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Cover image: The bookshop and lottery agency of Jan de Groot on the Kalverstraat in Amsterdam – Isaac Ouwater, 1779 (Rijksmuseum Amsterdam)

# The fabric of creativity in the Dutch Republic

Painting and publishing as cultural industries, 1580-1800

Patronen van creativiteit in de Republiek

Schilderkunst en uitgeverij als culturele industrieën, 1580-1800

(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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# 1 Introduction

On October 25 1779, Isaac Ouwater (1748-1793), a Dutch painter best known for his townscapes, painted the peculiar picture that adorns on the cover of this book. The painting depicts a street scene featuring a group of people jostling each other to enter a building. On closer inspection, the inscription reveals that it must have been lottery day, as the building in question was the Amsterdam office of the state lottery (*Generaliteitsloterij*), run by bookseller Jan de Groot (1733-1801).<sup>1</sup> Tucked away between two inns, De Groot's shop was only a stone's throw away from Dam square, the centre of Amsterdam, and from numerous fellow publishers, booksellers, art shops, and print publishers.<sup>2</sup> In 1742, someone taking a stroll from Dam square, via the Kalverstraat, to the Munt and back along the Rokin, would have passed as many as 44 bookshops and mapsellers, not even counting the smaller shops in the alleys.<sup>3</sup> The 'ninth house from the Dam', or Kalverstraat 10, itself had also been occupied by booksellers, publishers, and engravers for well over a century.<sup>4</sup> Illustrious neighbours included the landscape painters Aert van der Neer (c. 1604-1677) and Jacob van Ruisdael (c. 1629-1682).

The first to use the premises for the business of books, maps, and art was German born Clement de Jonghe (c. 1624-1677) who set up shop there in 1658 and went on to become one of the largest print publishers and art dealers of his day, offering around 60,000 prints.<sup>5</sup> After his death, his heirs rented the space to engraver and publisher Hendrik Visjager (?-?), who also ran a coffee house from the property. He was succeeded by publisher, engraver, and map and globe maker Gerrit Valck (c. 1652-1726), who, in turn, sold both the shop and the living quarters to the rear of the property to the famous German immigrant publisher Johan Hendrik Wetstein (1649-1720). In 1742, after the death of his son Rudolf, the shop and the houses – the former having been drastically renovated – came into the ownership of publisher Isaac Tirion (1705-1765). He would eventually sell the buildings, already home to a portrait

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<sup>1</sup> It reads: 'Hier werdt Gecolletet ... Ginnere ... loterij' or paraphrasing 'Hier wordt gecollecteerd voor de Generaliteitsloterij'. The inscription on the plaque refers to the sign of the Wetsteins, an image of a hand grinding a chisel on a stone: 'Dum teritur cos literatis, usui et literis proposit bonis'. In Dutch: 'Terwijl de wetsteen slijt, strekke hij den geletterden tot nut, den letteren tot voordeel'. Translation from Ter Gouw and Van Lennep, *De uithangteekens*, vol. II, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Van den Brink and Werner, eds., *Gesneden*.

<sup>3</sup> Lesger, 'De locatie van het Amsterdamse winkelbedrijf', p. 50; Van Nierop, 'De handeldrijvende middenstand', pp. 209-210.

<sup>4</sup> For the history of the building see: Heijbroek, 'Bij de voorplaat'.

<sup>5</sup> On De Jonghe see: Laurentius, *Clement de Jonghe*.

of the famous lawyer Hugo de Groot (1583-1645), to the De Groot family in 1769, ten years before Isaac Ouwater would paint the afore mentioned painting.<sup>6</sup> This did not mark of the building's association with bookselling. In 1790 it was purchased by bookseller Pieter den Hengst (1745-1818) and some 40 years later by Johannes Müller (1786-1853), who was in a partnership with Isaac Tirion, the grandson of one of the building's previous owners of the same name. In 1883, the property finally found a new function when Johan Peter Müller sold the place after his brother Christiaan died without leaving any heirs.<sup>7</sup>

This dissertation argues that geographic concentration of cultural producers in the same or related fields, as well as its persistence over time, are more than nice-to-know petty facts. The century long use of Kalverstraat nr. 10 as a bookshop testifies to the importance of the reproduction of skills and routines for future industrial development. In this case such reproduction even takes a physical form.<sup>8</sup> Even though creativity is essentially a raw material, equally distributed across time and place, cultural production, which relies so much on originality and innovation, does not develop and prosper just anywhere. This suggests that sustained successful cultural production, also depends on locally specific historical conditions and institutions that allow producers to make the most of the available pool of creativity.<sup>9</sup>

This thesis is the first systematic investigation of the role of local industrial organization in explaining spatial and diachronic patterns in early modern cultural production. More specifically, it analyses the industries of painting and publishing in the early modern Dutch Republic. Its aim is to contribute not only a to comprehensive interpretation of the evolution of early modern Dutch culture, but also to add to the broader context of the economic history of the Dutch Republic and to the understanding of production of cultural goods in general. Two larger issues inspire this research: the phenomenon of the Dutch Golden Age, and the observation that remarkable cultural production is concentrated in space and time.<sup>10</sup> Peter Hall neatly summarized the latter in the question of why 'the creative flame should burn so especially, so uniquely, in cities and not the countryside and what makes a

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<sup>6</sup> The painting remained in the art collection of the De Groot family until it was auctioned off in 1922 bij Frederik Müller & Cie, a by then renowned Amsterdam auction house, started by Frederik Müller (1817-1881) cousin of the abovementioned Johannes Müller.

<sup>7</sup> Even so, the Müller publishing business was continued by Christiaan's cousin Paulus Müller from a different part of town.

<sup>8</sup> 'The ninth house from the Dam' is not the only building that has such a pronounced occupational history. Consider for instance also the printshop of Otto Barentsz Smient in the Ossenmakrt (now Reguliersbreestraat), which remained with the family until it was sold to Jacob van Egmont in 1704. His heirs continued the business in the same location until the first decade of the nineteenth century. Smient set up his shop across the street from his father's, Van der Kogel, 'Barent Otsz', pp. 14-19. Another example is publishing business Van Keulen. Van Keulen, Morzer Bruyns, and Spits, eds., *In de gekroonde Lootsman*.

<sup>9</sup> This is argued in: Pratt, 'Creative clusters: Towards the governance of the creative industries production system?'; Scott, 'Cultural-products industries'; Scott, *The cultural economy of cities*.

<sup>10</sup> Consider also the analysis of Patrick O'Brien in O'Brien, 'Reflections and mediations'.

particular city, at a particular time, suddenly become immensely creative, exceptionally innovative?<sup>11</sup> In another comparative study of urban achievements, Patrick O'Brien explored why outstanding achievements in material and intellectual culture in early modern Europe tended to cluster in certain maritime cities.

## 1.1 Cultural production in the Golden Age

Between the 1580s and 1650s, the Dutch Republic of the Seven United Provinces (hereafter: the Republic) became the centre of the world economy. During this famous Golden Age, cultural production reached unprecedented levels in terms of scale, scope, and quality.<sup>12</sup> In 1935-1936, art-historian Wilhelm Martin wrote that 'nowhere [in the world] were there in such a small area so many and such great painters'.<sup>13</sup> Recent quantitative research has confirmed his statement. During the early modern period, Dutch painters produced a breath-taking number of paintings in a variety of genres. A figure in the region of several millions is now commonly accepted.<sup>14</sup> For book publishing, estimates are equally impressive. The Republic had the highest per capita consumption and production of books in Europe and Dutch publishers and merchants fulfilled important export functions.<sup>15</sup> The number of high-quality painters and publishers, as well as the variety of genres and styles are as much a characteristic of Golden Age cultural production as is its volume.<sup>16</sup> In other words, commercial and artistic achievements went hand in hand. This success, however, did not last. From the late seventeenth century onwards, the Dutch economy, including its cultural industries, lost much of its momentum.

The aim of this thesis is to uncover mechanisms responsible for the creation, reproduction, and the eventual loss of artistic and economic competitiveness of cultural industries in the Dutch Republic during the early modern period. Early modern Dutch cultural production is extraordinarily well-researched and this allows us to apply a broad scope. The research covers two industries, over two centuries, throughout the Dutch Republic as a whole. Thanks to centuries of detailed investigations by art- and book-historians, there exists a wealth of data on producers and the products they made. Moreover, the general context in which paintings and books were produced is familiar. Economic prosperity, population growth,

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<sup>11</sup> Hall, *Cities in civilization*, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. 'Bok, 'Rise of Amsterdam'; Hoftijzer, 'Metropolis'.

<sup>13</sup> 'geen land ter wereld ooit geweest [is] waar op een zó klein gebied zóóvele en zóó groote kunstenaars [hebben] gewerkt als toen in Holland'. Cited from Martin, *Hollandsche schilderkunst*, vol. I, p. 36.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Van der Woude, 'The volume and value of paintings'; Montias, 'Estimates'.

<sup>15</sup> For these estimates see: Buringh and Van Zanden, 'Charting the "rise of the west"'; Van Zanden, *Long road*, chapter 6. On export consider the contributions in: Berckvens-Stevelinck *et al.*, eds., *Le magasin de l'univers* *ibid.*.

<sup>16</sup> On painting see: De Vries, 'Art history'. On publishing and printing see: Hoftijzer, 'Metropolis'.

secularisation of demand, relative freedom of press and thought, high levels of literacy, and a developed trade network, all top the list of usual suspects. Furthermore, in art history, it has become commonplace to view Dutch painting from a modern economic perspective.<sup>17</sup> This is the framework within which this study is presented, with the additional explanatory variable of organisation and structure of production.<sup>18</sup>

## 1.2 Historiography

For a long time, art- and book historians have attributed the success of painting and publishing to general social, economic, and cultural developments external to the production of art and books as well as to industry-specific factors.<sup>19</sup> Local circumstances were favourable to expansion on both the supply and demand sides: there was economic prosperity, population growth, relative freedom of the press, cheap capital, high literacy, and a developed trade network to reach domestic and international markets.<sup>20</sup> Why the Dutch Republic emerged as an important cultural centre is generally explained by two interacting factors. Firstly, after Antwerp fell to the Spaniards in 1585, Amsterdam replaced it as a commercial centre and saw a dramatic increase in wealth. Secondly, the last decades of the sixteenth century witnessed a massive influx of skilled craftspeople from the Southern Netherlands. In other words, at a time when demand for luxury goods increased, immigrant-producers were ideally placed to provide these goods in a great quantity and variety.<sup>21</sup> More industry-specific explanations include the attribution of the exceptional success of Dutch seventeenth-century painting to the introduction of typically Dutch subject matters and painterly techniques.<sup>22</sup> In the case of book production, the influx of French Huguenot publishers following the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 and the so-called reading revolution during the second

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<sup>17</sup> This trend was introduced by economist Michael Montias in Montias, *Artists and artisans*; Montias, 'Cost and value'; Montias, 'The influence of economic factors' and further developed on a micro- and macro-level. Compare De Marchi and Van Miegroet, *Mapping markets*; North, 'Art and commerce'; Bok, *Vraag en aanbod*; De Vries, 'Art history'. For Dutch publishing there is no significant tradition of employing socio-economic theories. Exceptions are Cruz, *Paradox of prosperity* and De Kruif, *Liefhebbers*.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Prak, 'Painters'.

<sup>19</sup> 'Kopij en druk revisited: een eigentijds overzicht van de Nederlandse boekgeschiedenis vanaf de 14e eeuw', ; Hoftijzer, 'Metropolis'; De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Het Hollandse wonder'; Hellinga, De la Fontaine Verwey, and Ovink, *Kopij en druk*; Berckvens-Stevelinck *et al.*, eds., *Le magasin de l'univers*.

<sup>20</sup> On the Golden Age: Prak, *The Dutch Republic*.

<sup>21</sup> Bok, 'Rise of Amsterdam', p. 187.

<sup>22</sup> This line of reasoning can be found in Gombrich, *The story of art*, p. chapters 18 and 20. Prak, 'Painters', p. 144.



half of the eighteenth century are commonly used to explain increases in the number of titles produced in the Dutch Republic.<sup>23</sup>

In recent years an additional explanation for the success of Dutch painting has gained ground, as the study of visual arts has become the focus of a growing number of 'art and market' studies.<sup>24</sup> The general premise in these 'art and market studies' is that cultural products are commodities. This has resulted in a widely held belief that market forces have done much to shape early modern Dutch art production, both quantitatively and qualitatively.<sup>25</sup> Economist John Michael Montias triggered this research area in the early 1980s by employing economic theory to analyse the size and composition of Dutch local art markets.<sup>26</sup> Thanks to many subsequent efforts, the art and artists of the Golden Age have been relatively well-researched from an economic perspective. The relationship between economy and artistic production has been demonstrated on a macro-level by scholars such as Jan De Vries and Ad van der Woude, and on a micro-level by Marten Jan Bok.<sup>27</sup> The development of the new genres, styles, and techniques for which Dutch Golden Age painting became famous, are now interpreted not only as artistic achievements, but also as product and process innovations to lower production costs.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, the dramatic decline of the Dutch painting sector after the middle of the seventeenth century, is now attributed mainly to structural overproduction and declining demand for newly produced paintings as wall decorations.<sup>29</sup>

In book history, a 'markets' approach has been less common.<sup>30</sup> Although studies on the production of books during the Golden Age have discussed many economic aspects, they have done this without the explicit use of economic theory.<sup>31</sup> This thesis continues in the tradition of art market research, but will focus more on

<sup>23</sup> On Huguenot influence see: Frijhoff, 'Uncertain brotherhood'. On the reading revolution see for instance Van Goinga, *Alom te bekomen*.

<sup>24</sup> De Marchi and Van Miegroet, *Mapping markets*, p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> For a different explanatory model see: Brulez, *Cultuur en getal*, pp. 84-88. Brulez denies the relationship between culture and economy altogether and stresses the determining value of political power.

<sup>26</sup> There are too many studies to mention them all here. By Michael Montias: Montias, *Artists and artisans*; Montias, 'Cost and value'; Montias, 'The influence of economic factors'; Montias, 'Estimates'. Consider for example also: Bok, *Vraag en aanbod*; De Vries, 'Art history'; Van der Woude, 'The volume and value of paintings'; De Marchi and Van Miegroet, *Mapping markets*; North and Ormrod, eds., *Art markets in Europe, 1400-1800*; *Kunst voor de markt/ art for the market, 1500-1700*, vol. 50; North, *Art and commerce*. On England: Bayer and Page, *The development of the art market in England*. On the Southern Netherlands: Vermeulen, *Painting for the market*. On Italy, for example: Etro and Pagani, 'The market for paintings in Italy' (forthcoming); Spear and Sohm, eds., *Painting for profit*.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. De Vries, 'Art history'; Van der Woude, 'The volume and value of paintings'; Bok, *Vraag en aanbod*.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Montias, 'The influence of economic factors'.

<sup>29</sup> Bok, 'Rise of Amsterdam', p. 204.

<sup>30</sup> Exceptions are: Cruz, *Paradox of prosperity*; De Kruif, *Liefhebbers*; For a similar attempt regarding Dutch architecture: Prak, 'Market for architecture'.

<sup>31</sup> Most book-historical titles are either general or highly-detailed. Cf. 'Kopij en druk revisited: een eigentijds overzicht van de Nederlandse boekgeschiedenis vanaf de 14e eeuw', ; Van Delft and Bots, *Bibliopolis*; Hoftijzer, 'Metropolis'; De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Het Hollandse wonder'; Hellinga, *De la Fontaine Verwey*, and Ovink, *Kopij en druk*; Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*. In a project on Amsterdam printers, Piet Verkruijsse has focused on individual case studies. <http://cf.hum.uva.nl/bookmaster/>. In England there is a more established tradition in economic studies of book history: Cf. Plant, *The English book trade*; Raven, *The business of books*.

the organisation of cultural industries than has so far been. As Jan de Vries has suggested, market conditions alone cannot explain patterns of success over time and space. He pointed out ‘the explosive growth in the number of painters could only have been sustained if consumers were attracted to new products, or if new products caused them to change their tastes’.<sup>32</sup> Even if he did not follow up on this statement, the observation that markets do not only have to be created, but that they also need to be maintained, is an important one. This where organisation of industry and markets comes in. From this perspective, the presence of a large, sophisticated, and varied market was a necessary, but not in itself sufficient factor. Even though studies have hinted at the possibility of so-called endogenous growth mechanisms through local production systems in the form of ‘critical mass’ (Montias), guilds (Prak), and organisational changes in general (De Vries), this dynamic and the underlying mechanisms have yet to be explored in a systematic way.<sup>33</sup> So as to address this issue, the rest of the introduction will construct a coherent framework on the basis of modern economic theory. This comprises three steps: discussion of the analytical model of spatial clustering, the categorising model of industrial life cycles, and literature on the behaviour of cultural industries.

### 1.3 Cultural industries

Around the time that historians of early modern art production embraced an economic perspective, an alternative but complementary approach was developed in modern economic theory on cultural production. Sectors of the economy concerned with the production of culture came to be known as ‘cultural industries’, as opposed to ordinary manufacturing and service industries.<sup>34</sup> This trend did not come about as a result of economists developing a sudden awareness of the specific qualities cultural objects possess, but because planning for economies of post-industrial cities fuelled an interest in the optimal organisation of creativity. If policy makers are to be trusted, culture is crucial in promoting urban and regional economic development in post-industrial societies.<sup>35</sup> Related studies on successful urban cultural production discovered that firms in cultural sectors, as well as other sectors dependent on knowledge and innovation, displayed distinct economic behaviour and methods of

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<sup>32</sup> De Vries, ‘Art history’, p. 266.

<sup>33</sup> Montias, *Artists and artisans*, p. 329; Prak, ‘Painters’; Bok, ‘Paintings for sale’; De Vries, ‘Art history’, p. 265.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Scott, *The cultural economy of cities*.

<sup>35</sup> See Kloosterman, ‘Recent employment trends’; Power and Scott, eds., *Cultural industries*. See Lash and Urry, *Economies of signs and space* on the ‘culturalizing of the economy’. The concept of the creative city has been popularized through the seminal works Florida, *Cities and the creative class* and Landry, *The creative city*.

industrial organisation. Consequently, viewing different types of cultural production, such as art and book production and trade, as 'cultural industries' thus has a straightforward purpose: to shed light on how cultural economic competitiveness may be created and sustained.

Terms such as 'cultural economy', 'cultural industries', 'creative cities', 'creative clusters', and 'creative class' have become buzz words, rather than academic tools of interpretation and explanation. Urban planners with their attempts to push their 'cool cities' cannot shoulder all the blame for devaluation of these concepts, since academic literature on these concepts is not all that clear and consistent about definitions either. That is why, before indiscriminately applying the frameworks of cultural economy and spatial clustering to historical case studies, it should be clear what these concepts mean and what can and cannot contribute to the study of pre-industrial societies.

The cultural economy comprises those sectors that are involved in the production and consumption of goods and services that have a relatively large symbolic or aesthetic value.<sup>36</sup> These sectors are commonly known as cultural product industries, cultural industries, or creative industries. What is meant by a cultural industry?<sup>37</sup> Most scholars agree on the inclusion of the creative arts, cultural heritage, the audio-visual media (film, music, television, video and computer games, etc.), and print media and publishing.<sup>38</sup> Often the list also includes design, advertising, fashion, and architecture. Some lists include the industries that support cultural creation, such as retail bookselling or art dealing.<sup>39</sup> The creative economy often also includes science, engineering, and education sectors as well. The issue of definition is not a minor one, and not only because it strongly affects claims about the economic importance of the cultural economy: it is the foundation of the concepts discussed here. Different definitions lead to dramatically different outcomes in terms of economic impact, for example in terms of employment shares and spatial densities. Additionally, this does not even begin to capture spillovers to other sectors of the economy or the social implications of a more or a lesser-developed cultural economy.<sup>40</sup> Evidently, a more inclusive categorisation amplifies the economic relevance of the sector, but also makes it prone to criticism on the analytical value of the definition, as it is hard to maintain that all these activities genuinely share a comparable dynamic.

Most definitions of the cultural industries are based around a combination of five main criteria: creativity, intellectual property, symbolic meaning, use value, and

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<sup>36</sup> Cf. Scott, 'The cultural economy'.

<sup>37</sup> Compare Power and Scott, eds., *Cultural industries*; Towse, 'Cultural industries'.

<sup>38</sup> Towse, 'Cultural industries'.

<sup>39</sup> More problematic categories are for instance sports, religion, restaurants, software, and education.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Scott, 'Cultural-products industries'.

methods of production.<sup>41</sup> The first two, while strongly related to cultural production, are relatively broad in the sense that they can apply to many sectors that have nothing or little to do with culture production. The words creative and cultural are often used interchangeably, and they may indeed overlap in practice, but they denote two different concepts. For most people, they mean more or less the same thing, but it is important to realise that cultural production is not by definition creative, whereas creative production does not necessarily include the production of culture in the literal sense of the word. In theory, industries that generate innovations, which basically encompasses all industries, can be considered creative. As a result, the term 'creative economy' often includes science, engineering, and education sectors as well.<sup>42</sup> This research is concerned with the production of cultural goods, rather than with creativity or intellectual property in general. Therefore, the term cultural will be used throughout the book.

In the third feature meaning stands central as cultural industries are directly involved in the production of social meaning in the form of texts and symbols.<sup>43</sup> This aspect is often combined with the relative use value of goods that carry such symbolic significance. Allen Scott maintains that while cultural products may be heterogeneous, the sectors that make them are all engaged in the creation of artefacts whose symbolic or aesthetic qualities are high in relation to their utilitarian purposes.<sup>44</sup> The final aspect regards production methods. Ruth Towse describes the cultural industries as those that 'mass-produce goods and services with sufficient artistic content to be considered creatively and culturally significant. The essential features are industrial-scale production combined with cultural content'.<sup>45</sup> On the basis of this aspect, traditional visual art forms such as painting and sculpture should be banished to the periphery.<sup>46</sup> This is not to say that the production method determines what is culture and what is not, and therefore it should never be the sole defining characteristic. What is important, however, is that the method of production refers to both the market mechanism and the specific structure and organisation of industries involved in the creation of goods that carry a relatively large symbolic value. When these five elements are combined, the following definition emerges: the cultural industries are involved in a market-oriented production process that includes creativity (in whatever form), of goods or services that carry some form of intellectual property as well as a relatively high value of symbolism in relation to

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<sup>41</sup> Galloway and Dunlop, 'A critique of the definitions', p. 19.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Markusen *et al.*, 'Defining the creative economy'.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Hesmondhalgh, *The cultural industries*.

<sup>44</sup> Scott, *The cultural economy of cities*, p. 323.

<sup>45</sup> Towse, 'Cultural industries', p. 170.

<sup>46</sup> Hesmondhalgh, *The cultural industries*, p. 12.

their functional use.<sup>47</sup>

The social sciences have increasingly viewed cultural industries as a distinct economic sector, but this approach has not yet been systematically applied when approaching early modern history.<sup>48</sup> Why would scholars of pre-industrial societies even bother with these concepts and the largely policy-oriented distinctions between them?<sup>49</sup> Why not simply stick to the categories of arts, music, book publishing, or architecture? Because, by using the concept of cultural industries, we can help identify structural conditions which explain the already well-studied historical trends in cultural production. This hinges on the notion that cultural industries differ from other industries, despite their heterogeneity. This is not only because the cultural products in these sectors share certain characteristics, but also because these characteristics have consequences for the behaviour of firms and consumers, and for the economic organisation of the sector.

#### 1.4 Spatial clusters and geographic embeddedness

The growing interest in cultural industries as sources of economic growth in post-industrial urban economies coincided with growing academic interest in economic geography.<sup>50</sup> More specifically, economists are paying increasing attention to one of the most striking features of the geography of economic activity: the concentration of production.<sup>51</sup> Urban cultural agglomeration is not only viewed as a geographic outcome, but also as a key determinant of patterns of cultural-industrial success and failure. Consider, for instance, Elizabeth Currid's analysis of New York's cultural economy during the twentieth century.<sup>52</sup> Concentrated in little more than a single neighbourhood, New York's creative inhabitants manage to sustain their domination the world market for art, fashion, and music. In Currid's opinion, the New York cultural economy is so successful not despite but because of this small geographic underpinning.<sup>53</sup>

The common term for geographic concentration of production is spatial cluster. Economist Michael Porter has defined a cluster as 'a geographically

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<sup>47</sup> The main problem here remains the use of the word relative. How do we measure the degree of cultural value and functional value of a good or service?

<sup>48</sup> With Hessler and Zimmerman, eds., *Creative urban milieus* being an exception.

<sup>49</sup> The work of Peter Hall is a notable exception. Hall, *Cities in civilization*. Consider also Hessler and Zimmerman, 'Introduction: creative urban milieus'.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Power and Scott, eds., *Cultural industries*.

<sup>51</sup> Especially since the works of Michael Porter and Paul Krugman: Krugman, *Geography and trade* and Porter, *Competitive advantage*. The idea that there is a relationship between industrial structure, spatial associations, and economic growth goes back to the late nineteenth century, but has been developed by economic geographers during recent decades. Marshall, *Principles of economics*, vol. 7.

<sup>52</sup> Currid, *The Warhol economy*.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid..

proximate group of inter-connected companies and associated institutions in a particular field, linked by commonalities and complementarities'.<sup>54</sup> Patterns of industrial production suggest that there are benefits of geographic proximity for producers of similar and related products. Benefits stemming from physical proximity, as well as the scale and scope of both demand and supply, are known as agglomeration externalities. The main advantages of clustering are the realisation of economic efficiency through economies of scale and scope, by sharing both a specialized labour pool and suppliers, and the production and transmission of so-called tacit knowledge.<sup>55</sup> The former lowers search-, transaction-, and transport costs, whereas the latter facilitates learning and innovation, the basic sources of competitiveness in cultural industries.

The many possible benefits from being located in an urban area are typically referred to as urbanisation economies. These include, for example, access to skilled labour markets, to consumer markets, to other firms in the supply chain, and to trade networks, and can result in cost advantages as well as enhanced possibilities for innovation. Urban industrial diversity can, for instance, facilitate spillovers between industries. Localisation economies, on the other hand, represent positive externalities arising from the co-location of a group of firms. These economies are external to the firm yet internal to the industry, since they are a function of the organisation of the industry on a spatial level.<sup>56</sup> Urbanisation and localisation externalities are considered to enhance both the performance of incumbents and entrants. Being in the same location is important, but the interaction between producers, consumers, and suppliers is what actually creates a favourable industrial atmosphere, or 'buzz'.<sup>57</sup>

The cluster model is used to explain spatial disparities in the distribution of economic activities and, as such, it is closely related to the path dependency theory. This theory emerged in social sciences to account for outcomes (social, economic, political) that cannot be explained on the basis of prior historical conditions and may even be considered theoretically improbable.<sup>58</sup> In path dependency analysis, a certain outcome is traced back to a self-reinforcing dynamic or to a series of reactive events.<sup>59</sup> With regards to clusters, the dynamics between the producers in a cluster evolve over time and become rooted in specific locations. The self-reinforcing mechanisms of cluster externalities, which favour business establishments and growth, generate

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<sup>54</sup> Porter, 'Location', p. 254.

<sup>55</sup> Limberger, 'Economies of agglomeration', pp. 53-62 has applied this concept to sixteenth century Antwerp in a general discussion.

<sup>56</sup> Parr, 'Agglomeration economies', p. 719.

<sup>57</sup> Gertler, 'Buzz without being there?'; Storper and Venables, 'Buzz: face-to-face contact and the urban economy'; Bathelt, Malmberg, and Maskell, 'Clusters and knowledge'.

<sup>58</sup> E.g. Mahoney, 'Path dependence in historical sociology'; Liebowitz and Margolis, 'Path dependence'; Pierson, 'Increasing returns, path dependence, and the study of politics'. A famous example of the persistence of relatively inefficient technologies is the QWERTY keyboard. Liebowitz and Margolis, 'Path dependence'.

<sup>59</sup> Mahoney, 'Path dependence in historical sociology', pp. 508-509.

further externalities, in turn creating further growth, are known as positive feedback loops, or increasing returns.<sup>60</sup> This can generate unique sources of competitiveness, as historically evolved competitive advantages are difficult to reproduce in other locations.<sup>61</sup>

The concepts of agglomeration externalities and increasing returns epitomise the period in which the cluster thrives, a stage that has been thoroughly conceptualised in the literature. Cluster formation and ending, however are less well-documented.<sup>62</sup> With regards to the former, the cluster mechanism is considered to have taken root once a 'critical mass' of similar and related activities is reached. Why this happens in certain locations and not in others, is often attributed to exogenous circumstances, rather than initial potential, and therefore not directly related to subsequent sources of growth in the cluster. The proliferation of the term 'historical accident' to the initial concentration of production is a testament to this. Such 'accidents' are classed, for example as war, as technological innovation, or as the rise of an exceptionally talented entrepreneur.

A comparable analytical hiatus is evident in attempts to explain the decline of a cluster.<sup>63</sup> Path-dependency theory offers a neat explanation, introducing the concept of a 'lock in', which refers to the incapacity of clusters to diverge from their path due to overembeddedness. The sustained competitiveness of clusters depends not so much on cost-saving agglomeration economies, but on the ability to respond to fast-changing markets and technologies. Mechanisms responsible for spillovers and learning processes within clusters are considered to increase adaptive capacities, but only up to a certain point. The increasing entanglement of producers in local production can make it difficult for them to adjust their routines when facing changing circumstances, such as technological innovations or changes on the demand side. Routines may become so durable, that openings to other paths of development are inaccessible, making the cluster less capable in adapting to changing circumstances and in remaining competitive. The potential for 'lock-in' is further strengthened by the development of specialised institutions. Agglomeration facilitates the emergence of different kinds of formal and informal institutional infrastructures. Increasing institutional thickness can strengthen increasing returns, but may also increase the risk of clusters and local industries becoming 'locked in'

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<sup>60</sup> Cf. studies on various cultural industries: Röling, 'Small town, big campaigns'; Deinema and Kloosterman, 'Historical trajectories and urban cultural economies'; Wenting, 'Spinoff dynamics'; Kloosterman and Stegmeijer, 'Delirious Rotterdam'; Rantisi, 'The ascendance of New York fashion'; Rantisi, 'The local innovation system'; Bathelt, 'The re-emergence of a media industry cluster'; Glasmeier, *Manufacturing time*. Outside the cultural industries: Boschma and Wenting, 'The spatial evolution of the British automobile industry' and Saxenian, *Regional advantage* on Silicon Valley.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Amin and Thrift, 'Cultural-economy and cities'; Amin and Thrift, 'Globalisation'.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Evolutionary economic geography as developed in Boschma and Wenting, 'The spatial evolution of the British automobile industry'; Wenting, 'Spinoff dynamics'.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Martin and Sunley, 'Path dependence'.

established routines.<sup>64</sup> In order to explain why clusters may have to change their direction in the first place, exogenous factors causing demand or supply shocks need to be brought in. In all, in order to maximise the potential of a cluster, producers should profit from their embedded nature, while maintaining enough distance to enable swift adaptation when faced with exogenous shocks.<sup>65</sup>

Agglomeration theory is built on studies from general manufacturing industries, but the exact impact of co-location may differ per type of economic activity. Localisation and urbanisation economies are known to be particularly strong in industries in which actors compete above average on advanced competences, such as highly developed technical skills, quality, uniqueness, and novelty.<sup>66</sup> High-tech industries, knowledge-intensive industries, and cultural industries are therefore particularly susceptible to externalities generated by spatial clustering in urban settings.<sup>67</sup> Knowledge-related externalities stimulate both economic efficiency and interactive learning and are considered especially important for industries that rely for a large part on tacit knowledge transfer. As post-industrial industries tend to deal with new combinations, they involve a use of knowledge that is not yet sufficiently standardised and codified. Accordingly, tacit knowledge, , can only be transferred face-to-face and the co-location of individuals will promote flows of knowledge or spillovers. Moreover, the symbolic content of cultural products is consumed through interpretation and it has a strong tacit and symbolic component.<sup>68</sup> This makes it difficult to communicate to outside actors who lack a similar cultural and social frame of reference.<sup>69</sup> As a consequence, cultural industries are particularly sensitive to dynamics of spatial clustering.

### 1.5 Towards a more dynamic model of spatial clustering

The appeal of the spatial clustering theory for economic historians lies in its inclusiveness and temporal and spatial sensitivity. It crosses sectoral boundaries by including related industries, suppliers, the character of demand, and institutions. By doing so, cluster theory allows for the complexity of historically built relations between a geographic place, customers, related and supplying industries, and the

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. Amin and Thrift, 'Globalisation'; Gertler, 'Buzz without being there?'.

<sup>65</sup> They can do this by sustaining relations to partners outside the cluster. Bathelt, Malmberg, and Maskell, 'Clusters and knowledge'.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Feldman, *The geography of innovation*.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Lorenzen and Frederiksen, 'Why do cultural industries cluster?'. Asheim and Gertler, 'The geography of innovation' distinguish analytical, synthetic, and symbolic knowledge bases. The latter is considered most tacit.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Deinema, 'The culture business caught in place'.

<sup>69</sup> Gertler, 'Buzz without being there?'.



competitive environment.<sup>70</sup> While accepting the impact of exogenous factors, the key driver of cluster dynamics is considered to be endogenous. As such, it can complement explanations based on external market conditions and shocks. The benefits of clustering allow for the reproduction of competitive strength because the competitiveness of cultural industries is derived from a complex interaction between firms, institutions, networks, and practices. This may be especially true for cultural industries. Moreover, the characteristics of 'post-industrial' sectors much resemble the organisation of many crafts in 'pre-industrial' Europe. Like their modern counterparts, early modern firms were small- to medium-sized enterprises that required skilled labour, faced volatile demand, and tended to form clusters within urban areas.

Although cluster theory offers a coherent argument as to why place and time matter, it also has three major drawbacks, which will be discussed below.<sup>71</sup> To counter these, a three-stage comparative perspective is introduced: two industries, two centuries, and several towns. Each comparative step is supported by a theoretical model related to the (spatial) organisation of cultural industries: Caves' properties of cultural industries, Michael Porter's diamond model, and the industry life cycle. They are not rigorous analytical frameworks, but their primary strength lies in categorizing and organizing data. Even so, when combined they lead to a fresh interpretation of Dutch cultural production.

#### *Michael Porter's diamond model*

First of all, cluster theory is not clear on the geographic boundaries of clusters; in fact, they can 'range from a single city or state to a country or even a group of neighbouring countries.'<sup>72</sup> The fact that these concepts are applicable to different geographic scales reveals that there is no strong identification of internal mechanisms that can really explain clustering. As a result, clusters as an ideal-type can be applied to virtually all spatial concentrations, whereas the empirical studies tend to stress unique combinations of local conditions to explain cluster development. Because of this, related literature is often either too conceptual or case-specific. We therefore introduce Michael Porter's diamond model, so named for its shape.. Porter

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<sup>70</sup> Studies with a explicit focus on historical trajectories include: Heebels and Boschma, 'Performing in Dutch book publishing'; Wenting, Atzema, and Frenken, 'Urban amenities and agglomeration economies?'; Deinema and Kloosterman, 'Historical trajectories and urban cultural economies'; Deinema and Kloosterman, 'De stad en de kunst van het verdienen'; Deinema, 'Amsterdam's re-emergence as a major publishing hub in a changing international context'; Wenting, 'Spinoff dynamics'; Wenting, 'Evolution of a creative industry'; Kloosterman and Stegmeijer, 'Delirious Rotterdam'; Glasmeier, *Manufacturing time*.

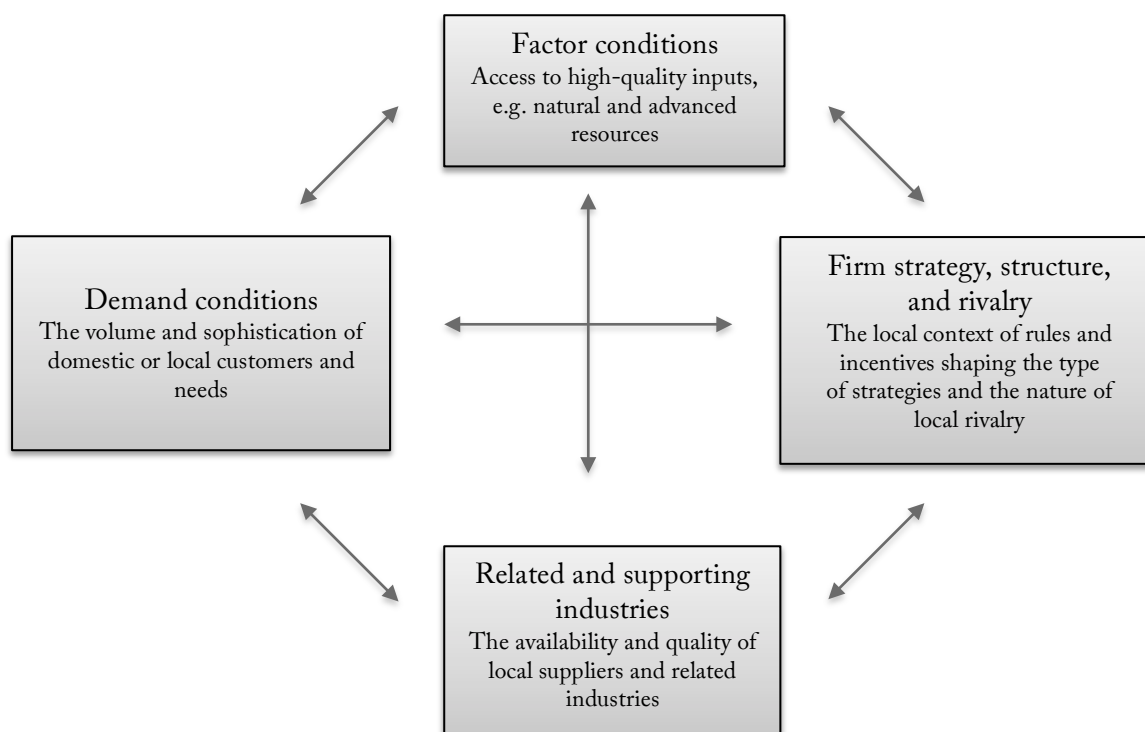
<sup>71</sup> Cf. discussions in: Maskell, 'Towards a knowledge-based theory'; Asheim, Cooke, and Martin, 'The rise of the cluster concept'; Boschma and Kloosterman, *Learning from clusters*; Boschma and Kloosterman, 'Further learning from clusters'; Boschma and R.C., 'Further learning from clusters'; Martin and Sunley, 'Deconstructing clusters'; Malmberg and Maskell, 'The elusive concept of localization economies'.

<sup>72</sup> Porter, 'Location', p. 254.

developed this framework in order to explain why a nation can succeed in some industries, but not in others. This model is a comprehensive framework listing the involvement of multiple actors and structures in the competitiveness of a cluster, while drawing attention to the relations between these determinants.

In Porter's model there are four key determinants that influence the competitive advantage of firms: factor conditions; demand conditions; related and supporting industries; firm structure, strategy, and rivalry. Chance and government are both exogenous to the diamond, but potentially influential to either different or all sets of factors. Because they cannot create lasting competitive advantages they are placed outside the model. The general idea is that the more intense the interactions between the pillars, the greater the productivity of the firms. It is worth pointing out that academic opinions range from those who use the model as a basic framework in which complex sets of conditions can be organised, to those who perceive the simplification as meaningless.<sup>73</sup> More specific critiques concern the absence of factors such as culture, politics, and institutions. However, it is now commonly accepted that its simplicity is its strength, as the model can be adapted to fit characteristics of different products and industries.

Figure 1.1 Basic visualization of Michael Porter's diamond model



Source: (Porter 1990).

<sup>73</sup> Porter, *On competition*, chapter 10.

Basic factor conditions, such as unskilled labour, raw materials, climatic conditions, and water resources are hereditary and available to all economic activities. Conversely, advanced and specialised factor conditions, such as financial services, skilled labour force, infrastructure, are created, hard to reproduce, and therefore more sustainable. In terms of demand, the diamond model considers composition of demand, the size and pattern of growth, and the mechanisms by which domestic preferences can be transferred to foreign markets. The external economies of related and supporting industry clusters, such as networks of specialized input providers and institutions, can be sources of competitive advantage. Finally, factors relating to firms' strategies, structures, and rivalry, form the fourth determinant. The main argument is that the strategies and structures of firms are strongly contingent on the local business environment and that these systematically differ between towns, regions, and countries. They determine the context in which firms compete.

Martin and Sunley (2002) have pointed out that the 'competitive diamond is the driving force behind cluster development and, simultaneously, the cluster is the spatial manifestation of the competitive diamond.'<sup>74</sup> In this dissertation the model is used to provide a structure to the wealth of information available on early modern publishing and painting. This allows us to get a clearer understanding of the different aspects and relationships that require attention when explaining long-term patterns. In publishing the industrial structure is more pronounced than in painting, and therefore the four pillars in the diamond will be used more explicitly in the chapters relating to Dutch publishing.

### *Industry life cycle*

Secondly, cluster studies often emphasise success stories and there is a lack of comparative analyses of failed and successful clusters. Although it is generally accepted that clusters, like products and industries, go through stages of start-up, growth, and decline, there are few studies of the different factors shaping the various stages from cluster emergence to cluster decline.<sup>75</sup> As a result, there is no analytically coherent framework on the movement of clusters through their life cycles. The causal conditions that link stages are often unspecified or case-specific. This matter has also resulted in measurement issues, especially regarding the role of spillovers. It is, for example, analytically unsatisfactory that the existence of knowledge spillovers is commonly proved by the existence of clusters.<sup>76</sup> Clusters and the relations between the pillars in the diamond model are not static over time.<sup>77</sup> The issue of the evolution

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<sup>74</sup> Asheim, Cooke, and Martin, 'The rise of the cluster concept', p. 10.

<sup>75</sup> Menzel and Fornahl, 'Cluster life cycles'; Press, *A life cycle for clusters?*

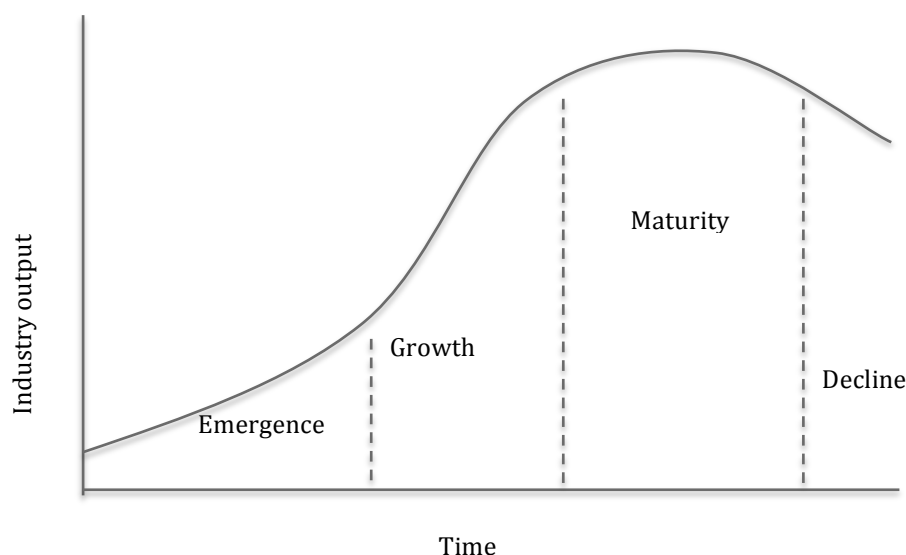
<sup>76</sup> Cf. Malmberg and Maskell, 'The elusive concept of localization economies'.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Boschma and Kloosterman, *Learning from clusters*.

of clusters is addressed by engaging the theory of industry life cycle.

During the last decade, a more evolutionary approach of clusters has emerged, concerned with exploring continuities in the causal conditions that link the different stages in the cluster's evolution.<sup>78</sup> The concept of the cluster life cycle resembles that of the more established models of product- and industry life cycles.<sup>79</sup> Empirical studies of products and industries have shown that they evolve in typical patterns and a number of theories and models have been developed to explain this evolution, sharing a number of stylised facts.<sup>80</sup> Typically, four or five stages are distinguished: dormant, start-up, growth, maturity, and decline/saturation.

Figure 1.2 Visualisation of stylised industry life cycle



The stages in the life cycle are known to not only differ in terms of size of the sector and growth rates, but also in terms of type and degree of innovation, character of firms (old/new; large/small), and spatial distribution. These are exactly the elements that will be mapped in this thesis in order to identify stages in the lifecycle. Understanding the conditions present before the emergence stage will enable the identification of factors that made both the cluster and the occurrence of 'critical mass' possible in the first place. Taking a long-term perspective also allows us to trace the way in which clusters move from one stage to the next more precisely. It is worth noting that industry life cycle theory has no fundamental explanatory power.

<sup>78</sup> Glasmeier, *Manufacturing time*; Glasmeier, 'Technological discontinuities'; Wenting, 'Spinoff dynamics'; Wenting, 'Evolution of a creative industry'; Heebels and Boschma, 'Performing in Dutch book publishing'; Deinema, 'The culture business caught in place'; Kloosterman and Stegmeijer, 'Delirious Rotterdam'; Röling, 'Small town, big campaigns'.

<sup>79</sup> Menzel and Fornahl, 'Cluster life cycles'; Neffke, 'Who needs agglomeration?'.

<sup>80</sup> This theory is well summarized in for example: Klepper, 'Industrial life cycles' and Jovanovic, 'Michael Gort's contribution to economics'.

It is only used here to demonstrate that certain stages in industrial evolution go hand in hand with specific characteristics, such as the rate and degree of innovation.

### *Properties of cultural industries*

The speed at which a local industry or cluster passes through the life cycle stages depends on market conditions and character of the industry. The trajectories of different industrial clusters may also vary. This may be particularly prominent in knowledge-intensive, cultural, and high-tech industries. The distinct features of creative industries as identified by Richard Caves help to better understand the implications of this.<sup>81</sup> He has listed the basic properties of creative industries in order to explain the structure of organisation in these sectors of the economy. Even though he uses the term creative industries, not cultural industries, the underlying argument is equally applicable. It should be stressed that the concept of cultural industries encompasses a variety of products and production processes, which do not reflect all of the above-listed features to the same degree. Moreover, these features are not exclusive to cultural industries, but particularly prevalent in those sectors of the economy involved in the production of cultural goods.

Table 1.1 Properties of creative industries as identified by Richard Caves

Properties of creative industries	Implications for market organisation
Nobody knows: demand uncertainty	High risks involved, overproduction, importance of selection mechanisms, close relations with (potential) consumers
Infinite variety: endless horizontal and vertical differentiation	Information asymmetries, importance of selection mechanisms, potential for creating demand (niches)
Art for art's sake: attitude of producers towards their products	Abundance of (would-be) artists, relatively low profit margins
Motley crew: projects involve complex interactions	Network embeddedness, flexibility
Time flies: timing is essential	Flexibility, distribution, marketing
Ars longa: durability of products	Copyright protection, oversupply
A-list/B-list: creative inputs are vertically differentiated	Ranking of talent, skewed income distribution, importance of gatekeepers

Source: (Caves 2000).

<sup>81</sup> Caves, *Creative industries*.

Firstly, we can see that cultural production is characterised by considerable market uncertainty, because the commercial and cultural success of a creative product is hard to predict. Secondly, the research shows that cultural products are highly differentiated, both vertically and horizontally. There is a potentially endless variety of works and genres, and while time each work is, by definition, different from all others, this is not the case in sectors where exact copies can be reproduced (*e.g.* single books, but not titles). Thirdly, cultural producers are not only in it for the money; many of them have cultural ambitions. This does not make for a fully commercial incentive structure, causing structural underemployment of creators, as well as low profit margins. It is also evident that production often requires diverse sets of skills, as many productions are project-based, collaborative affairs. This is particularly visible in the production of films, or the publishing of books; the input of all parties shapes the outcome. Timing is also important, as creative input has to be available at the right time and products can quickly go out of fashion. On the other hand, whilst some products have relatively short life cycles, others prove relatively durable, stimulating a need for forms of copyright. And lastly, the ranking of producers is based on skills and results in strong hierarchical groups and this creates a skewed distribution of success.

These particularities have implications for spatial and diachronic patterns of success and failure in these economic sectors. Cultural industries are characterised by distinct sources of competitiveness, by distinct forms of organisation, and they react distinctly to market conditions.<sup>82</sup> Cultural industries are not only concerned with the creation of aesthetic or symbolic content and subject to effects of Engels' Law – as disposable income rises, consumption of cultural products expands at a disproportionally high rate –, they also tend to agglomerate in specialised spatial clusters, predominantly in urban areas.<sup>83</sup> The potential contribution of using the perspective of the cultural economy in historical studies lies in this undeniable relation to geography, most specifically to cities. As is listed in the second column of Table 1.1, these properties can generate specific issues, such as information asymmetries and overproduction, which in turn influence the way markets for cultural products are organised.

Choosing book production, a sector that has generally been overlooked by economic historians, also allows for testing the 'art and markets' perspective for a different type of cultural industry. The case studies of both painting and publishing provide clear patterns of growth, stagnation, and decline. They display similar initial trends, but from the middle of the seventeenth century their paths start to diverge.

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<sup>82</sup> Cf. Scott, *The cultural economy of cities*; Kloosterman, 'Recent employment trends'; Hall, *Cities in civilization*.

<sup>83</sup> Scott, 'Cultural-products industries', p. 462.

Moreover, painting and publishing are artist-oriented and geared towards mass production, respectively. The former represents the high end of the market, where the artists themselves are relatively important and goods are produced mostly in small series (often just one, unique product). The latter typically engages in mass production. Publishing also requires relatively high capital investments and collaborative efforts, compared to painting. Such different characteristics can influence the way these markets were organised in terms of the labour market, institutional and geographic embeddedness, and the relative importance of innovation in these industries. By selecting more than one case-study, we can assess which conditions are industry-specific and which apply to cultural industries in general. And by combining spatial clustering theory with stylized models about cultural industries and industry life cycles, a dynamic approach is generated with which structural conditions that create and support success in early modern cultural industries can be studied.

## 1.6 Research questions and methodology

Informed by theory on cultural industries and agglomeration theory, two sets of research questions were raised. The first set serves to map cultural production in qualitative and quantitative terms, over time, and across space: How did Dutch cultural industries perform in both economic and cultural terms between 1580 and 1800? How did the geography of cultural production evolve during this period? Who were the important players and where were they located? The second set of questions concerns the dynamic modelled by cluster theory: How locally embedded were Dutch painters and publishers? What are the changes and continuities in the developments of the different components in Porter's diamond? The analytical challenge lies in tracing the relationships between developments amongst the four determinants on the one hand, and the diamond and industrial competitiveness on the other.

### *Data*

In order to address the first set of questions, both existing and newly compiled datasets were used. The historiography of the Republic's cultural industries is for the most part made up from separate art-historical and book-historical studies. Within these fields of research, numerous studies have been performed on the production and consumption of books and paintings. However, in recent years, important datasets have been built that allow for statistical analyses. For many of the

quantitative analyses, for instance the assessments of the size of the industries, extensive research was carried out on five datasets: *Short Title Catalogue Netherlands* (STCN); *Thesaurus 1473-1800*; *Adresboek*; *Ecartico* database; and *RKDartists*.<sup>84</sup> An example of a basic measure of the industries' lifecycles, that of headcounts, is shown in Figure 1.3.

Figure 1.3 Number of painters and publishers active in the Dutch Republic, 1580-1800, semi-logarithmic scale



Source: *Thesaurus 1473-1800*; *Ecartico*; *RKDartists*.

#### *STCN and Thesaurus*

The STCN is the digital Dutch retrospective bibliography. This can be defined as a list of books produced in a given country or written in a certain language during a specific period, in this case the Netherlands in the period 1540-1800.<sup>85</sup> The size of the publishing industry was estimated by using a by-product of the STCN: the *Thesaurus 1473-1800*. The STCN is accurate and comprehensive enough to allow for statistical analysis, but to accurately interpret size, scope, and quality of production, the following issues have to be taken into account.<sup>86</sup>

The STCN contains over 190,000 titles and over 500,000 copies of books

<sup>84</sup> Many thanks to the Marieke van Delft of the KB and to the Ecartico project, especially Harm Nijboer, for providing access to the datasets.

<sup>85</sup> See for more details: <http://www.kb.nl/stcn/index-en.html>. The STCN is discussed at length in *Handleiding voor de medewerkers aan de STCN*, ; Vriesema, 'The STCN-fingerprint'. Address book: Gruys and Bos, eds., *Adresboek*. For the nineteenth century: Dongelmans, *Van Alkmaar tot Zwijndrecht*. Foreign counterparts include the British ESTC at [www.estc.bl.uk](http://www.estc.bl.uk) and the Flemish STCV at [www.http://www.vlaamse-erfgoedbibliotheek.be/databank/stcv](http://www.vlaamse-erfgoedbibliotheek.be/databank/stcv) (Flanders) and; Mathis, 'The STCN in a global scope', p. 37. On the STCV: Van Rossem, Proot, and Delsaert, 'Short Title Catalogue Vlaanderen'.

<sup>86</sup> For a discussion of the use of STCN see: Van Delft, 'Kwantitatief onderzoek'; Mathis, 'The STCN in a global scope', p. 44.



published in the Netherlands (irrespective of the language) and of books in Dutch published abroad (with the exception of Belgium).<sup>87</sup> The STCN is based on the collections of all major academic libraries in the Netherlands, as well as various smaller ones, and important collections abroad. Therefore, it only includes titles of books that have survived to present day. Estimates suggest that around 80 per cent of the titles printed in the early modern period have survived.<sup>88</sup> Because survival chances for cheap, popular works are lower, this type of book is probably underrepresented in the STCN. Even though the results from the database should not be viewed as absolute figures, they are especially useful for comparative research, because the limitations apply equally across all towns and years.

What is more crucial is that not all titles required the same levels of creative and financial input.<sup>89</sup> The number of titles alone does not indicate anything the size of print runs (total output) or the size of the work, let alone the quality or novelty of the printed books. There is no serial data on average print runs in early modern Europe, while fragmented sources have shown that edition sizes could range from a few hundred copies or, less often, dozens for specialized works, to thousands for popular, often religious, works.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, some titles are multi-volume masterpieces, whereas others yet are ephemeral material, such as ordinances and dissertations. Luckily, the STCN enables the search for not only by author, printer, title, year, and place of publication, but also by more advanced properties, such as subject, language, size of the books, and typographical features. Distinctions can be made, for example, between ephemeral and non-ephemeral titles, Dutch and foreign; originals and copies; translations and reprints; the size of the sheets; and the use of decorative images. All of which are characteristics that influence the choices and investments publishers and printers had to make.<sup>91</sup>

The Thesaurus makes it possible to estimate how many people were involved in the publishing of books in a certain town during a particular period. The list of people working in the Dutch publishing industry includes the names of booksellers, printers, and publishers found on imprints and colophons in the editions included in the STCN.<sup>92</sup> Not every title contains such information. The dataset used in this research is comprised of 7,472 names.<sup>93</sup> The first and last year of publishing activity and the geographic locations have been linked to the names, based on the

<sup>87</sup> The geographic area referred to as 'the Netherlands' was not fixed during the period covered by the STCN, which raises the issue of whether or not Flemish books should also be included. As soon as the STCV, which is set up according to the same description formulas, will be completed, it will be possible to study Dutch book production in the Low Countries.

<sup>88</sup> Van Delft, 'Kwantitatief onderzoek', pp. 77-79. On survival chances of titles see: J. Bos, '1585-1725. Overlevingskansen van het boek', *Bibliopolis*, 2.4.7, [www.bibliopolis.nl/handboek](http://www.bibliopolis.nl/handboek) (accessed 20-07-2010).

<sup>89</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>90</sup> Febrve and Martin, *The coming of the book*, pp. 216-222.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Gruys and Bos, *t'Golde iaer 1650*. With ephemeral titles is referred to: pamphlets, ordinances, academic works and occasional titles, such as marriage-poems.

<sup>92</sup> As of September 16<sup>th</sup> 2009.

bibliographical data. Both the start and end points of booksellers' careers are available, assuming he, and occasionally she, was active in the years between. This allowed for estimating the number of people involved in book publishing, per year and location.

There are four main issues with the Thesaurus. Firstly, not every Dutch booksellers, printer, or publisher is included. A quick look at the guild archives, or at the selection of published documents pertaining to the book trade in seventeenth-century Amsterdam, proves this point.<sup>93</sup> Secondly, only the names of those people who were credited on the imprint or colophon are listed. Basically, this means that the database comprises the names of those who invested in publications and not of the publishing, printing, and bookselling labour force at large. Because we are interested in the cultural producers rather than the journeymen, this is not a dramatic problem in terms of mapping cultural activities, but the workforce as a whole is important in observing shifts in the organisation of production. Thirdly, the group of people included in the Thesaurus is not homogeneous. The dataset contains aliases and no structural distinction is made between publishers, booksellers, and printers by occupation.<sup>94</sup> Because during the early modern period these activities were often combined within a single firm, this does not have to pose a particularly big problem. Nevertheless, there was early occupational specialisation, as will be discussed in the following chapters, and the distribution of different occupations within the book trade did change over the course of the early modern period. Finally, the data is based on what is found on the imprints of the books themselves and this is can be misleading. Some publishers claimed to have been responsible for printing of the work, even though they never own a print shop.<sup>95</sup>

The quantitative results derived from the Thesaurus should therefore be treated with caution and any fixed conclusions based on the dataset should be checked with more qualitative sources and micro-studies. Despite these issues, the Thesaurus and the STCN are the best available datasets for mapping the book production sector, and without doubt the most consistent in terms of selection criteria.

### *Ecartico and RKDartists*

For estimates on the number of painters active in the early modern Dutch Republic, two dataset were used: Ecartico and RKDartists.<sup>96</sup> The Ecartico programme explores

<sup>93</sup> E.g. Kleerkooper and Van Stockum, *Boekhandel te Amsterdam*, vol. I or Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*. See also chapter 6 of this dissertation, in which this is illustrated quantitatively.

<sup>94</sup> Examples are Dirck Pietersz Pers, who, name notwithstanding, did not print. Cornelis Claesz is another example.

<sup>95</sup> The Ecartico database is not yet publically accessible, but a database preview can be found at <http://burckhardt.ic.uva.nl/ecartico/preview.php> (last accessed February 27 2012).

the complex fabric of artistic and economic competition in the field of history painting in Amsterdam from c. 1630 through 1690. Within this project a dataset was built to collect, organise, and analyse art-historical and biographic data concerning painters, art consumers, art dealers, and others involved in the cultural industry of Amsterdam and the Low Countries in the early modern period. The database is built on a wealth of archival sources and literature, and predominantly on the data collected by Pieter Groenendijk in his lexicon *Beknopt biografisch lexicon van Zuid- en Noord-Nederlandse schilders, graveurs, etc.* (2008).<sup>96</sup> The database contains biographical and demographic data on some 12,000 persons, born between 1500 and 1690.<sup>97</sup> Unlike the Thesaurus, the entries in the Ecartico dataset include biographical information.

Unfortunately, it does not cover the eighteenth century. Therefore, RKDartists database was used to estimate the scale of art production during this period. It contains information on c. 250,000 Dutch and foreign artists from the middle ages to the present day.<sup>98</sup> Unfortunately, it is not easy to systematically retrieve data from the dataset, because the dataset cannot be searched using the same queries as the Ecartico database. Lists of painters could only be generated per quarter century. Because these have been used to arrive at general estimates for the eighteenth century, they stand in sharp contrast to the more precise estimates generated by the Ecartico dataset for the seventeenth century.

#### *Quantifying the relative importance of producers*

On the basis of life cycle theory we can hypothesize that different stages in the life cycle of Dutch cultural industries coincided with specific degrees and types of innovation. In order to determine whether this was indeed the case, the concept of innovation needs to be defined. The 2005 OECD defines innovation as: 'the implementation of a new or significantly improved product, or process, a new marketing method, or a new organisational method'.<sup>99</sup> Innovation has long been seen as technological, but in cultural industries, as in many other industries, so-called soft innovation is more important.<sup>100</sup> Soft innovations reflect changes of an aesthetic nature. They primarily impact on sensory or intellectual perception and aesthetic appeal rather than functional performance. Hence closely related to cultural industries.<sup>101</sup>

In cultural industries, and with regards to soft innovation in general, a new and improved product does not necessarily replace an older one (vertical differentiation). Instead, there is often horizontal innovation: some consumers may

<sup>96</sup> Groenendijk, ed., *Beknopt biografisch lexicon*.

<sup>97</sup> <http://burckhardt.ic.uva.nl/ecartico/database.html> (last accessed February 27 2012).

<sup>98</sup> <http://english.rkd.nl/Databases/RKDartists> (last accessed February 27 2012).

<sup>99</sup> *OECD Oslo Manual: Guidelines for collecting and interpreting innovation data*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>100</sup> Stoneman, *Soft innovation*.

<sup>101</sup> Even though a distinction is made between soft (aesthetic) and hard (technological or functional), they are often related.

prefer the new and other consumers the old, even when the two are similarly priced. In this case, the variants cannot be ranked objectively in terms of quality, but only subjectively, and the products can exist side by side. Moreover, there can also be vertical innovation that does not involve an improvement in quality but rather a reduction in price. Products are considered horizontally differentiated if at a given price point some consumers prefer one and some the other.

When following this line of reasoning, all new product variants may be considered innovations, but of course not all of them are significant. The difference between differentiation and innovation is that the latter refers to the introduction of novelties that had a commercial impact. The OECD definition suggests that innovations must be perceived as useful and valuable to distinguish them from mere novelties. Such an impact is not easy to measure. In the databases, each painter or publisher is therefore treated as equal, which basically means artists such as Rembrandt are compared to minor artists of whom it is sometimes even unclear what they produced.

Luckily, art and book historians have used their expertise in identifying the main innovations during the period under study. Moreover, scholars in different fields have written about quantifying subjective concepts such as quality and innovation.<sup>102</sup> In order to map innovative activity in time and place, a distinction can be made between prominent producers and lesser-known contemporaries. In modern economic research, scholars employ 'input indicators' to measure investments in innovations and related processes, as well as 'output indicators' that measure the results of innovation, such as patents, in order to assess innovation intensity.<sup>103</sup> Surveys are the main tool for producing data on company-level innovation intensity. Needless to say, such indicators and direct methods for early modern cultural production are lacking. The area of historiometry offers the most concrete methods to measure reputation and valuation that suit the purposes of this study.<sup>104</sup> Historiometry is defined as a quantitative method used for statistical analysis of retrospective data.<sup>105</sup> What this boils down to is counting the number of references to famous (groups of) people in expert works, and often also the space allotted to each of them.<sup>106</sup> In this research Dutch and international art-historical appreciation, as well as contemporary appreciation of Dutch painters will serve as a proxy for

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<sup>102</sup> Consider for example Rita Gerlach, who compared theatre quality in Britain and Germany: Gerlach, 'The question of quality'.

