of the "picturesque" in symbolist visual culture. In *fin-de-siècle* art criticism, the picturesque—like materialistic "naturalism"—had to a certain degree become the denomination for the superficial opposite of the symbolist effort that tried to penetrate to the "soul of things." While picture postcards epitomized this superficiality, they were also gendered as feminine (because of the female collectors), and were associated with "the trivial, the picturesque, the ephemeral"—a critique similar to that of picturesque scenes, sketched by mere dilettantes.⁵ Declaring a work to be symbolist as opposed to picturesque was somewhat similar to how those "travelers" who moved beyond the beaten Baedeker path defined themselves as the opposite of "tourists."⁶

Bruges and picture postcards of Bruges are loci where symbolism and the picturesque converged. Decades before becoming a capital of the symbolist movement, Bruges became a stop in tours of the picturesque and appeared in albums and guidebooks.⁷ To gauge the relationship between symbolism and picturesqueness, this paper analyzes a series of fourteen heliotyped picture postcards by the Brussels artist Alexandre Hannotiau (1863–1901), published in 1900, and entitled *In Brugge/À Bruges* [*In Bruges*]. Contemporary critics found the drawn and printed art of Hannotiau to be "penetrating" and symbolist, yet his art ended up on fourteen postcards. After engaging with the wider picturesque-symbolist dualism in the context of Bruges, this paper scrutinizes the visual origins of Hannotiau's postcard images in his earlier artworks and in images of historical references that Hannotiau mobilized. To assess their specificity as heliotyped postcards of urban scenes, some of the postcards in the *In Brugge/À Bruges* series are also compared to both contemporary photographic postcards of similar sights and to Hannotiau's print album *Villes mortes: Bruges*, from 1894. The use of two motifs—cloaked women and religious practice—is analyzed in more detail. Finally, a look at how senders used the postcards illustrates another blurring of picturesque and symbolist aspects.

The paradox of Bruges around 1900

fig. 2

In September 1903, a print by Georges Scott appeared in both the British periodical *The Graphic* and the French periodical *L'Illustration*.⁸ The scene is set in the shadowy courtyard of the

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A BRUGES LA MORTE. — L'invasion du Béguinage : le coin des artistes.

Depuis que les livres de M. Georges Rodenbach ont mis à la mode « Bruges la Morte », la paisible ville flamande est, certes, l'un des lieux du monde les plus visités. Jamais elle ne fut plus vivante et plus animée. Les excursions Cook l'ont infestée, et les Anglais l'ont pour ainsi dire annexée, tant on les y rencontre nombreux et envahissants. Ce tranquille Béguinage que le poète nous décrivait silencieux et recueilli, sa place déserte traversée de loin en loin de glissantes ombres aux longs voiles noirs, est désormais assiéé par des rues furieuses de promeneurs affairés et bruyants. Des gens de lettres y croquent des notes, et sous les ombrages, dans les coins frais où il ferait si bon rêver, une horde de peintres s'est abattue, cliquant la palette, mesurant le paysage, la brosse tendue à bout de bras comme une menace, en travers des yeux, et crépissant frénétiquement des toiles sans défense des « misses » d'ordre-mer, venant exercer là leur talent d'amateur, pocher une étude ou barbouiller une aquarelle, tout en papotant. Et ce sont maintenant les béguines noires qui ont l'air d'intrus dans leur domaine naguère si calme.

fig. 2 Georges Scott, "À Bruges la morte," *L'illustration*, September 12, 1903, 176.

Beguinaige in the Belgian city of Bruges. In the foreground, a group of well-dressed people are engaged in leisurely pursuits—painting, reading, watching artists—while in the middle ground, two women, shrouded in dark cloaks, walk among the trees in front of houses faintly visible in the distant background. The accompanying caption in the French periodical speaks of “l’invasion du béguinage,” while the British one describes the Beguinaige as “a well-known artists’ haunt.” The French caption elaborates on the well-known paradox of a quiet city besieged by tourists. It mentions Rodenbach’s 1892 symbolist novel *Bruges-la-Morte*, which captures a silent city lost in time that at the same time fueled international tourism to Bruges and presents it crowded with a large number of modern tourists and “une horde de peintres.”⁹

That artists are mentioned is no coincidence. The paradox of Bruges around 1900 also played out in the visual arts. On the one hand, *fin-de-siècle* Bruges was an imaginary capital of the symbolist movement.¹⁰ Symbolist art, evocative and suggestive in nature, originated from a literary movement whose aim was to make visible the invisible, higher world of ideas or inner landscape through the depiction of the external world through *correspondances*, or parallelism.¹¹ The mystery and melancholia that symbolists sought were omnipresent in Bruges, once a flourishing medieval trade hub in the county of Flanders. The city’s Gothic monuments and street pattern were well preserved. Since the late fifteenth century, its economic situation had only deteriorated, to the point where it had become Belgium’s poorest city, and it did not experience the industrialization of the nineteenth century. Among the art treasures also preserved in situ were works by Flemish Primitive painters of the fifteenth century, such as Hans Memling, whose mysticism was explicitly favored by proto-symbolist visitors, such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti in 1849 and Paul Gauguin in 1894.¹² The city’s empty streets also became a favored visual motif. In addition, the many canals, signs of Bruges’s historical wealth that came from its now-lost harbor, which earned the city the name of “Venice of the North,” reflected the scenery and created atmospheric night views. Another motif was the figure of a woman wearing a black cloak with a hood, like those in the background of Scott’s print. Finally, according to a symbolist trope that Rodenbach used extensively, authentically medieval, Catholic faith could still be found among the impoverished population, making its prayers, pageants, and processions an attractive sight. These six motifs—Gothic architecture, art treasures, abandoned streets, reflecting canals, cloaked women, and religious practice—were the source of Bruges’s reputation as a key locus of inspiration for symbolist artists. The motifs appeared in paintings, drawings, and prints by symbolists such as Fernand Khnopff, Xavier Mellery, and Jan Toorop and in the writings of Rodenbach, Maurice Maeterlinck, Joséphin Péladan, and many others.

On the other hand, similar motifs were favored by those looking for “the picturesque Old World air,” as mentioned in the caption to Scott’s print.¹³ By 1900, the meaning of the word “picturesque” had evolved from the aesthetic category coined by late-eighteenth-century landscapers and landscape artists.¹⁴ William Gilpin, Richard Payne Knight, and Uvedale Price had defined the painting-like landscapes each in their own way, with roughness, irregularity, and variation. Halfway through the nineteenth century, addressing the evolution toward an urban picturesque, Charles Dickens and John Ruskin denounced parts of the theory and practice, as they took moral issue with the aesthetic pleasure some people found in looking upon the miserable, dilapidated homes of the poor.¹⁵ Eventually, picturesqueness became synonymous with “aesthetic failure, trivial cultural products and naïve tastes” and a “predictable and standardized language.”¹⁶ Since the rise of tourism around 1815, Bruges figured prominently among sites of Belgium’s historic urban scenery that were favored by picturesque artists, and the city retained its reputation

as a picturesque hot spot throughout the century.¹⁷ In 1894, an article in *The Studio* described Bruges as the perfect artist's paradise. It listed many of the same motifs favored by symbolist artists, while describing the city's population, and its "well-behaved, peaceful beggars," as "most picturesque subjects."¹⁸ Next to the "horde" of visiting international artists (both amateur and professional), the local so-called Bruges School, which included teachers at the local Academy of Fine Arts like Florimond Van Acker (1858–1940) and Louis Reckelbus (1864–1958), produced paintings for the tourist market. Bruges's city government and tourist organizations purposely sold the town as an "artist paradise" full of "picturesque spots" through the posters produced by Van Acker, Reckelbus, and others.¹⁹