<sup>103</sup> E.g. Jaffe and Trajtenberg, *Patents*.

<sup>104</sup> Woods, 'Historiometry as an exact science'.

<sup>105</sup> Simonton, *Historiometric Inquiries*; Simonton, 'Creativity from a historiometric perspective'.

<sup>106</sup> Consider for example: Murray, *Human accomplishment*.

prominence.<sup>107</sup> It is worth noting that historiometrics measures artistic fame, not commercial success. In Chapter 7 these issues will be discussed in more detail.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to draw up an equivalent ranking of publishers. Yet there is no doubt that there were large differences in the number of publications attributed to individual firms. Some firms were very large, while others were minor players and some were active in the international book trade, whereas others focused on local markets. Though some names are world-renowned, such as Blaeu or Elsevier, the number of existing studies on individual publishers is insufficient to measure book-historical appreciation. In the absence of other criteria, an alternative measure will be used: firm productivity, as defined by number and type of book titles (not single books) per firm according to the STCN. Firm productivity is estimated by linking names of publishers to the number of titles they produced. Admittedly, this does not allow for measuring market impact or cultural importance. Large firms are not by definition more innovative or differentiated. In-depth studies of publishers' oeuvres are the only real way to establish this and therefore the quantitative studies are accompanied by more comprehensive case studies and qualitative analyses.

A surprisingly large share of publishers in the STCN is only mentioned with a handful of titles. For example, almost 40 per cent of the 2,427 names listed for Amsterdam between 1580 and 1800, is only mentioned for one year. They may simply have been unsuccessful in publishing, causing them to go out of business, but the large share of these 'one-year-hits' suggests that they either used aliases or that they were not genuine publishers, but occasional publishers with a different primary occupation. In years of political turmoil, such as 1647, 1672 or 1689, the share of one-year-hits rose significantly.<sup>1</sup> Their share does not significantly influence the total number and trends of active booksellers per year in a significant way and they are therefore included in the aggregate measures.<sup>2</sup> However, when turning to the number of *starting*, rather than *active*, publishers, they do start to make an impact. When this measure is used, estimates which both include and exclude one-year-hits will be provided.

### *Prosopographies and archival research*

The thesis deals with the Dutch Republic and particularly with the province of Holland, the area where most cultural production was concentrated. In addition to the aggregate data derived from the STCN, one town in particular takes centre stage. Amsterdam was the largest town in the Dutch Republic as well as the most

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<sup>107</sup> Simply counting the significant figures is the unweighted measure of significance and the weighed measure is based on the space allocated to each individuals.

important and most culturally diverse centre. This case study serves to take a closer look at the local production system and illustrate the findings in case studies. In order to identify common characteristics of local groups of painters and publishers, the method of prosopography is applied.<sup>108</sup> Prosopographical research aims to identify patterns of relationships and activities of a group of people through the study of their collective biography. This is done by collecting and analysing biographical data surrounding a (well-defined) individual.

These individuals should have something in common, such as region of origin, religion, or, in this case, profession. It is basically a system for organising limited data in such a way that it can reveal connections and patterns influencing historical processes.<sup>109</sup> Names of active publishers and painters were collected for five bench-mark years: 1585, 1600, 1630, 1674, and 1742.<sup>110</sup> These years represent significant periods in the history of the Dutch Republic. The first two exemplify the early years after the Dutch Revolt, 1630 relates to the middle of the ‘Golden Age’, 1674 coincides with the years of economic and politic trouble, and, finally, 1742 was a period of economic stagnation or even decline.

Table 1.2 Number of producers in prosopographies per benchmark year

	N producers, publishing	N producers, painting
1585	9 (STCN: 8)	13
1600	29 (STCN: 22)	51
1630	39 (STCN: 57)	104
1674	58 (STCN: 111)	181
1742	61 (STCN: 177)	35

Source: Publishing: cf. note 111. Painting: Ecartico; RKDartists.

The key variables in the collective biography are the places and years of birth and death, work locations, professional status, guild memberships, family ties, master-apprentice relationships, wealth estimates, addresses, social background, and publishing activity in the STCN. Due to the fact that the Thesaurus does not contain biographical data on producers, whereas the Ecartico dataset does, the process of collecting information for the prosopographies required more use of micro-studies on individual producers.<sup>111</sup> Not all known publishers are included and this has

<sup>108</sup> Roorda, ‘Prosopografie’; Stone, ‘Prosopography’.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Bok, *Vraag en aanbod* on a prosopography of Utrecht painters during the seventeenth century.

<sup>110</sup> The years 1674 and 1742 were not chosen at random. For these years taxation registers were available. They offer a ready overview of active producers.

<sup>111</sup> For the publishing in the years 1585, 1600 and 1630 the main source was: Moes and Burger, *Amsterdamse boekdrukkers en uitgevers*, Briels, *Zuidnederlandse boekverkopers* and Leuven, *De boekhandel te Amsterdam*. For the years 1674, 1710 and 1742: Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, Leuven, *De*

resulted in a smaller prosopographical sample than in the case of painting, in which all known painters in Ecartico have been included. The sample of publishers was chosen randomly and is still representative.

A drawback of the prosopographical method is that group characteristics reveal little to nothing about day-to-day business strategies or institutional organisation. Therefore the research was expanded with the use of in-depth studies of individual firms. To some extent this could be done by consulting available studies on painters and publishers in the form of monographs, articles, or lexicon-entries. This information was further complemented with a broad range of archival material, for example tax registers, guild archives, and notarial archives. Local guild archives are for instance the main sources for gaining insight into the institutional organisation of local production systems.

## 1.7 Outline of the thesis

The dissertation is organised in two parts in order to separate the two industries. This is done for two purposes. Firstly, it serves to present the material in an accessible manner. Secondly, it makes for an analytically meaningful outline of industrial trajectories. In the conclusion, the differences and similarities will be highlighted. Both parts are subdivided in five chapters each and the chapters are arranged chronologically. This choice is not arbitrary, but informed by distinct stages in the industry life cycle. These roughly correspond to the time periods studied in the individual chapters. Within the chapters, Porter's diamond model is used where possible to distinguish between variables and to trace the relationships between the key determinants of competitiveness.

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*boekhandel te Amsterdam*. For archival documents involving Amsterdam publishers active in the seventeenth century see: Kleerkooper and Van Stockum, *Boekhandel te Amsterdam*, vol. I. These sources were checked against the Thesaurus and Mollhuysen and Blok, eds., *NNBW*, and complemented with additional information found in articles and monographs on individual producers.





## 2 Window of opportunity, 1580-1610

### 2.1 Introduction

In the fifteenth century, book production in the Low Countries had largely been limited to towns with an above average demand for reading material, driven by the presence of a university (Leuven) or schools run by the Brethren of the Common Life (Zwolle and Deventer).<sup>1</sup> A century later and book production had become increasingly tied to commerce, with Antwerp having made a name as the centre of book production in the Low Countries. Booksellers in most other Dutch towns were left producing for their own local markets and importing books from Antwerp.<sup>2</sup> But this all changed during the 1570s. In 1578, bookbinder and seller Cornelis Claesz moved to Amsterdam, where he joined Harmen Jansz Muller, the town's only other bookseller present at that time.<sup>3</sup> Soon countless others, many of whom were fellow immigrants from the Southern Netherlands, followed suit. By 1609, the year of Claesz' death, Muller and Claesz were surrounded by dozens of colleagues and competitors. And this was not limited to Amsterdam. Throughout the Dutch Republic, the number of publishers increased dramatically.

This chapter discusses the driving forces behind the early decades of growth in Dutch book production. In spatial clustering theory, cluster growth is assumed to depend on the reproduction of skills, routines, and specializations, whereas the initial concentration of firms involved in related or similar activities is often explained from historical accidents such as new technologies, demand shocks, war, or the presence of exceptionally talented entrepreneurs. These contingencies can attract or put off entrepreneurs from setting up shop in a specific location. The variable of chance can also be found on the margins of Porter's diamond model. Chance events are external developments that may be disruptive to industrial development, i.e. radical innovations, revolutions, wars, or general economic crises. Such events cause discontinuities that can reshape industry structures and shift comparative advantages. Dissatisfied with the analytical break of historical contingencies to explain initial geographic concentration, scholars have developed a

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<sup>1</sup> Waterschoot, 'Antwerp', p. 233.

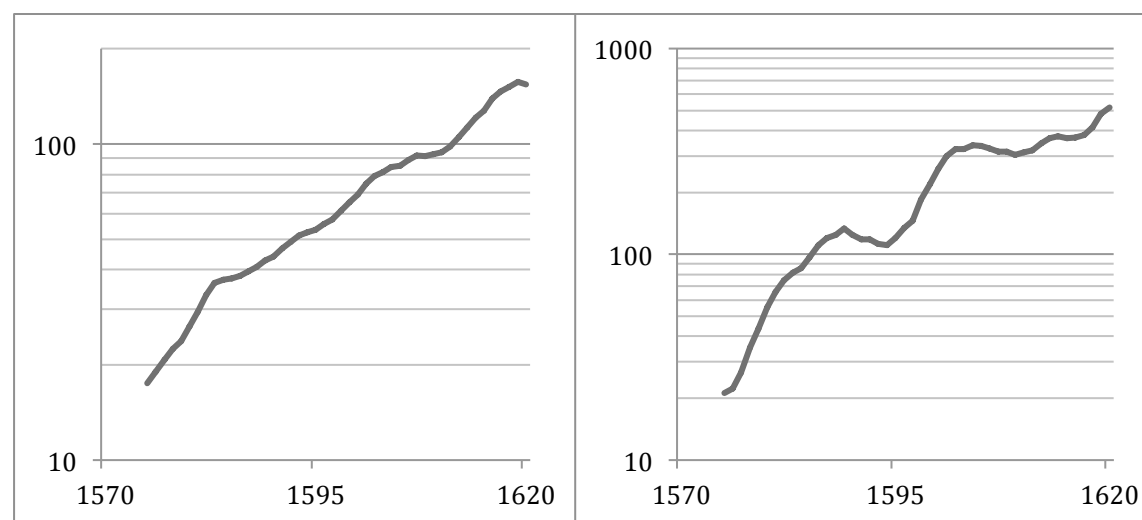
<sup>2</sup> Van der Laan, *Het Groninger boekbedrijf*, pp. 31-32 on Groningen, a town that had relied on imports and where the first printer set up shop in 1597. On Christophe Plantin's exports to the northern provinces during the period 1566-1589 see: Van Oord, *Twee eeuwen Bosch' boekbedrijf*, pp. 215 -269 .

<sup>3</sup> Thesaurus. Cf. Lesger, *Rise*, pp. 235-236.

rival interpretation.<sup>4</sup> It has been argued that at the moment of path creation, not all locations are equally qualified for facilitating a cluster. Preconditions for cluster emergence can for instance be found in the presence or even prior existence of related industries.

How was this in the case of Dutch publishing? Were there changes in pillars of Porter's diamond, were latent resources activated, and/or was there an exogenous shock that set the spark to book production? It is only after the 'critical mass' of firms is reached that the self-reinforcing mechanism set in. Accordingly, this growth dynamic builds on the structures and routines that emerged during the phase in which the critical mass of firms came into being. In other words, to understand the later success of Dutch book production, it is necessary to go back to its roots.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 2.1 Number of publishers, and number of titles produced, in the Northern Netherlands/Dutch Republic between 1570 and 1620, 5-year moving average, semi-logarithmic scale



Source: Thesaurus, accessed 12-02-2010; STCN.

## 2.2 The Dutch Revolt, an external shock

The role of 'chance' is an obvious candidate for explaining the sudden expansion of Dutch book production. This relates to an on-going debate in Dutch historiography, concerning the relative importance of exogenous and endogenous factors in explaining the Golden Age. The steep incline in Figure 2.1 coincided with the Dutch

<sup>4</sup> Most notably Frenken, Van Oort, and Verburg, 'Related variety' on related variety, or spillovers between different industries within a region or town. Consider Martin and Sunley, 'Path dependence' on regional preadaptation.

<sup>5</sup> Martin and Sunley, 'The place of path dependence'.

Revolt.<sup>6</sup> The Eighty Years' War, or Dutch War of Independence (1568–1648), began as a revolt of the Seventeen Dutch Provinces against Spanish control. King Philip II of Spain responded by deploying his armies and, during armed conflicts between the rebels and Spanish troops, he recovered large parts of Flanders and Brabant. In 1579 the southern provinces renewed their allegiance to Spanish rule in the Union of Arras, prompting a response from six of the northern provinces to form the Union of Utrecht, in which they pledged to support each other as allies in the event of war. The six provinces continued their resistance and, in 1581, they formally renounced allegiance to their sovereign, the King of Spain, an act that is often considered the formal declaration of independence of the Dutch Republic. At this point, Antwerp was still engaged in the rebellion, but its economic position had been weakened by the consequences of the war, whilst the worst was yet to come. Following the long siege of Antwerp in 1585, during which trade came to a virtual standstill, Antwerp was occupied by Spanish troops. In the same year, the rebellious northern provinces closed off the town's main artery – the Scheldt river – further weakening Antwerp's appeal as an international market place.

During the course of the Revolt, and especially after the siege of Antwerp and the blockade of the Scheldt, many of the southern producers and merchants left for the northern provinces. While historians generally acknowledge the contribution of immigrants to the rise of the Republic as a centre of trade and production, they do not agree on the nature of this contribution. In the traditional 'external shock' explanations of the rapid economic growth in the Dutch Republic, the events following the Revolt, not least the immigration from the Southern Netherlands, are considered the key explanatory factors.<sup>7</sup> Other scholars downplayed the importance of immigrants in the Republic's commercial expansion, stressing the intrinsic limits of Antwerp's commercial capacity and the competitive advantages of the northern provinces.<sup>8</sup> Following this recognition of Dutch potential, historians began to emphasise the role of endogenous factors in the rapid economic growth.<sup>9</sup>

Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude have argued that the real explanation for Dutch economic success should be sought in the distinct social and economic characteristics of the Dutch provinces. Antwerp's troubles and the migration of wealthy merchants merely facilitated commercial expansion. Research following this line of reasoning has resulted in studies on late medieval socio-economic organisation. For example, the absence of feudal structures, peasant landownership,

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<sup>6</sup> On the Dutch Revolt see for example Parker, *Dutch Revolt*.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. Israel, *Dutch primacy*; Briels, 'Zuidnederlandse immigratie'; Fruin, *Tien jaren*.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. Braudel, *Civilization*, vol. III; Van Dillen, 'Amsterdam'; Van Dillen, *Rijkdom en regenten*.

<sup>9</sup> De Vries and Van der Woude, *First modern economy*. See also Israel, *Dutch primacy*.

specialisation and commercialisation in agriculture, rise of wage labour, urbanization, increasing demand for consumption goods, and efficient markets.<sup>10</sup>

Research on the merchant community in early seventeenth-century Amsterdam has revisited the debate on the relative importance of immigrants from the Southern Netherlands. Oscar Gelderblom has challenged both the importance of the immigrant-merchants' wealth and their international orientation.<sup>11</sup> In his view, most of these merchants were young men with little capital or international experience. This did not make them fundamentally different from other migrants, for example those from Holland, or local merchants. Clé Lesger, on the other hand, has argued that immigrants from the Southern Netherlands were performing above average and that their contribution was disproportionate to their numbers.<sup>12</sup> In his view, the Revolt acted as the driving force behind the changes at the end of the sixteenth century, while local conditions compounded the effect of the external shock. But how does the development of book production fit into this debate?

In the case of Dutch book production, the importance of the external shock, or 'chance' in Porter's model can hardly be overstated. There is a substantial difference with the occupational group of merchants, of whom a sizable group already existed before the Revolt. Book production was only a small-scale activity in the Dutch Republic before 1580 and consequently the external shock of the Revolt and the Fall of Antwerp was of great importance. Antwerp's book production had been dealt a serious blow and the city lost its position as a center of humanist printing. The extent of the Revolt's impact on Antwerp's publishing can be illustrated by a closer look at the largest printing firm in the Low Countries during this period.

In the sixteenth century, the so-called *Officina Plantiniana* in Antwerp, established by Christophe Plantin (c. 1520-1589), was the most famous printing house and centre of humanism and learning in Europe.<sup>13</sup> In 1574, Plantin had 56 workmen operating as many as 16 presses, but just two years later, only three of these were still in use.<sup>14</sup> The downscaling of Plantin's printing establishment was as a direct result of Spanish troops sacking Antwerp in three days of destruction, which came to be known as the 'Spanish Fury' (1576). Spanish soldiers attacked Antwerp in an act of mutiny and rampaged through the town, demanding money and burning the homes of those who could not, or would not, pay. The losses for the Plantin firm were estimated at some f 10,000, and Plantin had to let go of his Paris branch.<sup>15</sup> In 1583

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Van Bavel and Van Zanden, 'The jump-start'.

<sup>11</sup> Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse kooplieden*, pp. 15-22 and the conclusion.

<sup>12</sup> Lesger, *Rise*, chapter 4.

<sup>13</sup> The seminal work on the *Officina Plantiniana* is Voet, *Golden Compasses*, vol. I. The following section is based on *ibid.*, pp. 84-113.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82. His firm employed 32 printers, 20 compositors, and 3 proofreaders. In total his staff was estimated at circa 150 people.

<sup>15</sup> Van Oord, *Twee eeuwen Bosch' boekbedrijf*, p. 217.

Plantin left Antwerp for Leiden, where he established another branch. Two years later Plantin returned to Antwerp, by now once again in Spanish hands, leaving his son-in-law in charge of the Leiden-based firm. Back in Antwerp, Plantin had to deal with scarcity in paper and other materials.<sup>16</sup>

While Christophe Plantin went back to Antwerp, most migrants opted to remain in the Dutch Republic. It is estimated that over 150 booksellers and printers relocated from the Southern to the Northern Netherlands in the period 1570-1619, with about half of them moving between 1570 and 1595, the other half between 1595 and 1619.<sup>17</sup> Of course, quantitative importance of immigrants was not unique to the book trade, nor was it restricted to Dutch towns. Any fast-growing early modern town depended on migration and, vice versa, any economically thriving town attracted immigrants. The Antwerp book trade, for instance, had, to a large extent, consisted of immigrants and the importance of booksellers born outside of London is also evident.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, the situation in the Low Countries during the final decades of the sixteenth century differs from general early modern migration patterns, in the sense that a large number of immigrants entered the labour market in a very short period of time. Just how dramatic the impact of the Fall of Antwerp on Dutch book production must have been, can be appreciated by pointing out its relative underdevelopment during the sixteenth century.

### 2.3 Promising factor conditions and a fallow market for books

In a letter to pope Gregory XVII, dated 9 October 1574, Christophe Plantin revealed his motives for settling in Antwerp and neatly summarised what made Antwerp the place to be: the availability of resources, the abundance of craftsmen, and easy market access.<sup>19</sup> Evidently, like all other entrepreneurs, aspiring publishers required favourable factor conditions, such as skilled labour, access to capital, and a well-developed transport infrastructure. By 1585 Antwerp could no longer offer most of the favourable conditions that had attracted booksellers around the middle of the sixteenth century, and many skilled producers and merchants went in search of an

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<sup>16</sup> Voet, *Golden Compasses*, vol. I, p. 117. For complaints by Plantin in his letters see Denucé, ed., *Correspondence*, pp 261, 262, 347, 351; Briels, *Zuidnederlandse boekverkopers*, p. 21. The number of orders from the Northern Netherlands dropped from 601 in the period 1566-1570 to 151 in the period 1586-1589 (the year of Plantin's death), and the number of individual booksellers by whom orders were placed decreased from 28 to 8. Van Oord, *Twee eeuwen Bosch' boekbedrijf*, pp. 256-257. Towns in Holland in particular were hardly able to obtain books from Antwerp during the period 1585-1589.

<sup>17</sup> Briels, *Zuidnederlandse boekverkopers*, pp. 3-6.

<sup>18</sup> Waterschoot, 'Antwerp', p. 234; Raven, *The business of books*, p. 205.

<sup>19</sup> Waterschoot, 'Antwerp', p. 241. Also in Limberger, 'Economies of agglomeration', p. 69.

alternative.<sup>20</sup> Besides geographic proximity, the Dutch Republic offered cultural and socio-economic proximity. After all, the provinces in the Low Countries had been subject to the same sovereign, operated within an interconnected economy, and shared a linguistic and cultural heritage. The strong pull exerted by the northern towns need not surprise us, yet since we are talking of structural conditions, one may also wonder why there were so few publishers in the first place.

Already during the sixteenth century, the occupational structure of the northern provinces was characterised by a high proportion of non-agricultural economic activities and wage labour, as well as a high degree of specialised labour, even in rural areas.<sup>21</sup> Commercial activities, for instance in dairy farming, the export of herring, textiles, and beers, were ubiquitous and Dutch merchants and shipmasters were well positioned throughout trading networks, especially in the Baltic trade routes.<sup>22</sup> The northern provinces showed an urbanisation rate of 27 per cent around 1525, when the average for Europe was only 9 per cent.<sup>23</sup> The province of Holland, the most commercialized region in the north, had a remarkable 45 per cent urbanisation rate. Moreover, estimates of GDP per capita, often used as a proxy for income per capita, are not dramatically different for the northern and southern provinces throughout the sixteenth century.<sup>24</sup>

Conditions for training a skilled labour force were also favourable in the Dutch Republic. The importance of capital embodied by people, the so-called human capital, is widely accepted in economics literature. There are several ways to measure the relative level of human capital in a society; the most common being levels of literacy, years of education, and the skill premium. In short this measure refers to the attributes gained by a worker through education and experience.<sup>25</sup> Contemporary visitors observed that men and women were generally able to read and write, and that these skills were relatively widespread in the countryside, rather than being merely concentrated in the cities.<sup>26</sup> Estimates of Dutch literacy, based on Amsterdam marriage registers, confirm these observations.<sup>27</sup> By tracing the difference in daily wages between skilled craftsmen, such as carpenters or masons, and unskilled labourers – for example, in the construction industry – the skill premium reflects the

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. attempts by Moretus to find appropriate apprentices for his printshop and bookshop in, for instance, Den Bosch at the end of the sixteenth century. Van Oord, *Twee eeuwen Bosch' boekbedrijf*, pp. 266-268.

<sup>21</sup> Van Bavel and Van Zanden, 'The jump-start', p. 503; Van Bavel, 'Rural wage labour'; Van Zanden, 'The 'revolt of the early modernists' '.

<sup>22</sup> On the Dutch trading position see Lesger, *Rise*.

<sup>23</sup> Urbanization rates from De Vries and Van der Woude, *First modern economy*, pp. 52-71.

<sup>24</sup> Van Zanden, *Long road*, p. 241.

<sup>25</sup> On human capital see: Becker, *Human capital*.

<sup>26</sup> See for example: Parker, *Dutch Revolt*, p. 21.

<sup>27</sup> Van Zanden, *Long road*, pp. 190-194; Kuijpers, 'Lezen en schrijven'; Stephens, 'Literacy in England, Scotland and Wales, 1500-1900', p. 511; Harline, *Pamphlets, printing, and political culture*. The Amsterdam case may even be an underestimation as literacy rates were often higher in the countryside than in towns, in contrast to, for example, England.

relative price of investing in human capital. In the Republic, the average skill premium was low, even before the Revolt.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, in the sixteenth century, Holland had the highest literacy rates in Europe, arguably a crucial factor in the demand for books.<sup>29</sup>

Demand for books is influenced by a number of factors, including price, purchase power, literacy rates, and socio-cultural preferences, as well as supply and distribution factors that invariably affect the availability of books.<sup>30</sup> Present-day analyses of price and income sensitivity of books show a price elasticity of circa -1.5 per cent and an income elasticity of circa 1.8 per cent.<sup>31</sup> In short, for every percentage point decrease in price, holding constant all the other determinants of demand, there is a resulting increase of more than a percentage point in demand. Likewise, following a 10 per cent increase in income, the demand for books, *ceteris paribus*, increases by 18 per cent. Although these figures cannot be directly applied to the early modern book market, it should be evident that both price and income were important to the size of the book market in the early modern period. Comparisons between early modern probate inventories and wealth estimates, based on, for example, tax or burial registers, have shown that there is a significant relationship between the consumption of books and the households' economic situation.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, Engel's Law predicts that as disposable income rises, the proportion of that income spent on essentials, such as food, tends to drop, leaving more room for non-essentials, such as cultural products.<sup>33</sup>

As noted above, there were no dramatic differences in GDP per capita between the northern and southern provinces during the sixteenth century. Yet this measure does not capture the average purchasing power of households. Real wages equal the nominal wage divided by the consumer price index (CPI).<sup>34</sup> Estimates of real wage levels are available for the major towns in both regions.<sup>35</sup> During the sixteenth century real wage levels in Amsterdam and Antwerp diverge. Real wages in Amsterdam were characterized by contraction in the first half of the century, whereas real wages in Antwerp remained relatively stable.<sup>36</sup> Yet Antwerp was not

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<sup>28</sup> Van Zanden, *Long road*, pp. 155-164.

<sup>29</sup> On literacy: *ibid.*, pp. 190-194. On sources and measures of literacy see Houston, *Literacy*.

<sup>30</sup> De Kruif, *Liefhebbers*, pp. 102-107; Ringstad and Løyland, 'Demand for books', pp. 148-149.

<sup>31</sup> Ringstad and Løyland, 'Demand for books'. The authors provide a discussion of different estimates of the income- and price-elasticity of demand for books.

<sup>32</sup> For example: De Kruif, *Liefhebbers*, pp. 102-104. Occupation, religious conviction, age, gender, and marital status of the deceased were also other factors of influence.

<sup>33</sup> Hesmondhalgh, *The cultural industries*, p. 97; Cf. Chai, 'Retrospectives'.

<sup>34</sup> Angeles, 'GDP per capita or real wages?'.  
<sup>35</sup> Real wages from Allen, 'Great divergence'. Nominal wages of building craftsmen in grams of silver per day (table 1) were somewhat lower in Amsterdam than in Antwerp during the period 1500-1549, and even during 1550-1649.

<sup>36</sup> Real wages presented as welfare ratios for building craftsmen from *ibid.*, pp. 425-428, esp. table 425. The welfare ratio equals average annual earnings divided by the cost of a 'poverty line consumption bundle' for a family consisting of a man, woman, and two children.

typical: in the Southern Netherlands in general real wages dropped between 1500 and 1560. By any means, around mid-century, the real wages in the urban centres of the south surpassed those in the north.<sup>37</sup> During the decades that followed, the Southern Netherlands stagnated and contracted, whereas real wages in the north picked up.

And so, even though there was no commercial hub that even remotely resembled Antwerp, the northern provinces offered a sophisticated labour market, a literate and urban population, and an established position in trade networks, already in the sixteenth century.<sup>38</sup> Still, the fact that no significant book production had developed in the northern provinces during the sixteenth century suggests that these overall conditions were not sufficient. Even if they would have improved during the seventeenth century, regardless of Antwerp's fate, there is no certainty that domestic book production would have expanded as substantially as it did. Moreover, it is inconceivable that any such expansion would have transpired just as quickly.

## 2.4 New publishers, new markets

Socio-economic circumstances in the Low Countries changed dramatically around the turn of the sixteenth century. This was clearly visible in the dramatic increase in population size, in the early modern period a suitable indicator of demand for labour. Lacking exact figures, on the whole, the estimated population of the northern provinces increased from 1,200,000 to 1,300,000 around 1550 to roughly 1,400,000 to 1,600,000 around 1600, and 1,850,000 to 1,900,000 another half a century later.<sup>39</sup> On a regional or urban level, growth rates were even more impressive. Holland and Friesland in particular show an upsurge unparalleled in Europe at the time.<sup>40</sup> Amsterdam's population increased by a factor three, from circa 30,000 in 1580 to close to 100,000 in 1600.<sup>41</sup> The population growth reflects increased employment opportunities in agriculture, trade, and industry. The growth of these sectors further stimulated the services industries, resulting in an economy wide boom.

During the Golden Age, GDP per capita increased and wages tripled, a development that by and large took place between 1580 and 1620.<sup>42</sup> Although the

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<sup>37</sup> It is worth noting that GDP per capital and real wages do not necessarily display comparable growth patterns.

<sup>38</sup> De Vries and Van der Woude, *First modern economy*, pp. 693-710.

<sup>39</sup> Faber *et al.*, 'Population changes', p. 110. They estimate the population of the Netherlands within modern borders.

<sup>40</sup> De Vries and Van der Woude, *First modern economy*, pp. 51-53.

<sup>41</sup> This estimate is based on a population of 30,000 in 1578, 120,000 in 1632, and 160,000 to 175,000 in 1650. Nusteling, *Welvaart en werkgelegenheid*, pp. 234-236, bijlage 2.2; Lourens and Lucassen, *Inwonersaantallen*, pp. 55-57.

<sup>42</sup> On European wages: Van Zanden, *Long road*, pp. 233-266; Allen, 'Great divergence'.



increase in real wages was more modest, it still comprised 20 to 40 per cent, depending on occupation and place of residence. Compared to other countries, wages were high and increasing, whilst, as an unparalleled share of the rapidly increasing population was able to read. Potential demand was large, to say the least. In a period of economic growth, rapid population increase, rising purchasing power, and on-going commercialisation and professionalisation we should expect nothing less than an increase in demand for cultural products, such as books. The book production industry indeed expanded rapidly from 1580 onwards, particularly after 1590: the number of titles annually produced in the Dutch Republic increased from circa 70 in 1580, to 360 in 1610.<sup>43</sup>

To some extent, the expansion of the publishing sector can be attributed by the combined increase in population size and the number of publishing towns – both reflections of an absolute increase in demand. The relative importance of both general and local demand conditions can be illustrated by the geography of book production (Table 2.1).<sup>44</sup> Population size, a basic proxy for the size of local demand, is an important determinant in identifying whether one or more publishers were active in 1610, though it cannot fully account for the geographic distribution of publishers. Typically, publishing was concentrated in towns and the number of towns in which publishers were located increased from 8 to 24.<sup>45</sup> However, in most urban areas, the scale of book production was fairly modest – even in towns housing over 20,000 inhabitants – we typically only find a handful of booksellers. In fact, 80 per cent of the growth between 1570 and 1610 was limited to the ten largest towns. Some towns specialised in certain types of production and, as we will see, it was in these fields that qualitative changes in terms of style and format took place.

Amsterdam and Leiden combined attracted roughly 40 per cent of the booksellers who migrated from the Southern Netherlands to the Republic between 1570 and 1600. This share further rose to about 50 per cent between 1600 and 1630.<sup>46</sup> Many booksellers tried their luck in other (Dutch) towns before moving to Amsterdam after 1590. Only 27 per cent of publishers working in Amsterdam in 1600 had started their business in the 1580s, as opposed to twice as many in the 1590s.<sup>47</sup> Presumably, some had planned to return to Antwerp as soon as possible and had

<sup>43</sup> STCN, accessed 14-03-2009.

<sup>44</sup> Amsterdam (34), Leiden (12), Rotterdam (10), Dordrecht (10), Delft (7). The Hague (4), Franeker (4), Middelburg (4), Utrecht (4), Arnhem (2), Den Bosch (2), Deventer (2), Enkhuizen (2), Gorinchem (2), Groningen (2), Hoorn (2), Kampen (2), Leeuwarden (2), Nijmegen (2), Alkmaar (1), Gouda (1), Haarlem (1), Schiedam (1), Vlissingen (1).

<sup>45</sup> Amsterdam, Leiden, The Hague, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Middelburg, Dordrecht, Haarlem, Groningen, Delft.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Briels, *Zuidnederlandse boekverkopers*. Especially before 1594, the immigrants were independent masters and shopkeepers. 1570-1600: N=93; 1600-1630: N=75.

<sup>47</sup> Prosopographies 1585 and 1600; Amsterdam's share is probably underestimated in Briels' figures, due to the fact that he only considered first place of settlement.

therefore lingered in towns closer to the borders, such as Middelburg and Dordrecht. Others had first tried to set-up shop in London, Cologne, or other towns in the Dutch Republic.<sup>48</sup>

In order to further explain the uneven distribution between towns, we have to take title production into account. The distribution of publishers does not fully correspond with the pattern found in title production. In the decade 1600-1609, the only towns where over 100 titles were produced were Leiden, Amsterdam, The Hague, Franeker, Middelburg, and Delft. It is easy to envision of the reasons behind the above average production in these towns. As soon academic texts are excluded, the level of production in the university towns drops significantly. Even so, Leiden remains the largest producer in the Republic in terms of title production. The Hague's high production levels can be easily explained by its function as the seat of government. After excluding the category of state publications, The Hague's book production loses much of its significance. A clear pattern emerges: Amsterdam was the hub of information; Leiden of academic printing; and The Hague became synonymous with political news, official state publications, and judicial printing.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Briels, *Zuidnederlandse boekverkopers*, p. 25.

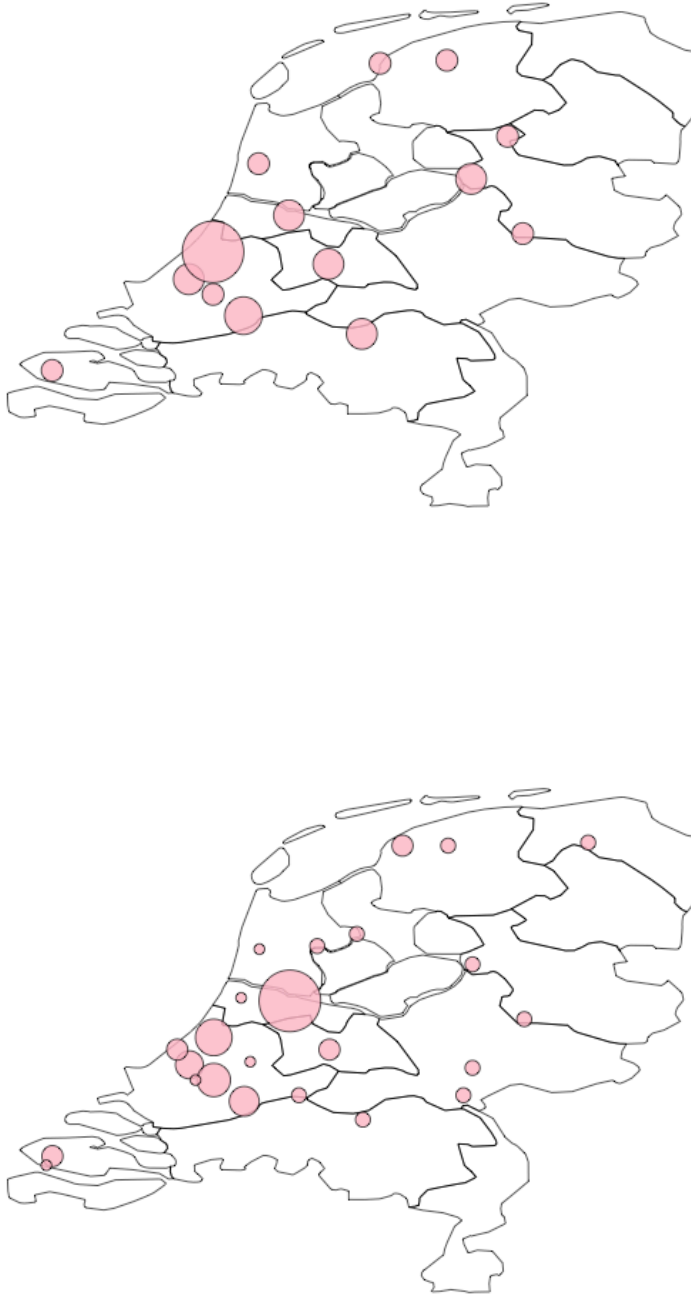
<sup>49</sup> Keblusek, *Boeken in de hofstad*, pp. 305-306.

Table 2.1 Distribution of publishers in the Dutch Republic, 1570, 1585, and 1610 (including all towns with one publisher or more in 1570)

	1570	1585	1610	Number of titles 1600-1609	Population size 1622, unless otherwise indicated ***
Leiden	0	10	12	1,234 (430*)	44,500
Amsterdam	2	5	34	369	105,000
The Hague	0	0	4	220 (70**)	16,000
Franecker	0	0	4	202 (63*)	3,500 (1670)
Middelburg	0	1	7	117	20,000 (1600)
Delft	3	3	7	105	20,000
Rotterdam	0	1	10	82	19,500
Arnhem	0	1	2	52	7,000 (1600)
Dordrecht	0	3	8	50	18,500
Haarlem	0	2	1	33	39,500
Utrecht	1	2	4	30	30,000 (1623)
's-Hertogenbosch	2	2	2	29	18,000 (1610)
Alkmaar	0	2	1	28	12,500
Groningen	0	0	2	25	16,500 (1600)
Gouda	0	1	1	17	14,500
Enkhuizen	0	1	2	12	22,000
Hoorn	0	0	2	12	14,000
Gorinchem	0	0	2	11	6,000
Leeuwarden	0	1	2	11	11,500 (1606)
Deventer	1	1	2	10	8,000 (1628)
Vlissingen	0	0	1	8	5,000 (1600)
Schiedam	0	0	1	6	6,000
Nijmegen	0	0	2	4	12,000 (1611)
Kampen	3	0	2	3	7,500 (1628)
Harlingen	0	1	0	2	8,800 (1670)
Steenwijk	1	0	0	1	1,000 (1636)
Total	14	37	115	2,673 (1,580)	-
Total towns (N >1)	8	16	24	-	-

Source: Thesaurus. Population estimates based on (Lourens and Lucassen 1997). \* = excluding academic texts; \*\* = excluding state publications, \*\*\* = the population figures are rounded to the nearest 500.

Figure 2.2 Distribution of publishers in 1580 (above) and 1610 (below)



Source: Thesaurus.

*Patterns of specialization*

Leiden was the first town in which book production flourished. The town, in the province of Holland, had been an important centre of textile production throughout the fifteenth century, but during in the sixteenth century its economy had not fared so well. This all changed after the Revolt, when the textile industry was revived and Leiden became a centre of academic studies. As it happens, Leiden was one of the first towns to choose the side of the rebels. Following the end of a Spanish siege in 1574, the leader of the Dutch revolt, William I, Prince of Orange, rewarded the town for its sacrifices and endurance by establishing a university. Only a year later, this first university of the northern provinces welcomed its first students. Despite this, in the early years of the university's foundation, the local book trade scarcely existed and printing jobs had to be filled by immigrant printers. In 1577, Willem Silvius from Antwerp was appointed as the academy's first printer. When he died after a mere three years, the famous humanist and classical scholar, Justus Lipsius, suggested Plantin as his successor. And so, in 1583, the famous Antwerp printer transferred part of his printing shop to Leiden. Through the joint efforts of the university and the local government, Leiden attracted the best possible printers and scholars and swiftly acquired pan-European fame.<sup>50</sup>

The Hague only had a small population, but one that was relatively wealthy and in need of printed texts.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, as a court and government town, the town attracted many civil servants, officers, ambassadors, as well as numerous diplomatic emissaries. Concomitantly, it exerted a pull on printers and booksellers. Since jurisdiction divided between the court and the town governments, with the former administering the Inner Courtyard (*Binnenhof*), the meeting place of the States General and the court of the Princes of Orange. Soon the markets at the Inner Courtyard attracted more and more salesmen of books, maps, and prints.<sup>52</sup> Contrary to other towns and the city itself, they did not have to be a member of the local guild in order to sell at this market, which meant that they could not only come from The Hague, but also from other towns.<sup>53</sup> Given the presence of the court and the States General, it is not surprising that many The Hague publishers specialised in relatively cheap opiniating and informative works, as well as semi-official or occasional printing. Specialist legal titles were also highly valued.<sup>54</sup> Hardly any of more popular mass products, such as songbooks or almanacs originated from The Hague. However,

<sup>50</sup> On the interaction between Leiden book production on the one hand, and government and university on the other, see: Hoftijzer, 'Metropolis'; Bouwman *et al.*, eds., *Stad van boeken*; Cruz, *Paradox of prosperity*.

<sup>51</sup> Keblusek, *Boeken in de hofstad*, pp. 17- on the emergence of The Hague as a centre of printed works. See also Kossmann, *De boekhandel te 's-Gravenhage*.

<sup>52</sup> Kossmann, *De boekverkoopers*, p. vviii.

<sup>53</sup> Keblusek, *Boeken in de hofstad*, p. 26.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

contrary to what could be expected in view of the characteristics on the demand side, there was little to no luxury printing. Did The Hague publishers and printers not have the copy, the type, or the skills? Or did they lack the local basis to counter the risks of capital-intensive and expensive works?<sup>55</sup> In any case, this illustrates the fact that local demand conditions cannot fully explain the spatial distribution of book production in the early modern Dutch Republic.

The development of Amsterdam as a centre of the book trade differed from Leiden's and The Hague's. The expansion of Amsterdam's book production started only after 1585 and was driven by the pulling force of commerce, rather than government initiative. Of the nine Amsterdam-based publishers identified as active in 1585, only two, possibly three, were Amsterdam-born, and only one, Cornelis Claesz, was born in the Southern Netherlands.<sup>56</sup> By 1600, just over ten per cent of the town's 29 publishers were native to Amsterdam and one third came from the Southern Netherlands. The timing of this suggests that the Amsterdam book trade only really took off when it became clear that Antwerp would remain under Spanish rule and that the Scheldt would remain closed. In 1600, more than half the immigrants from the Southern Netherlands who were working in Amsterdam had resided elsewhere after their initial migration.<sup>57</sup>

Amsterdam's production was more varied than Leiden's and characterised by a relatively low share of ephemeral work and a virtual monopoly in the production of geographical books – a relatively small genre. Already in the sixteenth century, Amsterdam, as a commercial satellite of Antwerp, had managed to expand its role in international trade. It held a dominant position in the import of Baltic grain and within Holland it became the major gateway to overseas trade, owing to its well-developed transport connections with the hinterland and a deep harbour in the IJ River.<sup>58</sup> Its location, geographical dispersal of trade, and frequency of shipping made Amsterdam one of the most important hubs in the flow of international information.<sup>59</sup> Not only for merchants, but also for publishers this was a crucial local resource. It is no coincidence that Amsterdam was strong in the publication of books relating to commercial know, that it took over Antwerp's lead in cartography and nautical works, and that it became the first international newspaper centre.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp. 73-74.

<sup>56</sup> Prosopography 1585. Hendrick Pietersz, Adriaen Barentsz and possibly Barent Adriaensz were born in Amsterdam.

<sup>57</sup> Prosopography 1600.

<sup>58</sup> See for the role of Amsterdam in the spatial economy of the Low Countries: Lesger, *Rise*.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., pp. 214-257.

<sup>60</sup> The earliest printed newspaper is the *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt etc*, published in 1618 Amsterdam by Casper van Hilten. Within a year a competing newspaper was issued. Cf. Dahl, *Amsterdam, cradle of English newspapers*; Dahl, 'Amsterdam. Earliest newspaper centre of Western Europe'; Stolp, *De eerste couranten in Nederland: bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der geschreven nieuwstijdingen*.

The comparison between the number of titles, number of ephemeral titles, and the number of publishers, revealed distinct patterns of concentration and specialization, already around the turn of the century. Leiden was the first to take off, but it was soon overtaken by Amsterdam. Nonetheless, even without official academic printwork, the number of titles originating in Leiden was impressive. The dominance of Leiden, The Hague, and Amsterdam was not difficult to explain. Each had a distinct competitive advantage in attracting (potential) publishers. Leiden became a university town, The Hague a court town, and Amsterdam a commercial hub. These functions also determined the development of specializations. In the following chapters the consequences of these early patterns of specialization will be discussed.

## 2.5 New markets, new products

During the phase of emergence, the number and variety of titles produced in the Dutch Republic expanded, but there were also changes in terms of style and content. A comparison of the genres of titles published in Amsterdam during the decades 1580-1589 and 1600-1609, confirms that the relatively novel genres gained ground during the emergence phase. Although theology (c. 25 per cent) and history (c. 35 per cent) remained the most important genres, modern subjects, such as geography, increased from 5 to 12 per cent, Dutch literature from 5 to 10 per cent, and poetry from 8 to 13 per cent.<sup>61</sup> To illustrate how Dutch publishers aimed for new markets, we take a closer look at two popular sub-genres: travelogues and songbooks.

Within popular genres, such as vernacular songbooks, as well as more luxurious genres, such as travelogues, new sub-genres emerged to target new market segments. In 1601, Leiden-based publisher Hans Matthysz published Daniel Heinsius' *Quaeris quid sit amor*, the first romantic poetry and emblem book in Dutch.<sup>62</sup> Besides it being the first of its kind ever written in Dutch (contrary to what the Latin title suggests), it was also innovative in terms of typography. It was published in quarto oblong, with a spacious type page, various fonts, and artistic emblem-prints. Quarto refers to a sheet folded twice to produce four leaves (or eight pages). Oblong is what we would now call 'landscape' layout – where the horizontal axis is longer than the vertical axis. A year later he launched a new type of songbook, *Den nieuwen lust-hof* (1602), which introduced an upgrade to the conventional genre by adding new lyrics to familiar melodies, using a variety of fonts, illustrations, and a large

<sup>61</sup> STCN, accessed February 2009. Note that titles can fit in multiple genres.

<sup>62</sup> Breugelmans, 'Quaeris'.

format (quarto oblong).<sup>63</sup> With the expensive deluxe songbook, Matthysz targeted a specific group of clients: wealthy youngsters, or *jeunesse dorée*.<sup>64</sup> This expensive collection of songbooks was soon revised and reprinted, and it became the leading template in the first quarter of the seventeenth century.<sup>65</sup> Because it was intended for a different market, this new type of songbook did not replace the old, simpler songbooks, but rather formed an additional subgenre.

Similar developments occurred in travelogues. While travel accounts had been in demand in Europe throughout the sixteenth century, Amsterdam publisher Cornelis Claesz further popularised the genre.<sup>66</sup> His publications differed from the typical travel books. Although his combination of copperplate engravings with letterpress type was not original – Claesz would have certainly used Plantin as a model here – the way he applied it to the travel genre was unique at this time. He included more illustrations and had engravers expand the compositions. Moreover, he used quarto oblong format, as opposed to the traditional standard atlas folio.<sup>67</sup> The oblong quarto format, gothic typeface, and use of the vernacular suggest that Claesz aimed for the broadest possible Dutch audience.<sup>68</sup> In addition, he also published these books in Latin and French, in a Roman typeface, and vertical folio to cater to international audiences. Between this expensive, scholarly work for the international elite and cheap print work for the masses, a new market opened up. Claesz exploited this new niche market, catering to wealthy merchants and ship owners, as well as the middle classes interested in the exploits of Dutch explorers.<sup>69</sup> Very few works on navigation and geography published by Claesz can be considered specialist or professional literature and most of these titles were produced for the interested layman.<sup>70</sup>

Through novel use of copy, fonts, format, images, and language, Dutch publishers tried to tap into the relatively untapped markets as well as the new markets that were forming as a result of economic growth. In the interplay between expanding potential demand, differentiation of demand, and strategies of publishers, new products were created. In the production phase, publishers required copy, paper, type, ink, and, depending on the type of books, print designers, print-cutters, translators, and editors. In his book *Hollands rijkdom* (1780), Leiden bookseller and

<sup>63</sup> Porteman and Smits-Veldt, *Nieuw vaderland*, p. 180; Verkruijsse, 'P.C. Hooft'; Wilde, 'Meer dan vorm'.

<sup>64</sup> Grootes, 'Jeugdig publiek'; Grijp, 'Voer voor zanggrage kropjes'; Keersmaekers, *Wandelend*; Keersmaekers, 'Drie Amsterdamse liedboeken'.

<sup>65</sup> On songbooks see: Veldhorst, *Zingend door het leven*; Veldhorst, 'Pharmacy for the body and soul'. On the new type of songbook in particular see: Keersmaekers, *Wandelend*; Keersmaekers, 'Drie Amsterdamse liedboeken'.

<sup>66</sup> Sutton, 'Economics', pp. 112-119.

<sup>67</sup> A series of diagrams on the size of books can be found in Gaskell, *A new introduction to bibliography*, pp. 87-107.

<sup>68</sup> On the public for Claesz' travel series: Sutton, 'Economics', pp. 123-128.

<sup>69</sup> Schilder, *Cornelis Claesz*, p. 283.

<sup>70</sup> Dijstelberge, 'De Cost en de Baet'; Van Selm, *Menighte treffelijcke boecken*, p. 174.



lawyer Elie Luzac (1721-1796) considered the following factors to be responsible for the success of the seventeenth-century Dutch book trade: the scholarly community, affordable paper, the beauty of the letters, the quality of printing, the price of the books, and, above all, freedom of the press.<sup>71</sup> The first three elements are clear-cut examples of what Michael Porter has labeled 'related and supporting industries'.

The presence of both internationally competitive and geographically proximate suppliers and firms of related fields may be of particular importance for cultural industries in which the production of goods is a collaborative enterprise. Book production is a perfect example of this. Yet it was not the presence of such activities that stimulated the development of Dutch book production. At the close of the sixteenth century, Dutch competitiveness in these industries was still a long way off. Before the Revolt, the Northern Netherlands had had no scholarly community worth mentioning and academic talent tended to try its luck elsewhere.<sup>72</sup> In terms of paper, Dutch sellers depended on imports through Antwerp. Type was ordered abroad. This meant that after the Revolt, related and supporting industries had to be built more or less from scratch.

### *Typography*

*Den nieuwe lust-hof*, the songbook published by Leiden publisher Matthysz, drew on a variety of fonts, by which it broke with the style of sixteenth century Dutch books, whose pages were dark, crowded, and with medieval-style decoration. Southern Netherlands' printers introduced the more elegant French style, characterised by balanced pages, a structure of chapters and paragraphs, the use of notes and references, different fonts, and ornate and decorative letters.<sup>73</sup> To achieve such effects, printers needed type in multiple sets, in various sizes. The three main types in use during this period were roman (basic upright), italic, and gothic (blackletter). Printers could buy up old type, order new type from type-founders who used existing matrices, or they could have their own typeface designed and cut for them. This, of course, required investment. Once punches and matrices were bought, they required little further expenditure, but stocks of type were more of a burden.<sup>74</sup> Expenditure on stocks of type came third after wages and labour in terms of the production cost of books, and it was the most expensive part of the firm's fixed

<sup>71</sup> Luzac, *Hollands rijkdom*, vol. IV, pp. 425-426. 'Verscheidene oorzaaken hebben onzen Hollandschen boekhandel tot dat toppunt gebragt, waarop die geweest is. 1. De menigte van geleerden, welken in Holland gewoond en der geleerde wereld eere toegebragt hebben. 2. De goedkoopte van het papier. 3. De fraaiheid onze drukletteren. 4. Onze oplettendheid om fraai te drukken. 5. De maatige prijs, waarvoor wij onze drukken konden leveren. 6. De vrijheid der drukpers. Dit laatste heeft vooral veel toegebragt om den Boekhandel in Holland te doen bloeien.'

<sup>72</sup> Davids, 'Amsterdam as a centre of learning', pp. 307-308.

<sup>73</sup> Dijkstra, 'De vorm: typografie in de Renaissance', p. 119.

<sup>74</sup> Voet, *Golden Compasses*, vol. II, p. 124.

capital.<sup>75</sup> Plantin's accounts point to conservative amounts per set, depending on the size and the type, but a total investment of as much as *f*20,000.<sup>76</sup>

Prior to the Revolt, printers in the northern provinces had procured their type in the south, where Hendrik van den Keere, who was Plantin's sole supplier after 1570, had a virtual monopoly.<sup>77</sup> In 1577, when the city council of Leiden set up a printing press, type still had to be ordered in the Southern Netherlands, but gradually several type-cutters started to arrive in the Republic. Van den Keere's family had fled from Ghent to London after 1584, where Van den Keere's daughter Colette married mapmaker Jodocus Hondius. In the 1590s they moved to Amsterdam, together with her brother, the engraver Pieter van den Keere. In the meantime, Thomas de Vechter, who had been Van den Keere's former foreman, had moved to Leiden, bringing with him some of his former master's tools and matrices.<sup>78</sup> The last remaining punch-cutter in the Southern Netherlands, Geeraert van Wolscharen, was also almost lured north; in 1609, a Dutch town, probably Leiden or Amsterdam, had offered him favourable settlement conditions. Desperate to keep Van Wolscharen in Antwerp, printers requested, seemingly successfully, that the Antwerp authorities grant him certain privileges to persuade him to stay.<sup>79</sup> During this period, another significant collection of type moved to the north. After Plantin's death in 1589, the enormous collection of typographic material he had built up was divided among his sons-in-law: Jan Moretus in Antwerp and Franciscus Raphelengius in Leiden.<sup>80</sup>

During this emerging period, Dutch printers were content to rely on Southern Netherlands' type and type-founders, with the type and associates of Van den Keere linking the sixteenth- and the seventeenth-century styles. Few new types seem to have been cut in the Dutch Republic, with the exception of a few specialised series, such as Arabic, Ethiopian, and Samaritan, commissioned by Raphelengius, as well as the cutting of a Hebrew typeface, tentatively attributed to Jodocus Hondius.<sup>81</sup> This was not limited to the Northern Netherlands; it has been observed that throughout Europe, the profusion of high-quality type-cutters in the third quarter of the sixteenth century was followed by half a century of scarcity, before Dutch type-founders would start to innovate once more.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., pp. 82-89.

<sup>77</sup> Middendorp, *Dutch type*, p. 18; Voet, *Golden Compasses*, vol. II, pp. 65-75.

<sup>78</sup> Voet, *Golden Compasses*, vol. II, p. 80.

<sup>79</sup> The request by Antwerp printers can be found in: Briels, *Zuidnederlandse boekverkopers*, pp. 565-566.

<sup>80</sup> Voet, *Golden Compasses*, vol. II, p. 76.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>82</sup> Vervliet, *Sixteenth-century printing types*, pp. 11-12.

*Book illustrations*

Along with the use of various fonts in the newly produced books, such as the songbook *Den nieuwen lust-hof* and Claesz' travelogues, the inclusion of illustrations was another innovative feature.<sup>83</sup> But the production of books became much more complex and expensive when illustrations were included. The printer had to decide whether to re-use old plates, order new plates, or perhaps even use new designs. He had order, produce, or otherwise have access to engraved or etched copperplates, or woodcuts. This required not only an investment, but also a more complex production process, as it involved collaboration with engravers and artists. There was no clear-cut occupational differentiation: some large publishers employed engravers and artists, artists also etched and engraved, while other engravers published their own work.<sup>84</sup>

Like printing, the activities of print publishing and engraving had also been concentrated in Antwerp during most of the sixteenth century. Until 1578, Harmen Jansz Muller was the only print publisher in Amsterdam, but soon after 1580 both the number and output of engravers and designers increased.<sup>85</sup> As with type, this did not immediately result in an abundance of new book illustrations. Demand for illustrations was partly met by re-using old plates. Cornelis Claesz, the largest map and book publisher in the Republic, based virtually all his artistic prints on existing impressions or plates, originally published by others.<sup>86</sup> Claesz owned hundreds of plates, made by contemporaries such as Jan Saenredam (1565-1607), and almost the entire production of Jacob II de Gheyn (c. 1565-1629).<sup>87</sup> Many of the images by De Gheyn had also been published by other print-publishers 20 years earlier.<sup>88</sup> Print publisher Hendrick Hondius (1573-1650) acquired plates and blocks by earlier artists throughout his career, reprinting at least 380 second-hand plates, close to a third of his publishing output.<sup>89</sup> And nearly half of Claes Jansz Visscher's (1587-1652) known oeuvre consisted of reprints from second-hand plates.<sup>90</sup>

Another manner in which old images could be re-used was by designing and engraving new plates after older impressions. This is not to say that such reprints were always carbon copies. The adaptation of older series could also be creative acts, resulting in the production of a new artistic product. Arguably the best-known print designers and publishers from this period, Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617) and Jacob

<sup>83</sup> Veldhorst, *Zingend door het leven*, p. 140.

<sup>84</sup> Kolfin distinguishes between several types of print publishers: painter-engravers, publisher-engravers, engraver-publishers, and publishers without a background in engraving. Kolfin, 'Amsterdam, stad van prenten', pp. 15-18.

<sup>85</sup> The following is based on Orenstein *et al.*, 'Print Publishers in the Netherlands'. On print publishing, including book illustration see also: Orenstein, *Hendrick Hondius*, p. 96.

<sup>86</sup> Orenstein *et al.*, 'Print Publishers in the Netherlands', p. 171.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 182-183.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>89</sup> Orenstein, *Hendrick Hondius*, p. 96.

<sup>90</sup> Orenstein, 'Marketing prints'.

II de Gheyn, both made many reproductions, but also developed distinct styles. Eventually Goltzius and De Gheyn seemed to prefer working on their own designs, which were then engraved by others, and after 1600 they both took to painting. During the emergence phase, a large expansion of the scale and scope of prints and book illustrations took place. Although new and original designs were becoming more widespread, it was only in the next phase, the 'Golden Age' of Dutch book illustration, that a new generation would *en masse* produce new designs.

### *Paper*

Dutch book producers active between 1580 and 1610 had to import printing paper, because it was not yet produced in the Dutch Republic on any significant scale. Attempts at setting up paper mills were made, but early mill-owners complained about the availability of the necessary know-how in the Dutch labour market.<sup>91</sup> The development of a domestic paper industry was not only inhibited by a lack of skills, but also by geographic conditions and the absence of pure water and waterpower.<sup>92</sup> Dutch paper production would only expand rapidly, even becoming the most efficient in Europe, when the introduction of the so-called 'hollander' in around 1674 allowed for an improvement of the pulping process. Yet, before becoming a producer in its own right, Holland had already been the largest depot of paper in Europe for some time. Unfortunately, we have very few figures on the import volume of paper. Even combined, they merely confirm that significant amounts were brought into the country.<sup>93</sup>

Before the Revolt, Dutch printers had mainly used 'Troyes' paper from Northern France, which was imported through Antwerp, but the Dutch Revolt disturbed trade, making imports irregular and causing costs to soar.<sup>94</sup> Many of Antwerp's merchants, including those involved in paper, moved to the Northern Netherlands, where they invested in new trade routes. Studies of watermarks show that after the Revolt, Swiss paper almost completely replaced Troyes paper, not only for writing, but also for printing.<sup>95</sup> Around 1580, Basel papermakers were having trouble competing with German and French paper production, but the Dutch *Compagnie van Duitsche papieren* soon revived the faltering Swiss paper production.

<sup>91</sup> Voorn, *De papiermolens*, vol. I, p. 6. 'Voornoemde Neeringe in dese Landen is onbekent, ende qualijcken bequame Arbeyders daer toe souden syn te bekomen'. After the Revolt, two concentrations of papermaking developed: in the Zaanstreek, to the north of Amsterdam, and in the Veluwe area, in the central part of the country.

<sup>92</sup> On domestic paper production see: *ibid.*; Voorn, *De papiermolens*, vol. II; De Vries and Van der Woude, *First modern economy*, pp. 311-315.

<sup>93</sup> Brugmans, *Statistiek*; Enschedé, 'Papier', p. 85.

<sup>94</sup> Voorn, 'Lombards', p. 317; Voet, 'Het Plantijnse Huis te Leiden', p. 29. The scarcity of Troyes paper is well illustrated by a letter from Raphelengius in Leiden to Plantin in Antwerp, dated 1591: 'par toute la Hollande n'y a moyen d'en trouver propre, et n'avons icy autre papier que ce meschant de la mala gente de Rochelle.'

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Laurentius, 'Paper'; Laurentius and Laurentius, *Watermarks 1650-1700*; *ibid.*.

Amsterdam merchant Cornelis van Lokhorst, the first important Dutch paper dealer, set up the Compagnie and several merchants and booksellers, including mapmaker Jodocus Hondius and later his widow Colette van der Keere, were involved in financing paper imports.<sup>96</sup> The dependence went both ways: van Lokhorst supplied paper and allowed publishers to pay in instalments, while the large printers facilitated the paper trade. Paper trade and book production were strongly intertwined, as was evident in the procedures following the death of the largest bookseller in the Republic, Cornelis Claesz, in 1609. The execution of his estate took place in the house of Cornelis van Lockhorst, the Amsterdam merchant involved in the large-scale import of paper. Shortly after Claesz' widow had proposed to pay off her brother-in-law's claim on the inheritance for the total sum of f 25,000, Van Lockhorst took over this debt.<sup>97</sup>

### *Copy*

As well as choosing paper, type, and illustrations, publishers also had to decide on the content of books. They could use old texts – in translation, as adaptation, or direct copy – or new texts, either produced on their own initiative or submitted by authors.<sup>98</sup> The rise of Amsterdam as an information hub and Leiden as an academic centre, as well as cultural changes all stimulated copy production. Increasing flows of information may be considered one of the most important drivers of Dutch book production, as they also improved international competitiveness.<sup>99</sup> This is especially visible in the case of geographic information. Before 1580, Dutch merchants had obtained their charts abroad, in Antwerp or Portugal. But subsequently, an independent trade developed rapidly, fuelled by the need for new and accurate information, by the immigration of cartographers and publishers, and also by the new flow of information into towns.<sup>100</sup>

Local governments, Amsterdam's in particular, and merchants were interested in capturing new trade routes, contributing to the boom of voyages of discovery in the 1590s. The amount and the intensity of Dutch overseas traffic had already increased in the sixteenth century, but only within a limited area,

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<sup>96</sup> The following is based largely on Voorn, *Uit de oudste geschiedenis*. Part of the firm's archive can be found in Utrechts Archief (UA), inv. 76, Archief van het Huis Zuilen 1385-1951. A concept of the 1613 revised deed can be found in: *ibid.*, n. 714, 'Akte van oprichting van een handelscompagnie in papier tussen enerzijds Cornelis van Lokhorst, anderzijds Johannes Pieter Spoor, Lodewijk Koninck, Christopher Danonik, Bonifacius en Emanuel Wiselius, Consalvia Romitis en Colletgen van den Keere, weduwe van Jodocus Hondius, 1613'. See Van Dillen, *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis*, n.1160 for the conflict between Jan Huygen van Linschoten and Claesz' widow, in which Catharina Garbrandtsz, Jodocus Hondius and Cornelis van Lokhorst are mentioned as guardians.

<sup>97</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 38-39.

<sup>98</sup> On the relationship between publishers and authors: Van Delft and Bots, *Bibliopolis*, 1585-1725, section: 'Relationship between publisher and author'.

<sup>99</sup> On Amsterdam as a centre of information exchange: Lesger, *Rise*.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, chapter 6.

circumscribed by the Baltic, England, and the Canary Islands.<sup>101</sup> By 1585, due to increases in scale and an expansion of trading areas into the Mediterranean, the Atlantic Ocean, and also north in the direction of Spitsbergen and Russia, this all changed. Direct trading links were established between the Republic and Africa, America, and Asia; Dutch publishers responded quickly to information flowing in as a result of these new sea voyages.<sup>102</sup>

In order to turn information into copy, publishers had to take the initiative. Let us again use the examples of poetry and cartography. Cultural changes such as the political and cultural self-awareness following the Revolt provided an impulse for the production of literature in the vernacular, though the question of whether the Dutch language was at all suitable for poetry was far from answered.<sup>103</sup> During the phase of emergence, the rhetoricians (*rederijkers*) dominated public literary life. Between the Amsterdam and Leiden chambers, people like Hendrik Laurensz Spieghel (1549-1612), Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert (1522-1590), Pieter Roemer Visscher (1547-1620), and Jan van Hout (1542-1609) stimulated the use of the Dutch language. They formed the link between older sixteenth-century traditions and newer seventeenth-century Dutch poetry. Poems were often distributed in private networks, and publishers had to turn them into commercial products. An ode in *Den nieuwen lust-hof* shows that some of the poets had contributed to the songbook at the behest of the publisher, Hans Matthijsz.<sup>104</sup>

Book production was entrenched in local and inter-local clusters of related and supporting industries and specific types of demand. Most of these industries were yet to be set up and only the factor of copy can be considered an important factor in the spatial concentration of production. In the reciprocal relationships between copy production, demand for certain types of information and texts, and the availability of printing and publishing skills, The Hague, Leiden, and Amsterdam emerged as centres of book production and bookselling.

<sup>101</sup> Davids, *Zeewezen en wetenschap*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>102</sup> Lesger, *Rise*, p. 228. See for an overview of accounts of voyages in the last decade of the sixteenth century: Van Groesen, 'De Bry collection of voyages', pp. 23-49.

<sup>103</sup> A good discussion can be found in: Porteman and Smits-Veldt, *Nieuw vaderland*. For an English language discussion of Dutch literature see: Meijer, *Literature*; Frijhoff and Spies, *Dutch culture*, pp. 531-594.

<sup>104</sup> Michiel Vlack's precise words were: 'Matthijs's son Hans, my friend, I could not turn down the request you made of me, sent out of your desire, so kindly accept these fourteen songs as a favour' ('Matthys zoons Hans mijn vriend, 'k en kond u niet afslaan / 't Verzouck an my gedaen, dies zend' door u begheren, / Eens lied'ren tien en vier, wilt dees uyt jonst ontfanen'). Translation from Veldhorst, 'Pharmacy for the body and soul', p. 242. See also: Keersmaekers, *Wandelend*, p. 24.

## 2.6 Firm structure and rivalry

In order to get a better understanding of the importance of individual characters and day-to-day practices during the first decades of the Dutch publishing industry, the local production system in Amsterdam will be considered. Table 2.2 shows the distribution of names found on imprints published in Amsterdam between 1585 and 1589, and 1600-1604, respectively. The recurrence of names is higher than the number of editions, which can be explained by the fact that on some imprints, two or more names appear. As is the case, for example, when a book is sold or published in Amsterdam, but printed in Haarlem or Leiden. Cornelis Claesz' name can be found on almost half of all editions in the first period; he clearly was the linchpin around which much production revolved. This is also visible when the output per individual career of the eight booksellers active in 1585 is compared. During his career, Claesz published more than the rest combined: 303 editions, followed by Laurens Jacobsz (1562-1603) with 88, and Harmen Jansz Muller with 82 editions.<sup>105</sup> In other words, more than half of the Amsterdam output in the first years of book production was concentrated in one firm. By 1600, this had changed. Considering production during the entire careers of the 25 book producers working in 1600 and represented in the STCN, we arrive at an average of 43 editions per person and a median of 14. Claesz (303 titles) is followed by Jan Evertsz Cloppenburgh (226 titles), but a considerable gap between these two and the rest remains.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>105</sup> The others produced 47, 14, 12, 5 and 1 title, respectively. Median production in 1585 was 30.5 titles including Cornelis Claesz and 14 titles excluding Claesz (average 69 and 36).

<sup>106</sup> Willem Jansz Blaeu is listed with 326 titles, but he only features in the STCN from 1608 onwards, and is therefore not counted as a publisher here. Around 1600, he was working as an instrument maker and not as a publisher.

Table 2.2 The distribution of names found on imprints published or printed in Amsterdam per five-year period

1585-1589	N	%	1600-1604	N	%
Cornelis Claesz	44	48.9	Cornelis Claesz	38	26.0
Harmen Jansz Muller	21	23.3	Laurensz Jacobsz	32	21.9
Laurensz Jacobsz	10	11.1	Herman de Buck	20	13.7
Barent Adriaensz	8	8.9	J.E. Cloppenburgh	12	8.2
Nicolaes Biestkens	4	4.4	Zacharias Heyns	11	7.5
Buys (Gyse)	3	3.3	Willem Jansz van Campen	9	6.2
J. E. Cloppenburgh	1	1.1	Barent Adriaensz	7	4.8
Adriaan Barentsz	1	1.1	Hans Matthijsz	5	3.4
Others	-	-	Others (N <5 editions)*	26	17.8
Unknown	1	1.1	Unknown	4	2.7
Other towns (11 towns)	21	23.3	Other towns (15 towns)	32	21.9
Total hits editions	90	100	Total hits editions	146	100
N total hits names	114	x	Total hits names	196	x

Source: STCN, Thesaurus. \* =17 persons.

The concentration of production in particular firms turns out to be a distinct feature of the early years of Dutch book production. The Hague's high level of title production, but relatively small number of publishers, can be explained by the presence of one particular printer, Hillebrant Jacobsz van Wouw I. His father-in-law had been the official printer of the States General in Delft. When the government moved to The Hague in 1588, the Van Wouws followed. This firm was responsible for all official printing on behalf of the States General, such as placards and ordinances. Between 1600 and 1609 the Van Wouw firm was responsible for almost half of all publications in The Hague. In the same period, Jan Jacobsz Paets alone produced three quarters of all titles published in Leiden. A decade earlier, 900 titles were produced, of which two-thirds by the firms of Raphelengius and Paets. During the emergence phase a handful of firms dominated the market, but their oligopoly became less pronounced over time.

Claesz was not only the largest producer of books but, at least in 1585, also the wealthiest bookseller.<sup>107</sup> Estimates of wealth for Amsterdam booksellers are hard to come by for this period, but fortunately there is a fiscal source from 1585: the so-called *Capitale Impositie*. Not all Amsterdam households paid this tax; it is estimated

<sup>107</sup> Jan Commelin is also listed with the high sum of *f*36, but we do not include him in this table as he only started publishing in 1594. In 1585, he was active as a merchant.



to have covered circa 40 per cent in 1585.<sup>108</sup> Unfortunately, the exact calculations behind the taxation are not known and therefore the taxes cannot be converted into estimates of wealth. However, they can be used to compare booksellers, because almost all booksellers active in 1585 are included (Table 2.3). Of the Amsterdam publishers, only Claesz belonged to the 605 inhabitants who paid more than *f* 10 in taxes. The firm of Muller, the oldest in Amsterdam, was taxed at a relatively modest *f* 2.<sup>109</sup>

In the rest of the chapter, Claesz will be the central figure, not because he was a typical Amsterdam publisher around the turn of the century, but as an economic agent in the take-off of Dutch book production. Native Amsterdam publishers Muller and Hartogvelt established family-run firms that would last for over a century or more, but they are not remembered as the pioneering firms that would put the Amsterdam book trade on the European map.<sup>110</sup>

Table 2.3 Booksellers in tax register 1585

Name	<i>f</i>
Cornelis Claesz	12
Willem Buys	5
Jacob Pietersz Paets	4
Gerrit Claesz	4
Adriaen Barentsz	3
Harmen Jansz Muller	2
Barent Adriaensz (binder)	2

Source: (Van Dillen 1941).

### *Cornelis Claesz, 'a driving force'*

Cornelis Claesz has received much attention in book-historical and cartographic literature and has been portrayed as a key figure in the rise of Amsterdam as a centre of information.<sup>111</sup> But little is known about his personal life. It is assumed that Claesz

<sup>108</sup> In the Imposition, 2,939 people were taxed: this is 40 per cent of all households, assuming an average household size of four. The source has been published: Van Dillen, *Amsterdam*. For a discussion see: Dudok van Heel, 'Waar waren de katholieken'.

<sup>109</sup> This difference is also visible in wealth estimates from the time of death of Amsterdam's two earliest booksellers. Claesz' assets were estimated to have amounted to at least *f* 50,000 in 1609, whereas Muller's house was valued at *f* 9,600, his print shop at *f* 1,000, the stock of paper in the shop at *f* 3,406, and household effects, including clothes and jewellery, at another *f* 1,000 same year. On Claesz' wealth; Moes and Burger, *Amsterdamse boekdrukkers en uitgevers*, vol. II, p. 27 ff.; Van Selm, *Menigte treffelijcke boecken*, p. 179. On Muller: Moes and Burger, *Amsterdamse boekdrukkers en uitgevers*, vol. I, pp. 285-341.

<sup>110</sup> The four individuals making up the Amsterdam-born in 1600, belonged to two families: Muller and Hartogvelt.

<sup>111</sup> Most notably: Van Selm, *Menigte treffelijcke boecken*, pp. 174-319; Schilder, *Cornelis Claesz*; Zandvliet, *Mapping for money*; Lesger, *Rise*, pp. 236-238. On Claesz' role in book illustration: Sutton, 'Economics', pp. 106-170. Claesz has also been the subject of a recent popular historical work: Van Tussenbroek, *Amsterdam in 1597*.

was born in the middle of the sixteenth century in the Southern Netherlands, probably in Leuven. In 1572, he moved from Emden to Cologne, while in 1578 he can be traced to Enkhuizen, a port-town on the Zuiderzee, northeast of Amsterdam and home to cartographers such as Lucas Jansz Waghenaeer. Almost immediately after the Alteration in 1578, Claesz moved to Amsterdam, where he would kick-start the rise of Amsterdam's book production.

A closer look at what Claesz produced and sold during the early decades of Dutch book production, as well as the networks in which he operated, reveals business strategies of one of the key figures in Dutch book history. A distinction can be made between Claesz' own publications – his publishing list – and what he sold from his shop, referred to as his stock. Although Claesz is best known for his cartographic work, he did not immediately start publishing in this genre. Between 1582 and 1587, he published works on various topics, ranging from book-keeping to state publications, as well as the *Deux Aes* and *Liesvelt* Bible editions.<sup>112</sup> In 1587, he issued his first geographical publications, but his career in geographical printing only really took off after 1589, when Claesz started to publish all of Lucas Jansz Waghenaeer's work, including the *Spiegel der Zeevaert*, originally published in 1584 by Plantin, and the first editions of the *Thresoor der Zeevaert* in 1592. From this point onwards, Claesz became the 'stimulator and driving force of Dutch cartography', a qualification of Claesz that, whilst grand, hardly overstates his role.<sup>113</sup>

According to the STCN, 121 titles were published in the subject 'geography', in the Republic between 1570 and 1609, 82 of which were published in Amsterdam. Claesz was responsible for 72 of these – almost 90 per cent of all geographic titles published in Amsterdam and 60 per cent of those published in the Republic. A comparison with other publishers' lists, reveals a strategy of specialisation.<sup>114</sup> Two publishers are selected who contributed a significant number of titles and were active in the same period: Harmen Jansz Muller (1572-1617) and Laurens Jacobsz (1588-1603).<sup>115</sup> Table 2.4 shows the genre distribution in titles published by the firms of Claesz, Muller, and Jacobsz. Claesz focused mainly on the subjects of history and geography. And, if anyone in Amsterdam was concerned with theological publications, it was Claesz' pupil, friend and neighbour, Laurens Jacobsz.<sup>116</sup> Muller,

<sup>112</sup> In 1582, Claesz first dated publication year, he published nine works, among which we find copies of letters of foreign rulers, for example a letter by the Turkish emperor to the German emperor, and other 'period documents'.

<sup>113</sup> Schilder, *Cornelis Claesz*.

<sup>114</sup> Van Selm has provided an analysis of 269 editions by Claesz, based on an older bibliography. Van Selm, *Menigte treffelijke boeken*, pp. 179-182, 246-252.

<sup>115</sup> Dijstelberge, 'De Cost en de Baet', p. 232. According to Dijstelberge, Claesz and Muller represent two archetypes in Dutch history: Claesz, the merchant, and Muller, the reverend.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.

on the other hand, was an important publisher of poetry; until 1580, he published in Latin, but then shifted to Dutch.

Table 2.4 Genre distribution in output during the careers of Cornelis Claesz (1582-1609), Harmen Jansz Muller (1572-1617), and Laurens Jacobsz (1588-1603)

Genre	Harmen Jansz Muller		Cornelis Claesz		Laurens Jacobsz	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Theology	24	27.3	37	11.9	66	74.2
History	13	14.8	127	40.7	18	20.2
Geography	2	2.3	72	23.1	0	0
Dutch literature (poetry)	19	21.6	19	6.1	3	3.4
Latin literature (poetry)	11	12.5	3	1.0	0	0
Business administration	2	2.3	7	2.2	0	0
Public and social administration	11	12.5	28	9.0	0	0
Medicine	1	1.1	13	4.2	1	1.1
Almanacs	0	0	11	3.5	0	0
Political science	0	0	9	2.9	2	2.2
Total number of titles in STCN	88	100	312	100	89	100

Source: STCN, accessed 5 July 2011

Although Claesz dominated the field of travel accounts and cartographic works, his publishing list was still varied.<sup>117</sup> Ephemeral printing took up a large part of his work. Van Selm has estimated the share of pamphlets in Claesz' total output at 20 per cent, while he also published news information, prognostications (astrological predictions), prophecies, and almanacs for a broad audience. Such steady-selling publications required fewer investments, offered quick returns, and served as counterweights to expensive publications. They could also be used to finance works requiring more considerable investments, such as Waghenae's *Thresoor der zee-vaert* and Jan Huygen van Linschoten's *Itinario, voyage ofte schipvaert*; the world atlases under the name of *Caert-thresoor*; and the *Atlas Minor* by Gerard Mercator, which he published in collaboration with Jodocus Hondius and Johannes Janssonius.

#### *Wholesale and internationalisation*

Like most other booksellers, Claesz did not only produce his own works, he also purchased books published by others, to sell in his shop. The items listed in the 1610 inventory catalogue, drawn up after Claesz' death, indicate that he sold much more than just the maps and travel accounts for which he is well-known. There was a

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Van Selm, *Menigte treffelijke boecken*, p.174.

significant difference between what was offered in Claesz' shop and what he published, both in terms of language and genre.<sup>118</sup> The records of the *Officina Plantiniana* show that Claesz was expanding his stock by buying books from the Antwerp-based firm on as many as twelve occasions in 1578.<sup>119</sup> Other Dutch booksellers also purchased with the Antwerp firm, but Claesz was the largest Dutch buyer in the administration of the *Officina Plantiniana*. More than half of the proceeds of sales to Dutch booksellers in 1609 (f 3,219) by the *Officina Plantiniana*, came from Cornelis Claesz.<sup>120</sup>

Increasing internationalisation is also evident in Claesz' activities at the bi-annual Frankfurt book fair, the centre of international book trade at the time. He was the first Dutch publisher to be represented at the fair in the post-Revolt years, where he became particularly active after 1602. Other Dutch publishers soon joined him; in 1604 Franciscus Raphelengius, Plantin's son-in-law from Leiden, and Johannes Janssonius from Arnhem were also present.<sup>121</sup> At the fair, Claesz did not buy haphazardly; the choices he made at the fairs reflected distinct preferences of his Amsterdam book-buying base.<sup>122</sup> By publishing, trading, and buying books, but also by bidding at auctions and even collecting redundant books from the town library in 1580, Claesz would eventually build up an extensive and varied stock.<sup>123</sup>

Claesz' role in for instance the distribution of imported specialist Latin books reveals that he not only tied foreign production to Dutch readers, but that he also acted as a wholesaler to fellow booksellers.<sup>124</sup> This is most visible through his 1609 '*Const ende Caert-Register*'. This is not a stock catalogue, but a publishing list, in which he only included the prints and maps for which he himself possessed the copper plates. It can be inferred that it was aimed at Dutch clientele from the fact that the catalogue was printed in Dutch, with advertised prices. What's more, most of the prints were not priced per single sheet, but per 25. The fact that buyers were encouraged to buy in bulk, suggests that Claesz must have targeted fellow book and print sellers, and possibly merchants.

As soon as Claesz took up publishing, his trading position in the exchange system must have improved. His foray into the geography niche provided Claesz

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., pp. 180-182, 246-252. Claesz' publishing list shows that 83 per cent was in Dutch, whereas of the titles in the stock catalogues between 1608 and 1610, 58 per cent was in Latin, 14 in Dutch, 30 in French, and 12 in German.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., pp. 182-183, note 179 in particular; Voet, *Golden Compasses*, vol. II, p. 487. For more on Claesz' relations with the *Officina Plantiniana*, cf. Schilder, *Cornelis Claesz*.

<sup>120</sup> Voet, *Golden Compasses*, vol. II, pp. 482-490, appendix 483.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Van Selm, *Menighte treffelijcke boecken*, pp. 198-211, 214-217. Data from Schwetschke, *Codex*. The Frankfurt ledgers show that Claesz was represented with one book in 1598, two in 1602, 18 in 1603, and 26 in 1605.

<sup>122</sup> Van Selm, *Menighte treffelijcke boecken*, pp. 198-211, 214-217. He bought a lot from the Commelin firm in Heidelberg, Raphelengius in Leiden, Plantin-Moretus in Antwerp, and Wilhelm Anton in Hanau.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., pp. 182-184, 246-252.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 217.

with a crucial selling point and enabled him to move into the international book trade.<sup>125</sup> Claesz did not hesitate to translate, for example, Linschoten's *Itinario*, into different languages. Conversely, he had German, French, and English travel journals translated into Dutch.

### *Collaboration*

The developments in Dutch overseas expansion and his collaboration with important Dutch and Flemish mapmakers, such as Waghenaeer, and also Willem Blaeuw, Petrus Plancius, Jodocus Hondius, Theodorus de Bry, and the Van Doetecums, enabled Claesz to become the most prominent seller and publisher of cartographic material in this early period. The importance of Claesz' ability to collaborate and build up networks outside the book trade is neatly illustrated by a recent analysis of a travel account series published between 1598 and 1603.<sup>126</sup> The intellectual and cultural milieu in which Claesz was active played an important role in the production of his travel accounts. The Dutch economy was booming, Dutch merchants were conquering overseas trade, Haarlem artists were developing a unique northern mannerist style, and Leiden University attracted scholars and printers. Amsterdam was the commercial centre, Haarlem the artistic, and Leiden the intellectual. The specialisation of all three towns came together in Claesz' business, where merchants, cartographers, seafarers, professors, designers, and engravers, each with different skills, were all used. Sutton's assertion that Claesz' *modus operandi* was collaboration, does not seem too bold a statement.<sup>127</sup> A closer look at his network neatly underlines the embeddedness of publishers in a structure of both related and supporting industries and inter-firm relations that surpassed local boundaries.

Claesz could draw on a number of resources to make his products successful. He had access to skilled engravers, often students or imitators of Haarlem mannerists, humanist scholars in Leiden, merchants and skippers in Amsterdam, and cartographers in Enkhuizen, Hoorn and Amsterdam.<sup>128</sup> The listings of prints advertised in Claesz' *Const ende Caert Register* of 1609 highlight the connections between Claesz' and the major engravers and publishers of Antwerp and Haarlem, working in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. He had direct and indirect relations to Jacques de Gheyn, Hendrick Goltzius, and Karel van Mander, while most engravers of Claesz' travel book illustrations were students of Haarlem mannerists.<sup>129</sup> His cartographic connections, partly based on his years in Enkhuizen, were

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p. 253.

<sup>126</sup> This section is based on Sutton, 'Economics', pp. 106-171 and Sutton, 'To inform and delight'.

<sup>127</sup> Sutton, 'Economics', p. 164.

<sup>128</sup> On Claesz collaboration with author Lucas Jansz Waghenaeer see Bos-Rietdijk, 'Werk'. On his collaboration with Jan Huygen van Linschoten see: Van Dillen, *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis*, n. 1160.

<sup>129</sup> Sutton, 'Economics', pp. 133-143.

intensified during the 1580s through contacts with the Van Doetecum family, Jodocus Hondius, and Petrus Plancius, who was one of Claesz' major business partners. Through his contacts, Claesz could tap into the highest intellectual circles. Plancius was embedded in international elitist circles and De Gheyn worked with Leiden humanist scholars, such as the jurist Hugo Grotius, Greek philologist Daniël Heinsius, and the naturalist Carolus Clusius. Leiden scholars were highly interested in voyages of discovery, which provided all manner of new information for their research subjects.<sup>130</sup>

Claesz was often not the sole publisher (or financier) of his titles. Expensive folios that involved a lot of platemaking were often published in collaboration with others, as was the case with the *Atlas Minor* mentioned above.<sup>131</sup> Paul Dijstelberge has analysed imprints of books published between 1601 and 1625, in order to trace relationships between book producers, and he showed that many books published in Amsterdam were printed elsewhere.<sup>132</sup> When Claesz' practices are compared to those of other significant Amsterdam publishers who had started before 1600, we find differences in the use of networks. Claesz outsourced most of his printing, often to printers located outside of Amsterdam. He used as many as 24 different printing firms for the 46 publications that specified the name of other printer and only four of these were located in Amsterdam.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, 23 of the titles in Dijstelberge's sample show a form of collaboration between Claesz and other publishers and 164 imprints bear only his name.<sup>134</sup> He co-issued publications with, for instance, Franciscus Raphelengius in Leiden and Jan van Waesberghe in Rotterdam.

In comparison, his neighbour and friend Laurens Jacobsz, published 39 titles on his own account and collaborated only with one other publisher – Cornelis Claesz – on eight occasions. He did, however, have his printing done by as many as fifteen different printers in Alkmaar, Delft, Dordrecht, Franeker, Haarlem, and Leiden.<sup>135</sup> Zacharias Heyns, active between had most of his titles printed outside of Amsterdam, in Haarlem, Leiden, Utrecht, Franeker, and Kampen. Jan Evertsz I Cloppenburg, active between 1589 and 1638, published 135 titles in his own name and had many titles printed by some 40 printers, both in and outside of Amsterdam; in Amsterdam he only collaborated with J.P. Wachter. Apparently, it was common to have works printed outside Amsterdam, but Claesz was the only one whose collaborations were

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., pp. 143-154.

<sup>131</sup> Based on Dijstelberge, *De beer is los*, appendix 2 and the STCN, accessed 10-03-2010.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid..

<sup>133</sup> STCN, accessed 10-03-2010. He collaborated with Amsterdam colleagues Johannes Hondius, Laurens Jacobsz and Desiderius de la Tombe; with Abraham Canin in Dordrecht; Jan van Waesberghe in Rotterdam; Franciscus Raphelengius in Leiden; Gilles Elzevier in The Hague; Jacob Jansz in Leeuwarden; and Johannes Janssonius in Arnhem.

<sup>134</sup> Van Selm, *Menigte treffelijke boecken*, pp. 251-252 cites collaborative activities by Claesz.

<sup>135</sup> Muller, on the other hand, who was a printer and engraver, printed 57 titles in his own name and only had one work printed by others (Raphelengius in Leiden).

so extensive. His geographic network covered as many as seventeen towns, mostly Dutch, but also Antwerp, Calais, and Edinburgh.<sup>136</sup>

That Amsterdam publishers, Claesz in particular, outsourced much of their print-work to other towns may be explained by lower wages in other provinces. Although wages outside the province of Holland were indeed somewhat lower, this cannot explain that often, competitors within Holland, such as Leiden or Haarlem, were favoured over local Amsterdam printers.<sup>137</sup> An additional explanation may be that the necessary skills were simply not sufficiently available in Amsterdam in the early decades of book production. It is possible that university towns, such as Leiden and Franeker, had attracted high quality printers from the Southern Netherlands, like Francois Raphelengius and Gillis van den Rade, and that port-towns, such as Amsterdam and Rotterdam, attracted entrepreneurs more involved in bookselling and publishing.<sup>138</sup>

Two-thirds of the printers who printed for Amsterdam publishers between 1601 and 1625 had started before 1600, whereas only a quarter of the 25 Amsterdam printers had started before 1600.<sup>139</sup> In 1585 the only local printer of significance was Harmen Jansz Muller. Fifteen years later, more printers were active: Nicolaas III Biestkens, Herman de Buck, Barent Adriaensz, W.J. van Campen, Peeter Geevaerts, Aert Meuris, Ewout Cornelisz Muller, and Jacob Pietersz Paets. Within Amsterdam, Nicolaas Biestkens and Herman de Buck were the popular choice. The delayed establishment of printers may also explain why the volume of production in Rotterdam and Amsterdam was relatively low, compared to the number of producers in these towns.

The re-issuing of Ptolemy's *Geographica* by Jodocus Hondius in 1605, confirms that the availability of printing skills in Amsterdam was not self-evident.<sup>140</sup> The atlas was published by Claesz and Hondius, but neither of them had a print shop. Only an academic printer, who possessed knowledge of the Greek language, could have printed such a work. Zacharias Heyns and Jan Commelin were 'learned' publishers, but they too lacked the facilities of a print shop. Willem Jansz Blaeu was on the rise, had published prints from 1602, and his first book in 1609, but was not capable yet of such an undertaking. With no one in Amsterdam able to print such a work, Wijnman has suggested that Hondius enticed Jan Theunisz, who had worked as a corrector for Raphelengius in Leiden, to Amsterdam to do the job. Theunisz not only knew Latin

<sup>136</sup> Antwerpen, Alkmaar, Arnhem, Calais, Delft, Dordrecht, Edinburgh, Enkhuizen, Franeker, Den Haag, Haarlem, Harlingen, Leeuwarden, Leiden, Middelburg, Rotterdam, Woerden.

<sup>137</sup> Prak, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 130.

<sup>138</sup> Dijstelberge, *De beer is los*, pp. 31-32. Dijstelberge has observed that the differences in quality of printwork of printers from different areas were not very large, but that the quality of printing was somewhat better in university towns.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, appendix 2.

<sup>140</sup> The following paragraph is based on Wijnman, 'Moet Jodocus Hondius'.

and Greek, but also Hebrew, and even Arabic and Ethiopian. He is recognised as the first printer of Hebrew works in Amsterdam.

The extensive discussion of Claesz served to highlight the importance of key entrepreneurs in the early decades of the Dutch book production after the Revolt. Claesz single-handedly doubled Amsterdam output, established international contacts, developed the specialization of cartographic publishing, trained the future generation, and enabled new start-ups to set up shop. He also specialized in bookselling and publishing, leaving the printing to others, in and outside Amsterdam. And so, Claesz' career and strategy also demonstrate that successful entrepreneurs did not operate in a vacuum and that relationships between actors in related and supporting industries, local and inter-local, were of crucial importance.

## 2.7 Conclusion

All elements of the diamond model played their part in the growth dynamic that started in the 1570s, testifying to cumulative causation. Several factors were particularly important in the start-up phase. In the case of Dutch publishing, the Dutch Revolt is a perfect example of 'chance'. The Dutch Revolt and the Fall of Antwerp both presented opportunities for other centres of book production to flourish. Changes in demand and supply reinforced each other and the result was a rapid expansion of Dutch book production. In a relatively short time span, immigrant publishers from the Southern Netherlands were responsible for boosting the underdeveloped Dutch book production, not only in quantitative terms, but also by introducing new business strategies. Book production expanded across the Republic, but it was not equally distributed. Although the number of towns harbouring publishers expanded, several towns showed excessive growth rates. Leiden, The Hague, and Amsterdam possessed distinct competitive advantages that made for a stronger pull on publishers. These advantages were not difficult to identify and they all had to do with fundamental urban specializations: Leiden as a university town, The Hague as a government town, and Amsterdam as a centre of commerce.

Immigrants were not only important in quantitative terms. Some of these immigrants, most notably Franciscus Raphelengius in Leiden, and Cornelis Claesz in Amsterdam, played a crucial role in capturing markets, in increasing the volume of production, and in training and providing business models for aspiring printers and book sellers. They managed to develop their new companies into strong players in specific niches, while traditional players jumped on the bandwagon and increased



their range and scale of production. Within the mutual dependence between producers, customers, related industries, and favourable factor conditions, people such as Cornelis Claesz, could capitalise on the window of opportunity created by chance.



### 3 Unlocking potential in the book industry, 1610-1660

#### 3.1 Introduction

The European book trade in first half of the seventeenth century was characterized a division in protestant centres including La Rochelle, Saumur, and Dutch towns and catholic centres such as Antwerp, Paris, Lyons, and even Geneva.<sup>1</sup> The quality of printing decreased throughout Europe, but Dutch books, in context neither particularly costly nor luxurious, became renowned for its high quality paper, simple and neat printing, and attractive typography.<sup>2</sup> By 1650, the number of booksellers active in the Dutch Republic had increased almost fourfold and Dutch publishers had become top players in the international book trade.<sup>3</sup> The Republic was not the largest producer in Europe, nor was it the only country in which volume of production increased. What set the book trade in the Republic apart were its growth rates, and its scale and scope relative to population size.<sup>4</sup> The period 1610-1650 can be characterized as the growth stage in the life cycle of Dutch book production.

Explanations for the expansion and improvement of Dutch printing and publishing are not hard to come by. All accounts of Dutch book production have stressed the combination of economic expansion, trade infrastructure, relative tolerance, high and sophisticated domestic demand, and adverse circumstances in other countries.<sup>5</sup> Thirty years ago, for instance, book historian Herman De la Fontaine Verwey offered the following account: '[...] being the centre of international trade, the tolerant climate due to the absence of a strong central government and church, and publishers' courage and energy.'<sup>6</sup> More recently, book historian Paul Hoftijzer has outlined the favourable economic and cultural circumstances, whilst also emphasizing the skills of individual entrepreneurs.<sup>7</sup>

These explanations neatly sum up a selection of necessary conditions for a healthy book production and book trade, but cluster theory suggests that there may have been more to it. Concentration of related economic activities can trigger self-reinforcing mechanisms that boost growth rates and innovative capacities. Did this

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<sup>1</sup> Febvre and Martin, *The coming of the book*, p. 194.

<sup>2</sup> Clair, *A history of European printing*, pp. 272-273. De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Het Hollandse wonder', p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> Laeven, 'Frankfurt and Leipzig book fairs', p. 190.

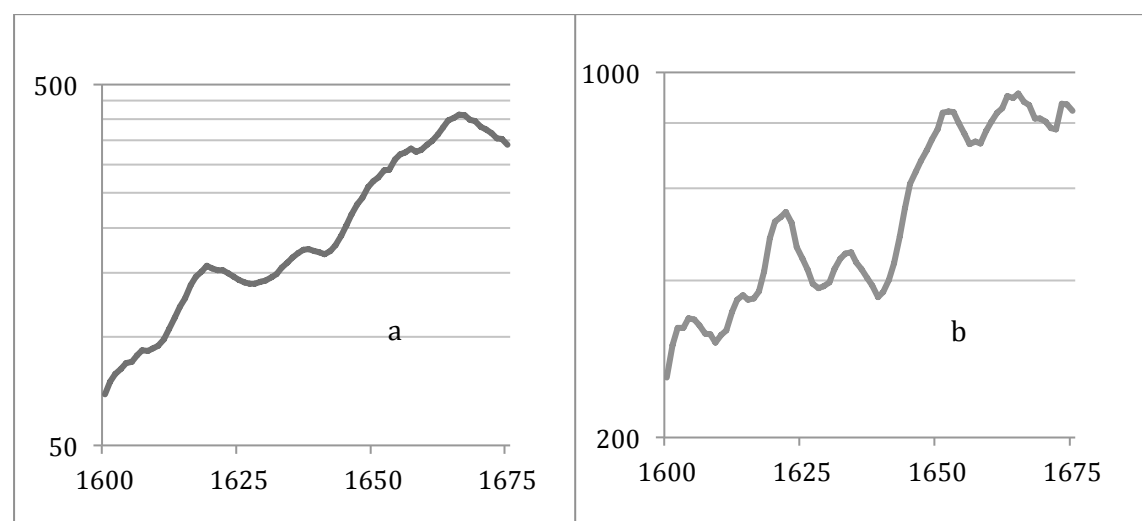
<sup>4</sup> Buringh and Van Zanden, 'Charting the "rise of the west"'.  
<sup>5</sup> As summarized in: Hoftijzer, 'Metropolis'.

<sup>6</sup> De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Het Hollandse wonder', p. 49.

<sup>7</sup> Hoftijzer, 'Metropolis', p. 256.

also happen to book production in the Dutch Republic? Were local specializations reinforced, routines and skills reproduced, and relationships between the pillars of Michael Porter's diamond intensified on a local level? In this chapter, two pillars of the diamond model take centre stage: demand conditions and related and supporting industries. The next chapter will be on the organisation of Amsterdam book production, in order to establish how it evolved from a loose set of firms, clustered around Cornelis Claesz, into the most important book production centre of Europe.

Figure 3.1 Number of publishers (a) and titles (b) in the Dutch Republic per year 1600 and 1700, 5-year moving average, log-scale on vertical axis



Source: STCN, Thesaurus.

### 3.2 Democratisation and differentiation of demand

The Dutch market for books around 1650 was very different from the one Cornelis Claesz had come into around 1580. Population had increased dramatically, testifying to the tremendous growth the Dutch economy experienced during this time. Amsterdam's population had expanded from some 30,000 in 1580 to 160,000 to 175,000 in 1650.<sup>5</sup> During the Golden Age, virtually all trades and crafts fared well and book production and book trade were no exception. The expansion of Dutch book production during the Golden Age is often presented as a continuous trend, but Figure 3.1 shows that growth rates were not static throughout the period 1610-1650. Following the initial rise during the emergence phase, the number of active publishers in the Republic stagnated and the number of titles produced annually

<sup>5</sup> Nusteling, *Welvaart en werkgelegenheid*, pp. 234-236.

actually declined. From circa 1630 onwards, and especially after 1640, growth had resumed. This raises questions on the relative importance of variables on the demand and supply sides. Did demand for books stagnate and then re-establish itself, or was the new growth a consequence of successful responses to stagnating demand and therefore essentially supply-driven?

Unfortunately, there are no comprehensive quantitative studies on Dutch book ownership in the seventeenth century. Due to limitations of source material, it is difficult to establish whether or not an increasing number of Dutch people bought books and/or if existing readers started buying more books. Consumption history of the early modern period is largely based on probate inventories, which can provide a detailed insight to material possessions of the deceased. But this comes with its own limitations.<sup>9</sup> Many households did not possess enough valuables to warrant any administration of their estates. And even if they did, clerks drawing up the inventories usually only recorded books that were considered valuable and they often did not describe the exact type of the listed books. In a study of seventeenth-century inventories from The Hague, Marika Keblusek had to concede that such records offer few clues on actual book ownership.<sup>10</sup>

With this caveat in mind, it should be noted that more general inventory research for the Dutch Republic suggests that the share of households possessing books and the number of books per household did increase during the seventeenth century.<sup>11</sup> Harm Nijboer found a significant increase in the number of households owning books in Leeuwarden between 1584 and 1655.<sup>12</sup> For rural Frisia, all the way in the northern part of the Republic, Jan de Vries observed a far-reaching penetration of urban culture between 1550 and 1750, which was, in his opinion, most evident in the possession of books.<sup>13</sup> In the area of Krimpenerwaard, just east of Rotterdam, between 1630 and 1670, circa 45 per cent of the sample population had books in their inventories.<sup>14</sup> Tentative comparisons between the Republic and England suggest that the share of Dutch households in which books were recorded was relatively high.<sup>15</sup> Between 1640 and 1670 in the town of Weesp in Holland, 55 per cent of the rich urban class, 38 per cent of the middle class, and 25 per cent of farmers owned books.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> A selection of literature discussing probate inventories as a historical source: Wijsenbeek-Olthuis, 'Boedelinventarissen'; De Vries, 'Between purchasing power'; *ibid.*; Van der Woude and Schuurman, eds., *Probate inventories*. On the use of probate inventories for research on book consumption: Van Ottegem, 'Omweg of dwaalspoor'; Gijzen, *Boekbezit in boedelinventarissen*.

<sup>10</sup> Keblusek, *Boeken in de hofstad*, pp. 139-149.

<sup>11</sup> Dibbits, 'Vertrouwd bezit'; Kamermans, *Materiële cultuur*; Nijboer, 'Fatsoenering van het bestaan'; Van Koolbergen, 'Materiële cultuur'; De Vries, 'Peasant demand patterns'; De Vries, 'Between purchasing power'.

<sup>12</sup> Nijboer, 'Fatsoenering van het bestaan', pp. 51-53.

<sup>13</sup> De Vries, 'Peasant demand patterns', pp. 34-236.

<sup>14</sup> Van Koolbergen, 'Materiële cultuur', pp. 135, 148-149.

<sup>15</sup> Kamermans, *Materiële cultuur*, p. 309.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

However, while relatively large segments of Dutch society appear to have owned books, and there were no significant differences between rural and urban areas, the number of books per household seems to have been relatively low. Even for the relatively prosperous eighteenth-century The Hague, José de Kruif found that almost 40 per cent of the population did not have a single book in their house, excluding pamphlets, and that only a quarter of the population owned more than ten books.<sup>17</sup>

With a lack of sufficient data or clear results to accurately assess changes in the possession of books over the course of the period 1610 to 1660, it is, at this point, not wise to compare inventories cross-country. Instead, taking a supply side approach can serve to assess developments in the consumption of books. Admittedly, there is the possibility of circular in trying to explain developments at the supply side by an estimation of demand proxied by the supply side. Nonetheless, the exercise is useful, as it makes it possible to exclude certain demand-side variables from the equation.

#### *Per capita production*

Estimates by Eltjo Buringh and Jan Luiten van Zanden suggest that after 1600, the Dutch Republic had the highest per capita consumption of books throughout Europe.<sup>18</sup> When amending production figures for population growth, age (adult/children), and literacy rates, estimates of per capita title production in the vernacular language per literate adult are produced. By adjusting for population size and literacy rates, important factors influencing the volume of demand are left out. No corrections are made for purchasing power, but by taking literacy the segment of population who could not afford books is to a large extent also excluded. It is assumed that all Dutch language titles were primarily intended for the domestic market. Although Dutch was also widely known in Germany and Scandinavia, this is not a significant problem, because even if these books were also exported, it is likely that Dutch consumers would still have read these titles. According to these variables, an average of 35 per cent of the total number of titles produced in the seventeenth-century Republic was directed towards the international market.<sup>19</sup> This is certainly too high an estimate, as Latin titles, the bulk of this share, also found a ready market in the Republic. If anything, these are conservative estimates.

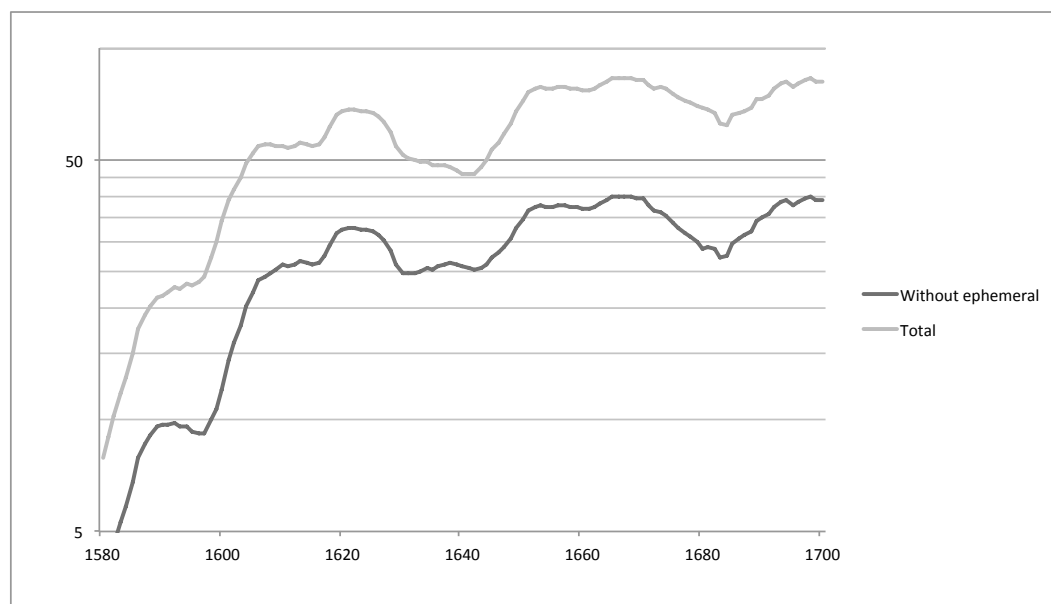
<sup>17</sup> De Kruif, *Liefhebbers*, p. 111; See also: De Kruif, 'Classes of readers'.

<sup>18</sup> Buringh and Van Zanden, 'Charting the "rise of the west"', p. 434. Buringh and Van Zanden used the demand equation  $b = \alpha * \beta * p^\epsilon$  to translate the figures for b-book consumption per capita in different countries and periods into estimates of  $\beta$ , the rate of literacy. The other variables were: estimates of the development of  $p$ , the relative book prices (book prices deflated by a cost of living index),  $\epsilon$ -an estimate of the price elasticity of demand for books (of 1.4), and  $\alpha$ -a constant derived for the Netherlands in the eighteenth century. Income effects are not taken into account. Note that they estimated book consumption, not title consumption.

<sup>19</sup> STCN, accessed 21-09-2010.

Accordingly, the following estimates are based on the following three assumptions: a) Of the titles published per year in the Republic, 70 per cent until 1620, and 60 per cent between 1620 to 1690 were in Dutch and therefore intended for the Dutch market, b) Literacy rates increased from 45 per cent in 1585 to 61 per cent in 1700, and c) 40 per cent of the population comprised children who presumably did not buy books. Figure 3.2 presents the number of Dutch-language titles produced in the Republic per literate adult. A distinction is made between ephemeral and non-ephemeral titles in order to account for changes in the composition of the corpus of printed works. After all, not all titles were of comparable size and form. Estimates of print-runs are not included because too little is known about their development during this period. Conservative estimates for the early modern period are 500 to 600, but print runs could range from a few dozen in the case of academic works, to thousands of copies per run for bestsellers.<sup>20</sup>

Figure 3.2 Title production in Dutch per 100,000 Dutch literature adults, 1580-1700, 10-year moving average



Source: STCN.

The trend in this figure is different than the one above. The trend in Figure 3.2 suggests that there had been much to gain for book producers in the first 30 years after the Revolt, and especially in the 1600s. For a large part, this was the result of a catch-up process. In view of the Republic's pre-Revolt demand conditions, discussed in the previous chapter, domestic book production had been surprisingly underdeveloped. During the emergence phase, the simultaneous changes on the

<sup>20</sup> Febvre and Martin, *The coming of the book*, pp. 216-222.

supply and demand sides stimulated the development of a local publishing and printing industry. By 1620 the effects of these changes seems to have diminished. Production figures, at least in terms of the number of different Dutch-language titles per literate adult, had stabilised and, in the absence of new stimuli in the demand for books, further growth potential was limited. Although real wages continued to increase up to at least 1650, and were relatively high compared to those in other countries, most of the growth occurred in the period 1580-1620. In the remainder of this chapter it will be argued that Dutch publishers reacted to the maturity in the traditional segments of the market by unlocking new market segments.

### 3.3 Book prices and paper supply

Demand for books was not only income-sensitive, but also price-sensitive. It has been estimated that during the early modern period, book prices in other countries were on average 50 per cent higher than in the Republic.<sup>21</sup> In this calculation, prices for the Republic were derived from a register of books on offer in the Dutch Republic between 1760 and 1788, drawn up by a Dutch bookseller, Johannes van Abkoude and extended and revised by his colleague Reinier Arrenberg.<sup>22</sup> The median price of books on sale during the last quarter of the eighteenth century – at least in the shops of booksellers who sent their information to Abkoude – was around f 1.20; the average was f 1.60. The list includes books published between 1643 and 1783 but, by and large, most of these were issued in the eighteenth century. As such they neither reflect what was for sale in a seventeenth-century bookshop, nor how the average price of books developed throughout the century.

Fortunately, a number of booksellers' stock inventories and publishers' lists have survived and can provide us with more accurate estimates of book prices for this period. Bert van Selm has published printed prices recorded in a 1628 publishers' list by Amsterdam publisher Hendrick Laurensz (1588-1649).<sup>23</sup> At the time, Laurensz was among the top five publishers active in Amsterdam. Excluding the production of ephemeral titles, he was even the second-largest producer (after the Blaeu firm), surpassing Jan Evertsz Cloppenburg and Paulus Aertsz van Ravesteyn.<sup>24</sup> This makes this list appropriate to assess Dutch book prices during the growth phase. His publisher's list from 1628 contains 506 priced entries for a little under 500 titles.

<sup>21</sup> Van Zanden, 'Common workmen'. Except in England, where average book prices were 35 per cent higher than in the Republic.

<sup>22</sup> Van Abkoude and Arrenberg, *Naamregister*. Van Zanden sampled all book prices for the seventeenth century, and from every page the first price from a book published in the eighteenth century, excluding multiple volumes. N= 782.

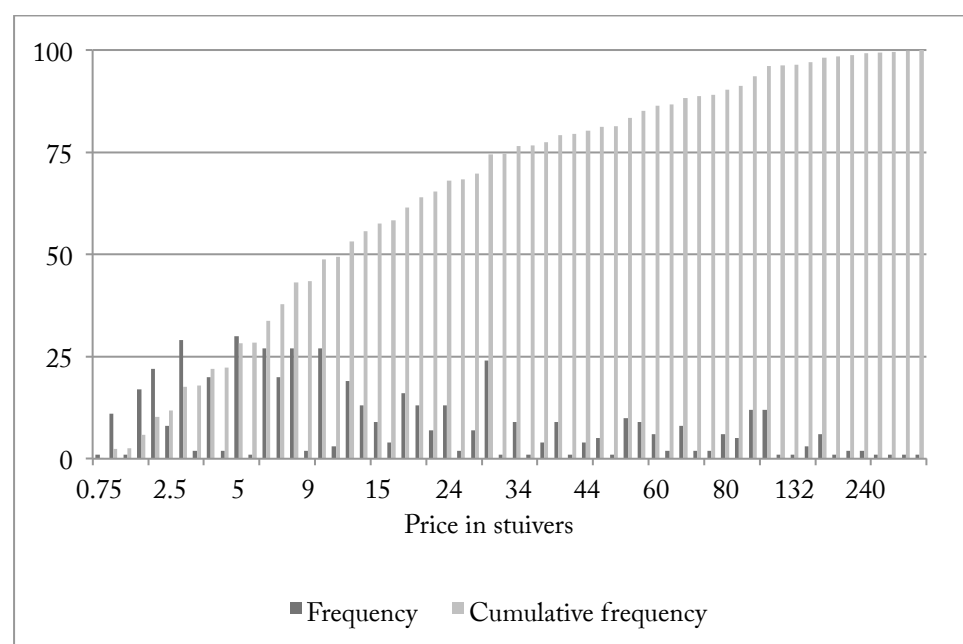
<sup>23</sup> Van Selm, 'De Nederlandse boekprijzen', pp. 99-100; Van Selm, *Menighe treffelijcke boecken*, pp. 344-349.

<sup>24</sup> STCN, accessed 19-11-2010.



Figure 3.3 presents the cumulative frequency of book prices in Laurensz' catalogue. Almost three quarters of the books featured in the 1628 catalogue cost less than 33 *stuivers*, and as many as half cost 11 *stuivers* or less. Van Selm has identified 139 of the 506 titles and used these to calculate the price per sheet. This calculation shows that, in 1628, the average price per sheet was 0.6 *stuivers*.<sup>25</sup> Because more expensive books had better chances of survival than cheaper books, the average price is probably biased in favour of a higher figure.

Figure 3.3 Cumulative frequency book prices in Laurensz' 1628 catalogue



Source: see note 26. N=506.

Later sources indicate that books on offer in Dutch shops varied from very expensive to very cheap.<sup>26</sup> The *Lexicon Arabico-Latinum* by Jacobus Golius (1653) in folio cost as much as *f* 25, an illustrated emblem book by Johan de Brunes cost no more than *f* 3, whereas a *Reynaert de Vos* in octavo was priced at just two *stuivers*.<sup>27</sup> In 1647, P.C. Hooft's *Neederlandsche Histoorien* (1642) cost about *f* 10.<sup>28</sup> A translation of the *Amadis de Gaule*, a 21-volume Spanish knight-errant tale often viewed as the first European bestseller, was priced at circa eight or nine *stuivers* per volume.<sup>29</sup> Although prices varied and costly books were not within the grasp of the average journeyman

<sup>25</sup> Van Selm, 'De Nederlandse boekprijs', p. 105. When the engraved books in Laurensz' catalogue are omitted, the average price per sheet is 0.492 *stuiver*.

<sup>26</sup> Van Selm, *Menighte treffelijcke boecken*, pp. 344-352.

<sup>27</sup> The following prices are derived from the 1647 catalogue of Laurensz, and cited in Van Selm, 'De Nederlandse boekprijs', pp. 99-100.

<sup>28</sup> Strenghold and Leerintveld, 'Pers in arbeid'.

<sup>29</sup> Van Selm, *Menighte treffelijcke boecken*, pp. 348-349, 352; Van Selm, *Amadis van Gaule-romans*, p. 67

earning a guilder a day, printed titles seem to have been generally affordable. But did books become more affordable during the seventeenth century?

The price of an early modern book depended on the amount of paper used, the quality of the paper, and the amount of labour required, for example, in composition and engraving. According to Van Selm, the price of books, when calculated per sheet, actually increased during the seventeenth century, from circa f 0.60 to f 1.25.<sup>30</sup> While the price per sheet may indeed have increased, this does not necessarily mean that the average price of books also increased. In the previous chapter, we established how publishers targeted a new group of customers with lavishly illustrated travelogues and songbooks. In the growth phase they once again changed their strategies to include other segments of demand. The share of cheap books entering the market increased significantly, bringing down the average price of books in general.

During the second quarter of the seventeenth century, smaller editions began replacing the 'deluxe' versions of songbooks.<sup>31</sup> New formats were introduced that could be taken everywhere, even carried in girls' aprons. Sedecimo oblong (16°), smaller than octavo or duodecimo and the so-called *mopsjes* (an even smaller 32° format) were advertised as easy to carry, easy to hide, and hard to read for one's visually impaired mother or grandmother.<sup>32</sup> These pocket songbooks gained immense popularity, as did another pocket subgenre: the *Republieken*, sized 24°. This series were surveys of topography, history, politics, and courts of various countries and regions, published by the Leiden Elzeviers between 1625 and 1649.<sup>33</sup> The *Republieken* achieved European-wide fame and the books became collector's items, not only at European courts, but also among the lesser-endowed local Leiden students. Young lawyer and book collector Johannes Thysius (1622-1653) collected almost all the titles in the series, including comparable titles from other publishers.<sup>34</sup>

The 24° format was by no means new, but the Elzeviers were the first to print these books in such a way that buyers could actually read them without the need of a magnifying glass.<sup>35</sup> Figure 3.4 clearly shows how the Leiden Elzeviers first shifted

<sup>30</sup> Van Selm, 'De Nederlandse boekprijs', p. 108.

<sup>31</sup> This is confirmed by a quick search in the STCN. The share of 12° or smaller sized songbooks published in the Republic, increased from 16 per cent in the 1610s (N=125) to 53 per cent in the 1660s (N=179). Accessed 18-04-2011.

<sup>32</sup> Veldhorst, *Zingend door het leven*, pp. 65-67. Example advertised by Haarlem printer and bookseller M. Segerman: 'Dan soo steekt men in syn sackje, met ghemackje, wel een boeckje, 't is niet groot [...]'.

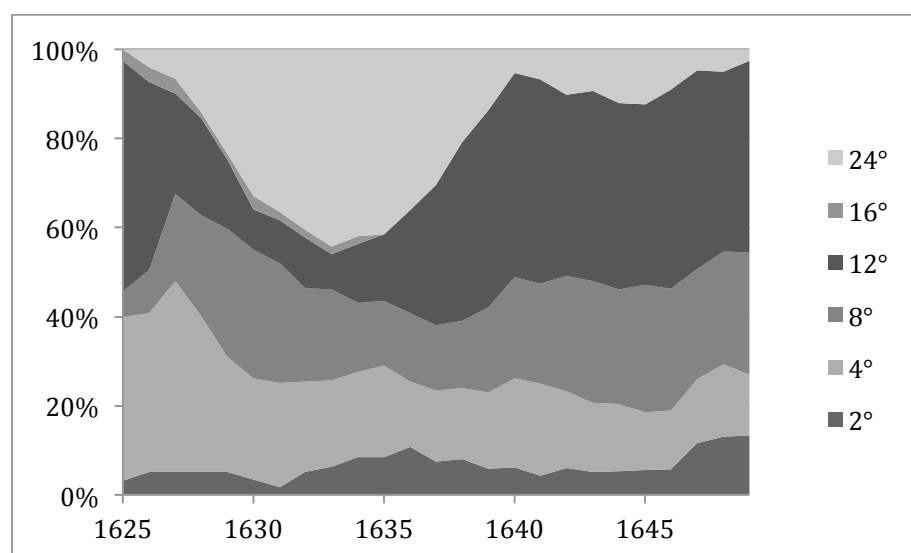
<sup>33</sup> Gruys, 'De reeks 'Republieken'', p. 78.

<sup>34</sup> Hoftijzer, 'Leidse studentenbibliotheken', pp. 147, note 136; *ibid.*, pp. 268-269. The *Bibliotheca Thysiana* in Leiden was founded by testament in 1654 to house the book collection of the young Dutch jurist Johannes Thysius. The book collection contains some 2,500 books and several thousand pamphlets on a great variety of subjects and is still arranged in seventeenth century fashion.

<sup>35</sup> STCN, accessed 04-10-2011. Dijstelberge, 'De vorm: typografie in de Renaissance', p. 284. On the *Republieken* see Gruys, 'De reeks 'Republieken''. In the southern Netherlands Plantin had also printed in 24°. Several years before Abraham and Boneventura introduced their *Republieken*, Raphelengius in

from the production of books in quarto and duodecimo, to producing the 24° format, and then back to the octavo and duodecimo.<sup>36</sup> In the publishers' list of the Amsterdam branch, run by Louis II Elsevier, smaller-sized books also dominated: over 65 per cent of the 235 titles published between 1638 and 1655 were printed in 12° or smaller.<sup>37</sup>

Figure 3.4 Distribution of titles according to format, Abraham I Elzevier, 1620-1650



Source: STCN, accessed 2011-10-04; N= 526.

The shift to small-sized editions was not limited to songbooks, or the genres the Elzeviers specialised in, but can be observed industry-wide. The seventeenth century has been portrayed as the century of the quarto: 'a strong book with pages wide enough to offer enough space for the somewhat plump, Baroque book decoration which was so characteristic of Dutch book production in the Golden Age', but a characterization of the century of the pocket-sized books seems just as valid.<sup>38</sup> Figure 3.5, presenting titles produced in Amsterdam between 1590 and 1670, indicate that initially shows that in quantitative terms, the share of the traditionally common quarto format indeed increased at first, only to decrease over the course of the seventeenth century. In the 1630s we notice a significant increase in duodecimo (12°) and by the end of the growth phase this was the largest category. In absolute terms, these smaller formats did not replace their larger counterparts: the number of titles in

Leiden had annually published one or a few pocketbooks and in 1619 Willem Jansz Blaeu was the first in Amsterdam to take up this niche.

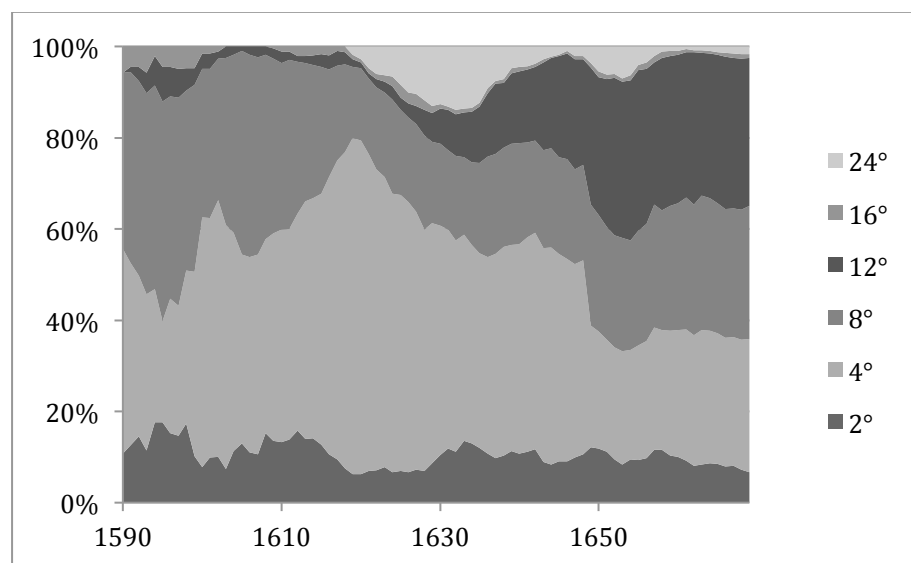
<sup>36</sup> STCN, accessed 04-10-2011; Under Boneventura and Abraham I Elzevier the Leiden firm produced 20 titles per year on average between 1625 and 1650, excluding academic texts and 35 including academic texts.

<sup>37</sup> Kingma, 'Uitgaven met verstrekkende gevolgen', p. 108.

<sup>38</sup> Van Delft and Bots, *Bibliopolis* 1585-1725, section: 'Formats'.

4° or 8° increased along the same trajectory as those in 12°. If anything, they formed an additional category within existing genres. Even though we cannot conclusively show that the average book price declined, these findings suggest that, as new categories of relatively affordable books entered the market, a variety of genres came within reach of a relatively untapped market.

Figure 3.5 Distribution of titles produced in Amsterdam 1590-1670, according to format



Source: STCN, accessed 2011-10-04; N=10,014.

A second strategy can be identified. Publishers developed a distinct tactic of product differentiation within single titles, starting with expensive first editions and then gradually issuing cheaper versions. This can be illustrated by the publishing history of one of the most popular Dutch authors at the time. In a 1647 stock catalogue of Amsterdam publisher Hendrick Laurensz, featuring printed prices, *Houwelijck* by Jacob Cats was listed in the luxurious quarto format for *f* 5, but also in duodecimo for *f* 1.20.<sup>39</sup> The early editions were often more luxurious. Cheaper re-issues or pirated editions in smaller formats and with fewer illustrations entered the market later. For example, Jacob Cats' best-selling debut *Sinne- en minnebeelden* (1618) was first published using high quality paper, different fonts, and many beautiful engravings. As Cats recounts in his *Ad lectorum*, booksellers complained to him that buyers were put off by the high price and so a new cheaper version was published in the same

<sup>39</sup> Van Selm, 'De Nederlandse boekprijs', p. 98.

year, omitting the repetitive use of engravings.<sup>40</sup> Later still, versions published between circa 1630 and 1650, were even cheaper, and often of lesser quality.<sup>41</sup>

The fact that Dutch publishers intensified strategies of differentiation and scaled down the format of their products is not a new observation, but book-historical literature does not explicitly address why this happened. In the introductory pages of a songbook published in 1654 the bookseller explicitly states that the small format was not chosen to save on printing costs, but to facilitate the readers in carrying the book in their pockets.<sup>42</sup> Other sources indicate the opposite. A statement by Leiden/Amsterdam's Louis Elzevier suggests that the use of smaller formats was a business strategy designed to reduce production costs.<sup>43</sup> In 1635, three years before his departure for Amsterdam, he explained how the use of small-sized editions had saved the firm, by reducing its paper expenditure by as much as 75 per cent. A few decades later, a letter by the famous Amsterdam publishing house Wetstein to French scholar Giles Ménage on the subject of the preparation of the second edition of the latter's *Diogenes Laertius*, also neatly summarizes the advantages of choosing a smaller format: the book would be cheaper to produce and generate higher sales.<sup>44</sup> Quantitative data also confirm that the Elzeviers used less paper. Even though they issued more titles, they used fewer sheets.<sup>45</sup>

Even if the incentive for printing smaller formats was commercial, rather than artistic, the question remains why this strategy became popular when it did. Van Selm has suggested that a possible explanation for the increase in the price per sheet may have been a consequence of rising paper prices, and it is conceivable that, if a strong increase in paper prices indeed occurred, this may have prompted reductions in the use of paper.<sup>46</sup> In book production, costs were determined by labour and paper; it is estimated that, on average, paper accounted for circa half of the cost price of books.<sup>47</sup> How much paper was needed depended on the format, the number of pages,

<sup>40</sup> [http://emblems.let.uu.nl/c1627\\_introduction.html?lang=dut](http://emblems.let.uu.nl/c1627_introduction.html?lang=dut). Accessed 21-12-2011.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, note 279, 'Meteen na de uitgave van dit werkje, welwillende lezer, kwamen de boekhandelaren bij mij klagen dat de kosten van de boeken door het driemaal afdrukken van de afbeeldingen in de drie afdelingen, buiten proportie stegen en dat de kopers de onnodig hoge prijs bezwaarlijk vonden [...]'. Accessed 21-12-2011.

<sup>42</sup> Cited in Porteman and Welkenhuysen, P.C. Hooft, *Emblemata amatoria*, p. 8. The book is: *Scoperos Satyra ofte Thyrsis Minne-wit* (s.l. 1654) and the original text: 'Welcke niet ghedaen is om dat de kosten des Druckers mochten zijn gespaert; maer achtende het selve het bequaemst ende het ghevoeghlyckst te wesen om in de sack hier en daer mede te draghen'.

<sup>43</sup> Bots, 'De Elzeviers', p. 167.

<sup>44</sup> Maber, *Publishing in the Republic of Letters: The Ménage-Grævius-Wetstein Correspondence 1679-1692*, pp. 16-17, 101-102 Letter from Wetstein to Ménage, December 12 1686.

<sup>45</sup> Schaep, 'Boeken met prenten', p. 294.

<sup>46</sup> Van Selm, 'De Nederlandse boekprijs', pp. 108-109.