In general, the aesthetics of the picturesque, and the obsession with decay and ruins, are also common to symbolism's obsession with places like Bruges that make the past tangible and that form an alternative to the "homogenizing pressures of modernization."²⁰ Despite this crossover, several critics around 1900 seem to imply a clear division, and in the context of Bruges, they used these two notions as opposites. In 1905, in a piece on Henri le Sidaner (1862–1939)—the "Rodenbach of painting"—the French critic Camille Mauclair states that "d'autres, habiles, allaient à Bruges 'chercher des motifs' sans dépasser le pittoresque extérieur, sans pressentir ce qu'il y avait d'âme éperdument mystique et intense derrière les murs."²¹ Notably, two of the painters in Scott's print are well-dressed women, whom the caption indicates as being British. Such dilettantism was pejoratively linked with bland picturesqueness, as articulated by Médard Verkest in 1900, describing their work as "stom en slaafsch, koud of doodsch, zooals het op teekenboek en schilderboek der Engelsche misses opgenomen wordt," unlike the Bruges landscapes by Hannotiau, who he says did it right.²² Generalizing and probably simplifying, Verkest noted two artistic approaches to Bruges: "'t Zij ze slaafs onze schilderachtige binnenkanalen, mooie trapgeveltjes of prachtige torens konterfeiten, 't zij ze het mysticisme van Brugge belichamen in teekeningen en doeken, zooals de puikkunstenaar van een Hannotiau het opvat en vertolkt."²³

Alexandre Auguste Hannotiau and his oeuvre in criticism

Today, Alexandre (or Sander) Hannotiau is not well known in Belgium, much in contrast to his status around 1900. At least four biographical descriptions of five or more pages were written shortly before his early death in 1901, often republished in edited volumes soon after.²⁴ The accounts of his life and work by Flemish writers, teachers, and art critics such as Pol de Mont (1857–1939), the already cited Médard Verkest (1863–1908) and Maurits Sabbe (1873–1938), and French-speaking critic Sander Pierron (1872–1945)—a close friend of the artist—all praised Hannotiau. Together with anonymous newspaper art criticism on specific exhibited works, these texts about the artist shed light on how Hannotiau and his art were generally perceived around 1900 and in particular how the symbolist and picturesque dualism was understood. Hannotiau, the son of a doctor, was born in 1863 in Molenbeek, then a new *faubourg* of Brussels. He died at thirty-eight, when he was a promising teacher at the Molenbeek art school. He began as a draughtsman for building contractors within his family and later worked for architect and scholar Auguste Schoy (1838–1885) on the Gothic revival renovation site of the Our Lady of the Sablon Church in Brussels.²⁵ He soon switched to painting, turning in 1888 to the historic town that would become the center of his oeuvre. His first works on Bruges are contemporaneous with the first Bruges works of Fernand Khnopff.²⁶ A decade earlier, Hannotiau's fellow Brussels artist Xavier Mellery, who was also Khnopff's teacher, had already produced evocative drawings that featured Bruges motifs.

According to Pierron, Hannotiau had the soul of both a Flemish primitive and a Gothic.²⁷ Pierron's articles included an often-reproduced photograph that shows Hannotiau surrounded by Flemish antiquarian objects in what Pierron called Hannotiau's "studio pittoresque."²⁸ This studio was said to be filled with medieval furniture, tin and copperware, carved wood in Gothic or Renaissance style, silk, statuettes, etc.²⁹ A painted interior view of 1900 suggests the studio may have also contained old books, a charter, Japanese prints, a globe, and a parrot.³⁰ Connecting this artist-antiquarian's interior to a wider private culture of collecting, staging, and experiencing antiquities is a laudatory review Hannotiau wrote of the Merghelynck house museum in Ypres, the late-nineteenth-century reconstruction by the archivist-collector Arthur Merghelynck of the interior of an eighteenth-century nobleman's palace.³¹ This antiquarian interest recurs in various biographies, and Hannotiau shared it with his teacher Schoy; both were erudite men, archeological collectors, and connoisseurs. Hinting at a symbolist trope, Sabbe found these old objects to be not only a source of knowledge for Hannotiau but also animated beings with whom he lived.³²

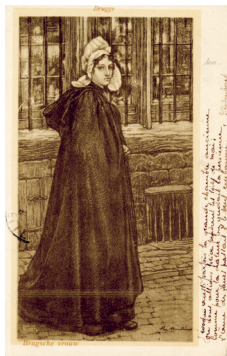
We could also relate this antiquarian reflex to two specific groups of works within Hannotiau's oeuvre that nevertheless go beyond this antiquarianism: his government-commissioned, precise copies of some fifteenth- and sixteenth-century monumental paintings and his paintings of historical scenes.³³ The latter are painted in a manner reminiscent of Henri Leys (1815–1869), a popular late Romantic painter of historical scenes. Hannotiau was an admirer of Leys, possessing a collection of over 100 drawings by the Antwerp master.³⁴ Hannotiau came to favor the history of Bruges as a subject for historical compositions and cartoons for monumental paintings.

The third main group of works within Hannotiau's oeuvre comprises his portrayals of contemporary Bruges, specifically his drawings and prints. "Il triomphe dans le 'black and white,'" according to an anonymous review from 1894, "et son crayon excelle à rendre la solidité des architectures de pierre ou le pittoresque ornamental des bois sculptés. C'est dire que la lithographie semble être inventée tout exprès pour lui."³⁵ While greyscale drawings allowed Khnopff and other symbolists to "establish the imprecise vision of object as symbol that was their goal," the 1894 reporter associated Hannotiau's black-and-white prints with picturesque qualities.³⁶ Other critics compared Hannotiau's black-and-white work to that of Mellery and Omer Coppens, intimate or nocturnal views of Bruges that "penetrated" to the "soul of things"—symbolist concepts both Pierron and Khnopff used to describe Hannotiau's art.³⁷ The similarities between works of these three artists can be striking. Mellery's *Après la prière du soir* (1900, Ixelles, MBA), for example, or the right wing of his Bruges triptych (ca. 1890, Brussels, KMSKB-MRBAB) are comparable to Hannotiau's drawing and postcard *A la chapelle de Jérusalem*. Likewise, the canal views in his postcard *Vieux pont* resemble Coppens' *Bruges, la nuit* (1900, collection Daniel Guéguen).³⁸



fig. 3 Alexandre Hannotiau, *À la chapelle de Jérusalem*, postcard from the *À Bruges* heliotype series, 1900.