<sup>47</sup> Based on Voet, *Golden Compasses*, vol. II, p. 380. 'The relationship between the two chief items [paper and wages] fluctuated from book to book and depended on the quality of the paper used and the number of copies printed. Wages formed a larger percentage of costs when paper quality was low and the run small, but even then paper practically always cost more than wages.' Van Zanden, *Long road*, p. 182 based book prices on the following cost distribution: 60 per cent paper costs and 40 per cent wages of craftsmen.

and the number of copies.<sup>48</sup> A steady supply of affordable paper was crucial to booksellers' businesses and a closer look at developments in the supply of paper is necessary to ascertain if the observed cutbacks on paper may have been a response to paper scarcity.<sup>49</sup> Not only would rising paper prices have increased the production cost and thereby selling price of books, but it would have also amplified the already high up-front investments required of book producers. Obviously, shifting to smaller formats allowed producers to cut down on these costs.

### *Paper prices*

Assuming that scarcity of paper would have resulted in mounting paper prices, we may use the developments in the price of paper as a proxy for changes in the supply and demand of paper. Henk Voorn, expert on Dutch paper production, did not use data on paper prices for serial analysis, but he suspected that paper prices increased between 1654 and 1671 and declined hereafter.<sup>50</sup> Let us put his suggestion to the test. Figure 3.6 presents estimates of Dutch paper prices, recorded by N.W. Posthumus.<sup>51</sup> Paper quantity was expressed in reams (one ream was *ca* 500 sheets), subdivided into 20 'mains' (quires) of 25 sheets each.<sup>52</sup>

Paper prices tripled between circa 1580 and 1620, but hereafter they remained relatively stable. When these are deflated with the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which measures developments in the value of the overall basket of goods, a somewhat different trend is revealed.<sup>53</sup> Real prices of paper seem to have been relatively stable throughout the seventeenth century, and even declined after *ca* 1615, to rise only slightly in the third quarter of the century. Although they largely followed secular price trends between 1570 and 1625, hereafter, nominal paper prices stagnated and real-term paper prices declined.<sup>54</sup> Assuming that demand for paper increased under the influence of demographic and economic growth, something must have happened on the supply side. How do these price trends correspond to the organisation of the import of paper?

<sup>48</sup> Examples in Voet, *Golden Compasses*, vol. II, pp. 20-21.

<sup>49</sup> This has been suggested by De la Fontaine Verwey in: De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Het Hollandse wonder', p. 55.

<sup>50</sup> Voorn, *De papiermolens*, vol. III, pp. 164-166. Van Selm has used this to explain the doubling of the price per sheet between circa 1630 and 1670. Van Selm, 'De Nederlandse boekprijs', pp. 106-107.

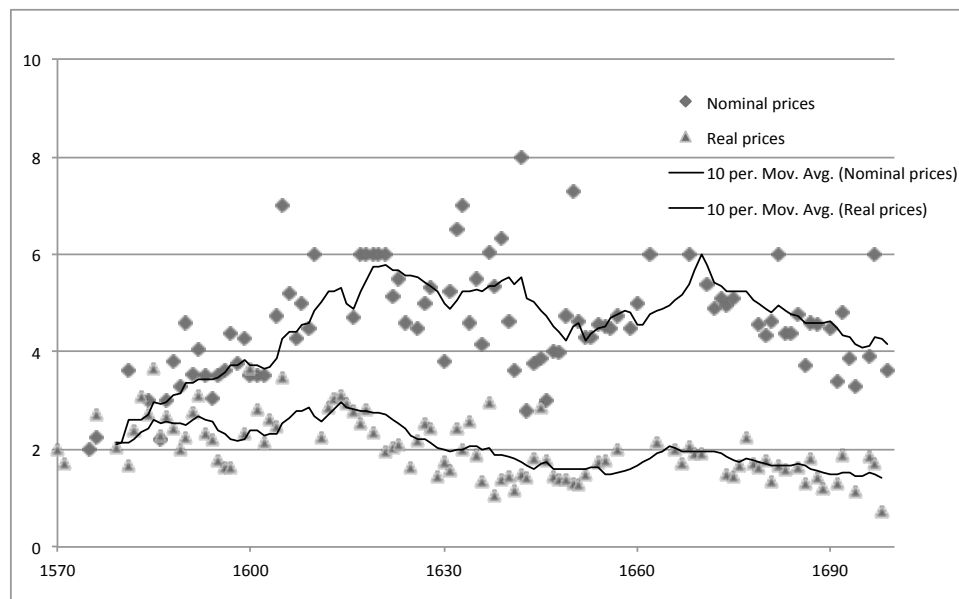
<sup>51</sup> Posthumus, *Nederlandsche prijsgeschiedenis*, no. 133, 330, 314, 227. Prices in n. 314 and n. 227 were given per quire, estimated at 20 quire per ream. Van Zanden used the same source and noted a general increase in paper prices between 1550 and 1650. Van Zanden, 'What happened to the standard of living?'. Data available at: <http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/brenv.php>. My dataset differs slightly from Van Zanden's: he did not include n. 314 and n. 227 and he provided references for pepper instead of paper.

<sup>52</sup> There were minor differences between countries.

<sup>53</sup> CPI from Van Zanden, 'What happened to the standard of living?'.

<sup>54</sup> Van Selm, 'De Nederlandse boekprijs', p. 106.

Figure 3.6 Paper prices per ream in guilders in Amsterdam, 1570-1699



Sources: see note 25 and 26.

#### *The organisation of paper imports*

In the previous chapter it was outlined how demand for paper increased rapidly at a time when traditional trade routes were inaccessible, and new ones yet to be firmly established. Merchants like Cornelis van Lokhorst appreciated the opportunity. Yet already by the early 1610s, there were problems between Van Lokhorst's partnership and paper producers, as the paper they delivered proved hard to sell.<sup>35</sup> The quality of the German paper was relatively low and with the onset of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), fought in Central Europe, more problems were inevitable. Transport options became limited and there were issues about exchange rates. The competitive pressure of paper imports from France intensified the problems of the *Compagnie*, leaving Van Lokhorst with an immovable stock of expensive and inferior paper.

Following these difficulties, the partnership was suspended, but Van Lokhorst immediately managed to revive it by attracting new investors. As before, the new financiers were mainly merchants, but the widow Van Wouw, printer of States General and one of largest buyers of paper from the *Compagnie*, also contributed as much as *f* 100,000. Even so, the new company did not fare well and collapsed after Van Lokhorst's death in 1629, when it became clear that the individual associates had been dealing on their own. Outstanding debts with printers and booksellers were often owed to the individual members, rather than to

<sup>35</sup> The following is based on Voorn, *Uit de oudste geschiedenis* and Voorn, 'Lombards'. Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. IV, pp. 195-272 deals with paperdealers, factors, and sellers, but her timeframe starts around 1680.

the company at large. A fierce court case between Van Lokhorst's widow and the associates heralded the end of the partnership.<sup>56</sup> The problems encountered by Van Lokhorst's companies are recalled here because of their suggestion of initial difficulties in the successful administration of a paper supply. This changed from the 1620s onwards.

From around 1620, other merchants started to take control of paper production in France. Around the same time, paper prices stagnated and even fell, whereas the quality of the paper improved. Coinciding with the decline of German imports, Dutch merchants came to control a large amount of French paper production by financing, or even buying, mills. The first Dutch watermarks, bearing the shield with the arms of Amsterdam, began to appear on paper produced in the mills of the Angoumois region. The most important contributing factor was Amsterdam merchant, Christoffel van Gangelt.<sup>57</sup> He had been posted in Angoulême as an agent for merchant Pieter Haack, but when Haack died in 1639, Van Gangelt became increasingly successful in his own right as an independent importer of French paper.<sup>58</sup> His paper was sold to Dutch and foreign booksellers through the ports of Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Presumably, this new system of supply was a significant improvement on the previous mode of paper supply, as is evident by the success of Dutch paper merchants in the international paper trade.

The Republic was not the only country to lack a domestic paper industry and depend on imports.<sup>59</sup> After Dutch merchants increased their involvement in French mills, and the Peace of Westphalia improved trade between France and the Republic, Amsterdam arose as an international paper distribution centre. According to documents in the Amsterdam guild archive, popular destinations included Muscovy, Denmark, Sweden, the Baltic regions, and, particularly after the middle of the century, England.<sup>60</sup> Booksellers in other parts of the Republic, as well as Antwerp, also obtained most of their paper from Amsterdam.<sup>61</sup> Correspondence from the Antwerp publishing house Verdussen shows how the Verdussen brothers obtained

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<sup>56</sup> Voorn, *Uit de oudste geschiedenis*, pp. 23-26; Nationaal Archief (NA); Hof van Holland: Civiele Sententies, inv. 704, sententie 137/1633, 29/7/1633. In 1633 the court ruled in favour of the widow, ordering the associates to pay her the colossal sum of f227,000. In a tentative list of debtors, dated 1635, some 80 names are recorded, including almost every important Amsterdam bookseller, some printers in the rest of the Republic, and in foreign towns, such as Hamburg, Danzig and London.

<sup>57</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. IV, pp. 210-224; Voorn, 'Lombards', p. 318.

<sup>58</sup> Voorn, 'Lombards', p. 319.

<sup>59</sup> On England: Coleman, *British paper industry*, p. 19.

<sup>60</sup> SA, Archief van de Gilden, inv. 56, behind n. 22 and behind 32. Examples from notarial archives in: Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. IV, p. 210. In 1656, for example, Van Gangelt had send 525 ream to Archangel, from where it was distributed to Moscow.

<sup>61</sup> The correspondence of the Nijmegen bookseller Abraham Leyniers (1640-1644) shows that almost all Leyniers paper came from Amsterdam: Begheyn, *Abraham Leyniers*; Between 1673 and 1700 Plantin-Moretus bought paper for f20,000 to f40,000 from the Amsterdam merchants Ysbrant and Levinus Vincent. The second most important bookshop in Antwerp, Verdussen, almost exclusively bought their paper in the Republic, and only sporadically directly from mills close to Liege or Namur. Sabbe, ed., *Briefwisseling*.



price and quality information from the most important Amsterdam paper traders.<sup>62</sup> The involvement of a number of Dutch merchants in the production of French paper bolstered the position of Amsterdam in the international paper trade, and coincided with the stabilisation of paper prices and improved paper quality. It also stimulated the involvement of merchants in the financing of other export products that were distributed along Dutch trade routes, a development that will be addressed this later in this chapter.

Considering the timing of the widespread use of smaller book formats, the developments in paper prices, and the shifts in the import structures, it is conceivable that downsizing the format of books, and thereby cutting down on paper costs, was a response to problems stemming from the supply of paper. Still, this may not have been the only factor in changing publishers' business strategies. Art-historical literature provided us with an additional hypothesis. In recent decades, the stylistic changes in Dutch painting in the 1620s have been increasingly interpreted as a response to changing market conditions, rather than to changes in taste. The use of a limited palette, simplified forms, and smaller formats lowered the amount of time needed to finish a painting and, because labour was the largest area of expenditure, production costs could drop significantly.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, these innovations in both product and process did not result in a loss of quality. Likewise, the introduction of small-sized books can be interpreted as an innovative market strategy that broadened and democratised the Dutch book market by lowering the cost of the finished product.

The fact that around this same time, the relationship between book production and its related and supporting industries was also transformed, suggests that there may have been more structural factors involved in encouraging Dutch publishers to adapt the form and content of books, than only the price of paper. The cooperative character of book production is unmistakable. Publishers functioned as general contractors, as booksellers and sometimes also as printers; authors functioned as suppliers of texts; paper dealers as providers of the essential primary ingredient; engravers as illustrators; scholars as translators and correctors; and finally, type founders and punch-cutters were crucial in shaping the appearance of books.<sup>64</sup> Accordingly, each aspect of the process of book production could be a means of competitive differentiation

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<sup>62</sup> Sabbe, ed., *Briefwisseling* Letters IX and X. On June 27 they responded to Vincent that they deemed the prices of both batches too high, and the quality of the sample of the first batch fairly low. Instead of 45 stuivers per ream, they suggest 42 stuivers for the first batch. In the correspondence with De Haes, they find f3.60 to expensive, and f3.40 more realistic, but offer f3.50 to get things done more rapidly.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Montias, 'Cost and value'; Montias, 'The influence of economic factors'; Sluijter, 'On Brabant rubbish'; Israel, 'Adjusting to hard times'.

<sup>64</sup> See for a summary: De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Het Hollandse wonder', pp. 55-58.

### 3.4 Typography

In 1683 Joseph Moxon (1627-1691) wrote that ‘Since the late made Dutch Letters are so generally, and indeed most deservedly, accounted the best, as for their Shape, consisting so exactly of Mathematical Regular Figures [...] I think we may account the Rules they were made by, to be the Rules of true shap’d Letters’.<sup>65</sup> As an English printer, publisher, maker of globes and mathematical instruments, and author of the famous handbook of printing *Mechanic Exercises on the Whole Art of Printing* (London 1683), Moxon had an intimate knowledge of Dutch printing practices. His father, a Puritan refugee, had worked as a printer in Delft and Rotterdam and Moxon himself had visited the Republic on several occasions.<sup>66</sup> His handbook shows that he was a great fan of Dutch typography, and he was not the only one.<sup>67</sup> By the end of the growth phase, Dutch typography had acquired international fame and its type was exported throughout Europe.<sup>68</sup>

Dutch book production was clearly bolstered by an internationally competitive supporting industry. In hindsight, it may not come as a surprise that Dutch typography was foremost in European printing, given the important role Dutch printers came to play in the European book trade, but by 1610 this was not self-evident. And while the perceived image of Dutch books may be one of great beauty, exceptional works such as the Blaeu atlases are not representative of the average quality.<sup>69</sup> Most books were no works of art and even Blaeu’s early editions of Pieter Cornelisz Hooft were published with an unattractive layout, lacking in decoration.<sup>70</sup> It was only in the growth phase that the aesthetics of Dutch books improved significantly and Dutch books became renowned for beautiful typography, decorations, and the high quality of paper.

From the 1620s onwards, the quality of Dutch typography improved as printing and composition became neater, new types were ordered, and typographic design became standardised.<sup>71</sup> A style emerged that was to be eventually known as the ‘Dutch taste’; not radically innovative, but of high quality and with a distinct look.<sup>72</sup> Series of roman type were developed that would determine the appearance of

<sup>65</sup> Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>66</sup> See for a discussion of Moxon: Janssen, *Zetten en drukken*, pp. 12-14.

<sup>67</sup> Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises*, pp. xxii, 22-24, 372.

<sup>68</sup> General publications on type and typefoundries: Carter and Mosley, *A view of early typography*; Vervliet, *French Renaissance printing types*; Updike, *Printing types*, vol. II. On Dutch type: Middendorp, *Dutch type*; Vervliet, *Sixteenth-century printing types*; Lane, Lommen, and De Zoete, *Dutch typefounders’ specimens*. There is no comprehensive work on early modern Dutch type production.

<sup>69</sup> De la Fontaine Verwey, ‘Het Hollandse wonder’, pp. 49-50.

<sup>70</sup> Dijstelberge, ‘De lof der onleesbaarheid’, p. 287.

<sup>71</sup> Dijstelberge, ‘De vorm: typografie in de Renaissance’, p. 120.

<sup>72</sup> McKitterick, *A history of Cambridge University Press*, p. 13. First mentioned as ‘goût hollandois’ in 1766 by in a manual by French punchcutter Simon Pierre-Fournier. Fournier and Carter, *Fournier on typefounding*.

publications from many important seventeenth-century Netherlands-based publishers, not least those by Willem Jansz Blaeu and Paulus Aerts van Ravesteyn. New Hebrew type changed the look of Hebrew books. The improvements in type design and type cutting reached great heights in the 1650s, not least in the work of Christoffel van Dijck, a German-born journeymen-goldsmith, who set up a typefoundry in Amsterdam in the later 1640s.<sup>73</sup> Compared to the sixteenth century designs, 'the contrasts between the hairlines and the main strokes is more pronounced in the types of Van Dijck, the serifs are almost imperceptibly cupped, the capital letters are more powerful ... The typeface in general appears to have been cut more sharply, and have a more accentuated effect.'<sup>74</sup>

According to book historian Paul Dijstelberge, the reason why the quality of printing improved in the 1620s is unknown.<sup>75</sup> He suggests that it may have been driven by the increasing internationalisation of Dutch book production, but, as he readily admits, this is not compatible with the apparent overall decline in quality throughout the rest of Europe.<sup>76</sup> He also puts forwards that competition amongst printers or publishers may have played a role. In other words, in this view it may not have been international rivalry that fuelled Dutch typographic innovation, but domestic competition.

During the expansion of Dutch book production, the number of printers increased, fuelling a need for more type. But this alone cannot explain the observed changes in typography. During the phase of emergence, Dutch printers had relied on Flemish type and type-makers. Matrices and punches were durable tools and, as long as there was a sufficient pool of available type, there was little need to order new ones.<sup>77</sup> During the growth phase, this demand could have been met by type cast from existing matrices. So, if it were not strictly necessary to have new matrices made, why would Dutch printers order their own typefaces? The observed expansion into the production of smaller sized books may have encouraged demand for newly produced smaller type, but there was more to it than that. To obtain a better understanding of why improvements were made in the 1620s, it is worth considering the consequences of ordering new type and new matrices, and having a look at how the type-founding and punch-cutting industry was organised.

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<sup>73</sup> John A. Lane, specialized in history of printing types and typefounding, is working on a study of Christoffel van Dijck.

<sup>74</sup> Caflisch, 'Christoffel van Dijck, an outstanding punchcutter', p. 7.

<sup>75</sup> Dijstelberge, 'De vorm: typografie in de Renaissance'.

<sup>76</sup> Jennett, *Pioneers in printing*, p. 47.

<sup>77</sup> Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew typography*, vol. II, p. 235. This is evident from the example of an order placed by Phoebus Halevi in 1670. He bought 120 pounds of small Hebrew types from the matrices cut by Nicolaes Briot for Menassah ben Israel in 1626.

*The organisation of type-founding and punch-cutting*

The timing and the early documentation on orders for new type are particularly enlightening. The tipping point in the production of new type came with type-cutter Nicolaes Briot. Originally from the Southern Netherlands, Briot was trained as a silversmith in the Dutch town of Gouda and active in Amsterdam from the 1620s onwards.<sup>78</sup> He is known to have supplied important printing firms such as Willem Jansz Blaeu and the leading Hebrew printer, Menasseh ben Israel. The Blaeus had their own type-foundry, but ordered their matrices from Briot and later from the famous Luther foundry in Frankfurt. The first evidence of cutting new common type dates from 1615, when Amsterdam bookseller Dirck Pietersz Voskuyl ordered type from Briot, presumably for Paulus Aerts van Ravesteyn.<sup>79</sup> The notarised contract between Voskuyl and Briot stipulated that the latter was not allowed to cut similar type for any other printer. In an argument between Blaeu and Briot's widow, Blaeu accused her late husband of having cast type for others, from matrices he had made exclusively for Blaeu.<sup>80</sup> Such exclusivity seems to have been an important issue for Blaeu. English scholar Thomas Marshall even complained to his patron, the dean of Christ Church College in Oxford, about Blaeu's refusal to sell type to other printers or type-founders.<sup>81</sup>

The ordering and purchase of new material was largely undertaken to secure a monopoly on certain typefaces, and even though the investment in new matrices was not very large, its returns were strongly valued. Typeface exclusivity was important, as it produced a unique look on the printed page. The initiative for the development of new type came from Dutch printers, in particular those active in Amsterdam. Letter cutting only developed in areas with a critical mass of firms that had something to gain from ordering new matrices. In the early years, Amsterdam had relatively few print shops of significance.<sup>82</sup> According to J.W. Enschedé, the 1632 establishment of the *Athenaeum Illustre* in Amsterdam served as a stimulant to printing, and, in turn, to punch-cutting and type-founding, in much the same way the University had a few decades earlier in Leiden.<sup>83</sup> The overall expansion of printing in Amsterdam, in which the establishment of the *Athenaeum* was but one factor, may have indeed fostered a critical mass of printers, not only in terms of quantity, but also in terms of competitive pressure. The development of unique type by Dutch printers should be interpreted as one of the tools available for differentiation.

<sup>78</sup> On Briot see: Lane, 'Nicolaes Briot'; Enschedé, 'Nicolaes Briot'.

<sup>79</sup> Enschedé, 'Nicolaes Briot', p. 153.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. 153-154.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>82</sup> Dijstelberge, 'De vorm: typografie in de Renaissance', p. 121.

<sup>83</sup> Enschedé, 'Nicolaes Briot', p. 171.

Whilst the artistic skills of Dutch type-cutters were widely acknowledged, their designs were also associated with commercial motives. In this light, it is interesting that not everyone appreciated Dutch letters. Dutch fonts, even Elzevier's, have been described as dull and unoriginally derived from the French, yet more practical, and lacking the artistic qualities of earlier type-cutters.<sup>84</sup> And, not everyone appreciated the small format of Dutch books. In 1651 Dutch classical scholar Nicolaas Heinsius wrote to fellow scholar Jan Frederik Gronovius that the French brothers, Jacques (1591-1656) and Pierre Dupuy (1582-1651), wished that Gronovius' *Livy* would have been printed in a larger format, the small types being a recurring subject of complaint for Paris scholars.<sup>85</sup> Gronovius responded: 'I have already received a similar opinion [...] but try to make men listen to reason who have nothing in their heads but the love of gain.'<sup>86</sup> It was not only contemporaries who judged Dutch type this way. Fournier claimed that Dutch printers deliberately use 'types of a cramped, starved look, so that they may get more words to the line and more lines to the page. They are not troubled by their ugliness, provided they are profitable.'<sup>87</sup>

A recurring theme in the criticism is the commercial outlook of the book producers. According to one historian of typography, 'printing fell into the hands of a class of masters and men less able, enterprising, and socially important, who looked at it solely from the commercial side.'<sup>88</sup> The business-like attitude of Dutch printers may have resulted in a reputation of profit seekers but, more importantly in this study, it also stimulated the cutting of new type, elevating the quality and recognisability of Dutch books. A similar development took place in a second important element of typography: book illustrations.

### *Book illustrations*

In the previous chapter, Claesz' extensive use of illustrations in Dutch travelogues, and Matthysz' new range of emblembooks and songbooks were discussed. Many illustrations in books published during the phase of emergence were imitations or emulations of older series. In the first decades of the seventeenth century the number of illustrated publications expanded rapidly.<sup>89</sup> After 1610 especially, new and original

<sup>84</sup> Updike, *Printing types*, vol. II, p. 22; Morison, *Four centuries of fine printing*, p. 37.

<sup>85</sup> They refer to the edition of *Livy (Historiarum Libri)* by J.F. Gronovius, published first by Louis and Daniel Elzevier in 1644-1645, in 12°. It was reprinted in 1653-1654, and a new edition (in 8°) was published in 1664-1665. The French brothers Jacques Dupuy (1591-1656) and Pierre Dupuy (1582-1651) lived in Paris, and are known for the scholarly gatherings, called *académie*, or *cabinet*, des frères Dupuy. Delatour, 'Le cabinet des frères Dupuy', pp. 287-328.

<sup>86</sup> Quoted in Davies, *The world of the Elzeviers*, pp. 147-148.

<sup>87</sup> Quoted in Kinross, *Modern typography*, p. 30.

<sup>88</sup> Updike, *Printing types*, vol. II, p. 93.

<sup>89</sup> There is no comprehensive publication on Dutch book illustration. De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Gouden Eeuw' provides an introductory discussion. Besides extensive bibliographic publications, book illustration is discussed in works concerning related fields like cartography, engraving, and printpublishing. Recently Elmer and Jaap van Veen have organized an exhibition on Amsterdam print publishing. Kolfin and Van Veen, *Gedrukt tot Amsterdam*. On Dutch print publishing Orenstein,

book illustrations flourished on the pages of atlases, travelogues, emblem books, and songbooks, and also in (natural) histories and pamphlets. Dutch publishers could take their pick from a significant number of engravers and the number of artists was increasing rapidly.<sup>90</sup>

How can we explain this 'golden age of book illustration'? The profusion of novel designs coincided with the golden age of engraving and painting, so it is reasonable to search for clues in the expanding art market. We should distinguish between the design and engraving or etching of (copper) plates, and the use of plates to print illustrated sheets. As in painting, the rapid increase in demand for images was met largely by immigrant engravers and artists. David Vinckboons (1576-1639), for instance, also known for his paintings and drawings, was one of the most popular designers, especially in the phase of emergence, but, compared to his successors, he was no genuine innovator. In the first quarter of the seventeenth century there were more and more prints of original designs by, and in the style of, artists who had been trained in the Dutch Republic, most notably Willem Buytewech (1591/1592-1624), Jan II van de Velde (1593-1641), and especially Adriaen van de Venne (1589-1662). Haarlem in particular, was a centre of engraving, with Hendrik Goltzius' son-in-law, Jacob Matham, as an important print-publisher. Not coincidentally, Haarlem was also the first town to take off artistically.

The 'Golden Age' of Dutch book illustration did not last; there was a hiatus between ca. 1635 and the 1670s/1680s, the era of prolific and innovative illustrators Romeyn de Hooghe and Jan Luyken.<sup>91</sup> Apparently the mere presence of engravers and painters was a necessary, rather than a sufficient, factor for thriving production of book illustrations. It is more likely that mechanisms responsible for the boom in painting that took place around this same time, also applied to engraving and print design. As with the artistic novelties in paintings, there may have been commercial motives behind the development of new prints and new book illustrations. In 1613, Jacob Matham's pupil, Jan II van de Velde, received a concerned letter from his father, who urged him to work as much as possible from his own designs, for this would bring him greater financial rewards.<sup>92</sup> Van de Velde indeed developed into an

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'Marketing prints'; Orenstein *et al.*, 'Print Publishers in the Netherlands'. On cartographic engraving and publishing in Amsterdam see for example: Van den Brink and Werner, eds., *Gesneden*. On Plantin and engravings: Bowen, *Christopher Plantin*. On illustrations for works of individual authors: Landwehr, *Romeyn de Hooghe*; Stuiveling *et al.*, eds., *Groot lied-boeck*, pp 89-91; Luijten, *Sinne- en minnebeelden*. On one specific genre: Kolfin, 'Portretten'.

<sup>90</sup> Michel le Blon, Pieter Serwouters, Crispyn, Simon and Willem de Passe (sons of Crispyn the Elder), Daniël van den Bremden, Simon Frisius, Claes Jansz. Visscher and Claes Pietersz. Lastman, were working with older engravers like Jacques de Gheyn II, and younger ones like Theodoor Matham, Jan Gerritsz. Swelinck, Crispyn van den Queborn, Salomon Savery, Jan van de Velde, Cornelis Kittesteyn and Gilles van Scheyndel. Stuiveling *et al.*, eds., *Groot lied-boeck*, pp 95-96.

<sup>91</sup> De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Gouden Eeuw'.

<sup>92</sup> Orenstein *et al.*, 'Print Publishers in the Netherlands', p. 183; Obreen, ed., *Archief*, vol. II, pp 100-101.

inventive printmaker, although he eventually decided to specialise in a different technique – that of landscape etching.

As demand for plates increased, so did competition for them. Second-hand plates were mainly acquired through auctions. The first significant auction of books and plates was that of Cornelis Claes in 1610, and many publishers, most notably Blaeu, Hondius and Janssonius, seized this opportunity.<sup>93</sup> Fierce competition could arise over plates. After the auction of map decorator and seller David de Meyne in 1620, a dispute arose between the group of Jan Evertsz Cloppenburg, Pieter van den Keere, Frans van den Hoeye and Johannes Janssonius on the one hand, and Willem Jansz Blaeu on the other. The former had bought two-thirds of the copperplates for a large world globe, but Blaeu possessed the remaining plates. When Blaeu tried to obtain the plates from the others, for example, by having publisher Dirck Pietersz Pers and plate-cutters Josua van den Ende, Robbert de Baudous, and Claes Jansz Visscher act as witnesses, he failed.<sup>94</sup> Cloppenburg and his associates declared that they could have the plates that were in Blaeu's possession reproduced in France. Besides, seeing as they were the owners, it was always possible for them to take an axe to the plates that Blaeu had set his sights on. Within such a competitive market, ordering new illustrations was an effective means of differentiation. As a result of increased competitive pressure, an increasing number of original plates were ordered and designed in the first quarter of the seventeenth century.

### 3.5 Copy production

Dutch publishers and printers clearly started to invest in new type and new print designs. But did they also take action in terms of the content of books? Before we turn to the relationship between the content of books and the book production industry, we first discuss developments in the mainstays of copy production in the early modern Dutch Republic (science and scholarship, commerce, religious and political involvement, and literature) to show in what way the pool of potential copy was increasing throughout these decades.<sup>95</sup> To put it mildly, between 1610 and 1650, Dutch publishers did not suffer from a lack of potential copy.

<sup>93</sup> On this auction, see Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 266-274; Van Selm, *Menighte treffelijcke boecken*, pp. 225-233.

<sup>94</sup> Van Dillen, *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis*, pp. 290, 354-355; Van Eeghen, 'De familie van de plaatsnijder C.J. Visscher', pp. 80-81.

<sup>95</sup> The rise of Amsterdam as a centre of information has been dealt with in the previous chapter.

The number of academic authors swelled as the infrastructure for higher learning expanded dramatically after the Dutch Revolt.<sup>96</sup> An academic infrastructure developed from scratch; competitive and unburdened by tradition. By 1650, the grid of higher learning consisted of five provincial universities – Leiden (1575), Franeker (1585), Groningen (1614), Utrecht (1636) and Harderwijk (1648) – and so-called ‘illustrious schools’, established mainly in the 1630s in a number of towns, including Amsterdam, Middelburg, Deventer, Dordrecht and Rotterdam. These schools were municipal rather than provincial enterprises that provided a form of undergraduate education.<sup>97</sup> Dutch universities and scholars soon acquired international relevance, attracting large numbers of foreign students and professors.<sup>98</sup> Records show that in 1649 almost half of all students enrolled in Dutch universities came from abroad, with more than a quarter from German lands alone.<sup>99</sup> The influx of foreign students reflects the high quality of academic teaching in the Republic and the excellent reputation the universities had abroad. The position of Dutch scholarly publications was strengthened by a relative freedom of press, which attracted important dissidents of the seventeenth century.<sup>100</sup> René Descartes (1596-1650) and Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) lived in the Republic, and although Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) was himself exiled, his writings were also published in the Dutch Republic. By the second half of the seventeenth century, the importance of Dutch universities had waned. The enrolment of foreign students dwindled as a consequence of political stability in Central Europe, and also due to the rise of new institutes of scientific research in other countries, especially those established in the form of royal academies, most notably in Paris and London.

Information also came pouring in through port towns, as the booming economy drove the increasing demand for applied and descriptive knowledge. Academics were not the only ones interested in science. In his famous 1632 speech at the opening of the Amsterdam ‘Athenaeum Illustre’, Dutch humanist Caspar Barlaeus presented his vision of the learned merchant: the *mercator sapiens*.<sup>101</sup> Even though this concept was more of an ideal than a reality, the link between commerce and science was indeed omnipresent.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, in the Dutch Republic, scholarly, religious and political debates were not limited to intellectual circles. The Dutch

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<sup>96</sup> Davids, ‘Amsterdam as a centre of learning’, p. 305; Frijhoff and Spies, *Dutch culture*, pp. 246-256. A peak in the number of prominent Dutch scholars been observed by Gascoigne, ‘Historical demography’, pp. 559-561.

<sup>97</sup> See Van Miert, *Humanism in an age of science*, pp. 21-43; Van Miert, ‘Where centres of learning and centres of culture meet’ on a discussion of the definition of illustrious schools. In legal terms, the illustrious school can be distinguished from a university in its inability to grant doctorates.

<sup>98</sup> Davids, ‘Amsterdam as a centre of learning’, p. 313.

<sup>99</sup> Frijhoff and Spies, *Dutch culture*, p. 255.

<sup>100</sup> On this see for instance Groenveld, ‘Mecca of authors?’

<sup>101</sup> See for example Van Berkel, ‘Rediscovering Clusius’.

<sup>102</sup> Cook, *Matters of exchange*; Huigen, De Jong, and Kolfin, eds., *Dutch trading companies*; Smith and Findlen, eds., *Merchants and marvels* discuss the relation between science and commerce.



Republic's so-called 'discussion culture' is a recognised marker of its modernity, and it is often repeated that even philosophical debates reached those lacking an academic background.<sup>103</sup> The public debate involved large segments of society and took place through prints and pamphlets – the new media *avant la lettre*.<sup>104</sup>

The 'Golden Age' of Dutch literature truly gained momentum under the influence of the generation of writers who began publishing in the 1610s: Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679), Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft (1581–1647), Bredero (1585–1618), Constantijn Huygens (1596–1687), and Jacob Cats (1577–1660).<sup>105</sup> The daughters of Pieter Roemer Visscher, Anna (1584–1651) and Maria (1594–1649) Tesselschade Visscher were also much admired. In the same decade, a group of prominent members, led by Samuel Coster, G.A. Bredero and P.C. Hooft, broke with the Amsterdam Chamber *d'Eglentier*, organising themselves into the *Nederduytsche Academie* for sciences and arts, with Dutch as the official language. It demonstrates how the literary field was in flux. Although it was partly the result of personality clashes, the conflict in the Chamber was essentially a parting of ways between the old and the new literary guard. The *Athenaeum Illustre* was established in 1632 and six years later the first municipal theatre in the Republic replaced the two Amsterdam chambers.<sup>106</sup>

During the growth phase, literature developed through a combination of local Dutch and foreign influences. The STCN shows that in the 1630s, there were only 300 translations from Latin and French to Dutch, half as much as in the 1610s and 1650s.<sup>107</sup> This indicates a significant decline in the share of translations in the total number of Dutch titles published between 1610s and 1630s, and an expansion of novel Dutch titles. New and original work was produced in a variety of genres, as a glimpse into the work of the most famous poets demonstrates. Take Vondel, whose '...immense oeuvre: 24 original dramas, translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the complete works of Virgil, and several classical tragedies [...], long panegyrics on Amsterdam trade and building activities, a religious epic, didactic poems in defines of Roman Catholic orthodoxy (the Mennonite Vondel converted to Catholicism around 1639), and thousands of occasional and devotional poems—in short, all poetic genres except love songs.'<sup>108</sup> The group of outstanding poetry and prose-writers who made their debut in these years were surrounded by an abundance of amateur poets. An expanding well-educated middle class, with time for leisurely activities, was writing poems. From 1625, students of the Latin schools were formally required

<sup>103</sup> Frijhoff and Spies, *Dutch culture*, pp. 220–226 on discussion culture.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Harms, *Pamfletten en publieke opinie* on pamphlets.

<sup>105</sup> Frijhoff and Spies, *Dutch culture*, p. 545.

<sup>106</sup> Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, *Dutch literature*, pp. 11–14.

<sup>107</sup> The number of translations from English and Greek in the Republic remained the same in the 1610s, 1630s and 1650s (circa 75 and 17 respectively). STCN.

<sup>108</sup> Grootes, 'Dutch literature and language', accessed November 4, 2011.

to produce a variety of occasional poems.<sup>109</sup> While producing numerous original works, Vondel, amongst others, also translated from other languages as a source of inspiration.<sup>110</sup> Conversely, due to the language barrier, Dutch literature had little international impact.<sup>111</sup> For those who used Latin, more international recognition was possible, as was the case for Neo-Latinists Daniel Heinsius (1580-1655), professor of Greek and History at the University of Leiden, and Hugo Grotius (1683-1645), lawyer, poet and dramatist.

### *From potential to real copy*

The increase in potential copy, whether in the form of information, news, knowledge, or cultural expressions, did not only have direct consequences on the scale of book production, but also reinforced its geographic distribution. The Hague became synonymous with political news, Amsterdam with commerce and literary life, and Leiden with academic printing. For example, the establishment of a university directly encouraged the development of a local publishing sector. More scholars and students resulted in more copy, while the university occasionally commissioned large and costly projects.<sup>112</sup> Consequently, scholarly work published in Leiden increased from just over 400 between 1575 and 1600, to 1,000 between 1626 and 1650. Likewise, the flourishing Chambers of Rhetoric increased the number of literary publications, especially in Amsterdam, and the presence of government supported printers in The Hague, such as the widow van Wouw, who had thousands of titles to her name. But this direct relationship alone cannot account for the variety, scale, and quality of Dutch book production.

The extensive and varied Dutch book production was not only the result of artistic, literary or scholarly talent, but also of strong commercial propulsion. The songbook can once again illustrate this point. Poets wrote the songs, but often it was the publishers 'who decided when the market was ripe [...]', not only with regards to anthologies, but also concerning individual songbooks.<sup>113</sup> From the 1610s, the names of individual authors began appearing more frequently on title pages. Prior to this, collections of poems distributed in private networks were often published without authors' names or consent. When, in 1599, Leiden publisher Jan Orlers published 87 poems by Visscher, he did so almost certainly without Visscher's knowledge. Thirteen years later, Jan Paets Jacobsz published Visscher's poems in a deluxe version, still without explicitly printing his name, but by then the origins should

<sup>109</sup> Frijhoff and Spies, *Dutch culture*, p. 532. The definition of literature is problematic, see *ibid.*, p. 538.

<sup>110</sup> Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, *Dutch literature*, pp. 142-147.

<sup>111</sup> Few Dutch-language literary works were translated, although publishers issued books in trilingual, for example some of Jacob Cats emblems at the end of the 1620s. The first English translations of the 'prince of poets' Joost van den Vondel only appeared in the early nineteenth century.

<sup>112</sup> Bouwman *et al.*, eds., *Stad van boeken*, p. 191.

<sup>113</sup> Veldhorst, 'Pharmacy for the body and soul', p. 241.

have been evident to all and the preface suggests the author's involvement. In 1614, Willem Jansz Blaeu published Visscher's new collection *Sinnepoppen* in a deluxe version and in a cheaper duodecimo, together with a revised and authorised sextodecimo version of the collection published by Paets two years earlier. The title page held the phrase 'revised by Visscher himself and enlarged by half as much again', as well as a reference to the 'incorrect Leiden copy'.<sup>114</sup> From the 1610s, publishers started vying for copy and the competition commenced, turning authors into marketing assets.

The original impulse came from the authors, but from the moment it was picked up by publishers, it was fair game. Reprints, adaptations and piracy were the order of the day, as complaints by authors and printed warnings show: 'Book printers who so hastily gather this and that together ... Do not touch my songbook'.<sup>115</sup> Bredero is known to have been particularly offended because the publisher had printed his work without consent and added a number of songs written by another poet.<sup>116</sup> When in 1636 P.C. Hooft wanted to have his collection of poems and songs published in the style of the lavishly illustrated songbooks from the first quarter of the century, his publisher, Jacob van der Burgh, rejected the idea, arguing for a cheaper variant. Apparently Hooft allowed himself to be persuaded, as the anthology was published without illustrations and musical notation.<sup>117</sup> Publishers also selected the content and, in the prefaces, the publisher sometimes made a direct appeal to the public to send him anything interesting that they had for possible inclusion in future editions.<sup>118</sup>

Another example can be found in the production of pamphlets. Relative freedom of press and mind, a broad-based reading culture and an efficient distribution network allowed news and events, as well as political and religious stances, to be discussed throughout the country and society.<sup>119</sup> These characteristics also increased the scale of copy production. The exact role of publishers in the creation of media hypes is hard to identify, but research on the dynamic between publishers, authors, and the government suggests that during the seventeenth century, pamphlets were increasingly appropriated as commercial products.<sup>120</sup> Like emblembooks and songbooks, political texts were the subject of fierce competition between publishers.

<sup>114</sup> Van Vaeck, 'Moral emblems adorned with rhymes', p. 206.

<sup>115</sup> Veldhorst, 'Pharmacy for the body and soul', pp. 234-244. *Cupidoos lusthof* (1605): 'Boekdruckers die soo haest wat by malcander scaept ... Myn lietboek tast niet aen.' Translation by Veldhorst.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.

<sup>119</sup> On pamphlets and politics in the Dutch Republic see for example: Harms, *Pamfletten en publieke opinie*; Deen, Onnekink, and Reinders, eds., *Pamphlets and politics*; Harline, *Pamphlets, printing, and political culture*.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Harms, *Pamfletten en publieke opinie*.

Although it is hard to make a general statement on the relationship between authors and publishers before the introduction of author copyright, the available evidence suggests that the supply of copy alone does not fully explain the large quantity and variety of titles. The relationship was reciprocal and reinforcing. Publications by booksellers and the presence of bookshops also functioned as stimuli for cultural and intellectual life. Therefore it should come as no surprise that with the expansion of scholarly, cultural, and commercial life, more and more knowledge, information and texts were created (and desired). Dutch publishers were ideally positioned to convert this pool of potential copy into commercial profit.

### 3.6 Conclusion

In view of the Republic's economic and demographic boom, it may not be very surprising that the Dutch book trade expanded during the Golden Age, nor that the quality of the produced books increased. Factor and demand conditions were favourable, related and supporting industries flourished, and the number of publishers increased. Unfavourable circumstances in other countries, such as war, economic difficulties, and censorship, further explain the relative lack of foreign competition. Yet, with the advantage of hindsight, it is easy to mistake the eventual success of the Republic as a European publishing centre as inevitable. By the 1620s, the volume of book production was relatively modest, the quality of books was not very impressive and growth rates even started to drop.<sup>121</sup> The necessary seeds had been planted in the first 30 years of Dutch book trade, but growth needed to be sustained and improved upon.

From 1620 onwards, there were significant changes in format, content, and quality of books. At the same time, quantitative growth in book production stagnated. This suggests that market conditions shaped the form and content of the books, as publishers came to play a key role, turning copy, illustrations, type, and paper into commercial assets. We have argued that publishers were broadening markets by introducing product and process innovations, such as smaller formats, new type designs, novel book illustrations, and content differentiation. Through these innovations, high potential demand was converted into real consumption.

Developments in related and supporting industries were important factors in shaping the form and content of Dutch books from the 1620s, but were not sufficient to fully explain publishers' strategies. For instance, the introduction of smaller formats and new types may have been part of a package of strategies, including an

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<sup>121</sup> Cf. Dijstelberge, 'De vorm: typografie in de Renaissance'; Dijstelberge, 'De lof der onleesbaarheid'.

increase in the quality of printing on the one hand, and cost cutting in the use of engravings on the other. Increased competition and the absence of exogenous stimuli of demand prompted publishers to both trigger and exploit opportunities in related and supporting industries, resulting in significant changes in the form and content of Dutch books. In the following chapter this hypothesis will be further explored by taking a closer look at the spatial distribution of book production and the organisation of the Amsterdam production system.



## 4 Buzz and pipelines in the publishing business, 1610-1660

### 4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the rapid growth and the qualitative improvements in Dutch book production have been interpreted as consequences, at least to some extent, of a strategic response to limitations on the demand side. New markets were reached as well as created through a series of process and product innovations. The implicit assumption has been that the intensification of competition stimulated publishers to act quickly, provide up-to-date information, and to differentiate products through typographical changes and improvements.<sup>1</sup> In many seminal works on printing, the lack of competition in French and English book production is considered an important cause of the overall low quality of printing in Europe during the seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> If lack of competition checked quality in these countries, could the reverse have been true for the Dutch Republic? During the period 1580-1610, book production in the largest publishing centres had been dominated by just a handful of firms. During the growth phase, the number of publishers active in Amsterdam increased significantly. It goes without saying that the competitive context in 1650 differed greatly from that in 1578, when Cornelis Claesz had set up shop. How competitive was the Dutch book trade and were there distinct changes over time?

The second issue in this chapter is that of local embeddedness. The early modern book trade has been presented as a cultural industry. The implications of this are that it may have particularly susceptible to geographic concentration and cluster dynamics. Was this indeed the case? And how advantageous was this? It is the balance of competition and cooperation that differentiates a cluster from a loose set of firms or a hierarchical network. Too much connectivity or collaboration causes rigidity, while too much competition offsets the positive cluster effects, such as scale economies and knowledge and innovation processes. Did Dutch publishers manage to reap the benefits of co-location, while maintaining a sufficient distance to allow competition? This analysis starts with a sketch of the geography of book production, followed by a treatment of the factors that influenced the intensity of local

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<sup>1</sup> Part of this argument has been published in: Rasterhoff, 'Carrière en concurrentie'.

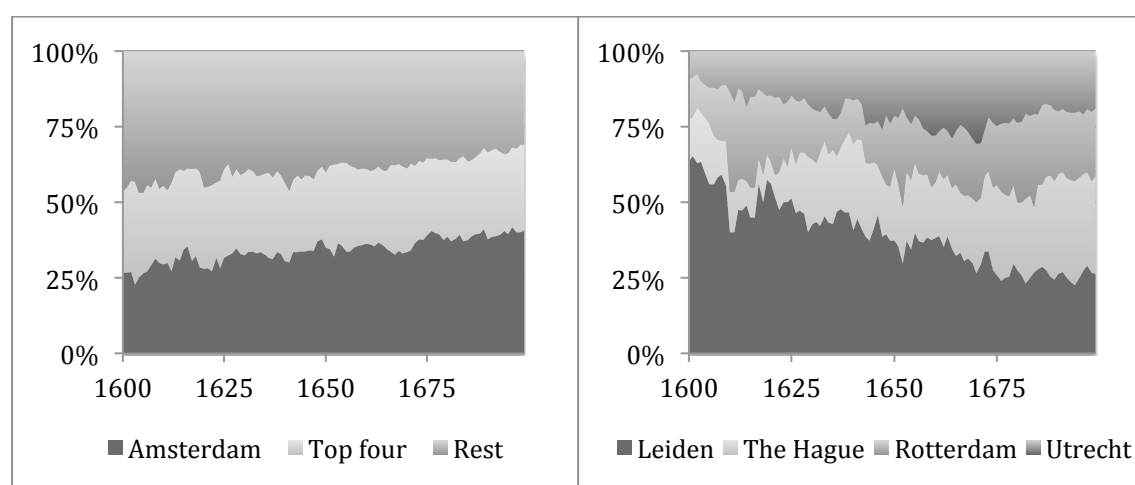
<sup>2</sup> Clair, *A history of European printing*, pp. 272-273.

embeddedness or openness. In the second part the market structure of the Amsterdam book trade will be analysed.

#### 4.2 Local specialization, competition, and complementarity

As illustrated in Figure 4.1, no single Dutch town had a monopoly position in book production. Amsterdam was by far the largest book centre, with Leiden a distant second. But with only one third of the total number of publishers in the Dutch Republic, Amsterdam was not a monopolist on the scale of London or Paris. In seventeenth century England, 75 per cent of the total number of people involved in book production worked in London.<sup>3</sup> In France, book production was more dispersed, but increasingly Paris became the hub, housing 60 per cent of the country's printers between 1600 and 1640. This share further increased over the course of the seventeenth.<sup>4</sup> During the sixteenth century, Antwerp housed an estimated 60 per cent of publishers in the northern and southern Netherlands.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 4.1 Share by total size of industry, measured in number of people active per decade (%) 1580-1699



Source: Thesaurus.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.bbti.bham.ac.uk>. The STCN and ESTC allow for a direct comparison as they have used comparable source material: imprints of books. For people, the Dutch and English databases cannot be directly compared, as unfortunately no Thesaurus has been connected to the ESTC. For England there is the British Book Trade Index (BBTI), but these records have been derived from a range of sources, printed and electronic, and from forms submitted by scholars and local researchers who have contributed their findings. See also: Raven, *The business of books*.

<sup>4</sup> Mellot and Boyer, 'The French printing and publishing network'.

<sup>5</sup> Briels, *Zuidnederlandse boekverkoopers*, pp. 5-6; Voet, *Typografische bedrijvigheid*, p. 240. When the STCV will be completed, it will be possible to make more precise calculations for the seventeenth century and a thorough comparison between the Northern and the Southern Netherlands.



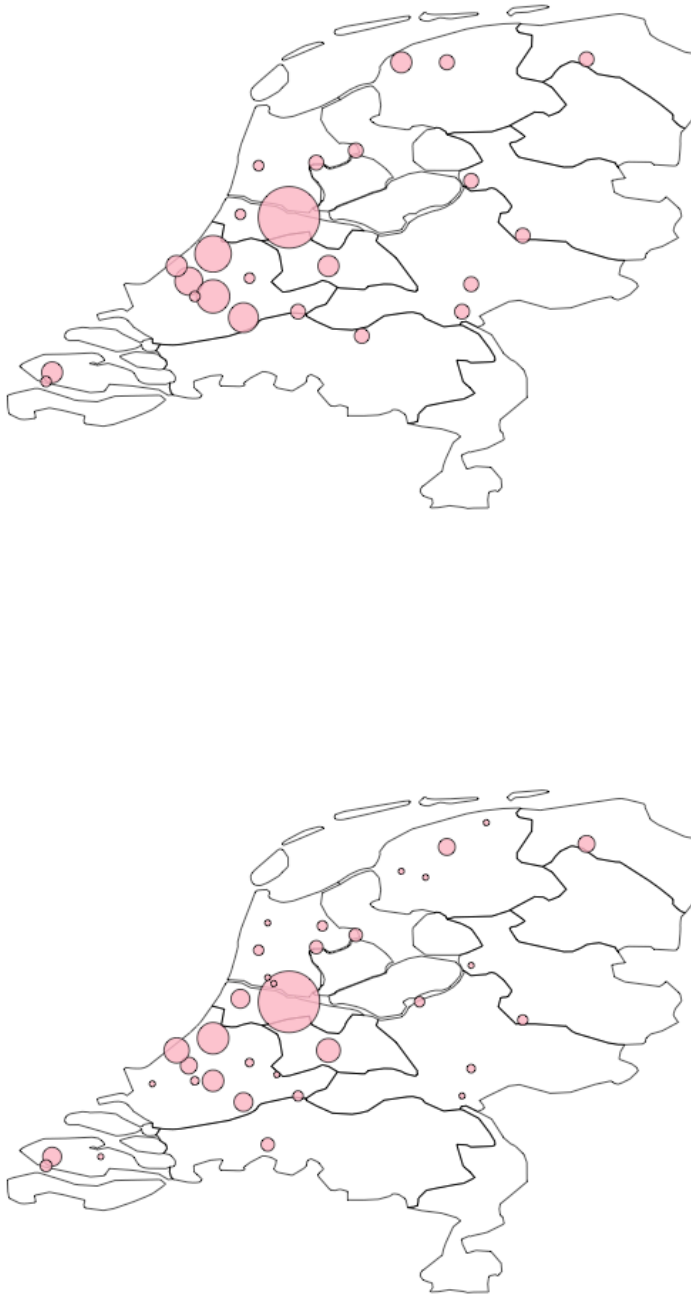
Even when a distinction is made between production and distribution, the position of Amsterdam does not come close to that of its foreign counterparts. In this exercise, all publishers are assumed to be booksellers and therefore their number can serve as a proxy for distribution, whereas title count is a proxy for production. Although the relative importance of Amsterdam increases when we consider title production instead of the number of booksellers, production was still relatively dispersed. Over time, production became increasingly concentrated in Amsterdam, and the differences between production and distribution increased. A second distinction is made between ephemeral prints and books by counting the categories of period documents, state publications, academic texts, and occasional publications as examples of the former.

Table 4.1 Distribution of booksellers, titles, and non-ephemeral titles

1610-1619	Total booksellers**	Total titles	Non- eph.	% Publishers	% Titles	% Non- eph.
Amsterdam	45	956	674	31.3	21.9	32.0
Leiden	20	712	442*	13.9	16.3	21.0
The Hague	4	321	58	2.8	7.4	2.8
Rotterdam	11	198	132	7.6	4.5	6.3
Utrecht	6	86	31	4.2	2.0	1.5
Haarlem	5	105	76	3.5	2.4	3.6
Delft	7	127	78	4.9	2.9	3.7
Dordrecht	8	117	71	5.6	2.7	3.4
Middelburg	4	112	64	2.8	2.6	3.0
Groningen	2	96	19*	1.4	2.2	0.9
Franeke	4	154	61*	2.8	3.5	2.9
Alkmaar	1	15	6	0.7	0.3	0.3
Zwolle	1	3	3	0.7	0.1	0.1
s.n., s.l.	x	836	211	-	19.2	10.0
Rest	24	518	179	13	11.9	8.5
Total	144	4,356	2,105	100	100	100
1650-1659	Total booksellers**	Total titles	Non- eph.	% Publishers	% Titles	% Non- eph.
Amsterdam	116	2,219	1,950	35	28	51.0
Leiden	33	1,240	520*	10	16	13.6
The Hague	19	741	216	6	9	5.7
Rotterdam	17	251	145	5	3	3.8
Utrecht	21	671	235*	6	9	6.1
Haarlem	10	93	61	3	1	1.6
Delft	10	79	45	3	1	1.2
Dordrecht	14	194	150	4	2	3.9
Middelburg	11	123	49	3	2	1.3
Groningen	8	295	99*	2	4	2.6
Franeke	3	141	86*	1	2	2.2
Alkmaar	4	28	22	1	0	0.6
Zwolle	1	7	2	0	0	0.1
s.n., s.l.	x	1,133	236	-	15	6.2
Rest	73	532	124	20	8	3.2
Total	332	7,747	3,823	100	100	100

Source: STCN, Thesaurus. \* excluding academic texts; \*\* average number of booksellers per year in decade.

Figure 4.2 Distribution of publishers in 1610 (above) and 1650 (below)



Source: Thesaurus.

*Distribution networks*

Michael Montias has stated that 'the scope of the printing, binding, and book distribution business clearly transcended the boundaries of individual cities.'<sup>6</sup> Production was relatively well dispersed, but connections between colleagues/competitors from different towns were prolific. Catalogues and newspaper advertisements provided a device to inform booksellers and customers in other areas of the country about the books on offer. In the newspaper published by Amsterdam-based Jan van Hilten, colleagues from Delft, Den Haag, Utrecht, Haarlem, Leeuwarden, Leiden, Middelburg, Dordrecht and Arnhem advertised their work. Eventually, the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* became the most significant place for advertisements. A survey of 887 advertisements for new books and 431 advertisements for book auctions, published in this newspaper between 1658 and 1675, shows that half of the total advertisements related to the book trade and 15 per cent book trade advertisements related specifically to book auctions. It is also evident how specialised Leiden's booksellers had become. Leiden's printers only make up six per cent of the advertisements for new books, and 26 per cent for book auctions.<sup>7</sup>

Another method of exchanging information between booksellers was through the *Catalogus Universalis*. The *Catalogus Universalis*, essentially a publishers' bi-annual (later annual) compiled by Amsterdam publisher Broer Jans, was first published in 1639 under the subtitle: 'Account of the majority of new, improved, or augmented books printed and published in the Dutch Republic'.<sup>8</sup> The purpose of the *Catalogus Universalis* was to present a list of all new titles published in the Dutch Republic. In gathering his records, Broer Jansz was dependent on the publishers themselves to supply him with the correct information. Although the *Catalogus Universalis* is not absolute, it does provide a relatively good representation of what was published throughout the Republic.<sup>9</sup> Through the annual we encounter works originating from 41 towns, 32 of which were located in the Dutch Republic. Of the 243 named printers and booksellers based in the Republic, 47 per cent (115) were located in Amsterdam, 10 per cent in Leiden (25), and circa 5 per cent in Utrecht (11), Dordrecht (14), and The Hague (9) respectively.

Another example that shows the widespread dispersal of book production concerns one artefact in particular: the almanac. Compared to the Southern Netherlands in the period of 1476-1570, production of almanacs was relatively

<sup>6</sup> Montias, *Artists and artisans*, p. 278 mentioned as buyers at an auction of copper plates in Delft: Johannes Janssonius and Broer Jansz from Amsterdam, Jan van Waesbergen from Rotterdam, and Hendrik Hondius from The Hague.

<sup>7</sup> Cruz, 'Secrets of success', p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> De Kooker, *Catalogus universalis*; See also: Gruys and Bos, *t'Gulde iaer 1650*.

<sup>9</sup> *Een Vertoogh van de meeste Boecken in dese Vereenighde Nederlanden, ofte gantsch nieuw, ofte verbeterd ende vermeerdert, ghedruckt ende uytgegeven zijn*. Of the 2,400 titles in the catalogues between 1640 and 1652, 48 per cent was in Dutch, 44 in Latin, 4 in French and the rest in German, Italian and Spanish.

dispersed through the Dutch Republic.<sup>10</sup> Although in other countries the production and selling of almanacs was not limited to just one centre, nowhere was it as decentralised as in the Dutch Republic.<sup>11</sup> Jeroen Salman's list of booksellers involved in the production or sale of almanacs between 1570 and 1705 contains 262 names (including widows), of which around one third was based in Amsterdam, eight per cent in Utrecht, and seven per cent in Rotterdam, Leeuwarden and The Hague, respectively.<sup>12</sup> Of the Amsterdam-based almanac producers, 40 can be considered specialists, involved in the process for ten years or more.<sup>13</sup> Almanac production took place in at least 8 towns between 1570 and 1600, and eleven towns between 1620 and 1650. Selling was even more dispersed.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, during the growth phase of Dutch book production, relations between towns intensified. Fragmented evidence from the STCN in the form of lists of debtors, collaborations and data indicate many intertwined connections between booksellers in different towns. For example, Broer Jansz in Amsterdam, one of the most important almanac publishers, had a network of nineteen booksellers in Amsterdam, three in The Hague, one in Leiden, and one in Haarlem. The geographic network of his successors, Gillis Joosten Saeghman and Jan Jacobsz Bouman, was much more extensive, as it included not just three, but as many as eleven towns.<sup>15</sup> In 1605, Adriaen de Voghel of Rotterdam already had a network of at least 20 different printers and booksellers across ten different towns. The creditors' list for Amsterdam bookseller Hendrick Aelbertsz, drawn up on his death in 1674, held 72 names. Of these names, at least 21 were booksellers or printers, and the debtors came from 23 different towns.<sup>16</sup> On the list of debtors of Paulus van Ravesteyn, one of the most important printers of his time, we find several Hague-based booksellers from.<sup>17</sup>

Booksellers in peripheral towns like Leeuwarden and Groningen often functioned as distributors. Leeuwarden bookseller Tjerck Claesz received many books and pamphlets, especially from Amsterdam, on a regular and rapid basis.<sup>18</sup> Another example of such distribution can be found in Groningen where local booksellers complained about the local '*bode*', who sold books and maps that arrived from Amsterdam directly to customers.<sup>19</sup> The importance of this distribution is recounted in a letter addressed to the famous Dutch lawyer Hugo Grotius, from his wife Maria van Reigersberch, dated 12 August 1624. In this letter she directly states

<sup>10</sup> Salman, *Populair drukwerk*, pp. 387-424, appendix 3.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 352-353.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 387-424, appendix 3. Salman does not distinguish between printed, published or sold almanacs.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 228.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 350-351.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 231.

<sup>16</sup> Harline, *Pamphlets, printing, and political culture*, p. 83.

<sup>17</sup> Kleerkooper and Van Stockum, *Boekhandel te Amsterdam*, vol. I, p. 601.

<sup>18</sup> Borst, 'Van Hilten, Broers en Claesse'.

<sup>19</sup> Van der Laan, *Het Groninger boekbedrijf*.

that successful book production was all about the distribution. She had discussed publishing her husband's *De jure belli ac pacis*, using her own imprint, with the Leiden orientalist Thomas Erpenius, who had set up a printing press in his home.<sup>20</sup> Erpenius told her that profits could potentially be made, but also tempered her enthusiasm by pointing out that distribution could become a bottleneck, as persuading booksellers to sell the work may be difficult.<sup>21</sup>

The geographic dispersal of production and the advanced opportunities for book distribution should be viewed within the framework of the country's urban structure.<sup>22</sup> The Dutch Republic had the highest urbanisation rates in Europe. By 1525, Holland already had a remarkable 45 per cent urbanisation rate. By 1650 this was even higher, at around 60 per cent.<sup>23</sup> In other provinces of the Dutch Republic, the rate lingered at circa 25 per cent. In general, Dutch towns were not very large, Amsterdam being the exception with 200,000 inhabitants around the middle of the seventeenth century, but they were diverse. As the Dutch Republic was fairly small, this resulted in a high population density, even in rural areas. One was never far from the next town and the urban network only became further integrated through the seventeenth century due to innovations in the transport system.<sup>24</sup>

Jan de Vries has demonstrated that the barge network was a considerable feature of the Dutch economy as it led to a significant decrease in costs compared to the existing alternative mode of transportation, the horse-drawn coach.<sup>25</sup> Stagecoaches were much more expensive, less comfortable, and their schedules were more difficult to maintain. Between 1632 and 1667 a system of passenger transportation by horse-towed barges (*trekschuiten*) was developed along a network of canals. Regular passenger services were maintained on routes in Holland, and later in Friesland and Groningen. By the middle of the century there were four networks that were not yet fully integrated, but between 1656 and 1665 these merged into two systems, Holland-Utrecht and Groningen-Friesland, connecting 30 cities. They generally ran either hourly or at least nine times per day. One could travel from Rotterdam to Delft in one hour and 45 minutes and from Rotterdam to Leiden in three hours.

<sup>20</sup> Rogge, ed., *Brieven van en aan Maria van Reigersberch*, pp 93-95; Van Selm, 'De boekdistributie in de Republiek', p. 89.

<sup>21</sup> Rogge, ed., *Brieven van en aan Maria van Reigersberch*, pp 93-95. 'Ick hebbe met Erpenius ghesproecken raeckende het drucken van U.E. bouck; zooveel hebbe ick wel verstaen datter wel profijt meede te doen is het tselve tot onse kosten te laeten drucken, maer het komt altemael aen op het distribuweeren ende datter qualijck geldt ut de bouckverkoopers handen te crigen is.' The correspondence of Hugo Grotius can be found online: [http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/groo001brie02\\_01/](http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/groo001brie02_01/) (accessed 23-10-2011).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Mijnhardt, 'Urbanization' for a comparable argument on the role of the Dutch urban system in development of the European Enlightenment.

<sup>23</sup> De Vries and Van der Woude, *First modern economy*, pp. 57-71. They use 2,500 inhabitants as a threshold.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Verhoeven, *Anders reizen?*, pp. 317-323.

<sup>25</sup> De Vries, *Barges and capitalism*, pp. 187-201.

Due to high levels of urbanisation, the polycentric urban structure, and the well-developed transport options, the domestic market for books and the organisation of book production and distribution was well integrated. Even though production was concentrated in specific towns, in particular in the case of certain specializations, in terms of the sale of books the Dutch book sector was certainly polycentric. At the same time, specializations and geographic concentrations were persistent over time, with Amsterdam as a permanent magnet for publishers. Could there have been local self-reinforcing mechanisms? And how locally embedded were concentrated producers? After all, a cluster is not (only) about the number or density of producers, but more about the interrelations within the diamond model. In the following sections, possible sources of local embeddedness and openness will be discussed.

#### 4.3 Financial administration of book production and book trade

A potential source of local entrenchment was the financial administration of early modern book production. Between 1500 and 1800 the Dutch Republic was one of the first economies in Europe to boast large-scale public and private capital markets.<sup>26</sup> In the early modern economy not all transactions could be paid directly in cash and credit was crucial. The existence of an advanced credit market offered benefits for all early modern entrepreneurs, but was particularly important for book production. Wages and paper made up the bulk of production costs, and it could take years before print-runs sold out, if at all. It is worth noting that the weight of the investments did not so much reside in the printing presses, which went for circa *f* 250 new and circa *f* 150 second-hand and could easily last a career, but rather in the accumulation of type, the purchase of paper, and the build-up stock.<sup>27</sup> In other words, because up-front investments were high, sales were slow, and demand unpredictable publishers faced serious liquidity risks. In this section will be outlined how they tried to deal with this. Three factors in the financial structure stand out. Interest rates were relatively low, merchants became increasingly involved in large publishing projects, and booksellers themselves developed payment methods tailored to the specific needs of their trade.

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<sup>26</sup> Gelderblom and Jonker, 'Completing a financial revolution'. On medieval capital markets in Holland see: Zijlenderduijn, *Medieval Capital Markets*.

<sup>27</sup> Estimates on prices of presses from Janssen, *Zetten en drukken*, p. 78 and Dijstelberge, 'De Cost en de Baet', p. 222.

Throughout the seventeenth century there was significant growth and flexibility in the supply of capital throughout the Dutch Republic.<sup>28</sup> The surplus capital and the development of financial techniques allowed interest rates on IOU's to drop from 8 per cent in around 1600 to 4 per cent by 1650.<sup>29</sup> Fragmented evidence, as well as the sizable archive of merchant Joseph Deutz (1624-1684), indicates that interest rates indeed averaged-out at around five per cent.<sup>30</sup> The implications of this can be illustrated by a calculation Paul Dijstelberge has made in order to estimate the costs of producing a relatively large-sized and therefore relatively expensive book. If the printer would have borrowed the necessary 600 guilders for paper and wages, at an interest rate of 2.5 to 5 per cent, the loan would have only cost him about 25 guilders per year.<sup>31</sup> On returns of *f* 3,000, assuming a selling price per sheet of half a stuiver, this was very affordable.

Merchants financed book production by supplying paper, which was then paid for in instalments, at relatively low interest rates. No administrative records of booksellers from this period have survived, but fragmented evidence provides some indications as to the importance of paper dealers. Accounts showing the financial situations of booksellers, drawn up in the event of financial problems, deaths or otherwise, almost without exception show the involvement of paper dealers.<sup>32</sup> From circa 1630 onwards, paper merchants became increasingly involved in supplying the capital necessary to produce for export markets, most notably for English, Hebrew and Roman Catholic religious texts.<sup>33</sup>

At first, the financiers of export products had a personal interest in the books: English merchants and preachers financed English bibles, and Jewish merchants and rabbis financed Hebrew religious works. By the late 1630s – by no coincidence, the same decade in which the paper trade became fully established – Dutch (paper) merchants recognised the commercial opportunities and stepped in. From this point on they became increasingly involved in the production process of mass-export products such as bibles. These publications typically required very large investments. In 1644, Amsterdam printer Immanuel Benveniste set out to publish an edition of the Babylonian Talmud in quarto size, financed partly by Jewish bookseller David del Sotto and by Dutch paper merchant Gerrit Verduyn, an endeavour that was administered in contracts drawn up before a notary.<sup>34</sup> Well before Benveniste started printing, he had to acquire 5,000 pounds of Median type, 400 of another, as well as

<sup>28</sup> A discussion of credit instruments used in Amsterdam in the seventeenth century can be found in Spufford, 'Access to credit and capital', pp. 304-305.

<sup>29</sup> Gelderblom and Jonker, 'Completing a financial revolution', p. 663.

<sup>30</sup> Other examples include interest terms between widow Schippers and Joseph Athias. Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. IV, p. 106.

<sup>31</sup> Dijstelberge, 'De Cost en de Baet', pp. 222-223.

<sup>32</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 37-39, 62-73.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59-62.

<sup>34</sup> Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew typography*, vol. I, pp. 150-153.



many other types, for which he paid Amsterdam type-cutter Jacques Vallet *f* 5,000 – the equivalent of a well-established middle-class home.<sup>35</sup>

The second important group of financiers can be found in the ranks of the booksellers' themselves. Sometimes, large booksellers functioned as direct creditors to their smaller counterparts, though this seems to have been uncommon.<sup>36</sup> Pooling resources to finance projects was a more universal strategy. This could take the form of joint ventures, in which a book was co-financed and the rights and risks were shared, or in the form of agreements between publisher and booksellers to purchase a set number of copies against fixed prices.<sup>37</sup> Collaboration on specific occasions and the long-term collaboration in formal joint ventures, the latter of which only became widely used post circa 1660, will be discussed in the next chapter.

Financing production was one thing, but booksellers had another concern: distribution. To broaden the stock on offer, they also had to acquire books published by others. There were three forms of exchange: cash, credit, or barter. The common form of exchange was barter, or '*change*', a method in which books were traded sheet for sheet. When the relationship between the booksellers was unequal, smaller booksellers bought on credit and debts were settled once or twice a year.<sup>38</sup> As most print runs only sold out over a period of years, if at all, most of the capital remained in type, paper and books in storage, leaving booksellers struggling with cash flows. The only other way to broaden the stock of books on offer was through booksellers' auctions, a conduit that became increasingly important. Auctions were an effective way for those trying to move their stock to obtain cash, and they were a relatively cheap way for others to purchase books. Consider, for example, Broer Jansz' and Johannes Janssonius' requests to auction parts of their stock in order to pay off creditors.<sup>39</sup> In most towns it was only allowed to auction stock in the event of death, when abandoning the trade, or in the case of insolvency. With the expansion of the book trade and the increasing number of auctions following deaths of collectors and booksellers, favourable payment procedures were developed: the so-called 'booksellers' bonds' or IOU's.

In trade in general, IOU's had been in use since the fifteenth century, and from the 1540s they were also employed by Dutch merchants to lend or borrow

<sup>35</sup> Fuks-Mansfeld, 'Hebrew book trade', pp. 166-167.

<sup>36</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, p. 63.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 306-307.

<sup>38</sup> Many examples of this practice can be found in the letters in Sabbe, ed., *Briefwisseling*. In those cases in which the trading relations were unequal, cash was preferred. For instance, 28 May 1669 a letter from Verdussen to Utrecht bookseller Arnoldus van der Eijnden refers to Amsterdam bookseller Joachim van Metelen, who had to buy much in cash, as he printed very little making it hard to trade by barter (Letter XII, p. 17) 'oock meeste boecken die hij heeft moet hij selfs (meest)al in gelt coopen, also hij niet veel besonders gedrukt en heeft om boecken tegen te connen mangelen'. But sometimes the Verdussens were at the opposite side of the equation. In 1670 the Verdussens hoped to exchange sheet by sheet with Elzevier, even though Elzevier had requested Verdussens pay in cash (Letter LXXVII, p.118-119).

<sup>39</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 258-259.

money in instalments of up to twelve months.<sup>40</sup> The first suggestion of IOUs in the book trade is in 1610, at the auction of Cornelis Claesz' stock. The usual payment conditions of cash or of six weeks on security, set out by Chamber of Orphans, did not apply in this auction.<sup>41</sup> Instead, IOU's were introduced. Such booksellers' IOU's had a specific feature: they not only stipulated payment in instalments, but did so without charging interest.<sup>42</sup> The fact that this method allowed booksellers to buy books in bulk is demonstrated by a complaint filed by Willem Jansz Blaeu. According to the notarial source, he had heard rumours about changes in conditions of the Claesz' auctions and protested against this, stating that he would have purchased more expensive goods if he had known this beforehand.<sup>43</sup> Documents concerning the 1612 auction of bookseller Barent Adriaensz's stock discuss conditions in more detail. When the buyer made a purchase of less than f 100, payment was due within six weeks, if he spent more he had to sign an IOU to Adriaensz. In the case of purchases of more than f 200, a term of three months applied; f 100 was due at the end of each term, until the total sum was repaid. In later years similar conditions are encountered.<sup>44</sup>

During the growth phase, Dutch publishers became increasingly tied into merchant networks and credit networks. In most explanations of the growth of Dutch printing, the well-developed transportation and trade networks of Dutch merchants feature prominently.<sup>45</sup> The position of the Dutch Republic, in particular Amsterdam, as a centre of trade greatly facilitated the export of books produced in the Dutch Republic, especially with the increasing involvement of local paper merchants in financing mass-production for export. Dutch port towns came to function as stable markets in the distribution of books throughout Europe.<sup>46</sup> Although it is impossible to measure the volume of international commerce in books, fragmented data on the distribution of English bibles, Latin catholic works, Hebrew religious works, and later works by controversial French authors show that these mass products, whether produced inside or outside the Netherlands, followed common trade routes.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Gelderblom and Jonker, 'Completing a financial revolution', p. 647.

<sup>41</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, p. 256.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 256-257.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256.

<sup>44</sup> Conditions in: Van Eeghen, 'Het Amsterdamse Sint Lucasgilde', pp. 98-99, appendix II. A discussion in: Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 258-259.

<sup>45</sup> E.g. Hoftijzer, 'Metropolis'.

<sup>46</sup> Clemens, 'Trade in catholic books', p. 86; Important Antwerp printers as the Moretuses and Verdussens used Dutch harbours to distribute catholic books.

<sup>47</sup> See the contributions in: Berckvens-Stevelinck *et al.*, eds., *Le magasin de l'univers*.

#### 4.4 Guild regulations and the reproduction of skills and routines

Production systems that consist of numerous small and medium-sized firms need collective bodies to develop scale advantages. Such bodies can contribute to successful production through lobbying with governments, offering training programs, transferring information within the cluster, or organising fairs.<sup>48</sup> Guild regulations not only reveal the concerns of their members, but also shape the competitive context in which they operated. Guilds could influence the intensity of competition in several ways. First of all, they could limit the number of producers allowed in a local industry. Secondly, they could regulate entry through the level of the entry fees and the requirements for becoming a member. Finally, they could administer the reproduction of skills and routines through the system of apprenticeships.

Licensing acts were also a direct influence on the number of new industry entrants. The English 1662 Licensing Act restricted the number of printers, founders, and presses, as well as the location in which presses could operate.<sup>49</sup> Likewise, several edicts were issued that limited the number of master-printers in Paris. During the second half of the seventeenth century, the French book trade, especially in Paris, became characterised by large printing houses and an oligarchy of masters. As a result there were fewer shops, each with larger workforces.<sup>50</sup> In the Dutch Republic such entry barriers were notably absent. There were no limitations on the number of guild members, and entry seems to have been fairly easy, provided one could pay the membership fee. Entry fees ranged from *f* 4 to *f* 8, depending on the town and whether the applicant was a local or not. In Utrecht in 1599, the entry fee was *f* 5, which increased to *f* 6 in 1663.<sup>51</sup> In Haarlem it was *f* 6 guilders, *f* 3 for burghers' sons and, in Amsterdam, the fee was *f* 7.10 and *f* 4.10 respectively. These were modest sums for the time, or a week's work for a skilled labourer. Locals were favoured over foreigners, and in all towns except Utrecht, sons and sons-in-law of masters received discounts on their fee and sometimes in the duration of their apprenticeship.

The Amsterdam magistrate, as well as the guild itself, was relatively lenient towards the participation of minorities such as Jews and Catholics. Catholic booksellers experienced little hindrance from their religious conviction. All known Catholic book producers were included in the Amsterdam Guild of St. Luke and later in the booksellers' guild.<sup>52</sup> In terms of issuing privileges on conflicts, contracts, and

<sup>48</sup> Porter, *On competition*, pp. 258-259.

<sup>49</sup> Febvre and Martin, *The coming of the book*, pp. 245-246; Brewer, *Pleasures*, pp. 132-138; s.n., 'Act' online access at: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=47336>

<sup>50</sup> Febvre and Martin, *The coming of the book*, pp. 155-156; Darnton, *Great cat massacre*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>51</sup> Article 1, 1599 and article 1, 1663. Forrer, 'Drie ordonnanties', p. 98.

<sup>52</sup> Leuven, *De boekhandel te Amsterdam*, pp. 12-13.

requests, they were on a par with their protestant colleagues, although it should be noted that no Catholic book producer was elected as dean. In 1632 the town council amended the 1616 terms of admission for Jews as citizens, in which the economic activities of Jews became strictly regulated: they were not allowed to sell goods in official shops, or engage in trades and crafts which were organised in guilds. In 1640, Menassah ben Israel's request to open a Hebrew bookstore was refused.<sup>53</sup> Nonetheless, Jewish printer Joseph Athias entered the Guild of St. Luke on 24 March 1661, followed by other Jewish printers.<sup>54</sup> They could use the guild membership to request privileges, but they were not entitled to relief in the case of illness or death, nor would their memberships pass on to future generations.

On the one hand, the relative importance of booksellers in the guilds of St Luke seems to have increased as the book trade expanded. In the Amsterdam case, booksellers obtained the right to elect one of the deans in 1619, and, in 1633, they were able to elect a second (out of a total eight). On the other hand, their influence is not strongly reflected in guild regulation. In fact, very few guild ordinances explicitly deal with their activities. In Leiden, book production was not included in a guild at all. In The Hague, where booksellers were also members of the artists' guild, there was little explicit regulation concerning the book trade, nor, when compared to painters, a strict administration of the fees or apprentices of binders or printers.<sup>55</sup> As a result, printing in the largest book production town was largely unregulated until the middle of the century. As a result, it was relatively easy to become a master printer or bookseller in the Dutch Republic, especially in the larger centres of production and established shops encountered relatively up few regulations.<sup>56</sup> In most towns, aspiring booksellers had to meet certain requirements before they could enter the local book trade, but that in general, these requirements were fairly relaxed. As a result, formal entry restrictions were relatively low and scarcely constrained competition.

### *The reproduction of skills and routines*

Cornelis Claesz, at times referred to as an institution of higher learning in his own right, trained at least seven apprentices, all of whom stayed in Amsterdam and became important members of the local publishing sector.<sup>57</sup> But Claesz was not a printer. He had made use of local printers as well as printers in other towns. After the influx of foreign expertise slowed down, it took the new generation of Dutch

<sup>53</sup> Fuks-Mansfeld, 'Hebrew book trade', pp. 162-163.

<sup>54</sup> Van Eeghen, *Gilden*, pp. 111-112. Similar exceptions to the overall regulation were made in the case of surgeons and brokers.

<sup>55</sup> Keblusek, *Boeken in de hofstad*, pp. 104-111.

<sup>56</sup> Cruz, *Paradox of prosperity*, p. 49.

<sup>57</sup> Prosopography, see Chapter 1.

printers some time to develop the necessary skills and start their own firms. Important printers, such as Blaeu, van Ravesteyn, and also the Elzeviers, only became active in the 1610s. Fifty years later, the number of Dutch printing firms had increased significantly, and Dutch printing in general had acquired world fame. By 1664 Von Zesen counted 40 large and small print shops in Amsterdam alone, and these included the best in the country.<sup>58</sup> Apparently skills were successfully reproduced on a local level. This begs the question, how was the generation and transfer of skills in publishing and printing organised?

In early modern Europe, an apprenticeship was one of the most important means of acquiring occupational training.<sup>59</sup> It could take place at home, as well as in the shop of an established craftsman, on the basis of an oral or written contract between a master and the family of the apprentice. Such a contract generally stipulated details on the term, the payment, consequences of contractual breaches, but sometimes also on boarding, lodging, clothing and leisure. In addition to these private arrangements, local institutions, such as guilds, could oversee the training process. In the Republic, apprenticeships were generally administered within the framework of the local guild, though it should be noted that not all crafts were organised in guilds and not all guilds regulated apprenticeships.<sup>60</sup> On the whole, Dutch guild regulations concerning apprenticeships focused on four areas: registration, fees, duration, and the number of apprentices.<sup>61</sup> They hardly ever defined the contents of the training.

The role of the guild in the transfer of knowledge and skills has been subject to debate.<sup>62</sup> According to Epstein, the guild's involvement served as a guarantee to recoup investments. Both on the side of the master craftsman and the apprentice, the expectation that they could reclaim their investments had to exist. For the master, the length of the apprenticeship ensured this. On the other hand, critics of guilds, who generally view guild-regulated apprenticeships as an entry barrier, have argued that the fee paid by the newcomer was to ensure him a share of the guild's rent. Similarly, the duration of apprenticeships and the use of masterpieces, as well as the level of entry fees, have been interpreted as an instrument to control both the labour and product markets. Epstein has stated that masterpieces were the exception rather than the rule in craft guilds in Europe, but they were fairly common in Dutch book

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<sup>58</sup> Von Zesen, *Beschreibung der Stadt Amsterdam*, pp. 370-371.

<sup>59</sup> On apprenticeship see De Munck, *Technologies of learning*; De Munck, Kaplan, and Soly, eds., *Learning on the shop floor*.

<sup>60</sup> Davids, 'Apprenticeship and guild control', pp. 69-70.

<sup>61</sup> De Munck, Kaplan, and Soly, eds., *Learning on the shop floor*, p. 67; Van Eeghen, *Gilden*, p. 24.

<sup>62</sup> On the debate on the role of the guild in the creation and reproduction of skills in the early modern period: Epstein, 'Craft guilds in the pre-modern economy: a discussion'; Epstein, 'Craft guilds, apprenticeship, and technological change in preindustrial Europe'; Ogilvie, 'Can we rehabilitate the guilds? A skeptical re-appraisal'; Ogilvie, 'Rehabilitating the guilds'.

production.<sup>63</sup> Only Leiden and Amsterdam did not require journeymen to produce masterpieces before entering the ranks of masters. In other towns, such as Middelburg, Haarlem, Utrecht and The Hague, both binders and printers had to deliver masterpieces before they could enter the guild as masters.

Unfortunately there are no studies on apprenticeships or on the role of guilds in the training of publishers, printers and booksellers. Since there is no evidence to suggest the use of manuals during this period, it is safe to say that the transfer of bookselling, binding, and printing skills and knowledge took place face to face, on the shop floor.<sup>64</sup> The paper trail is thin, but two types of sources – guild ordinances, and notarial contracts – provide some insight into the process of training.

As was the case in most Dutch craft guilds, none of the booksellers' ordinances referred to the content of training.<sup>65</sup> Clearly training was largely a private matter, of which only the basic administrative framework was provided by the guild. Indications of what printers learnt during apprenticeships in contracts can be found in notarial archives. Most importantly, they show that the terms set by the guild could be customised. The contract between a carpenter's widow and the Amsterdam printer Riewert Dircksz van Baart stipulated that her 13-year old son should learn to set type and print in several languages. The apprenticeship period was to last five years, fourteen hours a day, and in the first year his wage was 8 stuivers, in the second year 12, in the third 18, in the fourth 30, and by the final year he was to earn 40 stuivers per week (without room and board).<sup>66</sup> Five years later, in 1649, a boy took an apprenticeship with printer Christoffel Coenradus for six years to learn typesetting, with room and board.<sup>67</sup> The same printer also had an apprentice for four years, without room and board, for 6 stuivers in the first year, 10 in the second, 15 in the third, and 20 in the final year.<sup>68</sup> Despite the setting of general rules in guild ordinances, flexible interpretations were possible in private arrangements.

One important group has not yet been discussed: the journeymen.<sup>69</sup> It is important to note that, by and large, masters were training future journeymen rather than direct competitors; many apprentices never became masters. Unfortunately we have very little information on this aspect of early modern Dutch book production. One exception is the contract signed by Amsterdam printer Joseph Athias in 1674.<sup>70</sup> Six journeymen were hired to print English bibles. They were required to work five

<sup>63</sup> Epstein, *Wage labor and guilds*, p. 125.

<sup>64</sup> Dirk de Bray (c.1635-1694), son of the Haarlem painter Salomon de Bray, offers the only account on bookbinding before the eighteenth century, but there are no signs that this quasi-manual was widely used. De Bray, *Kort onderweijns*. A later manual is: David Wardenaar's, discussed in: Janssen, *Zetten en drukken*.

<sup>65</sup> For more details see: Forrer, 'Drie ordonnanties'.

<sup>66</sup> Van Dillen, *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis*, n. 769.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., n. 1040; *ibid.*, n. 1134.

<sup>68</sup> See also: SA, Notarieel Archief, inv. 2044, f. 104; SA, Notarieel Archief, inv. 2045, f. 132.

<sup>69</sup> On journeymen in book production: Febvre and Martin, *The coming of the book*, pp. 129-136.

<sup>70</sup> Mentioned in Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. IV, p. 122.

days a week, were paid per ream of paper, were not allowed to work for others and, if they did not deliver, Athias could only fire them after consulting the foreman or the oldest of the journeymen. The absence of traces of journeymen printers and compositors in the archives is all the more unfortunate because the way they were employed may have been crucial to the competitive position of the Dutch Republic in the export of books. As with most cultural industries, demand was unstable and supply was often project-based. These characteristics called for a flexible supply of labour. It has been suggested that Dutch printers could keep the prices of mass-export products, such as bibles, low by using a flexible labour strategy.<sup>71</sup> Possibly, the practice of hiring journeymen on a project-by-project basis was indeed introduced relatively early in the Dutch Republic, but not enough sources are available to make this claim.<sup>72</sup>

The exact structure of training and the way flexible labour was implemented in the Dutch book trade remains a mystery. The few things we do know are that training was organised through the apprenticeship framework and that basic apprenticeship terms were laid down in local guild ordinances and in private contracts. However, the fact that an increasing share of active producers in Amsterdam were also born there, suggests that they were trained locally, and that skills and routines were reproduced locally. The size and quality of the local labour force can be ensured or improved in two ways: by immigration (exogenous) or by reproducing skills locally (endogenous). Clearly, the expansion in book production through the start-up phase had relied on the former. In the growth phase, an increasing percentage of printers and publishers were born and trained within the Dutch Republic.

In 1600 the share of Amsterdam-born producers was 11 per cent, in 1630 it had increased to 40 per cent, and by 1674 it had reached 55 per cent.<sup>73</sup> In fact, by 1674 hardly any of Amsterdam's producers were born in other countries. Initially, this may seem in conflict with Van Zanden's estimate that about half the bookbinders and printers found in marriage banns between 1601 and 1700 were immigrants.<sup>74</sup> Erika Kuijpers has estimated that among the bookbinders and printers in Lutheran membership registers between 1626 and 1640, 60 per cent were from outside the Republic and only 13 per cent from Amsterdam.<sup>75</sup> The difference between findings from the dataset and those from the marriage banns can probably be explained by

<sup>71</sup> Beijer, 'De crisisperiode in de Haagse boekhandel': 'met hun 'gasten ter drukkerije' werkend 'bij 't stuk' of hoogstens 'in daghuur'. Fevre and Martin, *The coming of the book*, pp. 135-136 on *alloués*, hirelings in the French book trade in the eighteenth century.

<sup>72</sup> Darnton, *Great cat massacre*, p. 80. The hiring of journeymen printers on a project-by-project basis only became common in France during the eighteenth century

<sup>73</sup> Prosopography, see Chapter 1.

<sup>74</sup> Van Zanden, *Arbeid tijdens het handelskapitalisme*, p. 8. Based on the data gathered in Hart, *Geschrift en getal*.

<sup>75</sup> Kuijpers, *Migrantenstad*, p. 418.

the fact that the prosopography does not include data on the total workforce, but only concerns independent printers and publishers. This suggests that the larger workforce, including binders and typesetters, still depended to a large extent on immigrants, but that further up the hierarchical ladder, the positions of publisher and printer were reproduced within the local production system.

#### 4.5 Auctions and the reproduction of local competitiveness

In addition to local apprenticeships and father-son relationships, routines could be reproduced through the products themselves. In auctions and acquisitions books and *privileges* were transferred from bookseller to bookseller. Books were durable goods and when booksellers died or quit their businesses, the books were put up for auction or businesses could be taken over by colleagues or competitors. This was most evident in Amsterdam, where hundreds of bookshops were located.

How the local organisation of distribution could play a role in the creation and reproduction of local competitiveness can be further illustrated by using the example of Leiden. The establishment of the university and the hands-on stance of the local government had triggered the development of a local book industry in Leiden, but soon Amsterdam took over the town's early lead. Nonetheless, Leiden booksellers managed to carve out a niche for themselves in regional and even international book markets, and sustain their competitive advantage. They did not primarily compete on the basis of production but on trade - more specifically, on second-hand trade. The Dutch, Leiden booksellers in particular, did not invent auctions, book auctions or auction catalogues, but they were the first to develop printed book-sale catalogues for the auction of second-hand books. According to Van Selm, the rise of the book auction catalogue was paramount for Leiden to become more than just another university printing centre.<sup>76</sup> The commercial development of specialised book auctions and book-auction catalogues can be viewed as micro-inventions by which Leiden's publishers managed to create entire new markets for books.<sup>77</sup> In fact, the specialised and commercialised book auctions became a key competitive advantage for Dutch booksellers, particularly for those in Leiden.

Why did its inception take place in Leiden? In Van Selm's view this can be explained by the fact that Leiden booksellers were not organised in a guild and that this provided an independence that allowed local entrepreneurs to develop second-hand book auctions. Even if they were not entirely free of regulations, Leiden

<sup>76</sup> Van Selm, *Menighte treffelijcke boecken*, chapter 1.

<sup>77</sup> Cruz, 'Secrets of success'.



booksellers were permitted to auction books themselves, unlike their counterparts in other towns, where town secretaries or others that were appointed top-down, administered the auctioning. This implies that in these towns, where booksellers were either included in the Guild of St Luke or in their own guild, the innovation could not have been surfaced.<sup>78</sup> However, Laura Cruz has argued the opposite. Even though there was no formal guild, she recognises the Leiden book trade as an organised industry, displaying many features of the guilds. The Leiden booksellers' organisation, whether officially structured in a guild or not, she argues, was crucial to the successful development of the book auction catalogue.<sup>79</sup> Local booksellers cooperated and defended collective rights through a protectionist policy to keep foreigners from auctioning books in their town.<sup>80</sup> For instance, the Leiden booksellers requested that the auctioning of books by outsiders be prohibited. Through this and other protectionist measures, the period in which monopoly gains would accrue to the innovators would be prolonged. Or in other words, the Leiden booksellers created a primary marketplace for second-hand books relatively early onwards and managed to sustain such dominance in this particular market segments.

Van Selm and Cruz agree that the commercialisation of the specialized book auctions in Leiden after 1610 provided a source of competitiveness for the local book industry in the decades to come, but they disagree on why this invention occurred when and where it did. The timing and location of the commercialisation of the second-hand market for books can be best understood in relation to the previous stage in the life cycle. The book trade in Amsterdam and The Hague was also relatively unregulated and it is no coincidence that eventually both towns would develop strong positions in the trade in second-hand books, albeit in a somewhat different way than Leiden. Van Selm's assertion about the importance of some degree of autonomy appears to hold true in that respect. Yet Leiden's fate was influenced by its unique, but also fairly limited source of competitiveness: the university. As in other university towns the type of demand preadapted booksellers in Leiden to dealing in second-hand books, but two distinct characteristics around 1610 made an early lead in this field possible. Firstly, competitive pressure, both internally and from the outside, had increased by the end of the phase of emergence, and secondly a 'critical mass' was in place that made the development of the auctions and the catalogues worthwhile. As will become clear in the following chapters, most towns would see a shift from a book production to bookselling as their local markets started to become mature and competitive pressure increased. This would be reflected in the trading infrastructure. Leiden, which had taken an early growth

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<sup>78</sup> Van Selm, *Menighte treffelijcke boecken*, chapter 1.

<sup>79</sup> Cruz, 'Secrets of success', pp. 1-3; Cruz, *Paradox of prosperity*.

<sup>80</sup> Cruz, 'Secrets of success', pp. 9-10.

spurt, simply reached this point earlier than other towns did, and managed to adapt by developing and protecting a unique resource. This strengthened geographic patterns and influenced trends of competitiveness over time.

#### 4.6 Censorship and privileges

Printing presses in the Dutch Republic enjoyed a large degree of freedom, compared with other countries. Preventive censorship (censorship before publication) was never successfully imposed and repressive censorship (censorship after publication) was difficult to enforce due to the highly localised nature of government structure in the Dutch Republic. Implementation of censorship proved to be a difficult issue for both secular and religious authorities. There is ample evidence of convictions not being followed through.<sup>81</sup> The magistrates, called upon to execute edicts and decrees, may often have had similar commercial interests as the booksellers.<sup>82</sup> Besides, booksellers clearly knew how to play the game. In 1642, 550 copies of the Socinian publication *De vera religio* by Johannes Volkelius and Johannes Crellius, published by Blaeu, were burned publicly in Amsterdam. A year later the publisher came with a new edition, advertising it with the words: 'Banned in Holland and burned by order of the magistrate'.<sup>83</sup> He was not prosecuted.

This does not mean that there was absolute freedom of press. From the late sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth, edicts were proclaimed and resolutions passed against seditious, scandalous, and libellous books.<sup>84</sup> Especially in turbulent years, such as the period 1618-1621, the States General took a tighter hold of censorship.<sup>85</sup> In all, the number of banned books was low.<sup>86</sup> Fines prescribed by the States General increased throughout the seventeenth century, but different towns employed different practices.<sup>87</sup> We know of some publishers who received harsh punishment, but they are the exception, rather than the rule.

In England, printing required an elaborate system of licensing: every prospective publication had to be licensed by the censor and then recorded in the registers of the local booksellers guild, the Stationers' Company.<sup>88</sup> It should be noted that there were limits to the enforcement of the acts and some scholars even stated that the Licensing Acts were largely ineffective and of little significance to the trade

<sup>81</sup> For example in Leiden: Cruz, *Paradox of prosperity*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>82</sup> Van Gelder, *Getemperde vrijheid*, pp. 165-166.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.. Original text: 'in Hollandt by schepenvonniss gedoemd en met vier verbrandt.'

<sup>84</sup> Weekhout, *Boekencensuur in de Noordelijke Nederlanden*; Groenveld, 'The Dutch Republic'; Groenveld, 'Mecca of authors?'; Van Gelder, *Getemperde vrijheid*.

<sup>85</sup> Van Gelder, *Getemperde vrijheid*, pp. 154-155; Groenveld, 'Mecca of authors?', p. 68.

<sup>86</sup> Weekhout, *Boekencensuur in de Noordelijke Nederlanden*, pp. 378-382.

<sup>87</sup> Groenveld, 'Mecca of authors?', p. 78.

<sup>88</sup> The Stationers' Company of London was the local booksellers' guild.

as a whole.<sup>89</sup> Nonetheless, many printers and booksellers were harassed, fined and imprisoned for misdemeanours under such acts.<sup>90</sup> This increased entry barriers. Increases in both title production and the number of printers during periods of lessened censorship suggest that the threat of censorship alone influenced the behaviour of possible entrants and existing booksellers. After the abolishment of the act in 1695, neither the English government nor the Stationers Company were able to limit the number of printers and presses, and the number of print shops increased rapidly, both within and outside London. In 1695 there were 45 print shops in London; ten years later there were 70. Furthermore, provincial printing immediately began to flourish and the book trade became less concentrated in London.<sup>91</sup>

Moreover, privileges on almanacs, bibles, church and schoolbooks, arguably the most lucrative works, were in the hands of the English Stock, a collaboration of the wealthiest and most powerful printers of the Stationers' Company.<sup>92</sup> This monopoly heightened entry barriers, and it also kept both production costs and prices high, making it difficult to compete with printers on the Continent.<sup>93</sup> In France, the Parisian book guild had exclusive rights to produce legal prints through royal privileges.<sup>94</sup> Every published book had to be licensed before publication. At first, censors were theologians at the Sorbonne, later secular officials took on the role, and around the middle of the seventeenth century a national 'Administration of the book trade' was organised to regulate censorship and privileges throughout France. In the Southern Netherlands, the government also made ample use of privileges. The major monopoly involved the production of liturgical works, which was granted to the *Officina Plantiniana*. But the second-largest firm, Verdussen, acquired monopolies on Mint ordinances, liturgical works for various religious orders, schoolbooks and the official catechism.<sup>95</sup>

In the Dutch Republic, censorship was less forceful, but also the issuing of privileges was also much less related to issues of censorship. Notably, they were not monopolies in the true sense of the word. Government bodies such as the States

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<sup>89</sup> Summary in: Treadwell, 'Stationers and the printing acts'.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Ibid..

<sup>91</sup> Robertson, *Censorship*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>92</sup> In the seventeenth century 'there were essentially four such patent monopoly printing rights or privileges extant: (1) those for Acts of Parliament, statutes, proclamations, the Bible in English, and English service books, all held by the King's Printers, Christopher Barker III and John Bill II; (2) those for the Latin Bible, and all Latin and Greek grammars (including the ever-popular Lilly's grammar), held by the King's Printer for Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, Roger Norton; (3) those for all books concerning the common law, and Rastell's and Poulton's *Abridgements* of the statutes, held by Richard Atkyns; and (4) those for all primers, psalters, Psalms in metre or prose, all almanacs and prognostications, and a number of classical Latin texts widely used in schools, which were held by the Stationers' Company by means of an inner joint-stock of 115 of its most-favoured members (or their widows) dominated by the Company's Court.' Treadwell, 'Stationers and the printing acts', p. 769.

<sup>93</sup> Hoftijzer, *Engelse boekverkopers*, p. 4.

<sup>94</sup> On the French book trade: Martin, *Print, power, and people in 17th-century France*.

<sup>95</sup> Van Rossem, 'Bookshop of the Counter-Reformation revisited', pp. 307-308; Voet, *Golden Compasses*, vol. I, p. 65; Van Rossem, 'Drukkersbelangen'.

General and the States of Holland could grant printers or publishers a monopoly over reprints, referred to as a *privilege*, for a specified period of time.<sup>96</sup> Obtaining a privilege was not considered a special favour, and it did not imply the approval of contents. Although privileges gained some importance during the seventeenth century, they were still not used on a large scale. Perhaps one per cent of all books were published by means of a privilege.<sup>97</sup> The fact that most books were not protected by privileges can be explained by various factors: the lack of a direct need for a privilege, the costs and time-consuming procedure to obtain one, and the potential problems enforcing it. The costs of privileges were relatively high, around f 50 and sometimes even high as f 600, and the process of acquiring them was lengthy.<sup>98</sup> As a result, privileges were usually only requested for books that required significant investments, for steady sellers that could ensure the livelihood of publishers, or for recurring annual publications such as almanacs. Most were temporary monopolies concerning a single work.<sup>99</sup>

In the early seventeenth century, no standardised legislation on the procedures and criteria required to obtain privileges existed. The fines for infringements and the duration of privileges could vary and they could be obtained from both the provincial States and the States General. Although there were many disagreements between booksellers, only few were brought to court.<sup>100</sup> Some large conflicts resulted in the standardisation of practice, the most notable one being the 1630s court case on one the largest printing endeavours in the seventeenth century, the famous *Statenbijbel*.<sup>101</sup> This drawn-out conflict resulted in the devaluation of privileges by the States General, which is clearly evident by the scarcity of privileges issued by them in the eighteenth century. Instead, the States of Holland, the province where most printing presses were located, became the common issuer of privileges. Durations and fines became more uniform: generally fifteen years with a fine on infringements set at f 300. Privileges on certain profitable and widely popular genres, such as schoolbooks, were disqualified.<sup>102</sup> Exactly those types of books that were granted monopolies in other countries were subjected to open market.

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<sup>96</sup> On privileges: Hoftijzer, 'Nederlandse boekverkopersprivileges'; Hoftijzer, 'Nederlandse boekverkopersprivileges in de achttiende eeuw'; Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 193-236.

<sup>97</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, p. 93.

<sup>98</sup> Hoftijzer, 'Nederlandse boekverkopersprivileges in de achttiende eeuw', p. 58. Louis Elzevier II paid f 600 for a privilege for a special edition of the bible.

<sup>99</sup> Hoftijzer, 'Nederlandse boekverkopersprivileges in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw'; Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 196-201; Willem Jansz Blaeu's general privilege by States of Holland in 1608, was an exception: 'alle sijne eygen werken soo dien hij van nieuws geinventeert heeft, als degeene dien hij nogh inventeren sal'.

<sup>100</sup> An exceptional case was the conflict between Pieter van Waesberghe and Johannes Naeranus. Van Mameren, 'De Gazophylace'; Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 230-236.

<sup>101</sup> Van Selm, 'De Statenbijbel en de drukkers'; Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 197-200.

<sup>102</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 225-229.

In the Dutch Republic, lucrative areas of production were not generally monopolised, but if required, a publication could be protected by a privilege. Moreover, compared to other countries, it was possible to print almost anything in the Republic, providing Dutch booksellers with a well-known comparative advantage. The relative freedom of press attracted scholars, authors and dissident printers, whilst also opening up export markets. But there was more. Low-level protection for intellectual rights can discourage creative work, but overly strong protection brings its own share of negative effects. A heavily guarded market structure may increase restrictions at entry level and encourage rent-seeking behaviour, resulting in decreased investments in innovation. In cultural industries, patents do not generally play an important role. As the products are primarily artistic or literary expressions, rather than technological inventions, the common protection mechanisms for creativity in these sectors are copyrights.<sup>103</sup> In the early modern period, the issue of monopolies on books had more to do, in general, with censorship practices than with copyright. In many countries, the granting of certain privileges provided governments with a device to control publications. Such exclusive rights on all lucrative works could, in theory, create considerable entry restrictions and limit the intensity of industrial competition. The fact that the Dutch book trade in general was relatively free, and that locally imposed regulations could often be circumvented by moving actual copies or the intended publication to a different town, added to a relatively open publishing infrastructure.

#### 4.7 Local competition

Firstly, political and religious diversity, relative freedom of thought and press, as well as open and diverse information flows, were factors that stimulated the volume and variety of texts. Lesger has already explained how Amsterdam could develop into a centre of information, not least due to a relatively free flow of information.<sup>104</sup> No group of people or firms had a monopoly on information, which encouraged the exchange and diffusion of information. Merchants also endorsed the establishment of institutions that promoted the open flow of information, such as price currents and newspapers. By 1650 the Republic counted not just one, but as many as ten newspapers and there was not just the one university, but five (not counting the *Athenaeums*). All in all, the flow of information was free and abundant, boosted by an open infrastructure. Now all that was needed was a group of entrepreneurs ready to

<sup>103</sup> This is even considered one of main features of creative industries.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Lesger, 'The printing press'.

exploit these features as commercial opportunities. In the previous chapter the qualitative improvements in Dutch book production have been interpreted as strategic responses to limitations on the demand side. Intensification of competition stimulated publishers to act quickly, provide up-to-date information, and to differentiate products through typographical changes and improvements.<sup>105</sup> This happened especially after the 1610s, when increasing competitive pressures forced Dutch publishers to capitalise on the variety and volume of potential copy.

New and successful concepts were immediately copied by others, which drove innovation, improved quality, and increased the scale of production. After Blaeu had introduced the first large panorama in Dutch books, Visscher issued his in 1611 and Pieter van den Keere followed suit in 1613-1614. Janssonius immediately copied Blaeu's illustrated pocket-sized books in duodecimo oblong. In 1615, Blaeu had published all of Heinsius' emblems, including some poems in a smaller format, for which the Van der Passes had adapted the plates to scale. When, in 1617, the latter decided to publish a similar work in the same size and format, Blaeu reacted. Within a year, he published two books in the same format, with new plates by Michel Le Blon. In that same year, the Van der Passe firm published an adapted and expanded version of *Tronus Cupidinis*, increasing the number of emblems from 31 to 80.<sup>106</sup> Likewise, the scale, scope, and quality of illustrations in other genres also rapidly evolved through competition. In the case of maps and globes, continuous improvements were made, not in the least driven by the rivalry between the Blaeu firm and the Janssonius-Hondius tandem.<sup>107</sup> Can this interpretation of the importance of openness and competition be quantitatively supported? How competitive was the Amsterdam book trade and did distinct changes take place?

#### *Growth rates and the threat of new entrants*

The ratio between experienced firms and new firms, or incumbents and newcomers, also shifted during this period. The threat of new entrants refers to the threat posed by new competitors to incumbents. On entering a market, new competitors may challenge market shares and profitability if consumer demand does not increase concomitantly. Figure 4.3 presents the number of newcomers as well as the entry, exit, and turbulence rates. The number of newcomers in Amsterdam was relatively stable, with only a handful a year between circa 1610 and circa 1640. Hereafter, the trend intensifies. The rapid increase in the number of publishers in the 1640s can be partly explained by a large number of one-year hits. But even when this category is entirely omitted from the dataset, the number of entrants doubled. To interpret the

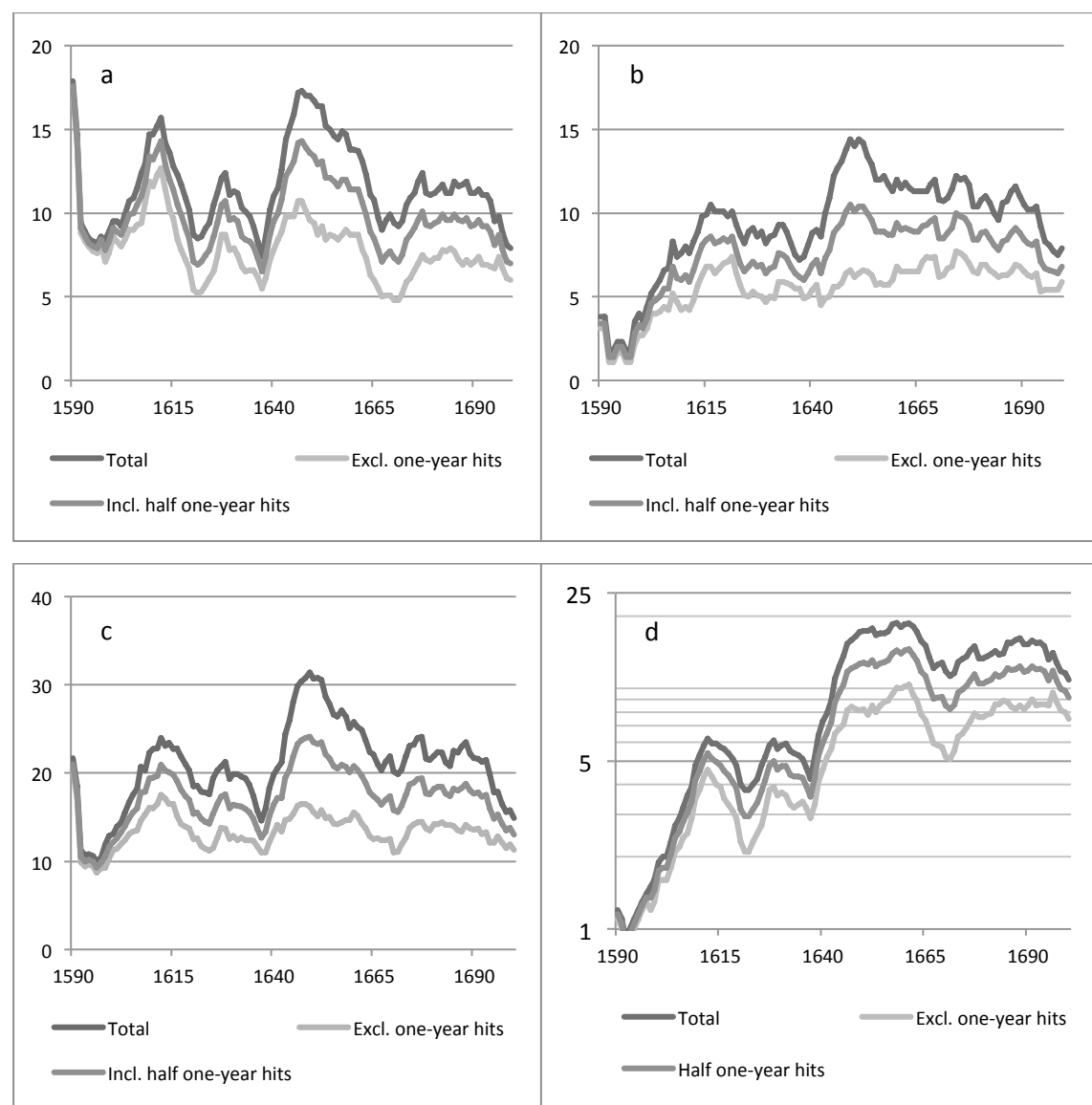
<sup>105</sup> Part of this argument has been published in: Rasterhoff, 'Carrière en concurrentie'.

<sup>106</sup> Porteman and Smits-Veldt, *Nieuw vaderland*, pp. 200-201.

<sup>107</sup> Compare the argument made in Lesger, 'The printing press', pp. 5-6.

impact of the number of newcomers, the size of the industry needs to be taken into account. Here the measure of entry rates can be applied: the share of newcomers in a certain year divided by the total number of active firms. The exit rate is the share of firms that ceased production in a given period, divided by the total number of firms active in that period. The turbulence rate is the sum of entry and exit rates.

Figure 4.3 Entry rates (a), exit rates (b), turbulence rates (c), and the number of newcomers on a semi-log scale (d) per year in Amsterdam, 10-year moving average, 1580-1700

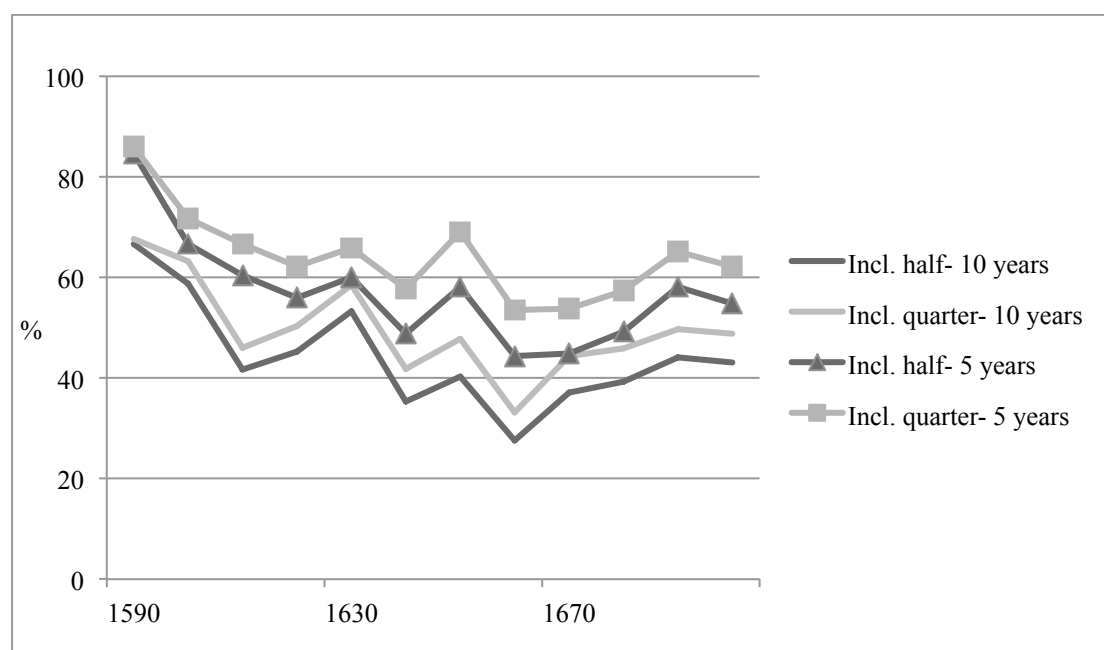


Source: Thesaurus

Empirical studies in economics have shown that entry and exit rates can differ significantly across industries, but also change during the course industrial life cycles.<sup>108</sup> In general, an attractive industry is characterised not only by high entry rates, but also by high exit rates and thereby a relatively high turbulence rate. Waves of new entrants – either bringing innovative and more competitive products to the market, or simply trying their luck – lead to large waves of exits, mainly of competitors whose abilities lie at the fringe of their industry. Higher levels of entry and exit rates tend to occur in emerging or growing industries, or in industries under rapid structural change.

Figure 4.4 presents the probability of new firms, starting in specific decades, surviving for more than five or ten years. Until circa 1660, survival chances declined significantly. Because these survival rates are strongly influenced by the occurrence of firms that fail in their first year, the survival chances of new firms starting by decade were estimated in five ways: including all one-year hits, including half, including a quarter, excluding them all, and excluding all firms that did not make it past four years. In all measures the decline was clearly discernible, which means that the impact of competition not only affected possible fortune-seekers, attracted by a booming industry. Publishers who managed to establish a company also found it more difficult to build a career.

Figure 4.4 Five and ten year survival chances of new Amsterdam-based firms in their commencement decade, 1590-1700



Source: STCN, Thesaurus.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. Geroski, 'Innovation'.



*Firm size*

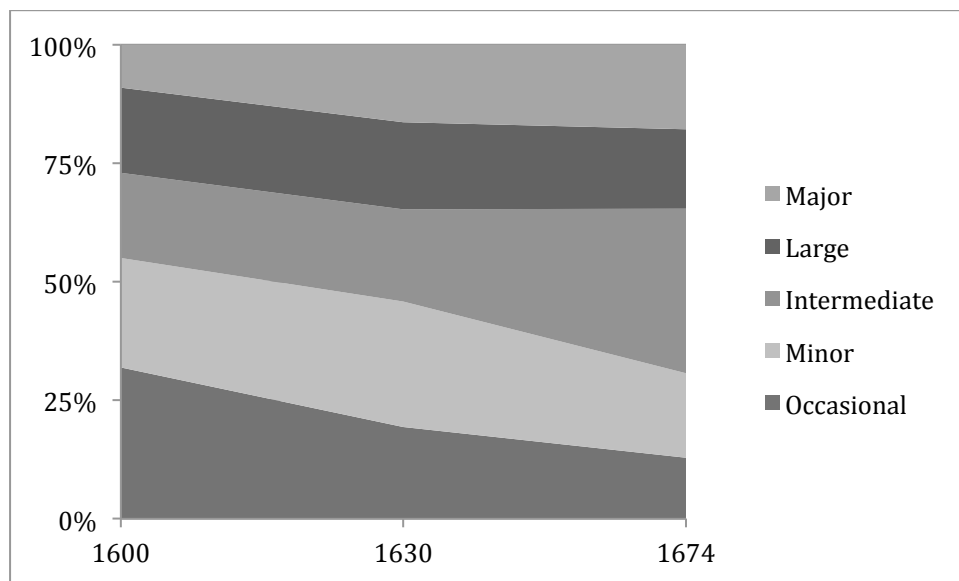
Competitive pressure may have increased due to the similarities in size and orientation. The median number of titles produced per Amsterdam publisher doubled between 1600 and 1674, despite the rapid increase in the number of competitors (Table 4.2). The average, however, shows a somewhat different growth pattern. This suggests that the industrial structure of the Amsterdam book trade changed. The industrial structure categorised according to firm size, as measured by the number of titles published throughout a publishers' career. A distinction is made between major ( $\geq 100$  titles), large (50-99 titles), medium (20-49 titles), small (6-19 titles), and occasional publishers (1-5 titles) (Figure 4.5). This reveals several changes in composition over the years. Around 1600 the share of publishers in each category was relatively equally distributed, but the major firms grew increasingly large, doubling their share. The occasional publishers' share decreased significantly, first to the benefit of minor firms, and then, after 1631, to the advantage of intermediate firms.

Table 4.2 Output per firm active in Amsterdam per benchmark year, 1585-1674

Year	1585	1600	1630	1674
N-titles	556	1,060	3,759	7,761
N-publisher	8	22	57	114
Maximum N titles per publisher	303	303	498	617
Average N titles per publisher	70	49	66	68
Median N titles per publisher	30	16	21	33

Source: STCN; Thesaurus

Figure 4.5 Distribution of Amsterdam publishers according to size, 1600-1674



Source: STCN; Thesaurus.

The observed changes in the industry's structure are corroborated by another source: tax registers. Estimates of wealth can be derived from tax registers, in the case of the Dutch Republic for instance the 200<sup>th</sup> penny tax, charged in 1631 and 1674. This tax had a minimum wealth requirement of *f* 1,000. In all, half of the publishers in the 1631 and 1674 prosopographies were identified. Between 1631 and 1674, booksellers' median wealth decreased from *f* 6,000 to *f* 4,000 (average from *f* 9,350 to *f* 7,016).<sup>109</sup> This finding alone can mean a number of things, for example... A contemporary wealth classification allows us to compare the relative importance of different wealth groups in the book trade during the seventeenth century. In Dutch tax collection in the seventeenth century, a distinction was made between 'capitalists', with more than *f* 3,000 of taxable wealth, and 'half-capitalists', who held between *f* 1,000 and *f* 3,000 taxable wealth. In 1641, the State considered, but did not pass, the motion for a third group: 'super-capitalists', who were estimated to be worth more than *f* 10,000. When the 1631 and 1674 taxes are compared, it becomes apparent that find that the share of half-capitalist booksellers increased from fifteen to almost 40 per cent. Of the 20 publishers identified in 1631, 9 had an estimated wealth of *f* 10,000 or more, and only 3 were taxed as half-capitalists. For 1674, estimates were found for of 94 publishers. Twenty had an estimated income of *f* 10,000 or more, and 35 publishers were assessed as half-capitalists. Although the number of super-capitalist publishers increased, they accounted for a smaller share. The share of capitalist publishers

<sup>109</sup> Frederiks and Frederiks, *Kohier van den tweehonderdsten penning*; SA, Archief van de Burgemeesters, 1295-1815, Stukken betreffende verscheidene onderwerpen, arch. nr. 5028, inv. 662, 'Belastingkohier van 200ste penning 1674'.

remained roughly equal.

If these wealth estimates are any indication of the income publishers derived from publishing, they corroborate the increasing importance of a sizable middle group during the seventeenth century. The existence of this large middle group of firms, of roughly equal size, may have added to the already high competitive pressure.

### *Industry concentration*

A more advanced measure of determining competition levels within the local sector can be applied. The industry concentration ratio allows us to assess the levels of concentration in Amsterdam book production.<sup>100</sup> The concentration ratio refers to the market share of the largest  $x$  firms within an industry, in percentage terms.  $X$  pertains to a specified number of firms, generally the four or eight largest. If the market concentration ratio of the top four firms is smaller than 40 per cent, the industry is considered to be very competitive, because no one firm controls a majority share of the market. This measure does not show the distribution of firm size or the changes in the market share between firms. For example, a 60 per cent concentration ratio may denote that one firm held 50 per cent, and two others 5 per cent each. It could also indicate that all three firms held a market share of 20 per cent each. By adding a second measure, the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) we arrive at a more complete picture of industry concentration. It is the sum of the squares of all firms' shares and ranges from zero (perfect competition) to one (monopoly). The HHI reflects the markets shares of all firms, squared to place more weight on larger firms.

In order to estimate market concentration data from the STCN (number of titles produced per year) and the Thesaurus (number of active publishers per year) was used. Excluding ephemeral print work and one-year-hits did not significantly influence the results, and therefore the unadjusted figures will suffice.<sup>101</sup> Table 4.3 shows market concentration ratios ( $C_4$ ,  $C_8$ ) for the years 1585, 1600, 1630, and 1674. The increase in the number of active producers went hand in hand with a decreasing industrial concentration. The HHI for the Amsterdam book trade confirms that the competitive pressure increased significantly during the seventeenth century. These figures are based on the number of titles produced by Amsterdam publishers active in a certain year, throughout their entire career. It is also possible to estimate

<sup>100</sup> On concentration measures see: Perlof, Karp, and Golan, *Estimating market power*, pp. 20-24.

<sup>101</sup> The share of ephemeral titles was 10 to 20 per cent of the total number of titles, depending on the benchmark year. The HHI was 0.02 higher in 1585 and 1600, and no different in 1630 and 1674. For the case of Amsterdam ephemeral titles refers to pamphlets and government publications, as they comprised circa 90 per cent of all ephemeral titles in Amsterdam. The remaining 10 per cent was mainly occasional titles, as Amsterdam publishers were hardly involved in academic production.

concentration in production in a given year. Counting all Amsterdam publications over three benchmark years – 1610, 1630 and 1674 –, the  $C_i$  declined from 53 per cent in 1610 to 32 per cent in 1674 and the  $C_s$  from 74 to 47 per cent over the same time frame. These figures confirm the increase in competitive pressure.

Table 4.3 Concentration indices Amsterdam, 1585-1674, based on number of titles produced during the publisher's career

Year	1585	1600	1630	1674
N-titles	556	1,060	3,759	7,761
N-publishers	8	22	57	114
Total $C_i$	523	711	1,394	1,974
Total $C_s$	556	934	2,290	3,137
Share $C_i$	0.94	0.66	0.37	0.25
Share $C_s$	1.00	0.87	0.61	0.40
HHI	0.35	0.15	0.06	0.03

Source: STCN; Thesaurus

### *Rivalry*

In theory, all publishers were competitors, but not all of them were rivals. For example, a producer of bibles had little to fear from publishers of pamphlets and ordinances. Although they are often used interchangeably, competition and rivalry are not synonymous. The term competition refers to firms that depend on the same resources, in this case any book producer. Rivalry has been defined as an individual firm's conscious behaviour towards other firms operating within the same market. In other words, it refers to direct competition.<sup>112</sup> Accordingly, the observed increase in competitive pressure according to both the HHI and concentration indices does not necessarily mean that rivalry intensified. In book-historical literature we find many references to direct competition between publishers, the most renowned example being the rivalry of neighbours Willem Jansz Blaeu and the Hondius-Janssonius dynasty. The Hondius-Janssonius tandem was not the only one challenging Blaeu. In 1632, Jacob Aertsz Colom published his own nautical manual, *De Vyerige Colom*, in which he proceeded to demonstrate and correct the perceived mistakes in the previous (i.e. Blaeu's) manual.<sup>113</sup> The rivalry in the production of emblem books and

<sup>112</sup> Scherer and Ross, *Industrial market structure*, pp. 15-16; Porter, *Competitive strategy*, pp. 3-50; Hannan and Freeman, *Organizational ecology*, pp. 139-140.

<sup>113</sup> Schilder and Mörzer Bruyns, *Navigatie*, vol. 2, p. 175. On Blaeu, competition and possible positive consequences: Lesger, *Rise*, p. 229. Djoeka van Netten is preparing a dissertation on the role of Blaeu in the dissemination of scientific knowledge and also addresses the rivalry between Blaeu and other firms.

political pamphlets provide further cases in point.<sup>144</sup> But however instructive these case studies may be, they alone do not allow for an assessment of the overall intensity of rivalry in the Dutch book trade. Therefore a different angle will be employed.

The STCN also allows us to collect concentration indices by genre. The number of titles published in Amsterdam in the genres of poetry (Dutch language and literature) and geography (including maps, charts, atlases, travel journals, etcetera) during the end of the emergence phase (1600-1609) and the end of the growth phase (1650-1659) were calculated. In the afore-mentioned general concentration measures, the effect of groups of firms was omitted, but for the subgenres this was taken into account for this by viewing collaborating publishers as one competitor. For example, Daniel and Louis Elzevier, who published many titles together during the 1650s, are considered one firm. Table 4.4 shows that the decline in concentration is significant for both genres, but especially for geographical publications.

Table 4.4 Concentration indices, 1585-1674 based on number of titles produced in Amsterdam per decade, per genre

Period	1600-1609	1650-1659	1600-1609	1650-1659
Genre	Dutch language and literature		Geography	
N-titles	31	311	46	143
N-publishers	15	70	6	28
Total $C_i$	13	99	44	68
Total $C_s$	23	147	-	92
Share $C_i(\%)$	41.9	31.8	95.7	47.6
Share $C_s(\%)$	74.2	47.3	-	64.3
HHI	0.08	0.04	0.66	0.08

Source: STCN, Thesaurus

The selection can be narrowed down to specific subgenres, such as Dutch travel journals, or secular amatory songbooks. Research on one particular subgenre, political pamphlets, has shown how the competitive pressure also increased in that field throughout the century. Though during the first quarter of the seventeenth century, two large publishers, Marten Jansz Brandt and Broer Jansz, were the main producers, along with a few others, whereas by 1672, dozens of booksellers were

<sup>144</sup> Porteman and Smits-Veldt, *Nieuw vaderland*, pp. 198-201; Veldhorst, 'Pharmacy for the body and soul'. On political pamphlets: Harms, *Pamfletten en publieke opinie*. On news: Van Groesen, 'Week'. On anti-Spanish propaganda: Koopmans, 'Profijtelijke Spaanse tirannie', vol. I.

involved in pamphlet production.<sup>115</sup> There were still major players that dominated production, but the cumulative impact of their smaller competitors was impressive.

These measures do not pretend to capture the full extent of rivalry, as not all publishers active in these genres catered to the same demand groups. They could differentiate themselves, for example, by price or by language. Nonetheless, both general trends and the available examples leave little doubt regarding the increase in competitive pressure in Amsterdam publishing between 1585 and 1674.

### *Printers' concerns*

In addition to the quantitative data, there also is a qualitative indicator of increased competition. On close inspection, the dates upon which independent booksellers' guilds were established reveal that distinct phases in the life cycle of the Dutch book trade coincided with the establishment of booksellers' guilds. In most Dutch towns, booksellers were originally members of craft guilds that encompassed a whole range of related economic activities, such as saddlers' guilds, or the more artistically-oriented Guilds of St. Luke. But, during the seventeenth century, independent booksellers' guilds were established.<sup>116</sup> In general, the expansion in the sector fuelled the need for regulation that was tailored specifically to book production, but the timing of such regulations suggests that they came in response to increasing competition.

We can discern two phases in the establishment of independent booksellers' guilds. The first phase took place during the decades around the turn of the seventeenth century, when guilds were established in Middelburg in 1590, Utrecht in 1599 and Haarlem in 1616. Where booksellers were not organised in their own guild, they remained in the local guild of St. Luke or, as in Utrecht, in the saddler's guild.<sup>117</sup> In Leiden, printers, binders, and booksellers were not organised in any formal corporate structure. A comparable phase of independent guild establishment has also been observed for painters, and interpreted as a reaction to the threat of imports from the Southern Netherlands.<sup>118</sup> The chronology of independent booksellers' guilds has, in contrast to that of painters' guilds, no clear link to the protection of local traders against the import of Southern Netherlands' products, following The Twelve Years' Truce. Nonetheless, a comparable motive can be identified. Restricting competition, particularly from non-booksellers and non-local booksellers, or, in other words, ensuring the monopoly of guild members in production and trade. This can

<sup>115</sup> Harms, *Pamfletten en publieke opinie*, pp. 45, 98, 144.

<sup>116</sup> On booksellers' guilds: Van Eeghen, *Gilden*, pp. 100-130; Van Eeghen, 'Het Amsterdamse Sint Lucasgilde'; Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 17-21; SA, Archief van de Gilden, inv. 1398, 1399 and 1400.