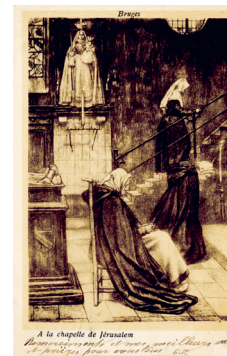
At the time of his death, Hannotiau's art was mostly framed as symbolist, although some disagreed. Belgium's key avant-garde art periodical, *L'Art moderne*, like other voices of the Brussels art scene such as Pierron, generally described Hannotiau's art in symbolist words, finding in it intimacy, mysticism, melancholia, mystery, soul, and solitude. The Catholic newspaper *Le Vingtième siècle* clearly also identified a symbolist tension in his work: "il en [Bruges] pénétra l'intimité psychologique et poétique avec une profonde et délicate sensibilité," while in his art "l'on sentait vibrer et rêver l'âme religieuse de la race."³⁹ In the liberal newspaper *Le Soir*, however, the writer said, rather dismissively, that Hannotiau's art merely "faisait revivre les coins pittoresques des vieilles villes et des vieux béguinages" and would probably soon be forgotten.⁴⁰



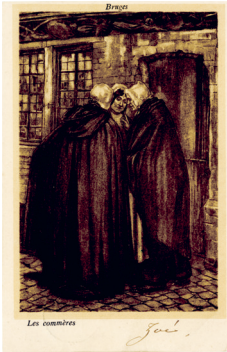
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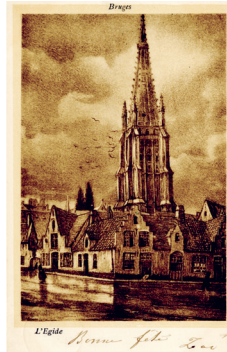
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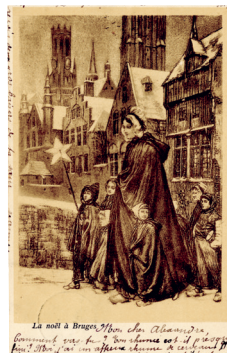
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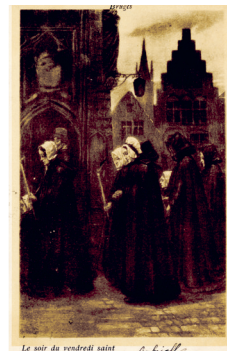
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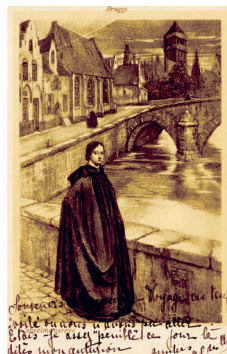
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12



13



14

	French title		Dutch title		Original work
1	Brugeoise	Bruges Woman	Brugsche vrouw	Bruges Woman	<i>Les dénêcheurs de Mésanges / De Meezenvangers</i> (drawing, 1898) Mentioned in Sabbe, “Hannotiau,” 201; illustrated in Sabbe, “Pour l’art,” 82, and in Verkest, <i>Studien</i> , 24
2	Calvaire	Calvary	St. Jacobs Calvarieberg	St. James’ Calvary	<i>De Kalvarieberg</i> (drawing, 1898) <i>Calvaire à Bruges</i> (lithograph, 1899) Mentioned in Sabbe, “Hannotiau,” 201; illustrated in <i>Société des Aquafortistes Belges</i> (1899), plate 7
3	A la chapelle de Jérusalem	In the Jerusalem Chapel	Jerusalemskerke	Jerusalem Church	Drawing, signed March 30, 1900 Bruges, Musea Brugge, inv. no. 0000. GRO0430.II
4	Les commères	The Telltales	Klappeien	Telltales	Untitled (drawing, 1900) Private collection
5	L’Egide	Protection	Waalplaats	Walloon Square* * the etymology of this toponymy is debated	Mentioned in De Mont, “Hannotiau,” 165
6	Godtshuis	Almshouse	Godtshuis	Almshouse	<i>Le vieille maison du Pélican (Bruges)</i> Mentioned in <i>Ville de Gand. XXXVIIe Exposition. Salon de 1899. Catalogue des tableaux et objets d’art exposés au Casino</i> , Ghent, Eug. Vander Haeghen 1899, 95 (n. 298)
7	Le jour des rois	The Day of the Kings (or Epiphany)	Driekoningendag	The Day of the Three Kings	<i>Le jour des rois à Bruges</i> (lithograph, 1895) <i>Op Driekoningendag</i> (drawing, n.d.) Brussels, KBR, Printroom, S.II 82322 and S.II 97267 Mentioned in De Mont, “Hannotiau,” 167
8	La Noël à Bruges	Christmas in Bruges	Kerstdag	Christmas	
9	L’Offrande	Offertory	Piéta	Pietà	
10	Soir	Evening	Avond	Evening	<i>Vieilles eaux</i> (n.d.) Illustrated in De Mont, “Hannotiau,” 26
11	Le soir du vendredi saint [1]	Good Friday Evening	Ommegang op Goedenvrydag [1]	Pageant on Good Friday	<i>Le Soir du Vendredi-Saint à Bruges</i> (pastel, n.d.) Illustrated in Du Jardin and Middeleer, <i>L’Art flamand</i> , 120–121
12	Le soir du vendredi saint [2]	Good Friday Evening	Ommegang op Goedenvrydag [2]	Pageant on Good Friday	<i>Le soir de vendredi-saint à Bruges</i> (pastel, n.d.) Illustrated in Du Jardin and Middeleer, <i>L’Art Flamand</i> , 120–121
13	Vieux pont	Old Bridge	Vlamingbrug	Flemings Bridge toponymy	<i>Vieux pont</i> (n.d.) Illustrated in Crous, “Vlämische Kunst-Ausstellung,” 569
14	Vieux quai	Old Dock	Speelmansreye	Minstrel Canal toponymy	

table 1 The fourteen postcards, listed alphabetically, from *À Bruges/In Brugge*, with their French and Dutch titles that correspond to the French and Dutch series. The Dutch titles are often toponymies. The third column lists the original artwork, if known, from which the postcards derive. Translations by Stefan Huygebaert.

Nevertheless, one of the things that kept Hannotiau's art from disappearing into oblivion was the *In Brugge / À Bruges* postcard series. Originally wrapped in an envelope with a print of the Bruges Belfry on it, it was sold as a set, with text in either French or Dutch. The Brussels editor and *librairie d'art* Maison Dietrich that produced the series was known for its postcards and reproductions of pre-Raphaelite and other art.⁴¹ Dietrich is also believed to be the first firm to publish illustrated postcards in Belgium, starting as early as 1888.⁴² Published about a year before Hannotiau's death, the postcard series came to double as an anthology of the artist's Bruges oeuvre. It is safe to assume that all the postcards were heliotypes of (or parts of) existing works. In Table 1, the postcards appear with their French and Dutch titles, along with the names of the artworks from which the prints were made, as much as could be determined.⁴³ Ink intensity and darkness vary.⁴⁴ Titles were printed in black, orange, or purple. In several cases the French titles are more general, suggestive, or poetic (*Calvary*, *Old Bridge*, *Old Dock*, *Protection*) than their purely toponymic Dutch equivalents.

Unlike the topographically correct urban scenes by Bruges School painters of the picturesque, every site in Hannotiau's postcards is to some degree altered or invented. Pierron wrote that Hannotiau's métier as an architectural draughtsman unconsciously guided him in his calling as an artist.⁴⁵ Another critic identified the artist's landscapes as typical of Bruges, even though not of identifiable sites, while another spoke of how the artist does not simply copy Gothic architecture but makes it come alive.⁴⁶

fig. 4

The postcard *Soir / Avond* shows the top half of a woman in profile in the immediate foreground, which adds a dramatic, mysterious, and evocative touch to the canal in the background, identifiable as the Augustijnenrei. This composition was also used by Khnopff and makes this postcard arguably the most ambiguous and symbolist of the series. The image on the postcard is the top part of a larger print that shows more of the woman's cloak and the bridge on which she is standing over the Augustijnenrei. In reality, however, that bridge did not exist.

The two postcards entitled *Le soir du vendredi saint* are exceptional because they form one continuous scene when placed next to each other. Hannotiau portrays an *ommegang*, or pageant, that followed the trajectory of the famous Procession of the Holy Blood. In this pageant walked local members of the clergy as well as common folk, rich and poor, young and old, while praying their rosaries. Hannotiau's initial print shows some sixteen women, two men, and three children walking from right to left. The majority of the women's faces are covered by their hoods, suggesting religious introspection. However, the actual site where Hannotiau set his scene is, and was then, impossible to find in Bruges. The local composer Joseph Ryelandt wrote in 1903 that "Hannotiau a illustré Bruges en des tableaux d'un art pénétrant, mais factice, s'inspirant plus du rêve que de la vue réelle."⁴⁷ This middle ground between essentialist reinvention and referential representation is also how Rodenbach interpreted (rather than documented) Bruges in his prototype symbolist novels.⁴⁸

Comparison with photographic postcards

fig. 5

Several of Hannotiau's postcards had equivalents in photographic postcards in terms of specific site or motif. *Les commères* constitutes a striking example. The postcard, a reproduction of a much larger drawing (97.5 × 67 cm) from 1900, features three women, their heads close to each other, as if caught in a whispering conspiracy. They stand in front of a house at Schaarstraat 54, which has



fig. 5 Alexandre Hannotiau, *Les commères*, postcard from the *À Bruges* series, 1900, sent November 2, 1900.



fig. 4 Alexandre Hannotiau, *Avond*, used postcard from the *À Bruges* series, 1900, sent on December 18, 1901.



fig. 6 *Bruges—Brugeoises—La Causette*, photographer unknown, postcard issued by Nels, 1905 or after, sent from Bruges to Valenciennes, August 28, 1908.

fig. 6

a decoratively carved cornice. Hannotiau has let the women's black hoods fall back, revealing lace caps and the faces of two of the women. Although the general motif of three women talking together was something of an international postcard trope, a particular photographic postcard of Bruges made at least three years later shows a strikingly similar composition. In the photograph on *Bruges—Brugeoises—La Causette* [*Women of Bruges—the Chat*], while none of the three women wears a black cloak, their heads are covered by similar lace caps, white and black. While the photographic postcard seems intended to document a local scene (the women are wearing their aprons and carry shopping baskets), the atmosphere of Hannotiau's scene is more confined and mysterious because of the monolithic, three-headed grouping that almost fills the entire image field.

Hannotiau's postcard *Godtshuis* shows the repetitive gables of *De Pelikaen*, one of over twenty groups of almshouses in a local Christian welfare system dating back to the late Middle Ages. *Godtshuis* is one of Hannotiau's most topographically correct postcards.⁴⁹ It shows a woman walking with a cane, and conveys a scene with an undertone of the passage of time. Most photographic postcards include the canal in front of the almshouses, but Hannotiau frames his scene differently. He draws the houses slightly from the side—but still more frontally than the vast majority of the photographic postcards—so that the open door reveals part of a white inner wall with a black plinth, pulling the beholder into the hidden world of poverty and charity.

In *Vieux quai*, Hannotiau relies on his architectural imagination. And as in *Soir*, he positions a figure in the foreground, as a *repoussoir*, leading the eye toward the line of the road and canal, identifiable as the Speelmansrei. However, the location is half-invented, as Hannotiau bends the road and canal more sharply than corresponds to reality. He also altered the perspective of the church tower in the background and added a semicircular buttress to the bridge and three buttresses to the chapel. The additions are rustic elements, the kind of elaborations that the original theoreticians of the picturesque allowed in order to obtain the irregularity and roughness so vital to the concept, of the kind that Ruskin would see as “changefulness.” Was Hannotiau enhancing picturesque Bruges, or molding it to the symbolist ideal? Whatever the case, he made the scene more essentially Bruges than the city ever was.

Comparison with the album *Villes Mortes: Bruges* (1894)

An album that for some critics constitutes the height of Hannotiau's oeuvre may shed more light on the artist's forging of a picturesque-symbolist, postcard Bruges. Published on June 15, 1894, the album, *Ville Mortes: Bruges* [*Dead Cities: Bruges*], contained eleven new lithographs by Hannotiau and a foreword by the symbolist poet Emile Verhaeren. There is no overlap between the album and the postcard series, possibly because of a contractual agreement with the Brussels editor of the album, Lammertin. The postcards were relatively cheap—the entire series cost 2.5 Belgian francs—and presumably widespread. The album is rare, as only seventy specimens were printed, and it cost between 25 and 100 Belgian francs, depending on the kind of paper.⁵⁰

While all of the postcard scenes contain people, several of the album lithographs feature empty views. Additions and inventions in the postcard series are mostly subtle and would only have been noticed by locals or Bruges *habitués*, but the inventions in the album are far more obvious. The image entitled *Vieux gloires* shows a black-cloaked woman kneeling near a knight's tomb, reminiscent of—but not identical to—Charles the Temerary's tomb within the Church of Our Lady in Bruges. The upper section of the



fig. 7 Alexandre Hannotiau, *Notre Dame*, lithograph from the *Villes mortes: Bruges* album, 1894.

fig. 7

fig. 8

print shows the painted window of Saint Georges from the former guild chapel of painters and glaziers, and next to that an elevated perspective on the belfry. However, the window that opens to the belfry has no glass in it, and patches of vegetation make it look ruinous. Birds flying around the belfry and the mourning posture of the figure in the foreground render the scene almost morbid. It is a scene of the sort of decay that frustrated local politicians and the Catholic press who championed the modernization of Bruges. The debate between defenders of a brand-new industrial sea harbor and those wanting to preserve Bruges's authentic, deserted character was portrayed (and to some extent caricaturized) in Rodenbach's novel *Le Carillonneur* [*The Bells of Bruges*], published three years after the *Villes mortes* album. The local Catholic newspaper, *La Patrie*, which advocated for the harbor project, recognized Hannotiau's talent, but denounced the album's "goût du macabre, de la nature morte."⁵¹

Cloaked women

Even more than in *Vieux gloires*, a morbid invention by the artist defines the print entitled *Notre Dame*. Hannotiau shows the impressive Gothic architecture of the Church of Our Lady's radiating chapels, but the chapels are used only as a backdrop. The focus is on the tomb in the foreground, but this Gothic *gisant* tomb of Philippe Pot never stood in Bruges. It was made around 1480 for the Cîteaux monastery in France. The Louvre bought the polychrome monument from a private collection in 1888, which generated some media attention and occasioned reproductions in periodicals.⁵² The only historical connection between Bruges and Pot is that he was a knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Founded in Bruges in 1430 by the Burgundian count Philip the Good, this European order held three "chapters" or gatherings in Bruges, in 1432 (St. Donation's Cathedral), 1468 (Church of Our Lady), and 1478 (St. Salvator's Church). Pot attended the last two. Hannotiau knew about the Order, as two of these Golden Fleece chapters had been the topic of paintings he made one year prior to the album. The artist had also been commissioned to copy the escutcheons that the Order left above St. Salvator's choir stalls.⁵³

Hannotiau did not include the tomb merely for its historical link between Pot and Bruges or the Church of Our Lady, however. Pot even seems incidental: we only get to see Pot's arms and feet—comparable to the view on the grave in the postcard *A la chapelle de Jérusalem*. What Hannotiau mobilizes from the Pot tomb is the evocative power of the eight cloaked *pleurants*, mourners-cum-tomb-bearers, with the appearance of caryatids. Three of their hooded heads define the scene. The *pleurants* clearly resonate with the hooded women appearing in the majority of the album's other prints. Hannotiau activated a connotation of mourning that already lingered in the traditional costume of the local women of Bruges.