<sup>117</sup> Van Eeghen, *Gilden*, pp. 100-130.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Prak, 'Guilds and the development of the art market'.

be illustrated by a closer look at the concerns of Amsterdam's printers.

In 1579 in Amsterdam, the Guild of St. Luke separated from other trades to deal exclusively with the visual arts. The members included painters, tapestry makers, embroiderers, and engravers. Booksellers and binders were also included because it was considered that they too worked with brushes ('penseel en quast').<sup>119</sup> Printers, on the other hand, were not full members. Until the establishment of the booksellers' guild in 1662, they were neither restricted, nor protected. In 1616, a group of Amsterdam printers requested guild status, stressing the need for regulation in their trade. The printers, probably inspired by recent developments in Haarlem, attempted to organise themselves, along with booksellers and binders, into one guild and proposed that they select two booksellers or bookbinders and one printer as deans.<sup>120</sup> The draft regulations of ten articles, addressed to the Amsterdam magistrate, even though it was never granted, provide some insight into the motives behind the request and the practices of the Amsterdam book trade.<sup>121</sup>

The first proposed article was aimed at prohibiting booksellers from having their books printed outside of Amsterdam without first consulting Amsterdam printers. Only if the books in question could not be printed to the same standard for a reasonable price in Amsterdam, booksellers would be allowed to outsource printing to printers in other towns. In that case they would not be permitted to use 'Amsterdam' on the title page. Articles 2 to 5 suggest that booksellers and printers were, up to this point, also in competition: booksellers took printing jobs, and printers were paid in books that they, in turn, had to sell. An attempt to make a more clear-cut distinction between booksellers and printers can be detected in article 4, which stipulates that master printers were not permitted to be paid for their work in the form of books. Booksellers and binders would be fined if they took printing jobs (article 2), and non-printers would not be allowed to print (article 3). Article 5 stated that printers should not print any more copies than the client had ordered.

The conditions for becoming a member were specified in articles 6, 7, 8 and 10. Printers from outside Amsterdam would be unable to set up a print shop within the town's limits, unless they had already worked in an Amsterdam print shop for two consecutive years. Apprentices would also not be able to establish their own shop, unless they had first been trained with an Amsterdam master for four years and completed a master test. As such, master printers would not be permitted to employ more than two apprentices at any one time. All in all, the draft regulations suggest that Amsterdam printers were experiencing competitive pressure from varying sides. In the end, the request was turned down. Booksellers and binders remained within

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<sup>119</sup> BKVB, Archief van het Amsterdams Boekverkopersgilde, inv. 56, in the front of the book.

<sup>120</sup> Article 9.

<sup>121</sup> BKVB, Archief van het Amsterdams Boekverkopersgilde, inv. 56, in the front of the book.

the Guild of St. Luke, and printers operated largely outside the corporate structure.

Amsterdam printers were fixed on strengthening their position vis-à-vis booksellers, outsiders and non-printers. Experiencing competition from both outside and inside their market, they attempted to increase the entry restrictions and gain a monopoly on local print jobs. In the end, however, they failed, and printing and bookselling in Amsterdam, as well as other book centres Leiden and The Hague remained relatively unregulated during the growth phase in the industrial life cycle, up until the middle of the seventeenth century. The second phase took place when growth rates were already declining. Independent booksellers' guilds were recognized in the larger book production centres of Leiden in 1651, Amsterdam in 1662, Rotterdam in 1699, and The Hague in 1702. These will be discussed in chapters on the next phase in the lifecycle of Dutch book production.

#### 4.8 Conclusion

Printers and publishers active in Amsterdam around 1650 were faced with a very different town than their predecessors in 1580. The population and the physical space of the town had expanded dramatically and Amsterdam had become the third-largest town in Europe, after London and Paris. Whilst economic transformations were taking place during the Golden Age, the market for books also changed considerably. Accordingly, significant advancements were made in terms of scale, scope, variety, and quality of book production. What did this mean for the Dutch book trade in general, and Amsterdam's in particular, and how did the organisation of production contribute to the advancements that were made?

The conclusions of this chapter are twofold. First of all, competitive pressure in Dutch book production appears to have increased, especially in the 1610s. This supports the suggestion that changes in form and content that took place around this time were shaped by market forces. In the case of early modern book production, the establishment of a local booksellers' guild can also be appreciated in this light, as can the development of specialised distribution, marketing, and payment methods. Local demand conditions, factor conditions, and the presence of related and supporting industries made for competitive advantages in certain towns, and in the Dutch book trade in general. And local specialisations, such as Leiden's second-hand book auctions, can be traced back to an early source of competitiveness: the relation with the university.

Secondly, both the local and the wider reaching connections that run throughout the Dutch book production industry were mapped. Economic



geographers ascribe great importance to local embeddedness, especially in cultural industries. By viewing the different elements in Porter's diamond as interrelated and in flux, it was revealed how self-reinforcing tendencies developed in a complex interplay that contributed to patterns of growth. On the other hand, the relative openness of Dutch book production is also apparent. Entry barriers were low whilst publishers experienced competition from outside their locality and developed extensive distribution and information networks. Though firmly rooted in local specialisations and cluster-like networks, there were multiple connections with other towns. Arguably, Dutch booksellers possibly had the best of both worlds. In the following chapters it will become clear how these characteristics played determining roles in the adaptation to changing circumstances during the next phase.



## 5 Publishers in search of new markets, 1660-1800

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter spans a relatively lengthy timeframe, from 1660 to 1800. Within this 140-year period, a distinction is made between a first stage (ca. 1660-1730) focusing on exports and a second phase (ca. 1730-1800) focusing on domestic markets.<sup>1</sup> While 1680, the year of Daniel Elsevier's death, is often used to mark the end of the age of the great Dutch printers, this analysis commences 20 years earlier.<sup>2</sup> The reason being that market saturation had already set in around the middle of the seventeenth century. This chapter ends at the close of the eighteenth century, as the nineteenth century brought with it a new phase in the industrial life cycle. A new book buying public came into being when developments on the supply side met the changes on the demand side. The introduction of a new technological regime improved the printing speed and the production of paper, whereas socio-economic and cultural transformations stimulated demand for books by way of developments in demographics, education, and also leisure and lighting.<sup>3</sup>

The 1660s may well be regarded as the decade in which Dutch printing came of age. Christoffel van Dijck produced high-quality type, Joan Blaeu printed the spectacular *Atlas Major*, Dutch presence in foreign markets was strengthened, and an unprecedented large number of publishers were active on the domestic market. In the period of 1680-1730, the Dutch Republic became, in Voltaire's words, 'le magasin de l'univers'.<sup>4</sup> But there were also early signs of trouble. Temporary hardships, such as the wars of the 1670s, intensified the difficulties caused by a more structural development: the maturing of the market for books. Over the following 150 years, Dutch publishers and booksellers had to produce for a stagnating domestic market. This became particularly pressing when in other countries printing in the vernacular expanded and foreign competitors took to challenging the Dutch presence. That 'a major part of the book trade ceased to be an international affair' was bad news for

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<sup>1</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 75-104.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117, note 281.

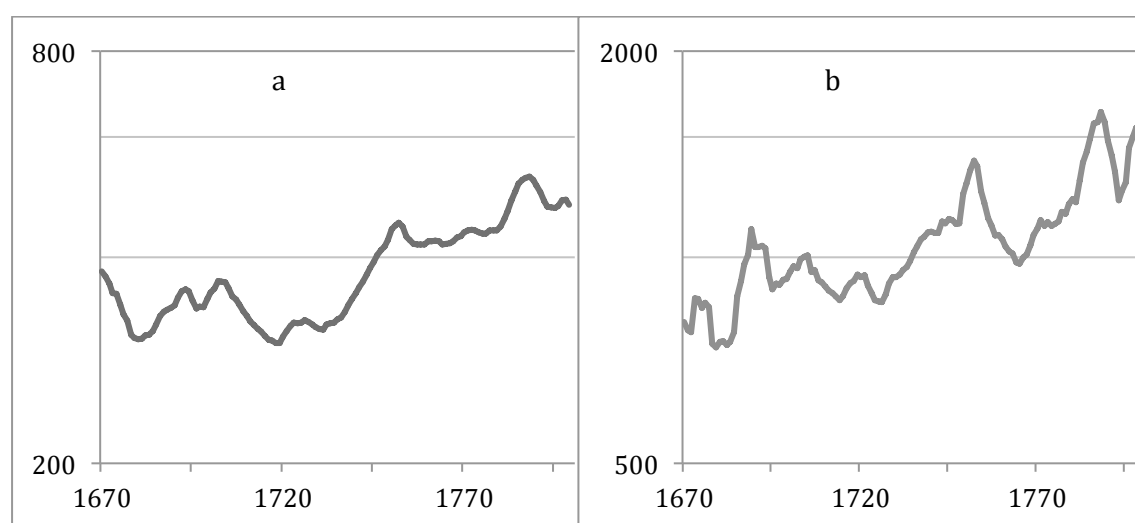
<sup>3</sup> Van Delft and Bots, *Bibliopolis*, 1830-1910 - Growth of the domestic market.

<sup>4</sup> On the position of the Dutch Republic in the international book trade: Berckvens-Stevelinck *et al.*, eds., *Le magasin de l'univers*.

the many internationally active Dutch publishers.<sup>5</sup> Eventually, Dutch book production would lose their leading international position and became, in many respects, an innovative backwater.<sup>6</sup> The number of publishers stagnated and once again Dutch publishers started reducing risks and pooling resources by forming formal partnerships, establishing guilds, and reforming payment methods.

From the perspective of cluster theory, this is an interesting period. Domestic and international circumstances changed, demanding adaptations from Dutch book producers. Did Dutch book producers get trapped in established routines, as path dependency theory would have it? Was it the end of the growth dynamic or did some book producers in some towns manage to adapt well and maintain or strengthen their competitiveness? If so, how did they do this? And did the spatial distribution of book production change? In this chapter a discussion of demand conditions and related and supporting industries take centre stage. In the following chapter the arguments will be substantiated by looking at developments in the context of competition, and the infrastructure of trade and production.

Figure 5.1. Number of publishers active (a) and number of titles produced (b), in the northern Netherlands/Dutch Republic between 1670 and 1800, 5-year moving average, semi-logarithmic-scale on vertical axis.



Source: Thesaurus, STCN

<sup>5</sup> Febvre and Martin, *The coming of the book*, p. 195.

<sup>6</sup> The term innovative backwater is taken from Martin and Sunley, 'Path dependence', p. 247.

## 5.2 Changing consumer patterns and the historians' need for revolutions

Quantitative data on Dutch publishing (Figure 5.1) shows that there was no significant growth over the period of 1660-1730. With the 1670s being a relatively dramatic decade for Dutch politics and the economy, the book trade suffered accordingly. In 1672, the so-called Year of Disaster, Louis XIV's French army invaded the Republic from the south, allied with an English fleet and two German bishops attacking from the east, in the Third Anglo-Dutch War. On top of this, scores were settled in domestic politics between Grand Pensionary Johan de Witt and Prince William III of Orange. The conflict resulted in the lynching of De Witt and his brother by civic militiamen in August 1672 and led to the instalment of William III, the future king of England, as *Stadtholder*. After a few years, the military threats were diverted and domestic political order was restored. The economic downturn that followed the turbulence of war could not have been good for the business of books, and the number of titles produced according to STCN dropped by some 40 per cent.<sup>7</sup> It has been claimed that the internal political wrangles must have alleviated this setback to some extent, as a large quantity of pamphlets was written, printed and distributed.<sup>8</sup> Even so, their cumulative economic value paled in comparison with that of books that were being issued during the same period.<sup>9</sup>

Other, structural factors proved more significant in determining the fate of the Dutch book industry. Dutch publishers were faced with changing economic circumstances. Up until the middle of the seventeenth century virtually every sector, new and existing, in the Dutch economy had witnessed significant growth. However, after circa 1660, growth rates started to level off, although the degree varied per region and per (type of) industry.<sup>10</sup> Some crafts and industries were in decline (light textiles, breweries, tapestry weaving, and painting), others stagnated (cloth, shipbuilding), and a few even flourished (tobacco, sugar, pipe producing, delftware factories, paper).<sup>11</sup> The towns in Holland that were relatively dependent on export industries were hit hardest. Although the Republic lost its world primacy, until circa 1750 it remained an important centre in finance and trade, and Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague managed to do relatively well. During the second half of the eighteenth century, it was stagnation and decline across the board. Compared to

<sup>7</sup> STCN, accessed 02-08-2012.

<sup>8</sup> Reinders, 'Printed pandemonium', p. 36; Harms, *Pamfletten en publieke opinie*, pp. 135-140.

<sup>9</sup> Thanks to Paul Dijstelberge for pointing this out.

<sup>10</sup> The traditional view on the Dutch economy in the eighteenth century was one of unmitigated decline, but since the 1980s an alternative interpretation has gained ground. On a general level, it was argued that the economic held up relatively well. Moreover, there was significant variation according to region and economic activity. Van Zanden, 'De economie van Holland'.

<sup>11</sup> On the Dutch Republic in the eighteenth century: Jacob and Mijnhardt, eds., *The Dutch Republic and De Vries and Van der Woude, First modern economy*.

other Dutch towns, however, Amsterdam, together with Rotterdam and The Hague, continued to do relatively well.

In all, the population of the Dutch Republic remained relatively stable, around two million, but on local and regional levels significant transformations took place. The extent of decline varied per region and per economic activity. This can be illustrated by urban population size, as the most direct indicator of economic growth patterns, because it, at least for the early modern period, reflects demand for labour. Amsterdam was one of the few towns that continued to expand, but less rapidly than before: its population increased from circa 160,000 to 175,000 around 1650, to 210,000 to 220,000 thirty years later and some 230,000 to 240,000 in 1730.<sup>12</sup> Hereafter, the population of Amsterdam remained around 220,000-230,000 until well into the nineteenth century. Other towns saw their population reduced. Leiden's, for instance, dropped from circa 70,000 in 1670 to 35,000 in 1750.

The sluggish economic growth in the Dutch Republic after 1660 and the subsequent stagnation and decline was both absolute and relative, and it was caused by a complex interaction of factors. To mention the most important ones: the Dutch trade network was reaching its maximum, Dutch wage levels were relatively high, European population failed to expand, and foreign competitors, England and France, took to take over Dutch positions in their markets and in international trade by means of policies of important substitution and emulation in industry and trade. Furthermore, as other countries caught up, the Dutch fell behind. In the newly developing international economy, larger countries employed economies of scale in shipping and manufacture.

That Amsterdam managed to do relatively well was by merit of the size and diversity of its market and the well-developed commercial infrastructure on the one hand, and the adaptive strategies developed by merchants on the other hand. While the economy experienced set backs, consumer patterns also changed. Over the course of the eighteenth century, poverty struck as prices of foodstuffs and raw materials became steeper, squeezing real wages and purchasing power. But even so, the elite remained, securing demand for luxury goods. As a result, various luxury industries continued to do fairly well: as is evident in the cases of producers of musical instruments, silver and goldsmiths, luxury furniture makers, and book producers.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Faber *et al.*, 'Population changes', p. 110. They estimate the population of the Netherlands within modern borders. Nusteling, *Welvaart en werkgelegenheid*, pp. 234-236 on Amsterdam.

<sup>13</sup> On the economy of Amsterdam between 1650 and 1800 and persistent local demand for a variety of luxury goods: Lesger, 'Vertraagde groei', vol. II-2; Lesger, 'Stagnatie en stabiliteit', vol. II-2.

*Demand for books*

The size and character of domestic demand for books through the eighteenth century has received considerable attention in the book-historical literature. Historians have identified several changes in the production and consumption of printed titles in Europe during the second half of the eighteenth century. The main view holds that there was an expansion of the reading public following the inclusion of a new group of non-elite readers, as well as a change in reading behaviour as readers began reading more than they had done in the past. German historian Rolf Engelsing was the first to characterise these changes as revolutionary (*Leserevolution*) and despite some hesitation, this term has become widely used to denote both the shift from intensive to extensive reading and the growth of the reading public.<sup>14</sup>

Taking a closer look at European consumption patterns in the eighteenth century can contextualize the popularity of the reading revolution theory. No less than three other 'revolutions' are supposed to have taken place in the period of 1650-1800: the consumer revolution, the industrious revolution, and the retail revolution.<sup>15</sup> We briefly discuss the paradoxes that have triggered historians to employ such strong vocabulary. The unspoken dilemma in explaining changes in early modern consumer patterns stems from the finding that the observed rise in material possessions occurred without a parallel rise in daily wages.<sup>16</sup> Jan de Vries introduced the concept of the industrious revolution to account for these seemingly contradictory developments.<sup>17</sup> His argument contends that while daily wages stagnated, the income of households increased as the post-Reformation workforce worked more days per year and both wives and children worked more hours. In this view, the driving force behind the changes in household behaviour was an increasing desire for consumption. By increasing the number of labour hours, households could increase their total income, even though wage rates remained stable.

Relating to the apparent paradox between changing consumer patterns without the required economic growth is the discussion of the 'retail revolution'. Bruno Blondé and Ilja Van Damme have shown that economic growth and urbanisation cannot explain the major changes in the retail sector and material culture of eighteenth-century Antwerp. If anything, there was economic decline and

<sup>14</sup> Engelsing, *Der Bürger als Leser*. For a critical overview of the concept of reading revolution see for example: Kloek, 'Reconsidering the reading revolution'.

<sup>15</sup> On the consumer revolution: Berg and Clifford, eds., *Consumers and luxury*; McKendrick, 'Consumer revolution'. On the industrious revolution: De Vries, *The industrious revolution*; On the retail revolution: Blondé and Van Damme, 'Retail growth and consumer changes'; Stobart and Hann, 'Retailing revolution?'. On the 'fashion revolution': Van Damme, 'Middlemen and the creation of a 'fashion revolution'.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Kwass, 'Ordering the world of goods'; Fairchild, 'Production and marketing of populuxe goods'; Berg and Clifford, eds., *Consumers and luxury*; De Vries, *The industrious revolution*, p. 177.

<sup>17</sup> De Vries, *The industrious revolution*.

de-urbanisation. They argue that the retail sector's boom at a time of economic stagnation - the so-called 'retail paradox' - should be explained by changing retail and consumer practices.<sup>18</sup> In response to and in conjunction with changing household behaviour, early modern retailing underwent significant changes, including diversification and scale expansion.

These 'paradoxes' are reminiscent of the growth of title production in the absence of increasing purchasing power and population growth in the Dutch Republic during the second half of the eighteenth century. The increase in the number of titles, the development of specialised reading institutions such as libraries, and the modernisation of distribution and selling during the second half of the eighteenth century, have been interpreted as possible signs of a Dutch reading revolution.<sup>19</sup> After a series of empirical studies on book ownership and bookselling, Dutch book historians are now finding the thesis of the reading revolution increasingly problematic. Not because of a lack of changes in reading production and consumption, but because the thesis is not well defined and the extent, nature, and impact of the changes in the Dutch Republic are not clear.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, booksellers' archives and probate inventories do not support the occurrence of a reading revolution in the eighteenth-century Dutch Republic.<sup>21</sup>

Joost Kloek asserted that: 'In fact, the so-called revolution was a very slow evolution, and the many anecdotes about 'reading fever' and 'novel devouring', even in the lower classes seem to come forth from concern about potential developments rather than from actual observations.'<sup>22</sup> It was not a large expansion of the general reading public, but rather a small group of already devoted readers to whom more titles were offered. Besides, the increase in the number of titles consisted largely of traditional genres such as religious and functional reading matter.<sup>23</sup> José de Kruif's research even points to a decline in the reading public.<sup>24</sup> It is now generally accepted that there was no quantitative growth of the reading public in the second half of the eighteenth century. Even so, qualitative changes and improvements in distribution are still predominantly attributed to developments on the demand side, more particularly the desire for up-to-date titles.<sup>25</sup> However, an alternative theory has been

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<sup>18</sup> See the work of Bruno Blondé and Ilja van Damme on retailing in a period of economic decline: Blondé and Van Damme, 'Retail growth and consumer changes'; Van Damme, *Verleiden en verkopen*; Blondé, Stobart, and Stabel, eds., *Buyers and sellers*.

<sup>19</sup> E.g. Van Goinga, *Alom te bekomen*.

<sup>20</sup> Kloek, 'Reconsidering the reading revolution', p. 292.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.; Brouwer, *Lezen en schrijven*; De Kruif, *Liefhebbers*; Van Goinga, *Alom te bekomen*; Baggerman, *Een lot uit de loterij*.

<sup>22</sup> Kloek, 'Reconsidering the reading revolution', p. 289.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid..

<sup>24</sup> De Kruif, *Liefhebbers*, pp. 108, 111-113.

<sup>25</sup> Baggerman, *Een lot uit de loterij*; Van Goinga, *Alom te bekomen*, pp. 307-310.



proposed that might explain the paradox between title growth and economic stagnation.<sup>26</sup>

Although Dutch publishers were operating in a mature market whilst also suffering a gradual loss of their international competitive advantages, this is not clearly visible in Figure 5.1. On the contrary, the number of titles produced in the Republic increased, rather than declined. Traditionally, this incongruity has been explained by a simultaneous increase in domestic demand for books, the so-called reading revolution, but, following José de Kruif's interpretation, it can be argued that the increase in title production attests to publishers' strategies in response to a stagnating and mature domestic market.<sup>27</sup> De Kruif has suggested that the increase in the number of titles can be explained by a strategy of differentiation in response to a satiated market.<sup>28</sup> She underpinned this with an economic theory about product life cycles. It is possible, De Kruif conjectures, that a larger number of titles were produced in smaller print runs, which would have reduced the net growth of copies, but not the number of titles. Unfortunately, there is no reliable serial data on print runs for this period, but it is possible to approach the discussion from a slightly different angle, namely that of the industry life cycle.

The industry life cycle ties sets of characteristics to distinct stages in the industry's life. If the demand for books expanded significantly, we would expect to see characteristics of the growth phase comparable to those observed in the previous chapter. In her analysis of distribution practices in the Dutch Republic throughout the eighteenth century, Hannie van Goinga has for instance suggested that the increase in the number of active firms could reflect either an increasing demand for books or changes in the composition of the book trade, for example the development of firms operating on a smaller scale.<sup>29</sup> She eventually concluded that the driving force must have been expanding demand but as of yet there is no evidence to suggest a significant expansion of the reading public. Though there is no data on the size of print runs, it is still possible to test Van Goinga's suggestion. On closer inspection of the composition of the Dutch book trade, it will become clear significant changes took place in the composition of local book production systems and that these had implications for the competitive context in which publishers operated. The strategies that were developed by Dutch book producers testify to a mature domestic market, rather than a growth market. This is not only true for the second quarter of the eighteenth century, but also for the period just after the middle of the seventeenth century.

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<sup>26</sup> Van Goinga, *Alom te bekomen*, pp. 308-309.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. De Kruif, *Liefhebbers*.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 95-93.

<sup>29</sup> Van Goinga, *Alom te bekomen*, pp. 290-291.

### 5.3 Internationalisation

The Dutch had embarked on the production of books for foreign markets during the first half of the seventeenth century. This came mainly in the form of bibles and religious or political treatises. Because Puritan bibles were forbidden in England, English refugees and Dutch printers produced them in the Republic, often commissioned by English booksellers and merchants. At first, this took place in several towns, most notably Amsterdam, Leiden, Rotterdam, and Dordrecht. However, during the seventeenth century, foreign language publishing became increasingly concentrated in Amsterdam, which, by no coincidence, was where most paper merchants were located.<sup>30</sup> Gradually, the task of coordinating the production of export products had shifted from interested patrons, such as Jewish rabbis and English ministers, to Dutch (paper) merchants and publishers.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, the position of Dutch publishers in international markets further improved. Book production developed with an increasingly international focus, no longer largely limited to Hebrew and English bibles and forbidden religious or political treatises. By 1700, Italian immigrant and historian Gregorio Leti confirmed that Dutch printers and booksellers had flooded the whole European market with books and periodicals.<sup>31</sup> Dutch publishers shifted almost seamlessly to production in French. It has been stated that 'by the close of the seventeenth century, Amsterdam was, after Paris, the next largest centre of French book production.'<sup>32</sup> The production of French language titles increased from as little as three per cent of all titles in 1650s, to 27 per cent in 1700, and then 25 per cent in the 1770s.<sup>33</sup>

Why did the Dutch come to dominate the international book trade at the end of the seventeenth century? Partly they owed it to the economic conditions in general, because they were firmly situated in an internationally oriented commercial trading infrastructure that increasingly specialized in wholesaling and distribution functions.<sup>34</sup> Another important factor was the relative lagging of other countries. The book trade in France, a dominant printing country up until the middle of the seventeenth century, was in crisis.<sup>35</sup> German publishers, while recovering from the destructions of the Thirty Years War, were increasingly oriented towards its own domestic market. And England's book trade and production infrastructure was by no means equipped to facilitate export. But the Dutch booksellers also had absolute

<sup>30</sup> Hoftijzer, *Engelse boekverkopers*, pp. 4-6.

<sup>31</sup> Leti, *Kort begrip der helden-deugden*, p. 17. '[Holland] alleen gansch Europa, met het werk der drukkerijen en boekhandel heeft bestraalt en verrijkt'.

<sup>32</sup> Febvre and Martin, *The coming of the book*, p. 197.

<sup>33</sup> STCN, accessed 18-10-2012.

<sup>34</sup> Lesger, 'Vertraagde groei' discusses this point for Amsterdam trade in general.

<sup>35</sup> Febvre and Martin, *The coming of the book*, p. 196.

and unique advantages. The factor conditions and organization of Dutch book production that had previously facilitated domestic and, to a lesser extent, international book production and trade now became key assets. The well-developed book industry, built on domestic markets and the mass production of titles forbidden elsewhere, offered advantages of scale and scope that were unimaginable in other countries. Moreover, its extensive international trade networks, financial infrastructure, and the relative freedom of press equipped Dutch production and trade for international success. Previously acquired sources of competitiveness attracted and nurtured a new group of immigrant intellectuals and publishers, who, in hindsight, came just in time to steer Dutch book production towards an open window of opportunity in the form of new international markets.

### *The Huguenot impulse*

After the massive influx of refugees from the southern Netherlands at the end of the sixteenth century, and steady immigration from German and Scandinavian regions throughout the century that followed, the final decades of the seventeenth century brought with them a new wave of immigrants, this time from France. Following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685, many Huguenots relocated to other countries.<sup>36</sup> Protestant booksellers in France were increasingly targeted by strict rules of censorship. The Dutch Republic was particularly attractive, not only as a religious safe haven, but also for its economic appeal. The turmoil of the 1670s had ended and the Dutch governments and entrepreneurs were keenly encouraging commerce, industry, and finance.<sup>37</sup> Dutch provincial governments and town councils actively tried to recruit the French immigrants by highlighting the liberties provided by the Dutch state and by offering favourable conditions for highly skilled craftsmen and wealthy merchants. In order to attract skills and capital, they proposed inclusive terms, such as free citizenship and free entrance to local guilds, but also exceptional conditions such as interest-free loans and exemption from taxes.<sup>38</sup>

Although the arrival of the Huguenots was seen as a welcome stimulus for the recovering economy, its long-term impact on the economy has been deemed of little consequence, especially in relatively established industries.<sup>39</sup> The book trade was a notable exception.<sup>40</sup> The trend towards an increasingly local composition of Dutch book production was disrupted by the arrival of French protestant publishers.

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<sup>36</sup> Cf. Frijhoff, 'Uncertain brotherhood'; Gibbs, 'The role of the Dutch Republic'; Gibbs, 'Intellectual and political influences'; Nusteling, 'Netherlands and the Huguenot émigrés'; Bots, 'Refuge dans les Provinces-Unies'.

<sup>37</sup> Frijhoff, 'Uncertain brotherhood', p. 147.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., pp. 143-147.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Isabella van Eeghen's seminal work on the French book trade in the Dutch Republic: Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*.

Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and, to a lesser extent, Utrecht, attracted Huguenot immigrants. The dominance of these publishers is well-illustrated by a 1715 engraving showing two bookshops in front of the Amsterdam Exchange, run by Huguenot refugees: François de l'Honoré and Jacques Desbordes.<sup>41</sup> By the 1680s the French language was replacing Latin as the *lingua franca* - the international language of the learned community - and the influx of French scholars and publishers greatly stimulated the position of Dutch publishing in the Republic of Letters. Dutch booksellers, especially those from Amsterdam, held a major share in the production of internationally oriented French language periodicals and compilations, through which they would also promote their own new books. The renowned Huguenot printer Henry Desbordes printed the first successful French periodical, *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres*, which was edited by Pierre Bayle. In 1715, the afore-mentioned Du Sauzet started his publishing career in The Hague with the periodical *Nouvelles littéraires*. The ambitious compendium *Bibliothèque Universelle et Historique* was financed by four leading Amsterdam publishers.<sup>42</sup>

As with the arrival of immigrants from the Southern Netherlands a century earlier, Huguenot publishers were not only important in terms of boosting entry rates and the scale of book production, but also in qualitative aspects. The newly established French-Dutch publishers introduced new genres, such as learned journals and book reviews, and had extensive networks of correspondents abroad.<sup>43</sup> Of the latter aspect, international and scholarly networks were especially important in view of the recent passing of several large, highly educated international publishers, most notably Joan Blaeu in 1673 and Daniel Elzevier in 1680. Huguenot publisher Henri Desbordes, from Lyon, and the Huguetan brothers from Paris were among the most important new arrivals.<sup>44</sup> The Desbordes firm produced a vast volume of catholic titles, adaptations of maps produced in France, and dictionaries and lexicons.<sup>45</sup> The Desbordes and Huguetan firms were perhaps exceptional, but the more modest Huguenot publishers, such as Henri Du Sauzet, also had extensive international networks.<sup>46</sup>

The importance of Huguenot publishers in developing international networks is evident by the establishment of local offices in other countries. This in itself was not new; other Dutch publishers had done the same. But this generation expanded

<sup>41</sup> *Devant la bourse d'Amsterdam: la boutique des libraires François l'Honoré et Jacques Desbordes* in: Ricart, *Les loix et coutumes du change des principales places de l'Europe*.

<sup>42</sup> Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, pp. 146-148.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Bots, 'L rôle de des périodiques Néerlandais'.

<sup>44</sup> On Henri Desbordes: Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. II, pp. 87-95. On the brothers Huguetan: Van Eeghen, 'Europese "libraires"'; Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. III, pp. 167-179.

<sup>45</sup> Van Eeghen, 'Europese "libraires"', p. 6. They seems to have had no shortage of capital, as the purchases they made at Hendrik Wetstein's auction in 1699, worth f 24,000 were redeemed within four years instead of the eight years agreed upon.

<sup>46</sup> On Du Sauzet see Van Meerkerk, *Achter de schermen van het boekbedrijf*.

into new areas. The Huguetan brothers were the first Dutch-based publishers to open a branch in Leipzig, where the annual fair was surpassing Frankfurt's. This move attracted much opposition, but eventually they built a strong position in the German town. The Huguetans also strengthened relations with England by establishing branches there.<sup>47</sup> Other Dutch publishers followed the Huguetans' lead. David Mortier, who was not a Huguenot refugee, set up a firm in Leipzig and became the first Dutch publisher to establish a permanent office in England, not counting The Hague publisher Adriaen Vlacq's unsuccessful attempt in the 1630s.<sup>48</sup> An inventory drawn up in 1694 attests to the international distribution: the Huguetan publications were available in no less than ten European countries.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, studies on the Republic of Letters, the informal international network of scholars that developed into an organization of newspapers, academic journals, books, and letters, neatly demonstrate the pivotal role Dutch publishers played in the networks of international scholarship.<sup>50</sup>

While acknowledging the impact of the new wave of immigration, it is important to point out that such an impact was only possible because of the existing infrastructure. Huguenot publishers and intellectuals were not only either pushed by persecution or lured by generally favourable conditions in the Republic. They also built on previously established relationships and reputations. The Huguetan brothers, who effectively replaced the firm of Daniel Elzevier, moved from Lyon to Amsterdam in 1682. Elzevier had been doing business with their (father's) company well before that time, as can be seen from the Elzevier's inventory from 1681.<sup>51</sup> The list of debtors compiled on the death of Daniel Elzevier displays an extensive international network. What is more, Dutch publishers had also jumped on the bandwagon, especially Rotterdam publisher Reinier Leers (1654-1714), the most important direct competitor of the Huguetans over these years.<sup>52</sup> It was by no means a coincidence that his father, Aernout Leers, had been one of the most important publishers of Latin titles of his time.

Based on a solid domestic demand for and supply of scholarly publications, the international trade in Latin scholarly work had increasingly come into the hands of Dutch publishers.<sup>53</sup> After the Thirty Years' War, Dutch presence with Latin titles at the Frankfurt fair peaked. Dutch publishers, such as the Leiden and Amsterdam Elzeviers, Joan Blaeu, Johannes Janssonius, and Johannes van Ravesteyn, along with

<sup>47</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, p. 92.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid..

<sup>49</sup> Booksellers in Livorno, Frankfurt, Leipzig, Lissabon, and London functioned as the main stock-holders. Van Eeghen, 'Europese "libraires"', p. 7.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Maber, *Publishing in the Republic of Letters: The Ménage-Grævius-Wetstein Correspondence 1679-1692*.

<sup>51</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. III, p. 115. On the list of debtors of Elzevier: *ibid.*, pp. 118-119.

<sup>52</sup> Van Eeghen, 'Europese "libraires"', p. 1. On Reinier Leers: Lankhorst, *Reinier Leers*.

<sup>53</sup> Frijhoff and Spies, *Dutch culture*, pp. 277-279.

Rotterdam publisher Arnout Leers, increasingly offered titles, sometimes pirated but mostly official, by foreigners such as John Locke, Francis Bacon and Thomas Hobbes. They also returned from these fairs with Latin titles which they then distributed to Dutch and foreign publishers.<sup>54</sup> Despite the high wages in the Dutch Republic, printing costs were still relatively low compared to other countries. In response to insinuations about the piracy of foreign works, Leiden publisher Pieter van der Aa argued that Dutch printers could print for half the price of English and French competitors.<sup>55</sup>

Although it was difficult to set up branches in England – Adriaen Vlacq had tried and failed – the Dutch were still key players in the distribution of scholarly titles. Most of the books imported to England between 1681 and 1682, years for which we have detailed data, had been dispatched from Amsterdam and Rotterdam.<sup>56</sup> The impact that the Republic had on the English book trade is also visible in eighteenth-century import statistics. Between 1696 and 1780, 60 per cent of unbound books imported into England were dispatched from the Republic, and only 20 per cent from France.<sup>57</sup> However, not all books imported from the Republic were actually printed there, as Dutch deliveries also included books from France, German lands and Italy. Dutch ports started to function as a major transit location for foreign publications. Antwerp publishers, for instance Verdussen or Moretus, increasingly used Middelburg, Rotterdam, or Amsterdam, for their mass export to the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, by 1688, England had closed its borders to French refugees and products. As a result, the Republic could become the most important gateway of information from France to England and vice versa.

French publishers had operated in networks with Dutch publishers well before they emigrated. They knew Dutch towns, especially Rotterdam and Amsterdam had the appropriate resources and that they would be welcomed there. New publishers were not hindered by strict internal regulations on entry into the local production system. This openness of the local publishers' community is visible in collaborations between French and Dutch publishers. It is telling that only one complaint against French publishers was recorded by the Amsterdam publishers' guild.<sup>59</sup> Dutch producers were remarkably skilled at tapping into foreign markets. The production system proved capable of integrating new people, new skills, and new markets in order to remain competitive.

<sup>54</sup> On the Latin trade in England: Roberts, 'The Latin trade', vol. IV: 1557-1695.

<sup>55</sup> '[Nooit is hier iets dergelijks verboden geweest], omdat wij hier te lande voor de helft kunnen drucken van de somme die de boecken in Vrankrijk en Engeland ons selfs komen te kosten en van die hooge prijzen niet bij yder kunnen worden gekost.' Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, p. 181.

<sup>56</sup> Roberts, 'The Latin trade', vol. IV: 1557-1695, p. 167.

<sup>57</sup> Barber, 'Books from the old world', pp. 245-252, table 241.

<sup>58</sup> Imhof, 'De Officina Plantiniana en de Moretussen'; Van Rossem, 'En Amberes'.

<sup>59</sup> Van Eeghen, *Gilden*, p. 110.

*Loss of foreign markets*

The prominence of Dutch publishers in international markets did not last and the loss of export and international distribution is generally placed in the 1740s. According to Giles Barber, the abrupt slump in the import of Dutch unbound books in the 1740s was caused by disruptions of trade following the War of the Austrian Succession (1742-1748).<sup>60</sup> While this may have been true, the loss of export markets was also caused by more structural problems. In the second quarter of the eighteenth century, significant changes hit the book trade of the Republic, England, France and Germany. Throughout Europe, censorship was relaxed, economic circumstances improved and, in the second half of the eighteenth century in particular, distribution possibilities in other countries were transformed. All of these factors had important consequences on the position of the Dutch international book trade, especially from the 1730 onwards.

During the eighteenth century, Germany finally recovered from the ravages of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) and a year-round distribution system replaced the bi-annual trading at the Leipzig and Frankfurt fairs, improving the trade infrastructure.<sup>61</sup> In England at the end of the seventeenth century the Licensing Act was not renewed. As a result, production increased and established London publishers faced new competition from within London, as well as from the provinces.<sup>62</sup> In France, while new import restrictions had limited Dutch exports from the 1720s onwards, a new quicker way of acquiring permissions gained ground after 1750. Through the so-called *permissions tacites*, publishers could now launch books more rapidly into the market, because long censorship procedures could be avoided. This method was probably used in particular for the type of titles that Dutch printers developed for the French market.<sup>63</sup> Like their London counterparts, Parisian publishers gradually lost their monopolies as provincial printing expanded.<sup>64</sup> The market expansion, as well as the increasing openness and competition in foreign markets stimulated economies of scale and scope in their book trades, offsetting Dutch competitive advantages.

It has been argued that another factor contributing to the loss of export markets was the rise of foreign publishers issuing titles in the vernacular. At first, when French replaced Latin as the international language of scholars and the elite, Dutch publishers were able to use this to their advantage. They published new titles

<sup>60</sup> Barber, 'Aspects of the booktrade', pp. 55-60.

<sup>61</sup> Laeven, 'Frankfurt and Leipzig book fairs'.

<sup>62</sup> Brewer, *Pleasures*, pp. 132-138.

<sup>63</sup> Statements by Amsterdam publishers indicate that reprints in France must have increased already earlier in the century see protest Amsterdam publishers in 1722. Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, p. 95.

<sup>64</sup> Van Goinga, *Alom te bekomen*, p. 12.

in French and also had titles translated from French into English and vice-versa. However, over the course of the eighteenth century, the vernacularisation and nationalisation of literature in European countries placed Dutch publishers at a competitive disadvantage.<sup>65</sup> Arguably, new genres, such as the novel, were dependent on more culturally specific resources than the humanistic and Enlightenment production had been.<sup>66</sup> Arguably the declining prominence of a pan-European publishing language such as Latin or French could have increased the need for physical proximity between publishers and consumers, thereby lowering possibilities for export-oriented production.

#### 5.4 Related and supporting industries

During the growth phase, Dutch publishers had responded to a large potential demand for books combined with increasing competitive pressure by investing in related and supporting industries. During the phase of maturity, copy, paper, and typography were of course still of crucial importance, but as we will see, Dutch publishers approached these in a different way. Instead of investing in new material, they limited risks by relying on existing content or typographic material. In the case of paper, the hostilities with the French limited imports, but just in time, Dutch papermakers developed new technologies that made high quality domestic paper production possible.

##### *Paper*

During the growth phase, Dutch printers had mainly relied on the import of foreign paper and, not surprisingly, the ban on the import of certain French goods, including paper, issued by the States General on November 2 1671, caused great distress among paper dealers and printers.<sup>67</sup> The hostilities between France and the Republic, along with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, resulted in the decreasing involvement of Dutch paper merchants in French paper mills. The French paper industry was hit hard by the emigration of Protestant paper makers to Holland, England and Germany, resulting in attempts by the French government to lure some of the emigrants back. The French king was urged to provide employment for those working in the mills, to prevent them from leaving. Louis XIV's ambassador in Holland, le comte d'Avaux, wrote to his king on November 29 1685, that Vincent,

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<sup>65</sup> Also pointed out in Deinema, 'The culture business caught in place'.

<sup>66</sup> Johannes, 'The development of the literary field'.

<sup>67</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. IV, pp. 258-272.



Amsterdam paper merchant and mill-owner in Angoulême requested a passport, but that this was undesirable because he could potentially bring as many as 500 employees with him to Holland.<sup>68</sup>

The problems in the distribution of paper could cause serious delays in the production of planned titles.<sup>69</sup> And as if the ban on the import and selling of French paper had not caused enough problems for Dutch printers and paper merchants, their situation was certainly worsened by an attempt to introduce new taxes on paper, especially on foreign paper and prints.<sup>70</sup> The archive of the Amsterdam booksellers' guild holds several requests by Dutch printers and paper dealers from various towns regarding the ban and the taxes, issued between 1674 and 1691.<sup>71</sup> Recurring themes include the necessity of paper imports due to the low quality and insufficient quantity of domestic production, the rising prices, and the declining competitive position of Dutch printing. It is worth noting that this was not the first time the government had tried to introduce taxes on paper.<sup>72</sup>

Both printers and paper dealers stressed time and time again that it would be disastrous for paper dealers and the publishing industry if foreign paper would cease to come through Amsterdam. A 1674 request by a group of Dutch printers from various towns, inspired by the ban and the two taxes, provides some insight in the concerns of paper merchants and printers.<sup>73</sup> They emphasised that the price of Dutch paper had already increased by one-third due to the restrictions on the import of French paper. Two-thirds of the paper coming into the country was used for printing (as opposed to writing and wrapping), but only ten per cent was used in the domestic market, the rest was redistributed to other countries.

The printers outlined a bleak future for Dutch printing under these conditions. Because there were no or few taxes on exports, and rents and wages were already high, the excises would stimulate reprinting in competing countries and result in a decline of the Dutch printing trade. They summarised that, because of this, German and Swiss papermakers would stop sending their paper to Holland and that the newly founded Dutch paper mills, which showed future promise to proliferate, would lose business. For booksellers and printers this would be devastating, as they would need to invest even larger sums in books. As a result, the printers argued, the production of English bibles and other export products would come to a virtual

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., pp. 252-257; *Negociations de M. le Comte d'Avaux en Hollande depuis 1679, jusqu'en 1688*, vol. IV: 1685-1688, p. 97. Thanks to David van der Linden for the reference.

<sup>69</sup> Example in Maber, *Publishing in the Republic of Letters: The Ménage-Grævius-Wetstein Correspondence 1679-1692*, p. 18.

<sup>70</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. IV, pp. 258-272. The proposed impost on paper was 20 *stuivers* per ream for imported white writing paper, and 12 *stuivers* per ream on white printing paper, gray and blue paper was taxed with 6 *stuivers*.

<sup>71</sup> BKVB, Archief van het Amsterdams Boekverkopersgilde, behind n. 22 and behind n. 33.

<sup>72</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. IV, pp. 258-272.

<sup>73</sup> BKVB, Archief van het Amsterdams Boekverkopersgilde, inv. 56, behind n. 33.

standstill. The complaints further indicate that printers were already emigrating and that printing in competing towns in England and Germany, such as Hamburg, Emden, and Bremen was flourishing or at least expanding rapidly. Since the ban on French paper, two-thirds of the presses were decommissioned and many printers had already moved to the border regions. The complaints were partially successful as the ban was lifted in 1674 and the excises on foreign and domestic paper withdrawn in 1675.<sup>74</sup> The other two duties were placed on printed domestic and foreign paper (e.g. newspapers and state publications) and on various types of bills.

Fortunately, at about the same time, significant improvements were made in the domestic paper industry with wind-powered mills being adapted for the production of printing paper.<sup>75</sup> Throughout the seventeenth century, the number of mills, especially in the Gelderland district of Veluwe, had increased but, through necessity, production focused on grey cardboard paper and also, from the 1650s, on blue paper. The real growth in productivity only occurred in northern parts of the province of Holland in around 1670.<sup>76</sup> This had everything to do with the introduction of the so-called 'hollander' dated around 1673 and arguably the most important invention in papermaking over three centuries. This technical improvement on the roll beater, a cylinder used for beating rags, made it possible to process the fibres of the rags in such a way that white paper production became viable. Moreover, it made pulping the rags much quicker than was possible with the water-powered paper mills in other areas. The improved speed of the wind-driven Dutch mills was the main competitive advantage over their water-powered counterparts in Germany and France. From this point onwards, the Zaan mills used this innovation to produce the white paper necessary for printing and writing. This moment saw, as Karel Davids put it, 'Dutch paper set the standard for the rest for Europe for over a hundred years'.<sup>77</sup>

There is a long history of attributing the innovations in papermaking to the arrival of the Huguenots, but Davids has argued that the Huguenot migration was not fundamental to the development of the Dutch paper industry, denoting differences in timing and an apparent lack of evidence.<sup>78</sup> The invention of the 'hollander' is generally dated at 1673, when the States of Holland called for advice on requests for a patent on the technology of papermaking by use of metal bars. However, Davids claims, there was more to it than this one improvement alone, as papermakers in the Zaan ensured supreme quality of their products by

<sup>74</sup> BKVB, Archief van het Amsterdams Boekverkoopersgilde, inv. 56, behind n. 22.

<sup>75</sup> The seminal work on Dutch paper production is: Voorn, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandse papierindustrie*.

<sup>76</sup> Davids, *Rise and decline*, pp. 167-171.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 227-229.

demonstrating specific skills in almost every stage of the paper-making process.<sup>79</sup> The emergence of (incremental) innovations in the paper industry was primarily due to an open climate of knowledge exchange. This openness reduced the costs involved in learning to operate new technologies, and allowed for higher rates of innovation diffusion.<sup>80</sup> The rapid diffusion of the 'hollander' is a case in point. The patent requested in 1673 was not granted and mills producing white printing paper soon emerged across the Zaan district.<sup>81</sup>

During the eighteenth century, Dutch papermakers produced the best paper in the fastest manner possible at the time, allowing Dutch merchants to further tap into foreign markets. These merchants also benefited from conflicts between England and France. In the seventeenth century there was hardly a paper mill to be found in England, and French mills had been their main supplier. Owing to renewed hostilities between France and England after 1688, Dutch paper traders started supplying most of the imported paper into England.<sup>82</sup> Despite the partial decline of French paper mills, Dutch publishers retained a competitive advantage until the end of the eighteenth century, by which time the technology had spread and book production in other countries caught up.<sup>83</sup>

### *Typography and copy*

In 1700, Gregorio Leti lamented the deaths of Elzevier and Blaeu, but he also acknowledged the continuity of Dutch publishing, printing, and trade efforts, particularly in the firms of the Huguetan and Leers.<sup>84</sup> However, by the end of this period of study, Dutch publishers and printers were no longer praised for their skills. They were even blamed by fellow countrymen for the supposed deterioration of the book trade. Allegedly, due to a lack of entrepreneurship, Dutch publishers were producing sloppy printings of derivative copy. In his history of the Dutch book trade, nineteenth-century publisher A.C. Kruseman attributed the loss of international markets to the sluggish nature of Dutch publishers.<sup>85</sup> In his view, deteriorating printing skills and ambition would have put off foreign authors such as Voltaire, who is indeed known to have complained about Dutch publishers.<sup>86</sup> Dutch authors and customers were also blamed for the lack of original work and for the fashion for

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp. 179-171.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. 390-400.

<sup>81</sup> Hills, *Papermaking*, pp. 56-57; Davids, *Rise and decline*, pp. 355-363, 398.

<sup>82</sup> Coleman, *British paper industry*, p. 22.

<sup>83</sup> Davids, *Rise and decline*, pp. 227-229.

<sup>84</sup> Gregorio Leti wrote, 'The names of Elsevier and Blaeu, both from Amsterdam, will be immortal in the most famous libraries of the world; as no one has ever been found, who came, either concerning the grandeur of the works, which they produced, or the purity of the printing, remotely close.' Lankhorst, 'Elzevirionanie', p. 19. A translation in Dutch can be found in: Leti, *Kort begrip der helden-deugden*, p. 9.

<sup>85</sup> Kruseman, *Bouwstoffen*, pp. 91-93. A clear overview is given in Baggerman, *Een lot uit de loterij*, pp. 71-74.

<sup>86</sup> Letter from Voltaire to Frederick the Great, July 20 1740. Voltaire, *Briefwisseling*, pp. 355-356.

French works. Kruseman's analysis was largely based on eighteenth-century sources, such as the publications of Leiden publisher and lawyer Elie Luzac; on anonymous complaints in the periodical *De Koopman*; and on fragmented reports, such as the letters of Voltaire or the statement by German traveller Philipp Andreas Nemnich that most Dutch booksellers were mediocre.<sup>87</sup>

In more recent book-historical literature, complaints by contemporaries have been interpreted in terms of general lamentations on the loss of economic and cultural leadership at the time.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, quantitative data shows few signs of a real slump. The decline was relative: foreign countries caught up and the Dutch lost their competitive advantages. The sector was so advanced that there was little more to gain, and with foreign countries' book trades expanding rapidly, stagnation could have certainly felt like decline.

### *Typography*

In the early 1670s, Bishop John Fell of Oxford (1625-1686) had sent the reverend and linguist Thomas Marshall (1621-1685) on a journey to Amsterdam to procure type, only to discover that 'last winter had sent Van Dijke and Voskens, the two best Artists in this Country, to their graves'.<sup>89</sup> The last quarter of the seventeenth century heralded the end of the large independent type-cutters, as type foundries became annexes of large printing firms. Abraham van Dijck, son of Christoffel.<sup>90</sup> Elzevier acquired Van Dijck's material in 1673 and in 1681 his type-foundry was sold to Joseph Athias, the renowned printer of Hebrew works and English bibles. After owning by descendants of the Widow Schipper, Athias business partner, the foundry and Van Dijck's heritage changed once more before it was sold to an ad-hoc partnership of the Haarlem printing firm Enschedé and an Amsterdam typefoundry, Ploos van Amstel, in 1767. A second significant foundry, that of the Blaeu firm, was operated by Dirck Voskens after 1678 and remained in business until well into the eighteenth century. Other large printers, such as Huguetan, Wetstein, van der Putte, and Bruyn, followed the example of Elzevier and Blaeu and set up their own foundry.<sup>91</sup>

The last Amsterdam-based punch-cutter to acquire worldwide and lasting fame, was the Hungarian, Miklós (or Nicolaus) Kis.<sup>92</sup> He had come to Amsterdam in 1680 to supervise the printing of the Hungarian Bible at Daniel Elzevier's office, only to learn upon his arrival that the famous publisher had also passed away. Deciding

<sup>87</sup> Luzac, *Hollands rijkdom*, vol. IV, pp. 422-427; *De Koopman* 5 (1775) pp. 114-125; Broos, 'Misdruk en mispunt', p. 220.

<sup>88</sup> Mijnhardt, 'De geschiedschrijving', p. 173.

<sup>89</sup> McMurtrie, *The brothers Voskens*, p. 115.

<sup>90</sup> Sabbe, ed., *Briefwisseling*, letter CLX

<sup>91</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, p. 294.

<sup>92</sup> On Kis see Haiman, *Nicholas Kis*.

to take up the challenge himself, he apprenticed in the shop of Blaeu and eventually became a type-cutter at Voskens' foundry. According to Kis himself, his master, Dirck Voskens, for fear of competition, had only agreed to teach him because he was not a local. Kis started printing his Hungarian bible, but he soon set up shop as an independent punch-cutter in Amsterdam, acquiring international fame within a few years and supplying clients in Poland, Sweden, Germany, Armenia, Georgia, and Italy.<sup>93</sup> However, Kis did not stay in Amsterdam for long; in 1689 he returned to Hungary.<sup>94</sup>

Although Dutch type retained its demand, the quality deteriorated after Kis' departure. Only a handful of letter-cutters set up shop in Amsterdam during the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>95</sup> The dominance of Dutch typography had come to an end by the late seventeenth century. In 1672 Marshall wrote: 'Founders here being reasonably furnished with matrices from Francfort, the old van Dijke, etc. have no regard to cutting and justifying, unless perhaps to supply a defect or two. So that some famous cutters, they say, are gone, to other countries for want of employment and now not one here to be found'.<sup>96</sup> In other words, founders were well stocked with good type, and had little incentive to order new cuts. Although some quality cutters began producing new type at the request of large firms like Wetstein and Enschedé, the first decades of the maturity phase saw a dearth of activity and innovation in type cutting.<sup>97</sup> Clearly, this was not the time to invest in new designs.

Bathelomeus II Voskens and the Cupy family did cut some new type but, in general, printers relied on used matrices and type. A new urge came only when the Wetstein and Enschedé firms started ordering new type from Johann Michael Fleischman, who started out in 1728 as a punch-cutter in the foundry of the printers Alberts and Uytwerf in The Hague. Fleischman produced many types for the Wetstein foundry, and eventually cut the bulk of his punches for the Enschedé foundry in Haarlem.<sup>98</sup> The Enschedé printing firm invested heavily in new type and developed a prominent type foundry. They only had one main competitor, Ploos van Amstel's firm in Amsterdam.<sup>99</sup> The Ploos van Amstel brothers started out in the early 1760s, but they rapidly increased in size. From the 1760s the two large type foundries competed for the inventories of smaller ones. Eventually, they agreed to buy the stock together and later divide it, as they did with the remnants of van Dijck's foundry in 1767.<sup>100</sup> Because Ploos van Amstel and Enschedé had been buying up the

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<sup>93</sup> Middendorp, *Dutch type*, p. 25.

<sup>94</sup> Lane, Lommen, and De Zoete, *Dutch typefounders' specimens*, p. 51.

<sup>95</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 297-298.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290.

<sup>97</sup> De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Het Hollandse wonder', pp. 60-64.

<sup>98</sup> Middendorp, *Dutch type*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Janssen, 'Ploos van Amstel's description'.

<sup>100</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, p. 301.

inventories of other type foundries, the number of type foundries decreased rapidly. In 1760 there were nine type foundries in the Netherlands, and seven of these were located in Amsterdam.<sup>101</sup> After Enschedé acquired the Ploos van Amstel inventory in 1799 there was only one other type foundry left: Bruyn in Amsterdam.

### *Book illustrations*

In the first decades of the seventeenth century, Dutch book illustration and print publishing had thrived. Though the Golden Age of book illustrations drew to an end in the 1630s, this was not the end of engraving, book production, or painting. There were still plenty of engravers, print publishers and artists around and book publishers still included illustrations. However, the production of new illustrations had stalled. The reason for the decline in new book illustrations should be sought in an endogenous setting. By the middle of the seventeenth century there were simply more plates in circulation than in 1600. Compared to later generations, early initiators such as Blaeu and Claes Jansz Visscher had to throw together their collections, whereas publishers in the 1650s, such as Clemens de Jonghe, could simply buy in bulk.<sup>102</sup> Plates could be over 100 years old; in 1679, two small Amsterdam book publishers published a book using 49 plates dating from before 1575.<sup>103</sup>

This can be illustrated with the example of songbooks. In 1649, Utrecht publisher Lucas de Vries published the songbook *Utrechts Zang-Prieeltjen*, consisting of two volumes in *sedecimo* oblong with illustrations.<sup>104</sup> In his introduction to the reader, De Vries disclosed his intentions. Though he had previously published several cheap songbooks featuring songs by local poets, the Utrecht youth had preferred the more expensive songbooks from Amsterdam and Haarlem. This spurred him into making this new songbook a collection of the best songs. The first volume of the *Utrechts Zang-Prieeltjen* contained eleven illustrations, all of which were copies of the ones used in the *Amsteldams Minnebeeckje* (first edition in 1635) and designed by Adriaen van de Venne (1589-1662). De Vries only replaced the title page as it inappropriately had the Amsterdam panorama in the background. In the second volume of the *Utrechts Zang-Prieeltjen*, he used emblem-prints that had previously appeared in *Maechden-plicht* (first edition in quarto in 1618) by Jacob Cats (1577-1660), and that were also designed by Van de Venne.

De Vries' use of a variety of illustrations, especially in the second volume, fits well with the general trend of small songbooks from the second quarter of the

<sup>101</sup> Janssen, 'Ploos van Amstel's description', p. 96.

<sup>102</sup> Kolfin, 'Amsterdam, stad van prenten', pp. 21-24.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>104</sup> The following is based on Rikken, 'Utrechts Zang-Prieeltjen'.

century. They still had many illustrations, and a more varied iconography than even their luxurious quarto predecessors, but they were often reprints, frequently produced with old plates.<sup>105</sup> The increasing use of second-hand plates was not limited to songbooks, as other genres also reproduced illustrations in this way. Gilles Joosten Saeghman, who popularised the genre of travelogues by reprinting previous versions at relatively low prices, adjusted the format by, for example, using two columns - a characteristic of popular literature. He reused many illustrations in his travelogues, based on series of woodcuts and copper engravings.<sup>106</sup>

Through bulk acquisition and the growth of family businesses, copperplates became concentrated in a more select group of firms such as Visscher, Danckerts, De Wit, Allard, and De Jonghe.<sup>107</sup> The shop inventory of reproductive print publisher Dancker Danckerts drawn up in 1667, for instance, lists a large number of prints by Mannerist artists active at the turn of the century, such as Goltzius, De Gheyn, and Bloemaert.<sup>108</sup> By collecting plates, they could get a head start over their competitors. The Blaeu firm acquired a virtual monopoly on 'modern' emblem books and dominated the market in world atlases and globes between 1650 and 1670, not only through its own production, but also by buying up plates. The increasing use of second-hand plates was inherent in the technology, because plates were durable. However, the fierce competition of the first half of the seventeenth century had inflated the number of plates in the market and therefore limited the need to invest in new ones. This had consequences for the distribution of print publishing, in both geographic and socio-economic terms. Nadine Orenstein has observed how variety and decentrality were key characteristics of Dutch printing publishing during the first half of the seventeenth century. In the period that followed, this changed. Print publishing became increasingly concentrated in a few large firms, most of which were located in Amsterdam.<sup>109</sup> Eventually, the recycling of plates led to repetition in illustration and to a decline in quality, due to damages caused by wear and tear.

A renewed interest in book illustration, in terms of genre, competition, and techniques, can be identified from the 1670s onwards.<sup>110</sup> The commercial rivalry in the field of exotic geography can be taken as a starting point. In the 1660s, Amsterdam print publisher Jacob van Meurs started issuing luxurious travelogue in folio with many illustrations.<sup>111</sup> Soon Johannes Janssonius van Waesberghe and Johannes van Someren challenged his work, especially regarding the new and unique print designs. They had engraver Coenraad Decker swear to secrecy and exclusivity, so that no one

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>106</sup> Verhoeven, 'De reisuitgaven van Gillis Joosten Saeghman', pp. 334-335.

<sup>107</sup> Kolfin, 'Amsterdam, stad van prenten', pp. 20-25. On Danckerts see: Van Veen, 'Danckerts en Zonen'.

<sup>108</sup> Orenstein, *Hendrick Hondius*, p. 95.

<sup>109</sup> Orenstein, 'Marketing prints'; Orenstein, *Hendrick Hondius*, p. 21.

<sup>110</sup> Kolfin, 'Amsterdam, stad van prenten', pp. 23-31.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

would steal their coup. Topographic prints became increasingly popular and whole new series were developed by publisher-engravers, such as Blooteling, and popularised by large publishers like Schenk, Valck, and Allard. At the same time, publishers and engravers experimented with new techniques such as colour printing and mezzotint engraving.<sup>112</sup> The former yielded great returns, but was very costly. Mezzotint was successful from the 1670s to the 1690s, and some print-publishers successfully specialised in this technique, yet the technique was not particularly suitable for book illustrations.<sup>113</sup>

The final quarter of the seventeenth century was an era of a handful of extremely prolific and versatile graphic artists: Romeyn de Hooghe (1645-1708), Gerard de Lairese (1640/1641-1711), Jan Luyken (1649-1712) and his son Casper (1672-1708), as well as later Jan Goeree (1670-1731). De Hooghe and Jan Luyken were by far the most prolific and important producers of original book illustrations.<sup>114</sup> De Hooghe was firmly situated in a network of some 170 publishers and booksellers; with some he collaborated only on a single occasions and with others he sustained durable relationships.<sup>115</sup> However, the resurgence of print publishing in the 1670s was different from the Golden Age of prints between circa 1600 and 1630. In contrast to the developments early in the growth phase, there was no widespread upgrading of the quality of Dutch printing. The gap between cheap illustrated books and expensive illustrated books widened.

During the eighteenth century, illustrations of great beauty were made, but this was not an age of new genres, techniques or a time for upsurges in the quality, quantity or variety of book illustrations. In general, the images in literary works were derivative of the French style and the quality of the songbook genre dropped to a popular level.<sup>116</sup> Followers of De Lairese and the Frenchman Bernard Picart illustrated many French books for the international market. Simon Fokke produced works in an original style, and several illustrators were accomplished in decorating the many (semi-)academic works on plants, animals, and travels.<sup>117</sup> Only at the end of the eighteenth century did illustrators Jacob Buys and Reinier Vinkeles start to produce new original work on a significant scale.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 24. On mezzotint engraving see: Wuestman, 'The mezzotint in Holland'; Rikken, 'Vroege kleurendruk'.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Wuestman, 'The mezzotint in Holland', p. 82.

<sup>114</sup> Van Eeghen, 'L rôle de des périodiques Néerlandais'; Verkruijsse and Verhoeven, 'Verbeelding op bestelling'.

<sup>115</sup> Verkruijsse and Verhoeven, 'Verbeelding op bestelling', p. 163. Of these 170 firms, some 100 were located in Amsterdam, 19 in Leiden, 7 in The Hague, 6 in Utrecht, and 4 in Rotterdam and Dordrecht. Others were located in ten smaller Dutch towns, as well as in Antwerp and Brussels.

<sup>116</sup> On Picart see for example Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, eds., *The book that changed Europe*; Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, eds., *Bernard Picart*.

<sup>117</sup> Van Delft and Bots, *Bibliopolis*, Domestic orientation, 3.1.5. 1725-1800 – Illustrations and decoration.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Het Hollandse wonder', pp. 60-64.