Early travel literature noted the cloak as a curiosity—a typical Bruges costume. One trope saw the piece of clothing as a sign of equality between rich and poor, another one associated it with a continuity between past and present. In 1865, the French writer Jules de Claretie (1840–1913) wrote that "un voyage à Bruges, c'est surtout un voyage dans le passé. Le costume même des femmes a quelque chose des vêtements d'autrefois."⁵⁴ Travel guides around 1850 also described the costume as picturesque: "For young women this dress is extremely picturesque, consisting of a long cloak of fine black cloth or silk, with a hood covering the head, under which many a half-hidden pretty face may be detected."⁵⁵

Rather than aiming for this picturesque or folkloric note, Hannotiau's use of the cloak motif evokes a sense of gloom, along the lines of a description by the early Belgian symbolist artist Félicien Rops, who in 1871 described Bruges as the city "où les

aux créations abstraites de l'art italien des impressions plus personnelles et toutes d'actualité, en un mot d'opposer au style et au symbolisme classique, qui seroit les mêmes sous toutes les latitudes, des éléments essentiellement variables et intimes.



Le Tombeau de Philippe Pot. — Côté opposé à celui représenté à la page 73.

pour notre grand Musée national, a signalé, à partir du treizième siècle, plusieurs exemples de *Ploauros*, rangés autour du défunt. Ces « Ploaurs », M. Courajod l'a fait fort judicieusement observer, ne sont pas tous des moines, comme on le croit généralement, mais bien les différents officiers laïques ou ecclésiastiques de la cour du défunt, tels qu'ils étaient costumés. Le jour de l'enterrement, quand ils avaient mené le deuil. A l'origine, ces fidèles compagnons de la mort sont d'ordinaire seulement peints en bas-relief ou sculptés en bas-relief.

Au quatorzième siècle, les statuettes isolées font leur apparition : à la Chaise-Bien, sur le tombeau du pape Clément VI (1342-1352) ; à Saint-Bertrand de Comminges (Haute-Garonne), sur celui de l'évêque Hugues de Châtillon (1352) ; à Vignon, sur celui du cardinal d'Algerneville (1391), autrefois dans la cathédrale de Notre-Dame-des-Bons.

La disposition du tombeau de Clément VI surtout était caractéristique et semble avoir fait loi jusqu'à l'aube de la Renaissance. Ce pontife, le plus fastueux de tous ceux qui régnèrent à Avignon — et ce n'est pas peu dire — avait fait achever des 1351, l'année qui précéda sa mort,

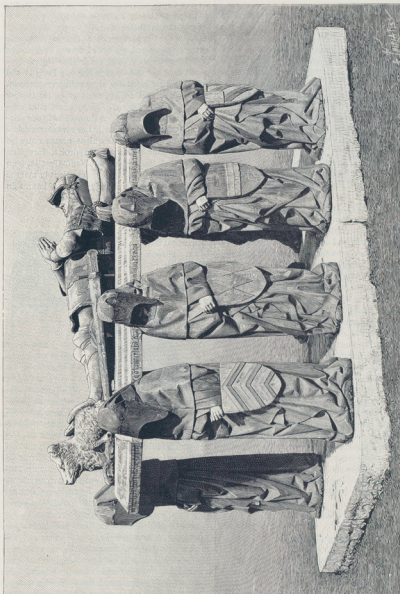
Dans deux érudits mémoires, publiées en 1885 par la *Gazette archéologique* et la *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, le savant conservateur de la sculpture du moyen âge et de la Renaissance au Musée du Louvre, M. Courajod, dès lors à l'affût de ce manuscrit de Philippe Pot qu'il tirait de conquérir

le somptueux mausolée aujourd'hui réduit à une statue étendue sur un simple sarcophage, qui devait perpétuer à travers les siècles le souvenir de sa magnificence. D'après les recherches de M. Faaron, le mausolée, exécuté par Pierre Boye, Jean de Sanholis et Jean David, comprenait à l'origine soixante-quatre statuettes rangées autour de la statue du défunt ; à savoir, le prêtre portant l'eau bénite, le diacre portant le livre des Évangiles, le serviteur, quatre cardinaux, cinq archevêques, neuf évêques, le comte de Beaufort avec ses deux épouses, le vicomte de Turenne, et une infinité d'autres parents du Pape.

Rien de plus fou que telle œuvre, pour peu qu'elle trouvât un interprète intelligent et hardi. Quelle tentation que de substituer aux *Ploaurs*, uniformément rangés autour du mausolée, dans des attitudes d'une désespérante monotonie, des acteurs chacun individualisés fortement, chacun exprimant ses sentiments par une mimique différente ! Ce fut la tâche à laquelle se dévoua le plus grand des sculpteurs septentrionaux du quinzième siècle, le Hollandais Nicolas ou Claus Sluter, devenu français par adoption ; il s'en acquitta glorieusement dans le mausolée

de Philippe-le-Hardi, de manière à susciter d'innombrables imitations, tout en décourageant à jamais la concurrence.

Peu de chefs d'École ont joué un rôle aussi considérable que Sluter, peu sont tombés dans un oubli aussi profond. Aujourd'hui même, après les



Le Tombeau de Philippe Pot, tel qu'il était, d'après une gravure par le Musée du Louvre. — Côté opposé à celui représenté à la page 72. — Grav. par Thibaut.

éclatantes revendications de la critique, c'est à peine si sa réputation a franchi le cercle d'un petit nombre d'érudits, et encore parmi ceux-ci

aucun n'a songé à consacrer au fondateur de l'École de Dijon la monographie, le monument, que celui-ci attend toujours. C'est un motif de

fig. 8 Page from an 1889 article in *Magasin pittoresque*, with Auguste Tilly's *The Tomb of Philippe Pot*.



fig. 9, 10

fig. 9 Alexandre Hannotiau, *Calvaire*, lithograph from the *Villes mortes*: Bruges album, 1894.



fig. 10 Alexandre Hannotiau, *St. Jacobs Calvarieberg*, postcard from the *À Bruges* series, 1900.

vieilles femmes, froides et jaunes figures d'Hemling, rampent le long des quais déserts comme si elles étaient les pleureuses de ce grand passé.⁵⁶ Indeed, in other cities the cloak was worn as a sign of mourning, and so Hannotiau employs the local picturesque motif to also give each of his postcards a gloomy touch.⁵⁷

Religious practice

The majority of the *À Bruges* postcards deals with religious practice. In line with symbolist literature, Hannotiau focused on authentic, popular devotion, as already mentioned for his two *ommeegang* postcards, *Le soir du vendredi saint*. The postcard *Calvaire* is closely related to the album print by the same name, both set near the church of St. James. In fact, it almost seems as if the woman passing by the cross in the album print is the same person, seen from the back, who is praying in front of the cross on the postcard. Again, Hannotiau took some liberties, in particular leaving out the flanking statues of Our Lady and John the Baptist, which traditionally serve as intermediaries between the worshiper and Christ. The worshiper and Christ are alone together in Hannotiau's postcard. In the album print, the woman seems unaware of the presence of Christ, whose face is animated, his piercing eyes fixed on the woman. In the postcard, Christ is only referenced by a left hand, and the face of the worshiper remains veiled, leaving her relationship with Christ a private matter.

The same game of gazes appears in the postcard *L'offrande*. Worshipers seem on their way to mass, as they pass the seventeenth-century Passion House near the cathedral's entrance, which is open to the interior. At the time, within this Passion House was a seventeenth-century statue of a kneeling Christ on the cross, then locally known as *Jesutje op zijn bloksje*.⁵⁸ In the postcard, however, Hannotiau replaced the kneeling figure with Christ seated near a lamp, almost as a door guard personally welcoming the worshipers

fig. 11

fig. 12

In his most architectural postcard, *L'Egide/Waalplaats*, Hannotiau emphasizes the height of the Church of Our Lady's tower by its contrast with the modest step-gabled houses of the Walplaats below.⁵⁹ A comparison with the photograph of the square clearly shows that Hannotiau set the church tower "free" from structures of intermediate height, lowering taller houses and omitting the large roof of the Sint-Janshospitaal. Hannotiau also gave the slender tower a bulkier appearance. In the foreground the artist suppressed the existing generic cornice facades, creating a more "pure" idea of a Bruges-style streetscape. Here again, the draughtsman is at work. Bearing in mind the debates going on at the time about conservation, purity of style, and the clearing of adjacent houses near Gothic churches, Hannotiau's resulting image is multilayered.⁶⁰ The intentional "clearing" of the air around the tower by eliminating structures of intermediate height, along with the monument-focused portrait orientation of the print (as opposed to a landscape orientation with an integrated cityscape), both play into the meaning suggested by the French title *L'Egide* [Protection]: a belief in the protection of Our Lady personified by the massive church tower watching over the city. Here, as in *Vieux gloires*, birds dramatically fly near the tower, against a clouded sky. The streets are wet, and the small, forward-leaning hooded figures seem to be rushing, as if caught in a storm. The postcard breathes the religious sentiment and devotion that, according to symbolist literature, animates the entire town.

Uses of the postcards

Postcard studies invite us to look at the "cultural work" performed by postcards—to scrutinize their use and the interaction between image and handwritten text. In an essay on lithography and early photography in Bruges, Dirk Lauwaert contrasts postcards and

their participative nature with the contemplative nature of earlier photographs: “Ik was hier” (postcard) versus “zo is of was het” (photography).⁶¹ Paraphrasing and transposing this to the picturesque-symbolist dualism, do Hannotiau’s postcards invite the user to write “this is how picturesque it looks” or rather “this symbolizes how I felt”?

The postcards that I collected (digitally or physically) for this research allow for some initial observations about their use. In 1900 the reverse side of a postcard was just for the address, while any messages had to be written on the front in the margins around the image. Only in September 1905 would this practice end, with the introduction of the split backside, when the Belgian postal system allowed a message on the left and the address on the right. Most of the concise messages on used cards from the *À Bruges* set consist of just a name or a very brief “Bonne fête” or “Joyeusement.”⁶² On others no writing was added, leaving the image—and the gesture of sending a postcard—to speak for itself, and assuming that the receiver would recognize the sender. Some of those blank cards were sent to recipients who are known to have been postcard collectors. Still others contain purely practical correspondence, such as the appointments and sums of money mentioned on the cards in figures 10 and 11.

I found at least one item of correspondence that shows that some postcard users actively engaged with the symbolist overtones in Hannotiau’s prints. In 1901, close to Christmas, someone in Nancy wrote at least three consecutive postcards from the series to a Mademoiselle Leletre Drapier, who lived with her parents thirty kilometers away, in Pont à Mousson, also in France. The writings on the three postcards reveal an emotional involvement with their subject. On the first, sent on December 11, the sender comments on *Brugeoise*: “L’habit en béguinage lui va fort bien.”⁶³ The fact that the postcard was posted in Nancy eliminates the “I was here” factor, while the comment on the printed image demonstrates that the card was more than a mere carrier of words or a communication device. Moreover, on December 18, the same correspondent wrote next to *Soir*: “Ce coin du paysage et ce profil / angelique s’harmonisent très bien / dans la mélancolie. Cela correspond / bien à l’état de mon esprit.”⁶⁴ A more literal expression of the key symbolist concept of *correspondances* is hard to find. Introduced by Charles Baudelaire, *correspondances* is essentially the portrayal of the external world as an aid to visualize the inner landscape.⁶⁵ Here, Hannotiau’s picture postcard puts Bruges in the role that the city performed in Rodenbach’s novel, *Bruges-la-Morte*. Scholars have pointed to the evocative importance of the stock photographs of Bruges that illustrate the novel’s first edition.⁶⁶ In his foreword to *Bruges-la-Morte*, Rodenbach explained the reason behind the photographs: he evoked the city as a character “associé aux états d’âme,” analogous to the handwritten words on the Hannotiau postcard.⁶⁷

fig. 4

Conclusion

In 1901, after the death of Hannotiau, the newspaper *La Patrie* cited the critic Jules Dujardin, who wrote of Hannotiau’s art, “Il a chanté ... la grandeur déchue de la vieille cité morte, le mystère et le recueillement qui vous hante lorsqu’on y habite, enfin le mysticisme ou, si l’on préfère, la religiosité de ses habitants.”⁶⁸ It is somewhat surprising to read this apt description, given the newspaper’s earlier criticism of his *Villes mortes* album and its support of the sea harbor project that was to revitalize “dead” Bruges. Hannotiau’s art was indeed perfectly in line with symbolists’ obsessions and preferences, because he focused on motifs—cloaks, religious life, almost deserted canals, and streets—that he portrayed as evocative symbols and not merely as aesthetically pleasing sights. This does not mean that Hannotiau was not invested in picturesque Bruges: he changed or invented views of



fig. 11 Alexandre Hannotiau, *Waalplaats* specimen, n.d., sent from Brussels to Lille on June 18, 1902.



fig. 12 *Place de la digue* [Waalplaats], photographer unknown, postcard issued by Nels, n.d., sent on January 2, 1901.

Bruges, sometimes subtly, sometimes overtly, adding buttresses, tweaking bridges, or simply composing an urban background with Bruges-like motifs—enhanced picturesque settings for his symbolist scenes. Hannotiau focused on the Bruges costume because of its mysterious and gloomy potential, while his portrayal of religious practice suggests the personal, intimate devotion of the worshipers. Such layered portrayals of Bruges also functioned when reproduced on a more widespread medium like postcards. The fourteen postcards allowed senders to use them in a personal manner, while the Bruges portrayals they carry go beyond the superficial touristic curiosity or cliché—that which several critics negatively labeled “picturesque.”

1 For their help, I thank Hubert Brandt, Dirk Michiels, Siska Beele (KMSKA), Laurence Van Kerkhoven and Inge Geysen (Museum Brugge), Karl Marcelis and Werner Adriaenssens (KMKG-MRAH), Georges Martyn, Marjan Sterckx, Linda Van Santvoort (Ghent University), the organizers of the Touring Belgium conference, and the reviewers for their suggestions. This research was enabled by the support of the Research Foundation-Flanders (FWO). This research was enabled by the support of the Research Foundation-Flanders (FWO).

2 David Prochaska and Jordana Mendelson, eds., *Postcards: Ephemeral Histories of Modernity*, Refiguring Modernism (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010); Lynda Klich and Benjamin Weiss, *The Postcard Age: Selections from the Leonard A. Lauder Collection* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2012); Marjan Sterckx and Leen Engelen, “Between Studio and Snapshot: Belle Époque Picture Postcards of Urban Statues,” *History of Photography* 37, no. 4 (2013): 445–458; Monica Cure, *Picturing the Postcard: A New Media Crisis at the Turn of the Century* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018).

3 Paul Edwards, “The Photograph in Georges Rodenbach’s *Bruges-La-Morte* (1892),” *Journal of European Studies* 30, no. 1 (2000): 71–89.

4 Jeffery Howe, “Fernand Khnopff’s Depictions of Bruges: Medievalism, Mysticism and Socialism,” *Arts Magazine* 55, no. 4 (1980): 126–131; Jeffery Howe, *The Symbolist Art of Fernand Khnopff* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982).

5 Naomi Schor, “‘Cartes postales’: Representing Paris 1900,” *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 2 (1992): 211.

6 James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800–1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 222. These two dichotomies (symbolist versus picturesque and traveler versus tourist) do not coincide, but the traveler is defined as an anti-tourist just as the symbolist is understood as going beyond the picturesque; *fin-de-siècle* picturesque and tourism share a general, pejorative connotation of predictability, repetitiveness, and superficiality.

7 Pieter François, “If It’s 1815, This Must Be Belgium: The Origins of the Modern Travel Guide,” *Book History* 15 (2012): 71–92.