### Copy

In the previous chapter, seventeenth-century publishers have been portrayed as crucial figures in the acquisition and assembly of novel copy. During the second half of the eighteenth century relatively few original titles by Dutch authors were published, compared to the Golden Age. With the new market conditions, publishers were less inclined to gamble on new publications. Instead, Dutch publishers increasingly reassembled existing content and converted foreign texts into titles for the Dutch market.<sup>119</sup> In a period of maturity, imports and translations were safer and cheaper bets. Not that translation costs were not necessarily small, but there were many translators willing to work for modest fees.<sup>120</sup> It is by no coincidence that the publishing list of the Leiden publisher Pieter van der Aa, one of the largest publishers active during this period, contained many translations, pirated editions, reprints of recently published titles, classical works, and composite volumes.<sup>121</sup>

Based on the STCN, it can be asserted that there was an increase in the share of Dutch titles translated from French, Latin, German, or English.<sup>122</sup> In the 1650s the total share had been a significant 17 per cent, and in the 1770s this had increased to 26 per cent. By the start of the eighteenth century, French translations had increased to account for circa ten per cent of all titles, a share that was matched by German translations in the last half of the century. The share of translations into French remained stable at circa ten per cent throughout the period, and the original language was often English, rather than Latin.

In particular genres, the use of international copy is also evident. For instance, only about half of the contributions in *Vaderlandse letteroefeningen*, the prestigious scientific-miscellaneous cultural magazine, consisted of articles originally written in Dutch, or of reviews of Dutch books. The other half was comprised of translated articles and reviews of translated books.<sup>123</sup> Research on women's periodicals also suggests that the demand for texts aimed at women was in part provided by other types of periodicals, such as almanacs, or by translations.<sup>124</sup> In musical publishing, a genre in which the Dutch excelled during the export phase, publishers mainly reprinted or adapted French or Italian titles. Between circa 1680 and 1720, eight Dutch publishers issued as many as 60 editions of the work of Jean-Baptiste Lully. These ranged from books of excerpts in oblong quarto, to *partitions générales* in large folio. Thus, Dutch publishers and their staff 'made much of Lully's music available to a more diverse group of consumers by printing excerpts and often by simplifying the

<sup>119</sup> Kloek and Mijndhardt, *1800. Blueprints*, pp. 460-461. See [Deinema, 2012 #1138 (forthcoming) for a comparable argument regarding Dutch twentieth century publishers.

<sup>120</sup> Van der Weel, 'Nineteenth-century literary translations', p. 28.

<sup>121</sup> Hoftijzer, *Pieter van der Aa*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>122</sup> STCN, accessed 18-10-2012.

<sup>123</sup> Johannes, 'The development of the literary field'.

<sup>124</sup> Van Dijk and Helmers, 'Nederlandse vrouwentijdschriften?'

instrumental scoring'.<sup>125</sup> Even in genres in which the Dutch had previously been leading and which were still large-scale, such as cartography, eighteenth-century production was generally derived of seventeenth-century work or adaptations of foreign production.<sup>126</sup>

This did not mean that Dutch publishers only followed the lead of others. They adapted, updated, and sometimes even improved foreign editions. In the case of musical publishing, for example, 'the Dutch led the way by moving from printing to engraving'.<sup>127</sup> In the nineteenth century, the Dutch publishing industry was still supplied with foreign material by specialist importers, and the Netherlands even became the prime importer of English-language works to the continent.<sup>128</sup>

It has been argued that the rise of literary prose put Dutch authors at a disadvantage.<sup>129</sup> The Dutch did not only lose their relative competitive advantage vis-à-vis foreign publishers, but they were also placed at an absolute disadvantage. Due to the small size of the country, possibilities for differentiation were limited. In this respect, the case study of periodicals is illustrative. Studies show an explosion in the number of periodicals that were available in England, France, and Germany through the last Enlightenment decades of the eighteenth century, as well as a steep increase in specialisation and differentiation. The post-1750 increase in the number and differentiation of periodicals has given the distinct impression that this also occurred in the Netherlands. Attempts at specialisation comprise journals for specific disciplines, such as medicine and law, and magazines for specific groups of readers, like women and children.<sup>130</sup> However, empirical studies have suggested a lack in sustainability of such specialised journals. A preliminary study on Dutch women's periodicals of the eighteenth century suggests that these magazines were not printed in large runs and that they were short-lived. If anything, the productions cover just one or two editions.<sup>131</sup> In a more extensive analysis, Johannes has shown that specialised Dutch periodicals were short-lived and that they had rather low circulation figures. He found hardly any specialised periodicals in circulation around the year 1800 and he dates the first successful long-running specialised scientific and medical journals at post-1810. Johannes explained these observations by the small size of the market for the Dutch-language and cultural periodicals.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>125</sup> Schmidt, 'Amsterdam editions of Lully's music', p. 127.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. the introductory chapter in Van Egmond, *Covens & Mortier* 2009.

<sup>127</sup> Schmidt, 'Amsterdam editions of Lully's music', p. 127.

<sup>128</sup> Van der Weel, 'Nineteenth-century literary translations'; Dongelmans, 'Contacts between Dutch and English publishers'; Van der Weel, 'Rise of the English book'.

<sup>129</sup> Kloek and Mijndhardt, *1800. Blueprints*, pp. 460-461. Cf. Kuitert, 'The professional author in the Netherlands'.

<sup>130</sup> Kloek and Mijndhardt, *1800. Blueprints*, pp. 77-85.

<sup>131</sup> Van Dijk and Helmers, 'Nederlandse vrouwentijdschriften?', p. 84.

<sup>132</sup> Johannes, 'The development of the literary field', p. 351.

## 5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter it has been argued that, by circa 1660, the life cycle of Dutch book production entered the inevitable stage of maturity. In the Dutch Republic, the factors stimulating demand for books, such as purchasing power and literacy rates were already high by the middle of the seventeenth century. As were urbanization rates, levels of wage labour, and on top of this, population growth came to a halt during the second half of the seventeenth century. Moreover, book production was characterised by a large degree of product differentiation, and by relatively inclusive distribution networks. Through product and process innovations, the commercial potential of a relatively large urban and professional middle class had been exhausted. In the absence of new demand stimuli, possibilities for domestic market growth were limited.

Nevertheless, Dutch book production and trade were remarkably dynamic. Despite the new market conditions, Dutch publishers managed to maintain production levels and even reinforced their position in the international book trade. They were able to adapt to the changing market conditions by tapping into previously developed skills and routines. The phase of maturity was not the time to invest in or compete with new and innovative aesthetics, such as copy, type, and illustrations, except for those at the higher end of the market. Instead, publishers tapped into previously acquired skills and resources, such as international networks. Their success was also facilitated by the development of domestic paper production, the immigration of Huguenot publishers, and international hostilities. In other words, with a little help from international circumstances and developments in a supporting industries, Dutch publishers managed to embark on a new path and prevent a 'lock in'. On the other hand, in the domestic market a new growth dynamic could not be created as successfully.



## 6 Adaptations in the book trade, 1660-1800

### 6.1 Introduction

By circa 1660 and again by 1730, Dutch publishers were confronted by reduced commercial opportunities. The hegemony of Dutch book production came to an end when foreign publishers started to catch up as a result of the abolishment of strict censorship and licensing, improving economic circumstances, and the development of vernacular book trades. However, the number of firms remained relatively stable and the number of titles produced even increased. This paradox has traditionally been explained by way of the reading revolution theory, but as of yet, no evidence has been found to support this. If anything, the fact that publishers refrained from investing in product innovations corroborates José de Kruif's argument that demand did not significantly expand during the eighteenth century. In this chapter, the discussion on market maturity will be continued.

Around the same time Dutch publishers strengthened their position as large-scale international exporters and distributors, publishers established their own guild where this had not been done before, existing guilds altered their statutes, more formal partnerships were formed, and distribution and payment methods were adjusted. Around 1730, when the position of Dutch publishers was once again under pressure as a result of the loss of export markets, publishers further modernized differentiation, distribution, and marketing techniques, altering the competitive context once again. At first sight, these different developments may seem unrelated, but in the framework of the industrial life cycle they are not. Viewing them as coherent reactions to changing circumstances adds the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative changes that can be observed throughout the period 1660-1800. The observed strategies in distribution and marketing, as well as mergers, collaborations, and the increasing occupational differentiations can be interpreted as market strategies aimed at surviving in a mature market, rather than in a growth market.

## 6.2 Infrastructure and distribution

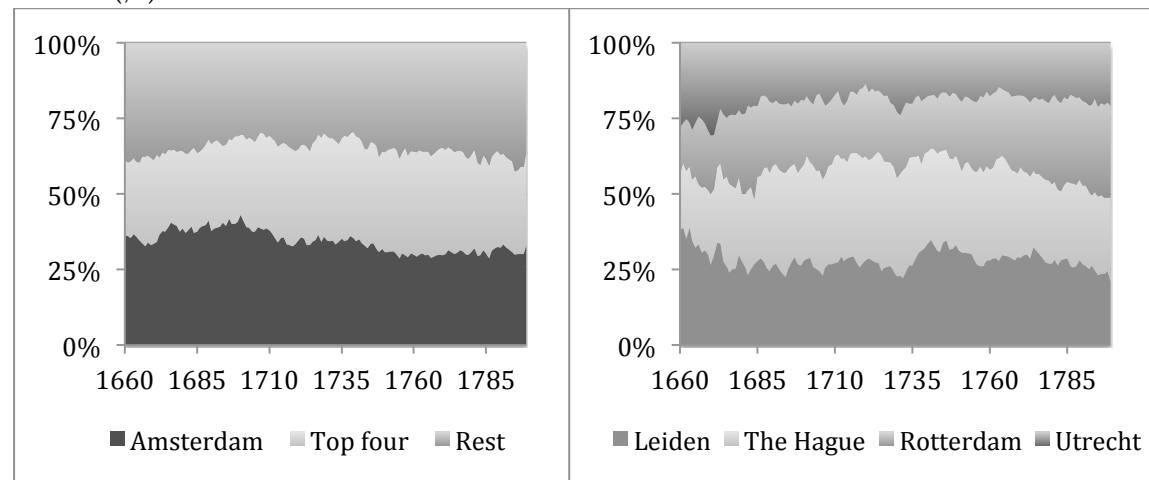
The maturing features of the domestic market, along with the simultaneous rise and fall of international dominance, coincided with some modest changes in the geographic structure of Dutch book production and trade (Figure 6.1). In the early decades of the maturity phase, Amsterdam's share of the total number of publishers in the Republic increased from circa 35 per cent to almost 45 per cent. This was due to the immigration of Huguenot publishers as well as its increasing importance in international book production and distribution. After the initial impact of the Huguenots subsided, Amsterdam's share returned to normal. With the exception of a slight decline in the 1730s, it remained stable throughout the rest of the century. The relative importance of Leiden, The Hague, Rotterdam, and Utrecht fluctuated between 5 and 10 per cent and, as its role in international book trade grew larger, The Hague surpassed Leiden from around 1680 onwards. However, in terms of title production, the picture looks slightly different (Table 6.1). In comparison to the 1650s, Amsterdam's share during the first decade of the eighteenth century remained the same, but 70 years later, the city's prominence in the production of non-ephemeral work had decreased from circa 50 to 40 per cent.

Although Dutch publishers operated in a well-developed domestic communication and distribution network, they also suffered from a lack of opportunity to regularly turnover their stock. Booksellers could not freely dispose of their stock, nor could they easily buy large stocks in one go. Swift distribution was not possible and the knock-on effects of this were increasingly apparent through periods of stagnating or declining demand. This section discusses five areas of distribution that were improved upon during the mature phase as a reaction to difficulties in the traditional channels of distribution: booksellers' auctions, remaindering, commission trade, public auctions and second-hand books, and advertising.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The following is based on Van Goinga, *Alom te bekomen*.

Figure 6.1 Share in total size of industry, measured in number of people active per decade (%) 1660-1799



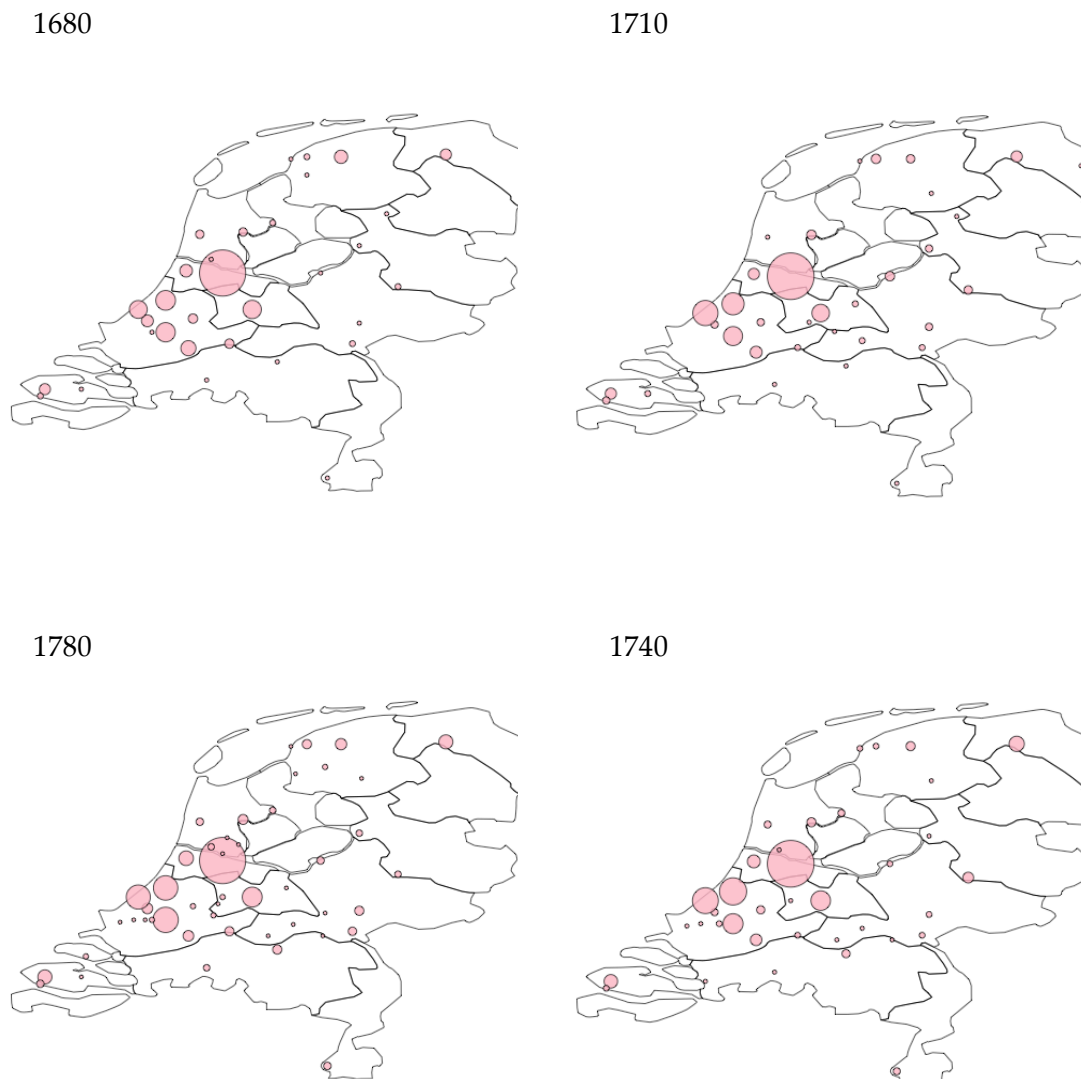
Source: Thesaurus.

Table 6.1. Distribution of booksellers, titles, and non-ephemeral titles.

1700-1709	Total publishers**	Total titles	Non-eph.	% Publishers	% Titles	% Non-eph.
Amsterdam	134	2,600	2,279	39.2	27.1	50.7
Leiden	27	1,499	568*	7.9	15.6	12.6
The Hague	33	981	345	9.6	10.2	7.7
Rotterdam	23	317	226	6.7	3.3	5.0
Utrecht	19	955	265*	5.6	10.0	5.9
Haarlem	8	109	65	2.3	1.1	1.4
Delft	3	75	42	0.9	0.8	0.9
Dordrecht	8	85	66	2.3	0.9	1.5
Middelburg	7	78	13	2.0	0.8	0.3
Groningen	7	161	43*	2.0	1.7	1.0
s.n., s.l.	-	2,109	338	-	22.0	7.5
Rest	73	613	241	21.3	6.4	5.4
Total	342	9,582	4,491	100	100	100
1770-1779	Total publishers**	Total titles	Non-eph.	% Publishers	% Titles	% Non-eph.
Amsterdam	135	3,672	2,962	30.4	30.8	40.7
Leiden	44	1,549	585*	9.9	13.0	8.0
The Hague	40	1,217	738	9.0	10.2	10.1
Rotterdam	37	733	389	8.3	6.2	5.3
Utrecht	28	1,291	582*	6.3	10.8	8.0
Haarlem	11	406	213	2.5	3.4	2.9
Delft	5	215	73	1.1	1.8	1.0
Dordrecht	7	377	210	1.6	3.2	2.9
Middelburg	15	373	157	3.4	3.1	2.2
Groningen	13	485	168*	2.9	4.1	2.3
s.n., s.l.	-	2,277	913	-	19.1	12.5
Rest	109	665	288	24.5	5.6	4.0
Total	444	11,930	7,278	100	100	100

Source: STCN, Thesaurus. \* also excluding academic texts; \*\* average number of publishers per year in decade.

Figure 6.2 Distribution in 1680, 1710, 1740, and 1780 (clockwise)



Source: Thesaurus.

#### *Distribution methods*

In theory, booksellers' auctions were an effective way to dispose of excess stock. However, in the second half of the seventeenth century, instigated by large publishers, they became increasingly regulated. This left smaller booksellers with few alternatives to shed stock and saw them resort to illegal sales, or illicitly adding new titles to second-hand sales.<sup>2</sup> The situation was particularly pressing in Amsterdam. In Leiden, The Hague, Rotterdam, Delft, and Utrecht exceptions could

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 123-151.



be made and regulations were less strict.<sup>3</sup> Only after a major conflict in the late 1760s were Amsterdam booksellers granted an annual auction.<sup>4</sup> In 1765, approximately 60 Amsterdam booksellers submitted a petition to their own guild to either keep a closer watch on unbound sales, or discard the rules altogether. Not only were the protestors unhappy with the restrictions on sales, they also accused large booksellers of not adhering to the rules that they themselves so desperately tried to sustain. However, the large booksellers objected and the request was not granted.<sup>5</sup> Supported by a group of Rotterdam booksellers, sixteen of Amsterdam's booksellers lay out their arguments in another letter.<sup>6</sup> Eventually they forced the issue and the case was brought to the local government. The administrators proved more liberal than the guild board and in 1769 they granted Amsterdam booksellers an annual unbound auction.<sup>7</sup> This was a rather muted triumph for the smaller booksellers, as they were still unable to auction books from outside Amsterdam.<sup>8</sup> The case of Amsterdam clearly reflects the importance of unrestricted purchasing and selling through auctions to eighteenth century booksellers, especially as they were attempting to shorten the turnaround time of books. Little is known about the average time between the production and sale of books in the early modern period, but estimates are that in the second half of the eighteenth century, it was approximately four years.<sup>9</sup>

Another improvement in distribution was the public auctioning of second-hand books.<sup>10</sup> Public auctions of second-hand books were an attractive means of obtaining working capital, as customers were supposed to pay in cash, and booksellers could also dispose (illegally) of newer titles. Again, this was not a new phenomenon, but its importance increased during the maturity phase. As discussed before, booksellers in The Hague's Binnenhof, referred to as 'De Zaal', were not subject to local guild regulations. Thanks to this early advantage they also secured part of the Dutch trade in second-hand books.<sup>11</sup> But the real winners were booksellers in Leiden, the birthplace of the printed auction catalogue and specialised book auctions.<sup>12</sup> The printed auction catalogue was a late sixteenth-century Dutch innovation that led to the rapid development of a flourishing auction system - one of the pillars of the Dutch book trade after the middle of the seventeenth century. In

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 123-125; Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 42-52.

<sup>4</sup> Van Goinga, *Alom te bekomen*, p. 140; BKVB, Archief van het Amsterdams Boekverkopersgilde, inv. 83, behind f. 153; Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, p. 271.

<sup>5</sup> BKVB, Archief van het Amsterdams Boekverkopersgilde, inv. 57, appendix 10; Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 269-271.

<sup>6</sup> BKVB, Archief van het Amsterdams Boekverkopersgilde, inv. 83, f. 153 and behind f. 138; *ibid.*; Oldewelt, ed., *Kohier*.

<sup>7</sup> Ordinance 1769, article 4; Van Eeghen, *Gilden*, p. 119.

<sup>8</sup> Van Goinga, *Alom te bekomen*, p. 149.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 155.

<sup>10</sup> On auctions and catalogues: Van Selm, *Menighte treffelijcke boecken*; Cruz, 'Secrets of success'; Van Goinga, *Alom te bekomen*, pp. 185-206.

<sup>11</sup> Keblusek, *Boeken in de hofstad*, pp. 114-116.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Cruz, 'Secrets of success'.

Joel Mokyr's terms, this was a genuine micro-invention. Leiden's publishers did not invent book auctions or printed catalogues but combined them, creating an original and profitable approach.<sup>13</sup> The development of the printed auction catalogue in Leiden at the end of the sixteenth century established Leiden as the second-hand book capital of Europe. Dealing with a stagnating local demand for and supply of copy, the market had already become saturated by around 1620, but the book trade coped relatively well.

To some extent Leiden's publishers followed the general strategies observed in the growth phase: they started publishing more in Dutch and decreased the size of books in order to lower prices.<sup>14</sup> However, they also shifted part of their focus from production to distribution, building on a local competitive advantage. As was pointed out in Chapter 4, Leiden's publishers specialised in the auctioning of academic libraries. By being located in the largest university town, they had access to valued collections of books, as well as to international information networks. Building up experience and skills, they quickly established a reputation for quality auctions. A market for second-hand books developed and the Leiden publishers' early advantages, combined with a collective effort to generate profits from their innovation, yielded a solid source of business. From 1722 onwards, as a result of repeated complaints from local booksellers regarding the systematic abuse in the application of public sales, Leiden's booksellers were permitted to hold annual public auctions.<sup>15</sup> In other words, the previously illegal but common practices were legalised.

A third improvement can be found in the manner of exchange between booksellers. Around the turn of the century, the sheet-for-sheet barter trade had been largely replaced by buying on credit, at least in the domestic trade. From the second quarter of the eighteenth century, commission trade, though not in itself a new concept, became more widely used in the European book trade, including the Dutch trade.<sup>16</sup> Commission trade was a form of 'sale or return': the books were delivered to the bookseller, who then had the right to return them should they fail to sell by an agreed-upon date. Booksellers did not pay upfront, but in annual instalments. Through this system, the risks for booksellers were reduced and were transferred to the publisher. The advantage for the latter was a more efficient distribution system.

The increased popularity of commission trade had significant consequences for the organisation of book production, as it increased turnover and stimulated the division of labour. Smaller booksellers were not required to also offer their own

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<sup>13</sup> Mokyr, *Lever of riches*, p. 13.

<sup>14</sup> Cruz, 'Secrets of success'.

<sup>15</sup> Van Goinga, *Alom te bekomen*, pp. 188-189.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61-86.

books in return, which reduced the necessity for them to print or publish their own titles. As well as the division in printing and selling, the publishing and selling sectors were also diverging. Some publishers began leaving the task of distribution to their business relations in Amsterdam, who evolved into so-called *hoofdcorrespondenten*: sales agents concerned with distribution rather than the production and sale of their own titles. The gradual division between publishing and bookselling led to the rise of the publisher in the modern sense of the word.<sup>17</sup>

Three other developments are highlighted to show the increasing importance of distribution over production. Since the 1620s, newspaper advertisements had already been used to market books but from the 1730s onwards they became increasingly widespread. Gradually the character of the advertisements changed, becoming increasingly appealing, especially where Dutch titles were concerned.<sup>18</sup> The remaindering of books - offering new books against strongly reduced prices - also served to speed up distribution and proved an effective method to discard of 'dead weight'.<sup>19</sup> After 1730, this method became increasingly popular. During economically difficult times, the need for working capital became more pressing and triggered the development of new strategies. Even if the economic situation should improve, booksellers were still confronted by distributional limitations. In short, there really was no reason to discontinue effective solutions, such as remaindering.

Studies on the development of book production in the Southern Netherlands confirm this interpretation.<sup>20</sup> The economic recession of the late seventeenth century inspired large Antwerp-based firms, most notably the *Officina Plantiniana* and the Verdussen firm, to change their business strategies. They employed jobbing-printing, most notably in Germany, used cheaper paper, limited production, but also reorganised their distribution and financing systems. Not unlike their Dutch counterparts, when dealing with economic difficulties Antwerp's firms made increasing use of commission trade, agents, and joint ventures.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, p. 54; Johannes, *Barometer van de smaak*, pp. 70-72; Van Goinga, *Alom te bekomen*, p. 299.

<sup>18</sup> Van Goinga, *Alom te bekomen*, pp. 37-51.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 155-182. On the importance of commission trade for Amsterdam's trading position: Van Tielhof, *The mother of all trades*, p. 269.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Van Rossem, 'Bookshop of the Counter-Reformation revisited'; Verhoeven, 'Grondslagen van verandering'.

<sup>21</sup> In particular: Verhoeven, 'Grondslagen van verandering'.

### 6.3 Financing

During the growth phase, there was no lack of capital within the Republic. Advanced and often local financing had stimulated the production of works that required large-scale investment. The Dutch continued to dominate international capital markets into the late eighteenth century but in comparison to the growth phase, more funds were invested in government debts and property, leaving fewer resources for trade and industry.<sup>22</sup> At the end of the eighteenth century, Dutch *rentiers* attracted a lot of criticism. Contributors to periodicals spoke longingly of the proactive merchants of the seventeenth-century, now replaced by idle *rentiers*.<sup>23</sup> In hindsight, the investment strategies of wealthy citizens were interpreted as showing good business sense. In a mature economy, commercial opportunities are more limited than during a phase of growth. In the maturing economy of the Dutch Republic the value of premises and capital became more evident and being a *rentier* was profitable. The book trade continued to profit from the excess capital accumulated in the Republic as interest rates on loans in the form of payment in instalments remained low, but some changes in the financing of books did occur.

Paper merchants were still involved as financiers of large-scale productions, but from the 1660s other forms of financing and risk-management became increasingly important. Production of English bibles by Joseph Athias can serve as a good example. He was financed through merchant Christoffel van Gangelt and his son-in-law Joseph Deutz. Van Gangelt, who started-out as a buyer in the paper mills of Angoulême, was one of the largest importers of French paper. Athias borrowed from Van Gangelt against an interest rate of five or six per cent.<sup>24</sup> These were not the only debts Athias acquired, which is clear from his testimony in 1668, again before a notary. Athias owed Van Gangelt as much as *f* 31,055 and this sum had to be repaid within six months against an interest rate of 5 per cent. Four years later, he owed *f* 39,539 and offered at least 33,000 books, with a net value of *f* 53,034, as security in order to annul all previous securities, bonds, bills of exchanges and assignments that Athias had provided to Van Gangelt.<sup>25</sup> In the 1670s, the financing of larger projects proved more difficult than before. In 1672, the Year of Disaster, Van Gangelt was

<sup>22</sup> Van Zanden, 'Economic growth', pp. 13-23; The overall capital accumulation in the Dutch Republic had increased from 10 to 12 million around 1500, to over 500 million in 1650. Much of this was invested in the merchant fleet, stocks of commercial hoods, property and government debt. In the period 1650-1790 the stock of capital more than tripled, but little more was invested in shipping or trade

<sup>23</sup> De Vries and Van der Woude, *First modern economy*, pp. 673-683.

<sup>24</sup> SA, Deutzenhofje, inv. 330; SA, Notarieel Archief 2766, 3-8-1663; Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. IV, p. 211. In 1663 both parties testified before a notary that had Van Gangelt supplied *f* 2,744 worth of paper, and that Athias would repay him in the form of 1,500 English bibles printed on regular paper and 500 on fine paper.

<sup>25</sup> SA, Notarieel Archief 3210; SA, Deutzenhofje, inv. 333.

confronted with financial problems and he transferred Athias' debt to Deutz, who then came into the possession of the enormous stock of books.

The printing process of a Hebrew bible illustrates the complex involvement of different parties, printers, booksellers, large publishers, paper dealers, and merchants, as well as the difficulties of getting large projects financed.<sup>26</sup> The endeavour began around 1670 with the preparation of Hebrew bible translations by printer Philips Levi (Uri Phoebus Halevi). Due to a series of problems, such as the financial troubles of Borrit Jansz Smient - the intended financier, bookseller and merchant - and problems with another merchant, Jan Otto van Halmael, it wasn't until 1675 that printing could commence. This time Athias himself acted as a financier, advancing f 12,000 for paper and wages. The complicated construction, which still involved Van Halmael and Smient, led to conflicts, resulting in Athias and Levy parting ways in 1676. Both printers continued the project separately, each using a different translation. Much to Athias' dismay, Joan Blaeu soon wanted to take over Van Halmael's investment. Without doubt, Athias' refusal to accept Blaeu as a financier was due to the latter's investment, together with merchants Laurens and Justus Bake, in the competing translation run by Philips Levi. It transpired that Athias had made a deal with another party, presumably Deutz. Though Deutz's name is blotted out on the document, the fact that the two men shared a history, along with indications from other sources, strongly implies Deutz's involvement.<sup>27</sup> Eventually Athias' debt was not redeemed, forcing Deutz to try and sell the books he held in storage. Losing his main financier, Athias looked elsewhere for help with printing. Focusing on English bibles, he formed a partnership with Susanna Veselaer, also known as the widow Schipper, the other large-scale producer of this export product.

#### 6.4 Partnerships, mergers, and financial tricks

From the 1660s onwards, collaboration became more prominent in the Dutch book trade, both as a business and as a finance strategy. Both merchants and publishers faced increasing difficulties in financing book production, forcing them to look for ways to reduce risks.<sup>28</sup> An alternative to such adversity was to form partnerships, or so-called *compagnies*. These were not new, but the scale and character of the joint ventures differed from previous periods, when more informal associations had prevailed. A few examples of different types of partnerships will be discussed, starting with the formal alliance of several large publishers in the production of one

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<sup>26</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. IV, pp. 213-215; *ibid.*.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 214-215.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 306-307.

particular title. In Leiden in 1661, Joan Blaeu and Daniel and Louis Elzevier, together with Frans Hackius, formed a partnership to publish a *Corpus juris civilis*.<sup>29</sup> They agreed that they would each sell a set share of the print run. Following the death of Joan Blaeu in 1673, the Boom brothers took over the widow's share in the *compagnie*, and sometime between 1673 and 1681 other large firms, Waesberge, Van Someren, and Wolfganck, also joined. Such agreements could cross town's borders. A significant example is the partnership between Pieter van der Aa of Leiden, François Halma and Willem van der Water of Utrecht, and Pieter Mortier of Amsterdam for the publication of *Le grand dictionnaire historique* in the 1690s.<sup>30</sup>

Publishers also joined forces to produce multiple titles in *compagnie*. Presumably, the Amsterdam publishers Johannes van Someren, Abraham Wolfganck, and the brothers Hendrik and Dirk Boom were the first, in 1675.<sup>31</sup> The partnership, later expanded with the inclusion of Michiel de Groot, concentrated on Dutch church books ('*nederduytisch kerckgoet*'). A comparison of the documents concerning the establishment of this early partnership with documents relating to later collaborations reveals that this type of collaboration had become increasingly standardised. Although it lasted only eleven years, its importance lies in the first recording of such a large joint venture, and the triggering of another, more successful, competitor. A second partnership focusing on church books was formed in 1680 when ten smaller firms joined forces to compete with the church books published by the first *compagnie*. They were, it would seem, more successful, as the partnership lasted until well into the twentieth century, though its exact composition had changed somewhat.<sup>32</sup>

In 1682, several members of the partnership that had published the *Corpus juris civilis*, including Blaeu, Wolfganck, the Booms, and the Van Waesberges, formed the largest *compagnie* of its kind. This group of firms collaborated on other business ventures, such as buying at auctions.<sup>33</sup> In the same year another large partnership was established following the sale of a large stock by widow Schippers. Fearing payment defaults, she had demanded mutual liability from the group of firms that took over parts of her stock. Van Eeghen discusses several other partnerships, for example an Amsterdam partnership, known as *compagnie de libraires*, that was formed to challenge Leiden publisher Pieter van der Aa by pirating his titles.

In addition, this period saw the execution of some significant mergers. The scale and success of Blaeu's atlas production was, in no small part, due to the fierce

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 307-310.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 181-182. On Pieter van der Aa: Hoftijzer, *Pieter van der Aa*.

<sup>31</sup> From 1822 under the official name *Nederlandsche Bijbel Compagnie*. Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 311-318; Enschedé, 'De voorgeschiedenis van de Nederlandsche Bijbelcompagnie'.

<sup>32</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 311-318.

<sup>33</sup> On the termination of the partnership: *ibid.*, pp. 319-322.

competition between the Blaeu and Janssonius publishing houses. Until the late 1620s, the maps published by Jodocus Hondius II and Johannes Janssonius had dominated the European market for world atlases. In the growing competition of publishing sea charts and pilot books, two giants emerged: Janssonius and Blaeu. After a fire at Blaeu's workshop on 23 February 1672 and the death of Joan Blaeu the following year, the plates and remaining stock passed to Blaeu's heirs: Willem, Pieter and Johann II. The stock was subsequently sold in five public auctions between 1674 and 1676, where Abraham Wolfgangck acquired the majority of the plates and paper stock. When Johannes Janssonius' estate was divided between his three heirs after his death in 1664, his son-in-law Johannes Janssonius van Waesbergen continued the business until he too passed away in 1681. In 1682, his son, Johannes, joined 'The Latin Company' with fellow book dealers Van Someren, Boom, Goethals, and Abraham Wolfgangck, the owner of the Blaeu's plates and stock. When Joan II Blaeu also joined two years later the two great cartographic houses were effectively merged. That same year, the heirs of the two great cartographic publishing houses published an atlas together.

The partnership between Joseph Athias and widow Schipper can also be interpreted as a virtual merger. Both had been producing English bibles and both had vied for certain privileges, but in 1673 they received a joint privilege from the States of Holland enabling them to print English bibles in all sizes for fifteen years. In the notarial deed they agreed to move their houses closer together to facilitate the collaboration. Therefore they both moved to the Zwanenburgerstraat in quick succession.<sup>34</sup> Through this partnership the duo managed to corner almost the entire market to export English Bibles from Holland. Publishers of catholic liturgical texts also joined forces in the 1670s, with the establishment of the Latin partnership, which specialised in the production of bibles and liturgical texts. Although publishers continued to rely on these formal alliances into and throughout the eighteenth century, most large partnerships were formed in the final decades of the seventeenth century.<sup>35</sup> The timing and nature of these new large partnerships suggest that publishers pooled resources and shared risks in response to increasing difficulties throughout the publishing landscape.

Another example of such a strategy can be found in the changing methods of payment. In part, this was due to the occurrence of several auctions of very large stocks within a short time frame. However, both the timing and character of the changes suggest that financial difficulties were the main motivating factor for formalising payment agreements. During the final three decades of the seventeenth

<sup>34</sup> Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld, *Hebrew typography*, vol. II, p. 295.

<sup>35</sup> Consider also examples in: Kolfin, 'Amsterdam, stad van prenten', p. 35.

century, more formal IOU's signed before a notary started to replace the informal IOU's of old. To illustrate the significance of this development, we look to the first large auctions between booksellers during this period. Following the death of Joan Blaeu in 1673, four auctions were held, one of which was intended exclusively for booksellers.<sup>36</sup> In this auction, the firm's own publications, with the exception of the atlas and the town atlases, were sold at auction. Consequently, Amsterdam's five largest publishers, Wolfganck, Waesberge, Elzevier, Van Someren and the brothers Boom, made a secret agreement to support each other's heirs should one of their partners die. The agreement stipulated that they would all attend the auctions of the stock of the deceased and were to buy at least a 1/32 share of the estimated value of the stock. In following this agreement, they would receive a discount for every each guilder spent. Conversely, should they fail to reach the threshold, a charge would be levied for every guilder below the agreed-upon amount. The fine for not fulfilling this obligation was set at *f* 1,000. This agreement was basically the opposite of deals to limit bids.<sup>37</sup>

The first opportunity for the business associates to put their words into action came with the death of Daniel Elzevier. The auction was as controversial and influential as Cornelis Claesz' auction had been 70 years earlier.<sup>38</sup> Following a conflict between the heirs and Elzevier's business associates, there were two sets of differing conditions: one for Dutch booksellers and a less favourable one for their foreign counterparts. The main components of the former group's conditions were the extended payment terms offered to booksellers, such as the ability to postpone the first payment to the second instalment's due date. As before, no interest was due on the bonds as long as they were paid on time, but because these bonds were signed before a notary they could be transferred.<sup>39</sup> These terms were presumably not offered in the conditions set for foreign booksellers.

The auctions, with purchases payable in instalments, formed the distributional grid that supported large publishers.<sup>40</sup> The new set of conditions resembled those in use throughout the growth phase, but they were reformed to meet current issues and would remain the standard until a second period of crisis led to further changes in payment procedures. In the 1730s there were new problems in the book trade, as the impact of the Huguenots had petered out with the death of certain significant Huguenots in the 1720s and as import restrictions were limiting exports to France. A group of publishers tried to release capital tied up in stock by

<sup>36</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 260-261; Kleerkooper and Van Stockum, *Boekhandel te Amsterdam*, vol. I, p. 44.

<sup>37</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, p. 261.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid..

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>40</sup> This is clearly visible in the archive of the Leiden firm *Luchtmans*. BKVB, Luchtmans archief: boekverkopers boeken, 1697-1803; BKVB, Luchtmans archief: administratie en boekhouding, 1702-1845.



organising a series of auctions of speculative nature.<sup>41</sup> The main instigators were members of the so-called 'group of five' from The Hague. These booksellers auctioned off unsold stock amongst themselves in exchange for bonds. Subsequently these bonds were transported to parties outside of the book trade. By trading in dishonoured bonds, the publishers created funds to meet creditors and effectively transferred their problems to external parties. With no immediate rescue strategy this bubble had to burst and in the 1740s a wave of bankruptcies followed, especially in The Hague. In addition to those directly involved in the malpractice, trading partners also suffered losses. Neaulme of Utrecht was in trouble, as were Du Sauzet and Batailhey of Amsterdam. Even Pieter Mortier's firm never fully recovered from the blow.<sup>42</sup> Once again we see how credit networks tied publishers in particular - though, in the Dutch Republic, not exclusively - into a local structure.

Van Eeghen has suggested that possible consequences of the speculation in public sales of books were both a decrease in use of bonds and, from the middle of the eighteenth century, a decline in paying by instalments.<sup>43</sup> These developments were a direct attempt to reduce the turnaround time of products.<sup>44</sup> Paying in instalments was relatively slow and also created obstacles for publishers in dire need of working capital. This issue became particularly pressing in periods of market stagnation or decline. Although several solutions were sought in the adaptation of distribution systems, cash flow remained a bottleneck.<sup>45</sup>

## 6.5 Guilds, from production to trade

The book trade's payment system made for intense connections between firms and a blurred occupational distinction between publishers, booksellers, and printers. In order to offer a broad variety of books for sale, it was essential to exchange books with other booksellers. Apart from increasing mutual dependence, this had a second consequence: it increased entry restrictions for booksellers. Those who would or could not publish or print books had few options available to them to facilitate trading, besides purchasing at auctions.<sup>46</sup> Throughout the century, minor players started to experience more pressure from large publishers, both directly and indirectly. With the emergence of a larger group of major publishers profiting from scale advantages, exchanges were often imbalanced, and this could result in irregular

<sup>41</sup> Beijer, 'De crisisperiode in de Haagse boekhandel'.

<sup>42</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, p. 94.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 95, 266-267.

<sup>44</sup> Van Goinga, *Alom te bekomen*, p. 150.

<sup>45</sup> In 1801, Dutch publishers organised a meeting in which they attempted to solve payment issues and determine ways to increase cash payments between booksellers. Van Goinga, 'Meer dan halve bottels'.

<sup>46</sup> Frijhoff and Spies, *Dutch culture*, p. 268.

exchange rates. Smaller publishers could not always trade sheet for sheet, or obtain the same discounts as larger buyers.<sup>47</sup>

Meanwhile, large publishers increasingly regulated the alternate means of acquisition: auctions. At the end of the growth phase, new booksellers' guilds were established in the larger production centres of Leiden (1651) and Amsterdam (1662).<sup>48</sup> In The Hague, publishers had to wait until 1702 before they were separated from the Guild of St. Luke.<sup>49</sup> However, by the 1640s they had gained more influence in the local guild and, after the 1656 separation of painters in the newly established association *Confrérie Pictura*, they effectively dominated the guild. This was mirrored in the more formal post-1651 regulation of The Hague's book trade, when the statutes were expanded with articles concerning booksellers and printers. The ordinances of the first guilds, i.e. Middelburg, Utrecht, Haarlem, were more concerned with the craft of printing than the revised versions of these ordinances were in the second half of the seventeenth century, or indeed, than the ordinances of guilds that were established later.<sup>50</sup> When comparing the 1616 draft of guild statutes drawn up by Amsterdam printers with the guild regulations that were approved in 1661, it becomes clear that hardly any of the articles in the 1616 draft made it into the eventual guild regulations. Differences in the content can be interpreted to reflect the changing concerns of those involved in the book trade. This time the bookseller-publishers, rather than the printers, had taken the initiative and they were more successful.

The Amsterdam ordinance, published in 1663, dealt primarily with three issues: membership criteria and apprenticeships, social benefits, and auctions. Much was copied from the ordinances of St. Luke, but articles 15 to 22 regarding auctions were a new addition. The statutes of the Amsterdam booksellers' guild stipulated that there would be five guild deans: four booksellers and one printer.<sup>51</sup> This was hardly a representative ratio of their own 1661 estimate of 200 booksellers and 100 printers working in Amsterdam. This suggests that, as a group, booksellers were the most powerful members of the book trade. The architects of the request argued that

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<sup>47</sup> Sabbe, ed., *Briefwisseling* In 1669 a letter from Verdussen to Utrecht bookseller Arnoldus van der Eijnden refers to Joachim van Metelen, who had to buy much in cash, as he printed very little making it hard to trade by barter (Letter XII). In 1670 the Verdussens try to try to exchange sheet by sheet with Elzevier, while Elzevier had requested Verdussens pay in cash (Letter LXXVII).

<sup>48</sup> Van Eeghen, 'Het Amsterdamse Sint Lucasgilde'; Van Eeghen, *Gilden*, pp. 100-102; Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 17-21.

<sup>49</sup> Keblusek, *Boeken in de hofstad*, pp. 104-117.

<sup>50</sup> Noord Hollands Archief, Gildenarchieven, Keuren van het gilde, 1616-1788. Keuren en Ordonnantien (K&O) II, 74 (1616); K&O II, 77 (1616); K&O II, 78 (1619); K&O II, 216 (1709). For Utrecht: three ordinances dated 1599, 1653, and 1663. Evers, 'Het Utrechtse boekdrukkersgilde'; Forrer, 'Drie ordonnances'; Hallema, 'Twee ordonnances' Kruseman, *Aanteekeningen betreffende den boekhandel*, 468-469.

<sup>51</sup> BKVB, Archief van het Amsterdams Boekverkoopersgilde, inv. 52. Ordonnantie voor het boek- en kunstverkoopers, nevens boek- kaart-plaatdrukkers, en boekbinders gilde deser Stede Amsterdam, 1769. This document contains the 1663 ordinance and later alterations.

they did not belong in the Guild of St Luke, since their sector hardly qualified. Booksellers never worked with paintbrushes, the original criterion for membership to the guild. Moreover, they complained about the lack of support offered by the guild board during the conflict over the *Statenbijbel*, attesting that the board of the guild only provided financial assistance in the disagreement because the town council forced them to. Slightly opportunistically, the booksellers also referred to the advantages of a separate guild for the local government, in terms of censorship enforcement.

Van Eeghen has suggested that one of the main reasons behind the Amsterdam booksellers request to separate from the Guild of St. Luke was the frustration of large publishers regarding the illegal auctions held by smaller booksellers.<sup>32</sup> The only articles in the statutes of the Guild of St. Luke that dealt directly with regulating booksellers were concerned with the practice of public sales.<sup>33</sup> By statute of the Guild of St Luke, members were only allowed to auction books when the owner had died, gone bankrupt, or otherwise ended his business. Sometimes exceptions were made, allowing booksellers to sell part of their stock to repay debts in order to prevent executorial sales.<sup>34</sup> In general, however, it was strictly forbidden to auction off books without first ending a business, but the archives of the Amsterdam booksellers' guild, as well as notarial archives, include several reports of illegal auctions.<sup>35</sup>

Article 22 of the 1663 guild decreed the prohibition of weekly or monthly auctions in homes or inns.<sup>36</sup> In 1674, a conflict arose when booksellers were caught in the middle of such an auction. In response, 60 less wealthy printers and booksellers requested to hold privately organised auctions without the presence of an official auctioneer (*'particuliere boeckventerije sonder afslaeger'*), the exact practice that was prohibited by article 22.<sup>37</sup> They explained how the article caused them serious problems, as it made it impossible to counter the 'monopoly' held by the few wealthy booksellers. They accused these wealthy booksellers of buying in bulk and artificially inflating prices. To counter this, the less wealthy had been congregating at monthly

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<sup>32</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. IV, pp. 267-277; *ibid.*, pp. 237-274.

<sup>33</sup> Statutes dated 17-10-1630, and 31-8-1658; Van Eeghen, 'Het Amsterdamse Sint Lucasgilde', p. 92.

<sup>34</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, p. 258.

<sup>35</sup> BKVB, Archief van het Amsterdams Boekverkopersgilde, inv. 56, in the front of the book; Kleerkooper and Van Stockum, *Boekhandel te Amsterdam*, vol. I, p. 1480; Van Dillen, *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis*, n. 1746, n. 1754; Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. III, p. 165.

<sup>36</sup> BKVB, Archief van het Amsterdams Boekverkopersgilde, inv. 60, f. 15-16. Article 22: 'Insgelijks sal niemant, wie hij zij, in Herbergen, ende Huysen, ofte eenigerley Plaetsen, vermogen aen te stellen, Weekentlycke, Maendelyckse of eenigerhande andere Comparitien, om aldaer gebondene of ongebondene boeken te Veylen, ofte Verkoopen, by op of afslag onder wat Pretext het soude mogen zijn, ende dat op de verbeurte van vijf-en-twintig gulden, te verbeuren by den genen, die deselve Veylinge of Verkoopinge sal hebben beleyde, ende twaelf gulden by yder Gildebroeder die daer by of present sal werden gevonden, te appliceeren als vooren.'

<sup>37</sup> BKVB, Archief van het Amsterdams Boekverkopersgilde, inv. 56, behind n. 26; Van Eeghen, *Gilden*, pp. 117-118.

meetings, having bought up stock in bulk, and auctioning the books amongst themselves, thus creating advantages of scale. The request of the smaller booksellers was countered by a successful request made by 56 large booksellers (including four of the petitioners of the first request), to maintain, and even reinforce, the regulations on auctions.

In Leiden, in around 1650, there was a comparable conflict.<sup>88</sup> Concerns arose when news emerged that the most important booksellers (who were also the guild deans) were trying to prohibit sales by out-of-town booksellers. In response, 21 of Leiden's smaller booksellers requested permission to continue to permit the practice. For the smaller booksellers these sales were the only way to buy books at reasonable prices because, so they complained, the large Leiden booksellers took too much profit. These conflicts suggest that large publishers gained more power at the expense of smaller booksellers.

## 6.6 Skills and routines

How did these shifts in priority relate to the infrastructure of skill transfer? First of all, it is important to distinguish between printers and booksellers.<sup>89</sup> The balance of power between different occupations within the guild, i.e. printers, publishers, small booksellers, and bookseller entrepreneurs, could in theory influence the guilds' involvement in the training process. In the case of book production, we would expect merchant entrepreneurs to favour relatively low restrictions on becoming a master. This would enable a large pool of printers and binders, bringing wages down. Printers, on the other hand, fearing competition, especially from cheap and low-quality products, might be expected to increase such restrictions for masters, while lowering those for journeymen and apprentices. The entrepreneurs behind the establishment of the new wave of guilds were international publishers, rather than local printers, and presumably more concerned with the book trade than with the actual production of books. They would have reaped little benefit from increasing the entry barriers for printers by, for example, requiring printers to pass a master test.

In the case of Dutch book production, power relations within the guild did indeed change, but whether this would have had any significant impact on the reproduction of skills, is impossible to say. Overall, the quality of the printing labour

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<sup>88</sup> Cruz, 'Secrets of success'; Cruz, *Paradox of prosperity*, pp. 25-58, 103-144.

<sup>89</sup> In the early modern period, printers generally supplied their books in unbound form. Customers could then choose in what type of binding they wished to purchase a book, or take an unbound book elsewhere.

force maintained its high level in the eighteenth century.<sup>60</sup> In general, the guilds do not appear to have been too concerned with the contents of training and this did not change throughout this period of study. In the collection of proceedings from the Amsterdam booksellers' guild covering the period of 1674 to 1805, only a handful of complaints or requests concern the quality of the printwork, training, apprentices or skills in general. The bulk of issues dealt with by the guild board concerned auctions and privileges.<sup>61</sup> In truth, guild regulations do not reveal the motivations of guild members, and generally reflect the ideology rather than the reality. Nonetheless, the fact that issues such as conflicts and complaints about piracy and auctions have left a paper trail, whilst information on apprentices remains scarce, suggests that training was not a major concern for the board of the guild.

As pointed out before, in most towns, booksellers were required to have been trained as binders and that some guilds had additional master tests for printers. Although some were binding specialists, most booksellers also possessed (basic) bookbinding skills.<sup>62</sup> The new booksellers' guilds of Leiden and Amsterdam did not require aspiring masters to pass a master test. In The Hague, on the other hand, the amendment of 1651 did refer to a binding test for bookbinders and booksellers; presumably no proof of skill had been required before this time.<sup>63</sup> They did not include a test for printers.

In the case of Utrecht, the following exception confirms the rule. The only known example of a bookseller being exempt from producing a master piece in Utrecht was Pieter Elzevier (1643-1696), who had been born in Rotterdam, but later lived in Amsterdam under the custody of Amsterdam-based publisher Lodewijk II Elzevier (1604-1670).<sup>64</sup> In 1668 he declared that he had no interest in printing or binding and only wished to sell unbound stock, much to the dismay of the guild board. It would take the town council up to a year and a half to mediate the conflict, but in the end Elzevier was granted membership without taking the test. He could only deal in unbound books, was not allowed to print, and could not even have binding tools in his house. He was not the only member of the dynasty who had little affinity with printing. Abraham (1655-1712), the last head of the Leiden Elzevier branch, was notably a bad printer.<sup>65</sup>

The observed differences in the testing of skills raise questions on the purpose of master tests. In theory, master tests could have served three different, albeit non-exclusive, purposes. Whether they functioned as a quality check on training and

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<sup>60</sup> Van Delft and Bots, *Bibliopolis*, 1725-1830: The book as physical object.

<sup>61</sup> BKVB, Archief van het Amsterdams Boekverkopersgilde, inv. 52.

<sup>62</sup> See for an example: Keblusek, *Boeken in de hofstad*, p. 89.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>64</sup> Forrer, 'Drie ordonnanties', p. 99.

<sup>65</sup> Davies, *The world of the Elseviers*, pp. 90-96.

skills, as an entry barrier, or added a symbolic gravitas to the reputation of the printers' products, is difficult to say at this point. Moreover, the distinction may even be merely analytical. The justification of Groningen booksellers to include a binding test for booksellers clearly reflects the ambiguity. Groningen booksellers, who requested their own guild in 1647, complained about the fierce competition they experienced from people who sold books without having had the proper training to do so. Their main argument was that, apart from possessing specific trading skills, such as bookkeeping, booksellers should know how to bind.<sup>66</sup> As such, it can be interpreted as an attempt to ensure quality and reputation, but also as a measure to exclude untrained booksellers. Although the requirement of passing a binding test would not have directly influenced the quality of the print, it did ensure that aspiring booksellers had spent time working with books.<sup>67</sup>

Increasing disquiet surrounding trade and distribution were not concerns evident in the newly established guilds. The 1599 ordinance of printers and bookbinders in Utrecht consisted of 25 articles. It started with admission fees and moved on to the master test, first for printers, then for binders. Ten of the first fourteen articles referred to apprentices, another five referred to journeymen, and some others related to the protection of members' interests, for example with regard to foreigners. The 1653 ordinance was similar. However, ten years later, we find a change in composition: the first eleven articles refer to the protection of local interests, and also to auctions. The new ordinance was remodelled on the basis of the 1651 Leiden decree, which was in turn inspired by concerns about auctions, rather than production. In other words, the Utrecht booksellers' guild also transformed from a traditional production-guild into a 'bookselling' guild.<sup>68</sup>

## 6.7 Competition

As in any phase of the industry lifecycle, examples of fierce rivalry can also be found in the eighteenth century. Think, for example, of the Amsterdam music publishers Estienne Roger and Pierre Mortier.<sup>69</sup> French Huguenot, Estienne Roger, had put Amsterdam on the map as the centre of music publishing, not in the least by reprinting musical titles from other countries. Soon enough though, others started

<sup>66</sup> Van der Laan, *Het Groninger boekbedrijf*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>67</sup> It is not possible to ascertain whether books produced in towns with skill appraisals were of higher quality than in towns where such appraisals were absent. The sample is simply too small and the Dutch book market was too integrated.

<sup>68</sup> The interpretation by Forrer is followed here. Forrer, 'Drie ordonnances'. Cf. Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, p. 252.

<sup>69</sup> Rasch, 'Muziekoorlog'; Rasch, 'Estienne Roger en Michel-Charles le Cène, Europese muziekuitgevers te Amsterdam, 1696-1743'; Lesure, 'Estienne Roger et Pierre Mortier'.

pirating his reprints, most notably Pierre Mortier, who reprinted work from Roger's Italian composers after 1708. According to publisher Jean-Louis De Lorme, Roger and Mortier were literally 'at war': 'but I will tell you here confidentially that he [Roger] is at war with Mortier, the bookseller from here [Amsterdam], and it is he [Mortier] who is counterfeiting his [Roger's] music, and has corrupted the workers of M. Roger'.<sup>70</sup> Mortier advertised his titles at two-thirds the price of others, and Roger was forced to lower his prices.<sup>71</sup> After Mortier passed away in 1711, Roger bought his plates and stock, but did not increase prices. Overall, customers clearly benefited from such rivalry.

Table 6.2 Measures of competition intensity, 1674-1710

Year	1674	1710	1742
N-titles	7,761	8,484	10,898
N-publishers	114	110	177
Total C <sub>s</sub>	1,974	1,904	2,145
Total C <sub>s</sub>	3,137	2,290	3,062
Share C <sub>s</sub>	0.25	0.22	0.20
Share C <sub>s</sub>	0.40	0.36	0.31
HHI	0.03	0.03	0.02

Source: STCN; Thesaurus

The quantitative indicators of competition do not reflect significant changes during this period. According to the data in Table 6.2, competition remained intense. A closer look at the size of the firms reveals significant changes in the occupational distribution of Dutch publishing firms, but first we will discuss a distinct area in which publishers fiercely competed: privileges.

### *Privileges*

The increasing importance of foreign trade resulted in a new role for formal privileges, not only between Dutch competitors, but also between Dutch and foreign competitors. By the end of the seventeenth century, conflicts surrounding privileges resulted in uniformity of regulations on privileges: the fine was set at *f* 300 and a privilege was valid for fifteen years.<sup>72</sup> However, there was still confusion and dissatisfaction, which were brought to a head by the strategies employed by Leiden

<sup>70</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. I, p. 61. The original text: 'Je vous diray entre nous qu'il est en guerre avec Mortier, libraire d'icy, et luy contrefait sa musique, lequel a debouchées les ouvriers a monsieur Roger'.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 201.

publisher Pieter van der Aa.<sup>73</sup> Van der Aa was granted a privilege on as many as 26 occasions.<sup>74</sup> At first he did not infringe upon the business of others, but this changed in 1689 when he and his associates, Halma (Utrecht) and Mortier (Amsterdam), tried to obtain a privilege on a dictionary and faced opposition by Leers (Rotterdam), who had just ordered copies of the dictionary from Paris. Van der Aa defended his request by arguing that he was trying to prevent the Leers firm from gaining the monopoly on the Paris edition. He eventually won the case.

Several years later, a new conflict arose. Van der Aa requested privileges not for one title, but for composite volumes, for example all the works by Erasmus or Cicero, or a collection of different authors under one denominator (e.g. the 40 plus authors mentioned in the request of a privilege for *Thesaurus antiquitatum & numismatum Orientalium, Judaicarum, Graecarum, Italicarum, Sicularum, Sardinicarum & Corsicarum*). Simply put, he applied the practice of privileges to form a monopoly. This invoked protests from competitors from both within Leiden and from other towns, stating that Van der Aa was trying to rig the market in his own favour.<sup>75</sup> Van der Aa responded by pointing out how others, even those requesting the prevention of his request, used similar methods. Van der Aa was granted the privilege on the composite edition, but other publishers were allowed to publish parts of the collection. The vague and broad formulations in privileges prompted the Amsterdam guild board to state that it would be better not to issue privileges at all, than to permit such general ones.<sup>76</sup>

The conflicts and confusion, often involving Van der Aa, resulted in further clarification, more standardisation, and heavier regulation. A 1708 request by a group of two publishers from Delft and twelve large Amsterdam publishers sums up six points of discord and included a proposal to clarify and regulate the issuing of privileges. They proposed that the privilege be limited to one title; that only Dutch people may apply; that all applicants disclose their names and addresses; that, with regard to composite titles, no works could be used that had previously been printed with a privilege, unless the original printer gave approval; that privileges on schoolbooks and liturgical titles could only be issued if new comments had been added to the original texts; and, that the fine be raised from *f* 300 to *f* 3,000.<sup>77</sup> Following another round of commotion and discord over an initiative by Van der Aa, a new set of regulations was set up in 1715. The new rules were almost identical to the 1708 proposal, except for the disclosure of business associates, which was a small

<sup>73</sup> Extensive discussion in *ibid.*, pp. 179-191. Van der Aa's role is well summarized in: Hoftijzer, *Pieter van der Aa*, pp. 72-74.

<sup>74</sup> Hoftijzer, *Pieter van der Aa*, p. 72.

<sup>75</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 182-183. 'genoegzaam de geheele directive van den boeckhandel deser anden in zijn maght soude bekomen'.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.



victory for Van der Aa. We find a clear relationship between the increasing importance of foreign trade and foreign titles and the increasing turmoil surrounding privileges. Those involved in the conflicts with Van der Aa were significant players in the international book trade and, as has been indicated by Van Eeghen, many were Huguenot refugees or sons of refugees.<sup>78</sup>

The constant conflicts between Van der Aa and booksellers across different towns brought about a new practice which saw all requests for privileges being submitted to the guilds of other towns, who then had to deliver their verdict on the request.<sup>79</sup> Guilds gained influence and the new system seems to have generally improved transparency. However, privileges did remain an issue in the competition between the Republic and other countries. In 1722, 24 Amsterdam-based publishers objected to the reprinting of their publications in France.<sup>80</sup> On the other hand, English publishers complained about the competitive advantage Dutch publishers had in the international market. In 1733, the London printer and publisher Samuel Buckley presented a petition to Parliament, requesting protection for a large printing undertaking, as he feared the import of pirated editions. He accused the Dutch government of having provided Dutch publishers with an unfair market advantage by giving out privileges on the one hand and reprinting 'the most useful and vendible books published in the neighbouring nations, in the learned languages, or in French, the common language almost of Europe', on the other.

Another method to increase reputation and discourage piracy was the advertisement of (intended) publications in periodicals and catalogues. In 1708, Pierre Mortier acquired the rights to print the *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* and he used this method to publicly advertise his upcoming works. In 1709 he declared his intention to print the operas of Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687) and other composers: 'The printing will surpass in beauty any music that has ever been seen before, great expenses having been made to create a printing establishment with all types of music books'.<sup>81</sup> In the same year he also published a catalogue in which he shamelessly advertised his musical works.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> 1710 contract 23 Amsterdam, 6 Leiden, 18 The Hague, 3 Rotterdam and 4 Utrecht. From this followed the infamous contract of nine Amsterdam publishers, of whom four were refugees. Of the 1710 contract 12 first- or second-generation refugees in Amsterdam, two in the Hague and one in Rotterdam. Latin and French books, international book trade.

<sup>79</sup> Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 202-204.

<sup>80</sup> Lesure, 'Estienne Roger et Pierre Mortier', p. 38. 'L'impression surpassera en beauté tout ce qu'on a jamais vu en musique, ayant fait de grandes dépenses pour établir une imprimerie de toutes sortes de livres en musique'

<sup>81</sup> Ibid..

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 39. It is announced to the public and musical amateurs in particular, that the aforementioned Mortier is working to correct the majority of editions of Italian and French music, and that he is having them engraved with such beauty and accuracy that none have ever been seen so handsome or precise. The aforesaid Mortier also informs that he will sell the aforementioned music for two-thirds of the price for which it is sold by other booksellers' ('On avertit le Public et principalement les Amateurs de Musique, que ledit Mortier fait travailler à la correction de la plus grande partie de la Musique Italienne

His rival, Estienne Roger, immediately responded to this provocation by adding an essay and a catalogue to one of his titles, addressing the counterfeiting practices of Mortier. Although he does not mention Mortier by name, the following lines leave us in no doubt as to his intended target: 'Estienne Roger, shopkeeper and bookseller in Amsterdam, who sells the most accurate music that has ever been published, also sells it cheaper than everyone else. You will see proof of these two truths at the end of this advertisement, where the price of music that has been counterfeited is marked, as well as the price that he [Roger] sells it for, and through a comparison of corrections that he [Roger] engraved with those that have been counterfeited...'<sup>83</sup>

#### *Firm size*

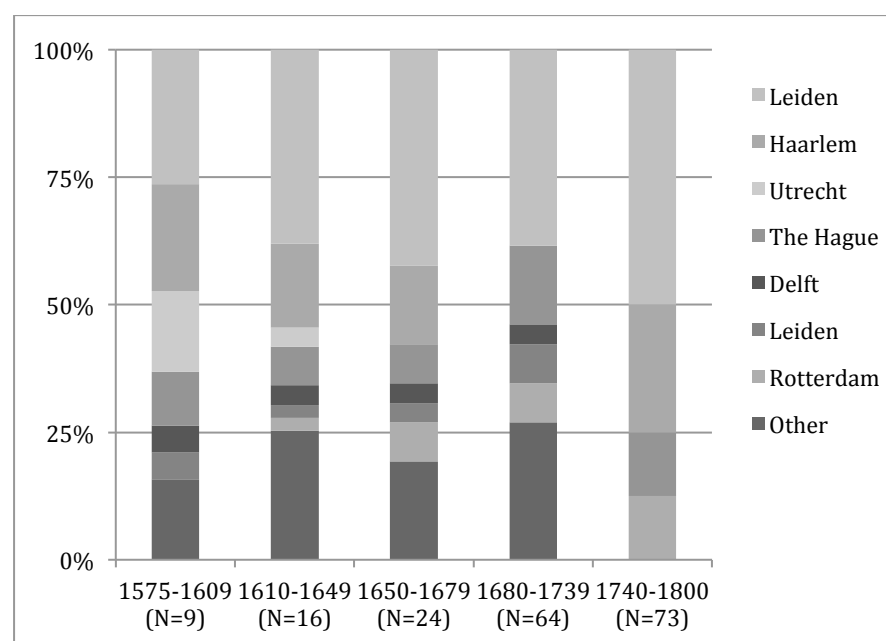
The number of major publishers active in the Republic increased rapidly through the phase of maturity, especially in the period 1680-1740, during which Dutch book production and trade were characterised by a focus on export (Figure 6.3). This growth was not only concentrated in Amsterdam. Amsterdam's share in this group of producers declined, to the benefit of The Hague and Rotterdam in the export period, and smaller towns in the period that followed. Not surprisingly, The Hague and Rotterdam were known for their export facilities and attracted significant numbers of Huguenots.