8 “A Well-Known Artists’ Haunt: A Sketching Club at Bruges,” *The Graphic*, September 12, 1903, 349; “A Bruges la morte,” *L’Illustration*, September 12, 1903, 176.

9 “[A] horde of painters,” from the caption to “A Bruges la morte,” 176.

10 Lynne Pudles, “Fernand Khnopff, Georges Rodenbach, and Bruges, the Dead City,” *The Art Bulletin* 74, no. 4 (1992): 637–654; Sharon L. Hirsh, *Symbolism and Modern Urban Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 257–277; Richard Hibbitt, “Bruges as Symbolic Capital,” *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 53, no. 3 (2017): 349–359; Dominique Marechal, “And the Clouds Stagnate. On the Water’s Face: Bruges as a Crossroads of European Symbolism,” in *Nature’s Mirror: Reality and Symbol in Belgian Landscape*, ed. Jeffery Howe (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), 81–94.

11 Rodolphe Rapetti, *Le Symbolisme* (Paris: Flammarion, 2005); Michelle Facos, *Symbolist Art in Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Michel Draguet, *Le Symbolisme en Belgique* (Brussels: Fonds Mercator, 2010).

12 Stefan Huygebaert, “Memling’s genius and locus: symbolists, travelers and tourists in Bruges’s St John’s Hospital,” *Simiolus* 44, no. 3–4 (2023): 225–243.

13 “A Well-Known Artists’ Haunt,” 349.

14 Carrie Tirado Bramen, “A Transatlantic History of the Picturesque: An Introductory Essay,” *Nineteenth-Century Prose* 29, no. 2 (2002): 1–19; John Macarthur, *The Picturesque: Architecture, Disgust and Other Irregularities* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

15 Nonetheless, for Ruskin, there still existed a “higher” or “noble” picturesque, that entailed the ‘changefulness’ of Gothic architecture, while his emphasis on truth and sympathy led to the picturesque nostalgia being absorbed in the conservation movement. Macarthur, *The Picturesque*, 15.

16 Respective quotations from Macarthur, *The Picturesque*, 1, and Tirado Bramen, “A Transatlantic History,” 1.

17 Lut Pil, “*Pour le plaisir des yeux*”: *Het pittoreske landschap in de Belgische kunst: 19de-eeuwse retoriek en beeldvorming* (Leuven: Garant, 1993).

18 William Patten, “Letters from Artists to Artists. No. VII: Bruges as a Sketching Ground,” *Studio: International Art* 3 (1894): 42–46.

19 The citations come from a railway poster entitled *Bruges (Belgium)—the Artist’s Paradise*, designed by Flori Van Acker and issued by the tourist organization Die Roja on July 26, 1911.

20 Tirado Bramen, “A Transatlantic History,” 7. See also Wolfgang Kemp and Joyce Rheuban, “Images of Decay: Photography in the Picturesque Tradition,” *October* 54 (1990): 102–133; Dabney Townsend, “The Picturesque,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55, no. 4 (1997): 365–76.

21 “[O]thers, skilful ones, went to Bruges ‘looking for motifs’ without going beyond the picturesque exterior, without sensing what there was of a fiercely mystical and intense soul behind the walls.” Camille Mauclair, *De Watteau à Whistler* (Paris: E. Fasquelle, 2005), 242.

22 “[S]tupid and slavish, cold or dead, the way it is recorded in the sketchbook and on the canvas of the English misses.” Médard Verkest, *Studiën over Brugsche Kunstenaars* (Tongeren: A. Demarteau zoon, 1900), 24.

23 “[E]ither they slavishly paint our picturesque [*schilderachtige*] inner canals, stepped gables or splendid towers, or they embody the mysticism of Bruges in drawings and canvasses, as the good artist Hannotiau conceives and interprets it.” Verkest, *Studiën*, 9–10.

24 On Hannotiau, see Paul de Glines [=Sander Pierron], “Nos artistes chez eux: Alexandre Hanotiau [sic],” *Le Petit bleu du matin*, January 10, 1897, 6–7; Maurits Sabbe, “Alexander Hannotiau,” *De Vlaamse School*, no. 11 (1898): 195–203; Verkest, *Studiën*, 21–28; Pol De Mont, “Alexander Hannotiau,” *Die graphischen Künste* 24 (1901): 25–30; Pol De Mont, *Koppen en Busten: Aanteekeningen over de Kunstbeweging van dezen Tijd* (Brussels: Lambert, 1903), 159–168; Sander Pierron, *Douze*

effigies d’artistes (Brussels: Xavier Havermans, 1910), 8–15.

25 On Schoy, see Marcel Celis, “Schoy, Auguste,” in *Repertorium van de Architectuur in België van 1830 tot heden*, ed. Anne Van Loo, 500–501 (Antwerp: Mercatorfonds, 2003); Ellen Van Impe, “Puisé aux meilleures sources”: Textual and Visual Strategies of Mid-19th-Century Architectural Historiography in Belgium,” *Architectural Histories* 3, no. 1, Art. 23 (2015): 1–21.

26 Howe, *The Symbolist Art*, 24.

27 De Glines, “Nos artistes,” 6.

28 De Glines, “Nos artistes,” 6; Verkest, *Studiën*, 22; “Il serait impossible de trouver un atelier plus pittoresque que le sien.” Pierron, *Douzes Effigies*, 9.

29 Sabbe, “Hannotiau,” 203; De Glines, “Nos artistes,” 1897, 6; Pierron, *Douzes effigies*, 9–10.

30 Alexandre Hannotiau, *L’Ara*, currently part of the Collection of the Flemish Community (*Collectie Vlaamse Gemeenschap*), inv. number 1243.

31 Hannotiau specifically liked the way exhibits were not “locked up” in showcases, which allowed visitors to dream and return to the past. One cannot help but notice the analogy with his own studio. His review is reproduced in Arthur Merghelynck, *Monographie de l’Hôtel-Musée Merghelynck à Ypres, Flandre occidentale, Belgique* (Ypres: Imprimerie Tyberghien-Fraeys, 1900), 77–78.

32 Sabbe, “Hannotiau,” 203.

33 Anna Bergmans, *Middeleeuwse muurschilderingen in de 19e eeuw: studie en inventaris van middeleeuwse muurschilderingen in Belgische kerken* (Leuven: Universitaire Pers, 1998), 141, 161–162. I thank Werner Adriaenssens and Karl Marcelis (KMKG-MRAH) for their willingness and help in showing me these works.

34 *Catalogue d’une très belle collection... provenant des successions de feu M. le général Hennequin et de feu M. Alex. Hannotiau, artiste peintre... à Bruxelles* (Brussels: E. Lhoest, 1902), 22, nos 504 and 505. I thank Kenan Van De Mierop for his help on this matter.

35 “He triumphs in the ‘black-and-white,’ and his pencil excels in rendering the solidity of stone architecture or the ornamental picturesque of sculpted wood. That is to say, lithography seems to have been invented especially for him.” “Chez Lamertin,” *L’Indépendance belge*, July 1, 1894, 6.

36 Hirsh, *Symbolism*, 4.

37 Fernand Khnopff, “Studio-Talk,” *The Studio* 14 (1898): 66–69; Pierron, “Douzes effigies,” 12.

38 Coppens was an acquaintance of Hannotiau; they often exhibited together and co-founded *Pour l’Art*, an art society that gathered many symbolists, including Jean Delville. Sébastien Clerbois, “Omer Coppens, secrétaire du cercle Pour l’Art (1894–1904),” in *Omer Coppens [1864–1926] ou le rêve de l’Art Nouveau*, ed. Sébastien Clerbois (Antwerp: Pandora, 2001), 43–56.

39 “[H]e penetrated the psychological and poetic intimacy [of Bruges] with a profound and delicate sensibility”; “one could feel the religious soul of the race vibrate and dream.” “Le peintre Hannotiau,” *Le Vingtième Siècle*, December 12, 1901, 1.

40 “[R]esurrected the picturesque corners of old cities and old beguinages.” “Mort

du peintre Hannotiau,” *Le Soir*, December 14, 1901, 4.

41 Klich and Weiss, *The Postcard Age*, 71, 278.

42 Roger Van Peteghem, “La firme Dietrich et Cie, editrice des premières cartes postales belges,” *Le Journal du Collectionneur* 5, no. 40 (1994), 53–55, and no. 41 (1994), 73–76. Daan van Heesch, “‘Allez-y! Ensor, Galerie Dietrich en het Prentenkabinet,” in *Ensor & Brussel*, ed. Daan van Heesch (Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2024), 59–67.

43 The postcard series is briefly mentioned in an afterword in Verkest, *Studiën*, 83.

44 Specimens of *Vieux quai* were printed with at least two different plates, as some prints feature a scratch in the upper left corner.

45 Pierron, *Douzes effigies*, 12.

46 “Le paysage ainsi composé est entièrement brugeois, et cependant vous ne le trouverez pas dans Bruges.” X., “Chat-Noir,” *Journal de Bruges*, December 18, 1898, 2. “Ses architectures gothiques ne sont pas de simples copies; il les fait vivre et les crée à nouveau par le point de vue et l’atmosphère.” “Au jour le jour. Échos de la ville,” *L’Indépendance belge*, March 20, 1902, 2.

47 “Hannotiau has illustrated Bruges in paintings of a penetrating but artificial art, inspiring himself more by dreams than actual sight.” Joseph Ryelandt, “Vendredi saint à Bruges,” *Durendal* 5 (1903): 284–287.

48 See, for example, Hans Vandevoorde’s afterword “Tussen verzinzel en werkelijkheid” (“Between Fabrication and Reality”) in Georges Rodenbach, *De Beiaardier [Le Carillonneur]*, 1897, trans. Jan H. Mysjkin, (Antwerp and Amsterdam: Hautekiet, 2003 (1897)): 283–300.

49 E.g. *Bruges—Green Canal. House of the Pelican*, issued by PhoB editions before 1905.

50 Van Peteghem, “La firme Dietrich,” 76. Advertisement in *L’Art moderne*, June 10, 1894, 181.

51 “[T]aste for the macabre, for the still life.” “Villes mortes.—Bruges,” *La Patrie*, July 25, 1894, 1–2.

52 See, for example, Louis Courajod, “Quelques monuments de la sculpture bourguignonne,” *La Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 32 (1885): 390–400; “Le Musée du Louvre,” *Journal de Bruxelles*, November 28, 1888, 2; Eugène Müntz, “Le Tombeau de Philippe Pot au Musée du Louvre et la sculpture française du Moyen Âge en France,” *Magasin pittoresque* (1889): 71–74. An etching of the monument by Henri Guérard (1846–1897) from 1885 exists in six different states. See Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie, FOL-EF-477 (16). In 1875, Alfred Stevens and Charles Edouard de Beaumont each painted an image, almost identical to each other, of the Pot monument in an invented sunny and idyllic garden setting where a couple of lovers linger. Erwin Panofsky and Gerda Panofsky have argued that both artists based their painting on a photolithography of the monument. The two paintings have a distinctively different message from Hannotiau’s print; Stevens and de Beaumont show the opposite of a morbid memento mori: a frivolous “invitation ... to enjoy the blessings of life and love.” Erwin Panofsky and Gerda Panofsky, “The ‘Tomb in Arcady’ at the ‘Fin-de-Siècle,’” *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 30 (1968): 287–304. Sophie Jugie, *Le Tombeau de Philippe Pot* (Madrid: Editions

El Viso, 2018): 26–29. For an elaborate discussion of this cloak motif, see Stefan Huygebaert, “Uncloaking the Kapmantel in Belle Epoque Bruges: the Symbolist Potential of a Picturesque Motif in Art,” *Oud Holland*, 134 (2021): 188–209.

53 The first of these paintings (1893) is held in Ypres, Church of Saint-James; the other is a cartoon, presumably held in Brussels, MRAH-KMKG.

54 “[A] trip to Bruges is above all a trip to the past. Even the women’s costume has something of the clothes of yesteryear.” Jules Claretie, *Voyages d’un Parisien* (Paris: A. Faure, 1865), 274.

55 “An Eastern Ramble in the Netherlands: Concluding Article,” *Chambers’ Edinburgh Journal*, August 29, 1846, 131.

56 “[W]here old women, cold and yellow figures from Memling, crawl along the deserted canals as if they were the *pleurants* of this great past.” Félicien Rops, quoted in J.-M. Simon, “Jeanne d’Arc dans les Flandres,” *Journal de Bruges*, November 14, 1896, 2.

57 For example, Theodoor Verstraete, *The Vigil*, 1889–1890, KMSKA, Antwerp.

58 K.V., “Het passiehuizen op Sint-Salvatorskerkhof,” *Rond den Heerd* 10, no. 17 (1875): 138. Hannotiau anachronistically included this kneeling figure in a passion house in his painting about the 1432 chapter of the Golden Fleece (Ypres), placing it near the St. Donation’s Cathedral.

59 “Waalplaats” is the old spelling.

60 Evert Vandeweghe, “De *verouderde* steden. Of hoe de historische stad vorm kreeg in een eeuw van modernisering (1860–1960): Aalst, Dendermonde, Oudenaarde en Veurne” (PhD diss., Universiteit Gent, 2013), 63–66, 324–363.

61 “I was here” versus “this is how it was.” Dirk Lauwaert, “Stadsfotografie in het negentiende-eeuwse Brugge [II],” *De witte raaf* 17, no. 105 (2003): 17–22.

62 “Bonne fête” (“Happy Holidays”) is written on a *L’Egide* specimen sent on November 2, 1900, to Mademoiselle Cécile Van Caloen in Varsenare; “Joyeusement” (“Joyously”) is written on a *Ommegang op Goedenrydag* specimen sent in 1902 to Besançon.

63 “This beguine cloak suits her very well.” From a used *Brugeoise* specimen, sent December 11, 1901 (Stefan Huygebaert collection).

64 “This corner of the landscape and this angelical profile harmonize very well with melancholia. That corresponds well with my state of mind.” From a used *Soir* specimen, sent December 18, 1901 (Stefan Huygebaert collection).

65 Sylvie Thorel-Cailleteau, “Proximité du naturalisme et du symbolisme en Belgique,” in *France-Belgique (1848–1914): Affinités-ambiguïtés. Actes du colloque des 7, 8, 9 mai 1996*, ed. Marc Quaghebeur and Nicole Savy (Brussels: Labor, 1997), 289–302.

66 Edwards, “The Photograph.”

67 “[A]ssociated with the state of the soul.” Georges Rodenbach, *Bruges-la-Morte* (Paris: Flammarion, 1892), 1. Another sender of *Brugsche vrouw* wrote the first four lines of Rodenbach’s poem *La Prière* on the postcard. Rodenbach included *La Prière* in his first collection of poems, *La jeunesse blanche*, from 1886.

68 “He sang the lost grandeur of the old dead city, the mystery and contemplation that haunt you when you live there, and finally the mysticism or, if one prefers, the religiousness of its inhabitants.” “Alexandre Hannotiau,” *La Patrie*, December 14, 1901, 1–2.

Provenance figures

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