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et Françoise, et qu'il la fait graver avec tant de beauté et d'exactitude qu'on n'en a jamais eu de si belle ni de si correcte. Ledit Mortier avertit aussi qu'il vendra ladite Musique les deux tiers à meilleur marché qu'elle ne se vend chez les autres Libraires.'))

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 40. 'Estienne Roger, marchand libraire à Amsterdam, qui vend la Musique la plus correcte qui se soit jamais imprimée, la vend aussi à meilleur marché que qui que ce soit. L'on va voir des preuves de ces deux vérités dans la suite de cet Avertissement, en y marquant le prix qu'on vend la Musique qu'on lui a contrefait, et le prix qu'il la vend, et en comparant la correction des ouvrages qu'il grave à celle des ouvrages qu'on lui contrefait.'

Figure 6.3 Geographical distribution of major publishers, 1575-1800



Source: STCN.

When we take a closer look at Amsterdam, we find a modest increase in the average number of titles produced by firms between 1674 and 1710. When we consider the number of titles produced during the firms' existence, we can identify two stages: the rise of the major firm during the export phase and the rise of the small firm during the following period. Nonetheless, the composition did change, as can be seen in Table 6.3. The number of major firms increased at the expense of the number of medium-sized firms. Figure 6.4 presents the relative importance of the different types of publishing firms. Between 1710 and 1740, there was no further increase in the share of major firms, but rather in the share of smaller firms, again at the expense of medium-sized firms. Median output even declined between 1710 and 1742. In contrast to the pattern during the growth phase, the rise in the number of firms was not matched by a concurrent increase in output per firm. That something had changed during the second quarter of the eighteenth century is confirmed by data on Catholic booksellers. Leuven has observed that large firms had problems sustaining their businesses and that new firms tended to be smaller.<sup>84</sup>

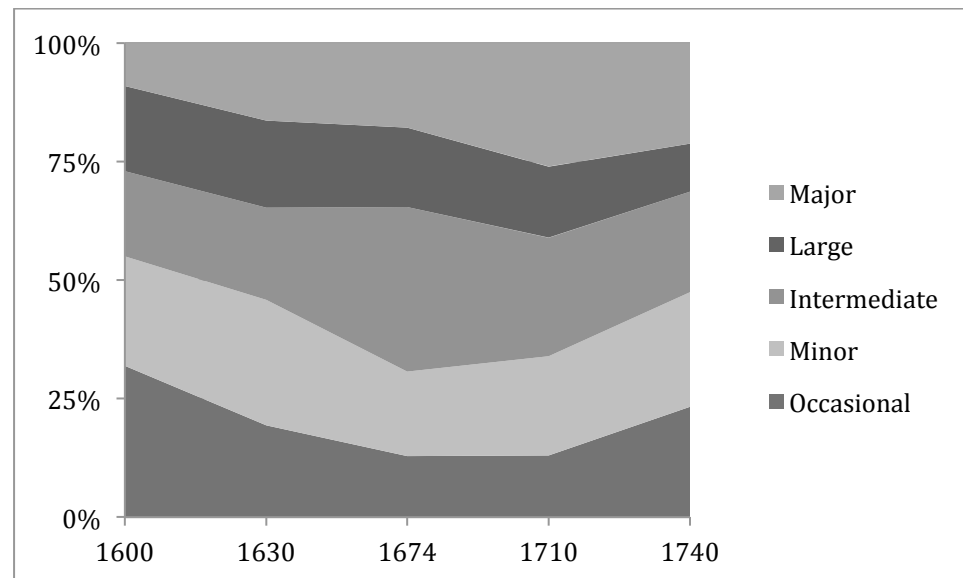
<sup>84</sup> Leuven, *De boekhandel te Amsterdam*, pp. 45, 53.

Table 6.3 Output of firms in Amsterdam 1674-1780

Year	1674	1710	1742
N-titles	7,761	8,484	10,898
N-publisher	114	110	177
Maximum-titles	617	665	903
Average-titles	68	77	62
Median-titles	33	34	24

Source: Thesaurus, STCN.

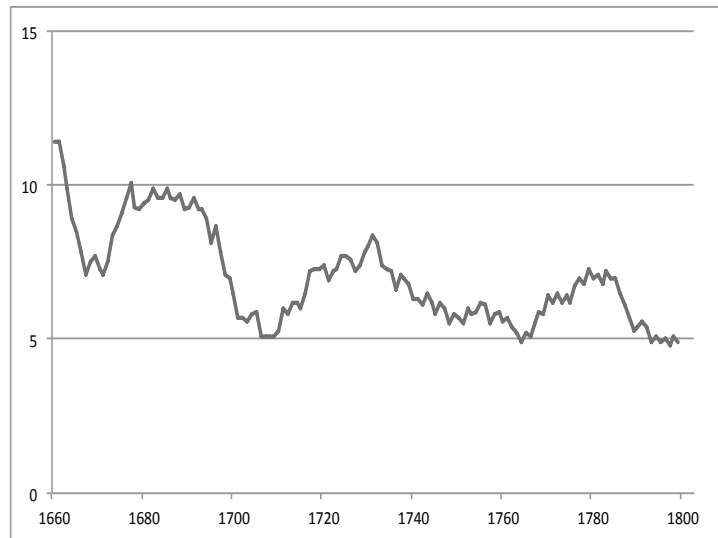
Figure 6.4 Distribution according to size, firms in Amsterdam, 1600-1740



Source: Thesaurus, STCN.

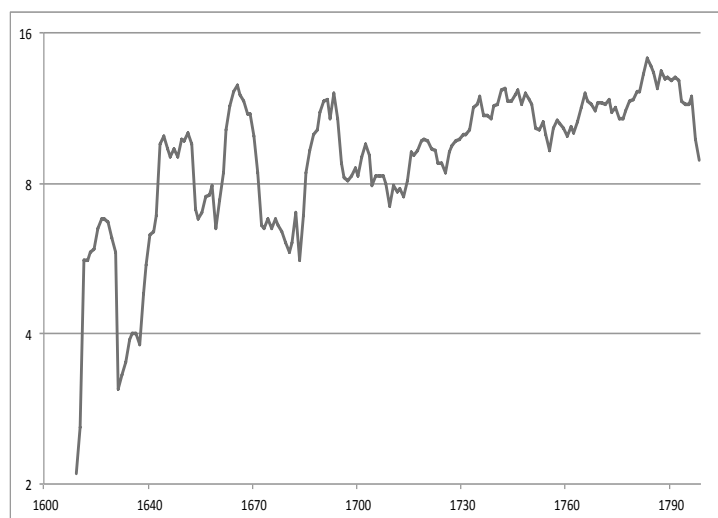
Through examining the records from the guild administration and the data from the Thesaurus, it becomes clear that the eighteenth century was characterised by a much more stable and modest entry pattern. This is exactly what can be expected in a mature market. The entry rate dropped after the 1650s, increased from the 1680s with the arrival of Huguenot publishers, before falling once more (Figure 6.5). All the while, the number of booksellers annually registered in the guild gradually increased (Figure 6.6).

Figure 6.5 Entry rates Amsterdam publishers (%), 1660-1800, 10- year moving average



Source: Thesaurus

Figure 6.6 Number of entries in the Amsterdam booksellers' guild per year, 1600-1800, semi-logarithmic scale, 10-year moving average



Source: SA, Archief van de Gilden, inv. 63.

Firms became increasingly localised. In 1674, circa 50 per cent of Amsterdam publishers were native to the town and by 1742 this had increased to 67 per cent. Among the remaining 34 per cent were almost no foreigners.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, in 1630 the largest producers had been immigrants, except for Hendrick Laurensz, and possibly Broer Jansz. Forty years later almost all members of this group were born in

<sup>85</sup> Prosopography, see Chapter 1.

Amsterdam, except for Daniel Elzevier (b. Leiden), and Jacob Lescaille (b. Dordrecht). The international position and arrival of Huguenots broke the trend. In 1742, seven of the fifteen major Amsterdam publishers in the prosopography were native to Amsterdam, whilst four were born outside of the Republic. Moreover, the share of whose father was also involved in the book trade, or in one of the related and supporting industries, doubled from 20 to 40 per cent.<sup>86</sup> In 1742 this was almost 80 per cent.

The increased local entrenchment and development of family firms increased entry restrictions. One obvious entry barrier in book production is the level of investment necessary for starting a business. The cost of establishing a new firm strongly influences career possibilities and, in turn, the competitive environment of an industry. When it requires so much investment to compete in a specific industry, the number of firms will remain relatively low due to the importance of economies of scale. As book production demanded high levels of sunk investment, publishers often started-out as binders then later, once they had saved enough to invest in printing material, they branched out. Necessary investments included adequate premises, a printing press, type, paper, and other materials, such as ink. With printing presses costing around *f* 100, sources suggest that an aspiring printer would need several hundred guilders to purchase the necessary material.

However, in this assessment of developments in the competitive structure of the Dutch book trade, this is not the most influential entry barrier. Although the level of initial investment limited number of people able to invest in a new print shop, sunk costs did not significantly change over time. In other words, incumbents did not possess significant advantages over starters in this respect. Nevertheless, the fact that locals - family firms in particular - already had established reputations and networks should not be underestimated. Moreover, the increasing opportunities for bigger firms, independently at first and then later in partnerships, to acquire large sets of books, plates, type and even privileges at auctions imply that they gained significant advantages over smaller firms. Furthermore, not all firms could compete in foreign markets. Existing relationships based on trust and information as well as experience with translators and editors became indispensable assets. Not all publishers had such resources at their disposal and they were difficult to establish in a short space of time. In the progressively export-orientated market of the late seventeenth century, medium-sized firms found it more difficult to compete.

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<sup>86</sup> Prosopography, see Chapter 1.

## 6.8 Occupational differentiation and the rise of the small firm

Can the increasing occupational differentiation, a separation between the activities of publishing, printing and selling explain the shifts observed above? Data on the occupation of people involved in the book trade from a variety of sources can be derived from various sources, but as there is no comparable serial data covering the two centuries it is difficult to establish trends over time (Table 6.4). An alternative approach is to compare guild registration to the data in the STCN. The limitation of the STCN, i.e. the fact that booksellers are only included if their name is on an imprint, now works to our advantage. It allows for the assumption that the names in the Thesaurus are the people leading the initiative for a publication. This was not a requirement for guild membership. Of course, this is a simplification, as not all people in the Thesaurus were publishers in the modern sense of the word, nor did all booksellers become guild members. Nevertheless, the trends in Figure 6.7 provide clues. During the seventeenth century the two groups do not differ greatly, but the trend starts to diverge in the eighteenth century. The number of new entrants in the guild increased gradually, whereas the number of new 'publishers' declined or stagnated, depending on the share of one-year hits included. This divergence may be explained by a growing number of people who were involved in bookselling but did not initiate publications. This can be seen as a logical consequence of the changes in the payment and distribution methods.

Table 6.4 Occupational distribution in Amsterdam

	Address book Thesaurus (1600-1699)	<i>Beroepstelling</i> (1688)	Annual guild contribution register (1700-1739)	PQ (1742)
Bookseller/bookshop	411	33	185	121
Bookbinder	3	15	69	-
Printer	97	11	50	15
Publisher	-	-	-	-
Librarian	-	-	-	-
Combined	-	-	-	-
Various	49	12	44	9
Unknown	182	112	155	-
Total	742	183	504	145

Sources: note 87.

<sup>87</sup> Adresboek, many thanks to Marieke van Delft; 'Beroepstelling 1688' in: Van Eeghen, *Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. V-1, pp. 338-340; 'Notulenboekje der jaarzangen'. Register bevattende opgaaf van leden, alfabetisch op achternaam, en door hen betaalde jaarzangen en bosgeld' in *ibid.*, pp. 340-352 and SA, Archief van de Gilden, inv. 68 and 69; Personeel Quotisatie (PQ) Amsterdam 1742: Oldewelt, ed., *Kohier*. Many to Clé Lesger for providing the data. On the PQ see also: Van Goinga, *Alom te bekomen*, pp. 315-338, appendix II.

Figure 6.7 Number of starters in Amsterdam, per decade of first entry in STCN, and registration in the booksellers' guild



Source: SA, Archief van de Gilden, inv. 63; Thesaurus.

## 6.9 Conclusion

The period of 1660-1800 was characterized by market maturity. In order to deal with structural constraints on demand and technological change, producers both large and small developed a series of market strategies. Not only did they limit investment in product innovations, they also tried to reduce risks by forming partnerships and mergers, by amending guild regulations, and by modernising marketing and distribution processes. Business strategies relating to the trade in books gained importance over those related to production. The timing of the improvements in distribution and marketing becomes particularly significant from the perspective of the industrial life cycle. The main strategies in dealing with mature markets are differentiation, distribution and marketing, and this is exactly what happened in eighteenth-century book publishing. These findings go against the thesis of the reading revolution. If there ever was a period of transformation resembling something of a reading revolution in the early modern Dutch book market, this would have been much earlier, around 1620, when the growth phase set.

As a result of the changes in market strategies, the competitive structure of the book trade changed considerably. Informal entry restrictions increased in a



variety of ways and there was less room for the kind of medium-sized firms that had characterised Dutch publishing during the growth phase. The balance of power within the sector shifted towards large publishing firms, especially those with international contacts, as they had significant scale-advantages over their smaller counterparts. During the second half of the seventeenth century, further modernisation of the book trade saw the gap between large and small firms increase further still. Process innovations stimulated occupational specialisation and the business of publishing became detached from that of printing and bookselling.

In terms of cluster theory, there are two other aspects that require attention. First of all, the three towns dominating the international book trade were the same towns that had developed competitive advantages already by 1600. The book trade in these towns had been relatively unregulated during the growth phase and it was firmly tied to specific local amenities: the academy, the government, and commerce. This testifies not only to their position in the Dutch urban network, but also to strong patterns of reproduction over time, as has been illustrated in the case of Amsterdam. Secondly, even though Dutch publishers were not necessarily locked in the true path dependence meaning of the word, they were both aided and disadvantaged by its past. The established routines and relationships in Porter's diamond model proved indispensable in the catering to foreign markets at the end of the seventeenth century. However, the growth dynamic in the previous stage of the lifecycle had also virtually depleted further potential for expansion in the domestic market. This became particularly pressing when Dutch publishers lost their fame in the international markets. The strategies chosen to deal with this, alleviated some of the pressure, but could not redeem or recreate international recognition.



## 7 A period of transition, 1580-1610

### 7.1 Introduction

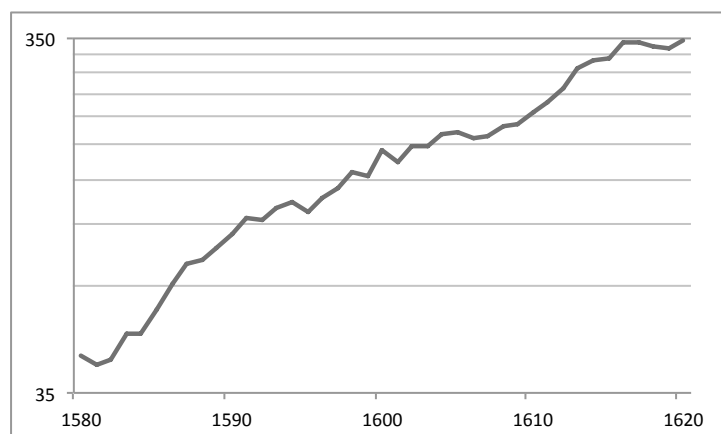
The initial decades following the Dutch Revolt formed a decisive stage in the history of Dutch painting.<sup>1</sup> Figure 7.1 shows a similar pattern to the one we observed in the publishing trade: the number of producers active in Dutch towns increased dramatically after circa 1580. In this chapter the development of Dutch painting throughout the period 1580-1610 is traced. The factors responsible for the rapid expansion after 1580 are also familiar by now: the Revolt, economic and demographic growth and the secularisation of demand. Acknowledging that this story has often been addressed, not least in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, the purpose of this chapter should be clarified. Primarily, it is a crucial step in the discussion of the lifecycle of Dutch early modern painting and for interpreting later stylistic and commercial trends in the art market in particular.

Three issues will receive particular attention. Firstly, growth rates were high, while absolute growth was still relatively modest. As such, the period of rapid growth should be interpreted as one of catching-up. Potential demand was relatively high and increasing, but it was only in the following phase that this was capitalised on by a new generation of innovative artists. The second issue concerns the history and character of the different towns. Artistic communities did not develop just anywhere. Established artistic centres of Utrecht and Haarlem both attracted and fostered clusters of history-focused painters, whereas in Amsterdam painting developed in response to scale, dependent on immigrants who met demand for new specialisations, such as the depiction of landscapes. Finally, the relationship between painting and other cultural activities, such as publishing, cartography, graphic art, and literary life, was vital in expanding the range of motifs and images available to both consumers and aspiring painters.

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Montias considers the period of 1580-1613 as a transitional era for Delft painting. Montias, *Artists and artisans*, chapter 2. The 1993 exhibition catalogue concerning the 'dawn of the Golden Age' discussed the period 1580-1620. Luijten *et al.*, eds., *Dawn of the Golden Age*. In his seminal outline of the Golden Age of Dutch painting, Bob Haak distinguished between the periods of iconoclasm and revolt (c. 1566-1588) and the turn of the century (c. 1588-1609). Haak, *The Golden Age*, pp. 162-176. Focusing on the sub-genre of merry companies, Elmer Kolfin referred to the period of 1580-1610 as the formative years. Kolfin, *Young gentry*, pp. 37-57. Wayne Franits work on figure painting starts only around 1609. Franits, *Dutch seventeenth-century genre painting*.

Figure 7.1 Number of painters active in the Dutch Republic 1580-1620, semi-logarithmic scale



Source: Ecartico.

## 7.2 Expansion of the art market

During the sixteenth century, Antwerp had been the artistic hub of north-western Europe, with the northern provinces little more than an artistic backwater. A handful of skilled painters, most notably Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533), Maerten van Heemskerck (1498-1574), Jan van Scorel (1495-1562) and Anthonis Mor (c. 1517-1577), produced internationally significant paintings, but an exogenous shock, such as a growth dynamic, was required to trigger something more than routine existence. The Dutch Revolt served as such a catalyst, transforming both the demand for paintings, and their supply.

Given the overall demographic and the economic growth in the decades following the Revolt, along with the importance of immigrants in publishing, the rapid growth in the number of painters active in the Dutch Republic is not altogether surprising. As with the publishing industry, the Dutch Revolt and the Fall of Antwerp unlocked opportunities for other centres of artistic production. Owing to its relative proximity and the lack of significant language barriers the Dutch Republic was an attractive destination for painters from the Southern Netherlands. That it offered religious refuge and a large urban population of potential customers also provided ample incentive.<sup>2</sup>

Growth rates between 1580 and 1610 were substantial, but the absolute number of painters starting each year should not be overestimated. In that sense, the upsurge was not quite as epic as it is sometimes implied. Even in Amsterdam, soon to be the largest artistic centre in the Northern Netherlands, the number of

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 2.

newcomers only increased from approximately four per year in the early 1580s to a little over six per year in 1610.<sup>3</sup> Because the artistic cluster started out very small, growth had a large cumulative impact. Not surprisingly, given the small number of painters active in the northern provinces before the Revolt, entry rates were high. Initially, Haarlem and Delft had the highest entry rates of around 20 per cent, but they soon declined to 10 per cent, and in Delft even to 5 per cent, in around 1600. Entry rates in Utrecht were as low as 3 per cent in the 1580s, but increased to 10 per cent.

Figure 7.2 Number of entries and entry rates per year in the seven largest towns (left), and Amsterdam, 1585-1610 (right), 5-year moving average



Source: Ecartico.

In a pattern comparable with that of the publishing industry, the influx of producers was matched by an increasing private demand for paintings. After the Reformation, the number of paintings displayed as public property fell, especially following the iconoclastic turmoil of 1566 that led to the destruction of numerous works of religious arts in churches, monasteries and chapels in the Low Countries. Presumably, the demand for images was replaced by a demand for art in the home. In the Northern Netherlands this had not yet taken the form of standardised production for an open market, as painters still relied predominantly on a modest demand for portraits and religious or historical subjects.<sup>4</sup> This changed after the

<sup>3</sup> This corresponds with data from the Amsterdam marriage bans during this period. Bok, *Vraag en aanbod*, pp. 213-214.

<sup>4</sup> Montias, 'Cost and value', p. 459.

Revolt, when rapid economic growth and the arrival of immigrant art buyers both increased and altered the demand for paintings.<sup>5</sup>

In a period of economic growth, rapid population increase, and rising purchasing power, nothing less than an increase in demand for cultural products such as paintings is to be expected. Michael Montias has estimated an overall wealth elasticity of 1.23 from a study based on Delft probate inventories of deceased citizens, and 1.46 from a random sample of Amsterdam inventories dated 1620-1660.<sup>6</sup> This means that as the wealth of the deceased in Delft increased by 1.0 per cent, the value of the art collection increased by 1.23 per cent. Admittedly, this does not reveal how changes in income levels affected spending on art, but if these estimates are any indication of income elasticity, as they were in the case of publishing, it is safe to say that potential demand increased significantly after 1580. As was pointed out in Chapter 2, the rise in purchasing power occurred mainly between 1580 and 1620, when Dutch painting was still in the phase of emergence.

However, according to Jan de Vries, the rise of per capita income in the first half of the seventeenth century is 'the most common and most dubious explanation' for the flourishing Dutch culture and the large size of the art market. In his view, rising incomes did play a role, but 'could not have accounted for more than a small part of the phenomenon.'<sup>7</sup> Yet his argument is about the sustainment of growth and this chapter is on the foundations of a growth dynamic. He argued that the explosive growth in the number of painters could only have been sustained if consumers were attracted to new products, and/or if new products caused them to change their tastes, which is exactly what happened during the next stage in the life cycle. Still, as Sluijter has pointed out, increases in purchasing power may have stimulated demand for luxury products, but that did not necessarily mean these had to be paintings.<sup>8</sup> In fact, Thera Wijssenbeek's study on possession of art in the inventories of The Hague has shown that, within the aristocracy, tapestries were the most popular and that if the upper level households did own paintings, these were mainly portraits.<sup>9</sup>

Both the increases in purchasing power and the arrival of immigrants from the Southern Netherlands – who were used to adorning their homes with relatively inexpensive pictures – stimulated demand for paintings. This demand, however, was not necessarily for paintings produced in the Dutch Republic, which were elaborate, time-consuming and consequently relatively expensive.<sup>10</sup> The fact that a large number of cheap paintings imported from the Southern Netherlands entered the market in

<sup>5</sup> De Vries, 'Art history', p. 265; Montias, 'Cost and value', p. 459.

<sup>6</sup> Montias, 'Works of art', pp. 75-76; Montias, *Art at auction*, p. 34.

<sup>7</sup> De Vries, 'Art history', p. 266. And vice-versa, as will be explored later, the fall of income alone can explain only a minor part of the large decline in the number of painters and production of paintings.

<sup>8</sup> Sluijter, 'On Brabant rubbish', p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Wijssenbeek-Olthuis, *Het Lange Voorhout*, pp. 82-86.

<sup>10</sup> Sluijter, 'On Brabant rubbish'.

the first decade of the seventeenth century suggests that painters in the Dutch Republic failed to fill a certain gap in the market.<sup>11</sup> At public auctions a wide range of pictures was offered for sale: substantial numbers of very cheap pictures priced from ten *stuivers*, copied pictures that went for less than *f* 5, and inexpensive paintings, possibly originals, at *f* 10-20. Both Dutch-born and immigrants from the Southern Netherlands attended these public sales of imported paintings, and their popularity is evident by complaints from local painters fearing an erosion of their market shares. They labelled the imports as being of inferior quality, but presumably they were simply less expensive.

Apparently, a rise in purchasing power was not sufficient to trigger the development of a mass market for locally produced paintings: the prices of paintings had to drop first.<sup>12</sup> In other words, Dutch artists did not yet exploit the full potential of market conditions. In the following phase, from the 1610s onwards, product and process innovations that significantly lowered production time and thereby the prices of paintings, would unlock this potential.<sup>13</sup>

### 7.3 Spatial clustering and the impact of immigration

Like publishers, painters concentrated in towns close to their customer base. Population size, a basic indicator of the volume of local demand, is an important factor in explaining whether or not painters were active in a particular town in 1610. Nonetheless, it cannot account for the exact distribution of the number of painters. It only explains where painters settled initially. In general, larger towns accommodated more painters than smaller towns. Between 1580 and 1610 the gap widened between small centres and towns, the latter of which already started this period with comparatively large number of painters. The number of towns in which one or more painters were located increased from nineteen in the 1580s to 33 in the 1600s, whereas the number of towns in which more than ten painters were active only increased from eight to ten, with the inclusion of Leeuwarden and Rotterdam.

This divergence cannot only be explained by the size of local demand as proxied by population size (Table 7.1). Besides, all large artistic centres expanded between 1580 and 1610, but not unvaryingly so. The ranking within the top-ten changed over time, largely independent of the variable of demography. Apart from in Amsterdam, the number of painters active per town varied between 10 and 20, all the while the population size was changing significantly. For example, the number of

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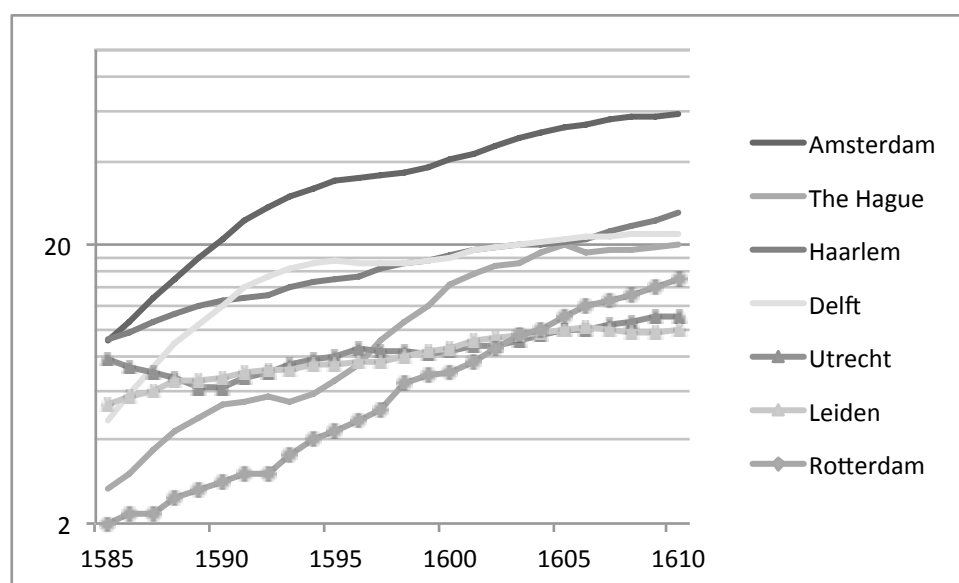
<sup>11</sup> Cf. the argument in *ibid.*.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4; Cf. De Marchi, 'The role of Dutch auctions'.

<sup>13</sup> Montias, 'The influence of economic factors'.

painters in Haarlem increased gradually, meeting the levels of The Hague and Delft by around 1610, but by 1622, Haarlem's population had increased to almost three times the size of The Hague's and almost twice the size of Delft's.<sup>14</sup> Amsterdam's population more than doubled between 1580 and 1610, from 40,000 in 1580 to over 80,000 in 1610 and it soon became the largest artistic centre as well.

Figure 7.3 Number of painters active per town, 1580-1610, 5-year moving average, semi-log scale



Source: Ecartico, date accessed: 12-01-2010.

Table 7.1 Number of painters per 10,000 inhabitants, 1570-1610

	A	H	U	TH	D	L	R	M	Do	Lee	Average
1570	2.9	3.3	3.9	2.7	2.5	3.3	0	1.7	1.5	0	2.2
1580	2.3	2.9	3.3	2.2	1.8	3.3	1.4	2.5	2.8	1.2	2.4
1590	5.6	4.4	2.5	6.0	10.0	3.9	2.0	3.6	3.2	1.1	4.2
1600	7.8	5.8	3.1	17.6	11.4	4.0	5.0	3.0	6.3	5.8	6.7
1610	7.1	7.8	4.1	15.8	11.8	3.1	11.2	2.3	4.4	9.6	7.9

A=Amsterdam, H=Haarlem, U=Utrecht, TH=The Hague, D=Delft, L=Leiden, R=Rotterdam, M=Middelburg, Do=Dordrecht, Lee=Leeuwarden. Source: Ecartico; (Lourens and Lucassen 1997).

<sup>14</sup> Lourens and Lucassen, *Inwonersaantallen*.



Figure 7.4 Distribution of painters in 1580 (above) and 1610 (below)



Source: Ecartico.

In addition to the volume of demand, its sophistication was also important in determining the size of the local art market. The presence of an above-average demand for portraits, especially during the first two decades, was a decisive factor in

determining the work location of immigrant painters. In the first decade, Delft was the fastest growing artistic centre, overtaking every other town except Amsterdam. In the 1590s, The Hague had taken the lead. It was no coincidence that both towns, separated by just ten kilometres, were the seats of Dutch political institutions. As The Hague had proved impossible to defend against the Spanish troops, from 1572 onwards the leader of the Revolt, Willem van Oranje, lived in the St. Agatha convent in Delft, later dubbed the princely court (*Prinsenhof*). But, from 1588, The Hague became the political centre of the Dutch Republic. Although the political role of Delft was short-lived, the town remained a popular place to stay for *stadtholders*, ambassadors, and other high status guests of the Republic throughout much of the seventeenth century.

Haarlem and Utrecht were both towns with an artistic legacy and this stimulated the development of concentration of painters, as will be discussed more at length in the next chapters. The presence of related and supporting industries also influenced location patterns. Malines-born painters were well represented in Delft – making up a striking 41 per cent of all active painters – and in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Middelburg. Not all painters can be considered artist-painters, as some specialised in decorating faience, glass or tapestries. The strong relation between the production of tapestries in Amsterdam and Delft and the presence of watercolour painters from Malines is a good example of this.<sup>15</sup> Antwerp painters played a role in most towns, albeit less significantly in Delft, Haarlem, and The Hague.

#### *The relative importance of immigrants*

The spatial distribution of artistic production can be further clarified by taking a closer look at patterns of immigration. The significance of immigrants in the development of artistic production has often been expressed.<sup>16</sup> Jan Briels has estimated that, between 1580 and 1595, over 200 artists from the Southern Netherlands set up shop in the Republic.<sup>17</sup> More recently, their quantitative importance has been questioned. Eric Jan Sluijter has argued that upon closer inspection, the number of painters who originated from the Southern Netherlands, active in Dutch cities around the turn of the century, was somewhat disappointing.<sup>18</sup> In his opinion, the role of immigrants from Flanders and Brabant or, more specifically, their children, only gained significance in around 1610. Sluijter's

<sup>15</sup> See also Montias on tapestry and watercolour painting in Delft. Montias, *Artists and artisans*, pp. 286–293; Hartkamp-Jonxis, 'Flemish tapestry weavers'.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Bok, 'Rise of Amsterdam'; Montias, *Artists and artisans*, p. 73; Bruyn, 'A turning-point in the history of Dutch art'.

<sup>17</sup> Briels, *Vlaamse schilders en de dageraad*, p. 13. Also consider Briels, *Vlaamse schilders in de Noordelijke Nederlanden*.

<sup>18</sup> Sluijter, 'On Brabant rubbish'.

argument, is persuasive, but he does not supply much quantitative evidence to support it.<sup>19</sup>

Table 7.2 presents the share of locally born painters active in the top-ten artistic towns. There were significant differences between towns. Amsterdam, Delft, Rotterdam, and Dordrecht appear to have been heavily dependent on immigration. To measure the relative importance between Dutch and foreign immigrants, the number of active painters is used, which was effectively equivalent to the number of new painters in this period of sudden growth (Table 7.3). In the top panel the absolute figures are presented, in the middle panel the shares based on the total number of active painters, and in the third only the total number of artists whose place of origin is known. A distinction can be made between two groups of towns: one where locals played a significant role (with circa 40 per cent locally born), and one where growth was more dependent on the presence of foreigners, or more specifically immigrants from the Southern Netherlands (20 percent or less locally born). Haarlem, Utrecht, The Hague and Leiden belong in the former category, the others in the second.

Table 7.2 Place of birth of entrants in the top ten artistic centres, 1580-1610

1580-1609	A	H	U	TH	D	L	R	Lee	M	Do	Total
Total	136	60	19	42	46	26	39	12	19	21	408
Local	18	16	5	9	8	8	2	3	1	1	71
Immigrant	99	20	8	13	29	13	19	8	10	16	235
Unknown	19	24	6	20	9	5	18	1	8	4	114
% Local	13.2	26.7	26.3	21.4	17.4	30.8	5.1	25.0	5.3	4.8	17.4
% Local excluding unknown	15.4	44.4	38.5	40.9	21.6	38.1	9.5	27.3	9.1	5.9	24.1

A=Amsterdam, H=Haarlem, U=Utrecht, TH=The Hague, D=Delft, L=Leiden, R=Rotterdam, Lee=Leeuwarden, M=Middelburg, Do=Dordrecht. Source: Ecartico.

To determine the appeal of the various Dutch towns, all the locational choices of the non-local categories are taken into account. Amsterdam attracted almost 70 per cent of all 'foreigners other' (N=13) and 50 per cent of all Southern Netherlands painters (N= 159).<sup>20</sup> In Amsterdam, Middelburg and, to a lesser extent, Rotterdam and Delft, foreign presence was most significant. Sluijter's suggestion that the relative

<sup>19</sup> In Haarlem, the number of painters from the Southern Netherlands active between 1600 and 1605 was relatively small (four out of nineteen), especially when compared to other crafts Boers-Goosens, *Schilders en de markt*, pp. 43-50.

<sup>20</sup> Note that can be double counts: people who lived in several towns in this period.

quantitative importance of immigrants from the Southern Netherlands was not exceptionally high seems true for some towns, but not for others.<sup>21</sup>

The figures presented below present a somewhat distorted view of the size of the artistic community as a whole and of the relative importance of some towns. The artists in the Ecartico dataset do not form a homogeneous group. Rather, it encompasses decorative painters, watercolour painters of whom no work has survived, and important artists. To allow for a more accurate assessment of the expansion of the art market and its spatial composition, the relative prominence of Dutch artists will be assessed. This exercise is also important to assess the relative importance of immigrants. The importance of immigrant painters in the early decades of the Dutch Republic is not only a matter of quantity, but also of quality. At the start of this timeframe, when relatively few painters were active in the northern towns and one scholar even spoke of artistic deadlock from around 1580 to 1585, when all the prominent painters who had dominated the third quarter of the sixteenth century had either died or become less active.<sup>22</sup> Was the artistic field around 1580 indeed a wasteland, providing easy access to new people and styles?

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<sup>21</sup> Sluijter, 'On Brabant rubbish', p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Kloek, 'North Netherlandish Art', p. 16.

Table 7.3 Place of origin of active painters in eight top artistic centres, 1580-1610

Absolute figures									
Town	H	U	D	A	TH	L	R	M	Total
Total active	64	26	45	146	47	30	39	22	419
Unknown	24	12	8	21	24	6	18	9	122
Local	18	6	7	22	9	9	2	2	75
Republic other	8	3	7	14	7	4	6	1	50
Foreign total	14	5	23	89	7	11	13	10	172
Antwerp	5	4	2	43	4	7	9	5	79
Malines	0	0	16	21	1	0	2	1	41
Southern Netherlands other	7	0	5	16	2	3	2	4	39
Foreign other	2	1	0	9	0	1	0	0	13
Shares based on total number of active painters (%)									
Town	H	U	D	A	TH	L	R	M	Total
Total active	64	26	45	146	47	30	39	22	419
Unknown	37.5	46.2	17.8	14.4	51.1	20.0	46.2	40.9	34.2
Local	28.1	23.1	15.6	15.1	19.1	30.0	5.1	9.1	18.1
Republic other	12.5	11.5	15.6	9.6	14.9	13.3	15.4	4.5	12.2
Foreign total	21.9	19.2	51.1	61.0	14.9	36.7	33.3	45.5	35.4
Antwerp	7.8	15.4	4.4	29.5	8.5	23.3	23.1	22.7	16.8
Malines	0.0	0.0	35.6	14.4	2.1	0.0	5.1	4.5	7.7
Southern Netherlands other	10.9	0.0	11.1	11.0	4.3	10.0	5.1	18.2	8.8
Foreign other	3.1	3.8	0.0	6.2	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0	2.1
Shares based on total known origin (%)									
Town	H	U	D	A	TH	L	R	M	Total
Excl. unknown	40	14	37	125	23	24	21	13	297
Local	45.0	42.9	18.9	17.6	39.1	37.5	9.5	15.4	28.2
Republic other	20	21.4	18.9	11.2	30.4	16.7	28.6	7.7	19.4
Foreign total	35.0	35.7	62.2	71.2	30.4	45.8	61.9	76.9	52.4
Antwerp	12.5	28.6	5.4	34.4	17.4	29.2	42.9	38.5	26.1
Malines	0.0	0.0	43.2	16.8	4.3	0.0	9.5	7.7	10.2
Southern Netherlands other	17.5	0.0	13.5	12.8	8.7	12.5	9.5	30.8	13.2
Foreign other	5.0	7.1	0.0	7.2	0.0	4.2	0.0	0.0	2.9

A=Amsterdam, H=Haarlem, U=Utrecht, TH=The Hague, D=Delft, L=Leiden, R=Rotterdam, M=Middelburg. Source: Ecartico.

## 7.4 Measuring artistic prominence

It is not possible to estimate the number of products in order to identify prominent producers, as was done with title production in the publishing section. This is because survival rates of paintings from this period are much lower. There are many painters whose work is completely unknown, and even the known oeuvres of recognised painters are up for debate.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, as has also been outlined in the introduction, the field of historiometry offers the most concrete methods to measure prominence in visual arts.<sup>24</sup> This technique assesses the reputation of both individuals and groups of people by counting references in expert works, and often also the space allotted to each individual. The primary assumption is that when experts try to write a comprehensive and balanced account of the people in their field, they allocate space according to importance.<sup>25</sup> In this case valuations by art historians through art-historical reference works are used.

In theory, all painters and all paintings show elements of originality and creativity (except, perhaps, for straightforward copyists). If the premise that successful producers managed to secure a market for their works by distinguishing their creations from other similar products is accepted, art-historical appreciation can be used as a measure for artistic innovation and successful differentiation. In this respect, art-historian Lyckle de Vries' interpretation is explicit: 'Art is that part of the sum total of visual production which differentiates itself from the rest by its high quality'.<sup>26</sup>

Historiometry has much to do with canon formation.<sup>27</sup> Canons are not static, and the conclusions are influenced by the selected reference work. The present-day view on Golden Age painting differs, for instance, from that of eighteenth century biographer Arnold Houbraken, but also from Wilhelm Martin's in 1935-1936. For example, Houbraken did not pay much attention to the so-called tonal painters and Martin tended to omit Dutch Mannerist or Carravagist painters.<sup>28</sup> Other examples of fluctuations in the appreciation of art over time comprise recent attempts to include new groups of painters such as the late seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century classicists.<sup>29</sup> The discussion about canon formation in Dutch art has been

<sup>23</sup> Montias has estimated that not even 100 of circa 40,000 to 50,000 paintings hanging on walls in Delft in 1650 have survived. Montias, *Artists and artisans*, p. 220; Cf. De Vries, 'Art history', pp. 256-259.

<sup>24</sup> Woods, 'Historiometry as an exact science'.

<sup>25</sup> Murray, *Human accomplishment*, p. 74.

<sup>26</sup> De Vries, 'Yellow Pages or Guide Bleu?', p. 214.

<sup>27</sup> On canon formation in the arts see the special issue of *Simiolus* vol. 26, issue 3 (1998); Vermeylen, Van Dijk, and De Laet, 'Test of time'; Ginsburgh and Weyers, 'On the formation of canons'; Perry and Cunningham, eds., *Academies, museums and canons of art*; Brown, 'Revising the canon'; Ginsburgh and Weyers, 'Persistence and fashion in art'; Sluijter, 'Beelden van de Hollandse schilderkunst', vol. II; Hecht, 'Een wisselende lijst'.

<sup>28</sup> Martin, *Hollandsche schilderkunst*, vol. I.

<sup>29</sup> Mai, Paarlberg, and Weber, eds., *Kroon op het werk*.

mostly played out over Houbraken's *Grote Schouburgh der Nederlandsche Konstschilders en Schilderessen* (*The Great Theatre of Dutch painters*) and related to the extent at which Houbraken's lexicon influenced our present-day canon.<sup>30</sup> Essentially, every art-historical survey implicitly forms a canon, based on art-historical and even personal a priori preferences or theories. Or as De Vries has put it: 'The concepts of canon, selection, quality and art cannot be separated'.<sup>31</sup> By using a range of datasets based on various criteria instead of one, this study attempts to overcome this problem.

To establish which artists survived the test of time and entered the canon of art-history, art-historical sources, such as dictionaries, surveys and lexicons were called in. A distinction should be made between two types of sources to establish a ranking of painters based on their prominence: the approval of art historians and the approval of contemporaries, painters, collectors, and art-lovers (in Dutch: *liefhebbers*). This method resulted in four datasets: international prominence (A-list), national prominence (B-list), contemporary prominence (C-list) and all artists (D-list).<sup>32</sup> These datasets all reflect different sources, different levels of appreciation, and by extension they can be used to compare different market segments.

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<sup>30</sup> Sluijter, 'Beelden van de Hollandse schilderkunst', vol. II, p. 394. Horn, *The Golden Age revisited*; Cornelis, 'Arnold Houbraken's "Groote Schouburgh"'; Carasso, 'Houbraken's Groote Schouburgh'; Carasso, 'Houbraken's "Groote Schouburgh"'. Carasso, 'Houbraken's Groote Schouburgh'. Carasso has compared an elite group of painters listed in Houbraken, 171 artists of whose portraits were published in the *Great Theatre*, with the surveys of Wilhelm Martin and Bob Haak and found that the only one missing in Houbraken was Willem Doudijns (1630-1697). Criticized by Horn, *The Golden Age revisited*, p. 582. Horn counted 107 rather than 17 artist portraits. See also: Grijzenhout, 'Myth of decline'; Hecht, 'Browsing in Houbraken'.

<sup>31</sup> De Vries, 'Yellow Pages or Guide Bleu?', p. 214.

<sup>32</sup> Piet Bakker has differentiated between painters of whom work is known and painters of whom no work is known in an attempt to map the diversity within the large and vague group of 'painters'. Bakker, 'Crisis? Welke crisis?'. Presumably such a distinction results in a sample somewhere in between my C and D samples.

Table 7.4 Samples of prominent artists

Ranking	N	Criteria	Sources
A++	18	Ibid – very strict	Murray, <i>Human Accomplishment</i> <sup>33</sup>
A+	56	Ibid – strict	Kelly and O'Hagan, 'Identifying the most important artists' <sup>34</sup>
A	138	International prominence	<i>Oxford Dictionary of Art</i> <sup>35</sup>
B	317	National prominence	Haak, <i>The Golden Age; De Kroon op het werk; Age of Elegance</i> <sup>36</sup>
C	995	Contemporary appreciation	Van Mander/Houbraken/Van Gool/Van Eynden&Van der Willigen <sup>37</sup>
D	c. 4,000	All known painters	Ecartico <sup>38</sup>

Charles Murray is the best-known user of historiometry and his work provides a starting point for mapping prominent painters.<sup>39</sup> He has endeavoured to map and rank the world's greatest achievers and achievements, including those from the world of painting. He has quantified the accomplishments of individuals and countries across the globe in the fields of arts and sciences, from ancient times to the mid-twentieth century, by weighting the amount of space allocated to them in reference works. For the period of 1600-1820 he cross-referenced a selection of art-historical reference works and collected the names of 113 European painters, of whom nineteen were Dutch. Dutch-born Peter Lely was also included in this group, though he should have been grouped with England, where he spent his working life. The 18 remaining artists form the A++ sample.

<sup>33</sup> Murray, *Human accomplishment*.

<sup>34</sup> Kelly and O'Hagan, 'Identifying the most important artists'. Many thanks to the authors for sharing their data.

<sup>35</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of Art: New Edition*.

<sup>36</sup> Haak, *The Golden Age; Mai, Paarlberg, and Weber, eds., Kroon op het werk; Loos, Jansen, and Kloeck, Age of elegance*.

<sup>37</sup> Houbraken, *Groote Schouburgh*; Van Mander, *Schilder-boeck*; Van Gool, *Nieuwe Schouburg*; Van Eynden and Van der Willigen Pz., *Geschiedenis der vaderlandse schilder-kunst*.

<sup>38</sup> See the discussion of this dataset in Chapter 1.

<sup>39</sup> Murray, *Human accomplishment*.



Economists Elish Kelly and John O'Hagan have undertaken a similar endeavour, but limited their research to prominent artists from the thirteenth century to the first half of the twentieth.<sup>40</sup> Their dataset is constructed from the *Oxford Dictionary of Art* but cross-referenced with *Reclams Künstlerlexikon* to adjust for the observed Anglo bias in the *Oxford Dictionary*.<sup>41</sup> Their sample is considerably larger than Murray's (876 artists), but they only include those artists that occupy 0.22 column inches in the Dictionary. Of their selection, 66 were born in the Southern or Northern Netherlands, and were active in the Dutch Republic between 1580 and 1800.<sup>42</sup> Of these artists, 56 were based in the Republic for the majority of their work. These make up the A+ sample.<sup>43</sup>

When the criterion of 0.22 column inches per artists is dropped, the sample expands considerably. For the A-sample all artists in the *Oxford Dictionary* who were born in the Northern or Southern Netherlands and for whom the Dutch Republic was their main work location were selected.<sup>44</sup> Those artists who were only mentioned as the brother, father or son of another painter and were only bestowed with less than five lines, 21 in total, were excluded from the sample. This resulted in a selection of 111 painters born in the Republic, with the earliest born in 1527 and the latest in 1797. In addition, sixteen artists were added: they were born elsewhere, but the Republic was their main work base. The total number of artists included in the A-list is 138, almost twice the size of the A+ sample.

The length of text allotted to each individual artist's entry varies greatly from only a few lines for minor artists to long sections for acclaimed painters such as Rembrandt. This obviously also reflects the editor's personal view of the pecking order within the pantheon of Dutch artists. In some cases the choice of the painters rests not only on their fame as painters, but also on their influence as authors on art theory of their era, as was the case for both Karel van Mander (1548-1606) and Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627-1678). The exact ranking of painters in the samples is not particularly relevant for the purpose of this study. It is more important that the samples do not display great inconsistencies. As many as fourteen of Murray's significant artists are included in both Kelly's and O'Hagan's top 20, and 14 of Grove's also correspond with the sample compiled on the basis of the *Oxford Dictionary*. Almost without exception the same 30 names recur throughout the different top-twenties.

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<sup>40</sup> Kelly and O'Hagan, 'Geographic clustering'; Kelly and O'Hagan, 'Identifying the most important artists'.

<sup>41</sup> Darmstaedter and Von Hase-Schmundt, *Reclams Künstlerlexikon*.

<sup>42</sup> Although Kelly and O'Hagan include one Dutch painter for the 18<sup>th</sup> century, he (Jacob Asmus Carstens) was in fact Danish.

<sup>43</sup> Note that artists born and active only in the 16<sup>th</sup> century are not counted.

<sup>44</sup> Kelly and O'Hagan, 'Identifying the most important artists'.

All A samples are based on international reference works that cover an extensive time frame and geographic area. For the B sample an art-historical work dealing exclusively with the Dutch Republic is used: Bob Haak's seminal overview of Dutch Golden Age painting.<sup>45</sup> Not surprisingly, this dataset is more inclusive and the dataset increases to 266 painters, twice the size of the A sample.<sup>46</sup> However, Haak's book only deals with the seventeenth century. For the eighteenth century there was no comparable seminal work and therefore the exhibition catalogues *De kroon op het werk: Hollandse schilderkunst 1670-1750* and *The age of elegance: paintings from the Rijksmuseum, 1700-1800* had to be used as reference works.<sup>47</sup> This yielded the names of 63 painters. Excluding double counts, the total number of artists in this sample is 317.

The lack of a seminal work on Dutch painting in the eighteenth century is indicative of the Golden Age bias in art history. To compensate for this a sample on contemporary reputation was created. The C-list encompasses references in contemporary sources. Lexicons drawn up by contemporary biographers, including as Van Mander, Arnold Houbraken (1660-1719), Johan van Gool (1685-1763), and Roeland van Eynden (1747-1819) and Adriaan van der Willigen (1766-1841) were used to assess of the status of artists and the appraisal of quality in the seventeenth and eighteenth century.<sup>48</sup> They published the following four well-known lexicons to establish a selection of prominent painters according to contemporaries: Van Mander's *Schilder-boeck* (1604), Houbraken *Grote Schouburgh* (1718-1721), Van Gool's *Nieuwe Schouburg* (1750-1751) and Van Eynden's and Van der Willigen's *Geschiedenis* (1816-1840). Combined, these works provide us with a catalogue of seventeenth and early eighteenth century painters, indicative of what and who were deemed worthy of mentioning.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Haak, *The Golden Age*.

<sup>46</sup> This selection was cross-referenced with two other sources: *Grove's Dictionary of Art's* discussion of seventeenth-century Dutch artists and the online resource *Web Gallery of Art*. With presence in all three sources as a criterion, the size of the sample decreased to circa 130 painters, roughly the same amount and composition as the A sample. Turner, *From Rembrandt to Vermeer*; Virtual museum of European painting and sculpture of the Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque periods (1100-1800), [www.wga.hu](http://www.wga.hu), accessed 20-08-2010.

<sup>47</sup> Mai, Paarlberg, and Weber, eds., *Kroon op het werk*; Loos, Jansen, and Kloek, *Age of elegance*.

<sup>48</sup> Houbraken, *Groote Schouburgh*; Van Mander, *Schilder-boeck*; Van Gool, *Nieuwe Schouburg*; Weyerman, *Levens-beschryvingen*; Van Eynden and Van der Willigen Pz., *Geschiedenis der vaderlandse schilderkunst*. Examples of such lexicons from other countries include d'Argenville, *Abregé de la vie des plus fameux peintres*; Descamps, *La vie des peintres*; Smith, *Catalogue raisonné of the most eminent Dutch, Flemish and French painters*.

<sup>49</sup> De Vries, 'Gelukkige schildereeuw', p. 60.

## 7.5 Prominence in Dutch painting

As the period of 1580-1610 preceded the famous Golden Age, it will be no surprise that the number of active prominent painters of this period is relatively limited compared to the period 1610-1660. No painters active in this period made it into the A++ sample. In the A+ sample, nine painters active in the Republic and were born before 1580 were identified: Abraham Bloemaert (1566-1651), Ambrosius I Bosschaert (1573-1621), Gillis II van Coninxloo (1544-1607), Jacob II de Gheyn (1565-1629), Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617), Hendrick de Keyser (1565-1621), Karel van Mander (1548-1606), Roelant Saverij (1576-1639), and Hans Vredeman de Vries (1527-1607). When this selection is expanded to include artists of the A-list, six more qualify: David Vinckboons (1576-c. 1633), Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem (1562-1638), Cornelis Ketel (1548-1616), Michiel van Mierevelt (1567-1641), Jacob Isaacs van Swanenburgh (1571-1638) and Joachim Wtewael (1566-1638).<sup>30</sup> Regarding these first decades of painting, the B sample of also discusses Hendrick Vroom (1563-1640) and Hans Bol (1534-1593).<sup>31</sup>

Despite the small size of the sample, seventeen in total, it is worth analysing where they came from and where in the Dutch Republic they were active. International architect Hans Vredeman de Vries, who was constantly moving around, will be omitted. The main work location is determined by counting the number of years spent in one location. Of the sixteen painters left, seven were born in the Southern Netherlands (Bol, Vinckboons, De Gheyn, Van Coninxloo, Van Mander, Bosschaert, and Savery) and eight in the northern provinces (Vroom, Wtewael, Ketel, Van Swanenburgh, Van Mierevelt, Cornelisz van Haarlem, De Keyser, and Bloemaert) and only Goltzius was from the village of Bracht, a German town near the Dutch border. It is worth noting that these results strengthen Sluijter's argument on the overrated importance of immigrants.

Five of the sixteen prominent painters in our sample were active in Amsterdam, with three in Utrecht, three in Haarlem and four in Delft, Middelburg, Leiden and The Hague respectively. These results crudely correspond with the spatial distribution of painting mapped in the previous section.<sup>32</sup> The Hague, Delft and Amsterdam are underrepresented compared to the size of their artistic communities. This may be due to the presence of painters who were not strictly artists, but decorative painters and to the relatively large number of watercolour painters from Malines. Watercolour paintings were short-lived compared to oil

<sup>30</sup> Note that De Keyser and Vredeman de Vries are better known for their sculpting and architecture, and that De Gheyn and Goltzius were not only painters, but also famous engravers.

<sup>31</sup> Haak, *The Golden Age*, pp. 166-176.

<sup>32</sup> The lack of prominent painters in Delft has also been observed by Boers-Goosens, *Schilders en de markt*, p. 34.

paintings, and neither their products nor the names of the makers have survived the test of time well. The relatively low number of prominent painters in Delft and The Hague can also be explained by the dominance of portrait painters, whose work was hardly original, catering to a demand from government officials.

### *Contemporary sources*

To check these results for the Golden Age bias, this sample was cross-referenced with contemporary sources, such as Karel van Mander's *Schilder-boeck* (1604), town descriptions, probate inventories and art collections. This selection is limited to painters Van Mander credited with their own chapters and who were active in the towns of Amsterdam, Haarlem, and Utrecht. The results are contrasted to the number of artists mentioned in Ecartico for the period of 1580-1604. Of the 116 painters active in Amsterdam between 1570 and 1604 according to Ecartico, ten had their own dedicated chapter: De Vries, Vinckboons, Van Coninxloo, Gillis Coignet (1542-1599), Bol, Abraham Bloemaert, Dirck Barendsz (1534-1592), Frans II Badens (1571-1618), and Ketel.<sup>53</sup> Pieter Aertsz (1508-1575) also featured prominently, but he is excluded from the sample, because he did not live past 1580.

Seven out of 43 Haarlem painters had a chapter devoted to them: Goltzius, Cornelisz van Haarlem, Vroom, Cornelis Cornelisz van Wieringen (1577-1633), Frans Pietersz de Grebber (1573-1643), De Gheyn (who was there studying with Goltzius from 1585-1590), and Pieter Cornelisz van Rijck (1567-c. 1637). Not surprisingly, much space was allocated to Van Mander's friends and colleagues Hendrick Goltzius and Cornelis Cornelisz. Of 23 painters active in Utrecht between 1580 and 1604, only Anthonie van Blocklandt (1534-1583), Bloemaert and Uytewael have their own chapters. The Van Mander list of prominent painters corresponds with the art-historical selection above. The only new additions are the Antwerp-born Coignet and Badens, and the four Dutch painters, Van Blocklandt, Van Ryck, Van Wieringen and De Grebber. It is worth noting that Van Blocklandt only lived until 1583. These additions do not significantly change the interpretation on the relative importance of immigrants developed above.

Van Mander pays most attention to Cornelis Ketel. Excluding poems, his biography covers roughly ten pages, one of the most detailed and longest in the entire book.<sup>54</sup> Van Mander and Ketel had known each other for some 20 years and Ketel represented the kind of artist Van Mander appreciated most: he wrote poems

<sup>53</sup> The number of active painters is based on the Ecartico dataset. For example, Pieter Pietersz (c. 1541-1603), a prominent portraitist active in Haarlem and Amsterdam, was mentioned by Van Mander, but he did not have get his own chapter, The well-known Utrecht painter Paulus Moreelse (1571-1638) is only mentioned in passing.

<sup>54</sup> Van Mander, *Schilder-boeck*. Think of Pieter Brueghel, Gillis van Coninxloo, Jacob Grimmer, Pieter Baltens, Cornelis Molenaer, Hans Bol, and David Vinckboons.

and practiced history painting, including complex allegories.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, Van Mander also discussed a different type of painter, the Southern Netherlands specialist who worked on the open market and he emphasised how highly they were valued by art lovers.<sup>56</sup> It is worth noting that Van Mander did not use the laudatory phrase *uytnemend* for all painters born in the Southern Netherlands, but only for Barentsz, Aertsz, Ketel, Goltzius, Cornelisz van Haarlem and Bloemaert. They were all based in Amsterdam and Haarlem, except Bloemaert, whose main work location was Utrecht. In fact, there is a strong spatial preference in Van Mander's selection. Amsterdam and Haarlem were more important than Utrecht, where only Bloemaert and Uytewael warranted their own chapters.

In addition to the work of Van Mander, two other source types may offer insights into the perception of painters in this period. First, town descriptions, which were published in the Dutch Republic from the early seventeenth century onwards, contained surveys of history, topography, politics, trade, crafts, and almost always a section on illustrious men of the town, such as office-holders, artists, learned men and occasionally a learned woman.<sup>57</sup> The first published description of Amsterdam was by Johannes Isacius Pontanus (1571-1637). It appeared in Latin in 1611 and three years later also in Dutch.<sup>58</sup> When Pontanus discussed the artists, he started with three Amsterdam-born painters, who had all been dead for almost two decades: Pieter Aertsz (1508-1575), Dirck Jacobsz (1494-1567), Dirck Bernardts (Barentsz) (1534-1593). He continues with Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert (1522-1590), also born in Amsterdam, and Joost Jansz Bilhamer (1541-1590).<sup>59</sup> The latter was a cartographer, master builder, military engineer, land surveyor, sculptor, and plate cutter. Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert, also born in Amsterdam, is best known as a theologian, scholar and publicist, but he was also involved in engraving and music. Coornhert hardly worked in Amsterdam; he had left for Spain in 1538, travelled to Italy and Germany, where he worked with Hendrick Goltzius who probably accompanied him to Haarlem in 1577. Although Amsterdam housed other many other locally-born and immigrant painters by the town Pontanus drew up his town description, they were not mentioned.

A second possible source on contemporary appreciation is diary entries on painters and paintings, such as *Commentaris rerum quotidianarum* of Utrecht lawyer and scholar Arnoldus Buchelius (1565-1641), and more specifically his *Res Pictoriae*.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Nowadays, however, he is best known as a portrait painter and he is renowned for his painting with fingers and feet- possibly due to paralysation that caused him to quit between 1610 and 1613.

<sup>56</sup> Sluijter, 'On Brabant rubbish'.

<sup>57</sup> For an extensive analysis of artists in early modern Dutch town description see Marcus, 'Daarvan breeder geschreven ...' and Marcus, 'Stedekonst'.

<sup>58</sup> Pontanus, *Rerum et urbis Amstelodamensium historia*.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 286

<sup>60</sup> Hoogewerff and Van Regteren Altena, *Arnoldus Buchelius "Res pictoriae"*, vol. 15, I: 1590-1605.

In April 1591, Buchelius stayed in Amsterdam, where he, in the company of his host, goldsmith Antonius Boonhof, called on painter/engraver Jacques II de Gheyn.<sup>61</sup> He also admired the art collection, *Thesaurum pictorae omnigenis*, of public secretary and art-lover Jacques Razet (?-1609), which included paintings by Anthonie van Blockland, Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem, Dirck Barendsz, Cornelis Ketel, Abraham Bloemaert, Hans Bol and Jacques Saverij.

In theory, probate inventories also provide clues on the prominence of certain artists. This of course does not mean that unattributed paintings were, by definition, made by non-prominent painters, or that attributed paintings were always by renowned painters. Presumably the occurrence of artists' names in inventories does reflect, to some extent, the acquaintance between former owners, those drawing up the probate inventories, and the producer of the painting. Unfortunately, inventories from the period of 1570-1610 seldom include attributions.<sup>62</sup> More interesting inventories, such as the post-mortem auctions of the painters Gillis van Coninxloo and Hans van de Velde in 1607 and 1609 respectively, provide few additional attributions.

A brief look at inventories of a later date does not significantly alter the composition of the sample of prominent artists. Michael Montias has categorised the names of artists he found in Amsterdam inventories from the period of 1607-1680.<sup>63</sup> His sample is based on, according to his own estimate, over half of the inventories drawn up by notaries, 70 per cent of the inventories recorded in the books of the Chamber of Insolvent Estates between 1643-1680, and all the auction sales that named artists.<sup>64</sup> Overall, painters from Amsterdam, Haarlem and Utrecht were most prominent. In Montias' list of painters, of whom more than 22 are known by attributions in lots from the period of 1607-1680, Pieter Aertsz ranks highest, followed by Karel van Mander and Roelant Saverij, coinciding with our list. Other 'early' names are: Hendrick Goltzius, Cornelisz van Haarlem, Vroom and Jan Nagel (1570-1602), Bloemaert in Utrecht, and Van Coninxloo and Vinckboons in Amsterdam. In the total sample – including painters who have between 5 and 22 paintings or drawings (lots) attributed to them in private inventories – we encounter a few members of our group: Badens, engraver Jacob Matham (1571-1631), Ambrosius Bosschaert, Hans Vredeman de Vries, Wytewael, Bol and Ketel.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>61</sup> On Razet see also: Bok, 'Art-lovers and their paintings'.

<sup>62</sup> <http://research.frick.org/montias>. For example, in the thirteen accounts that can be found in the Getty Database inventories, we find 373 anonymous works of art and only one that was attributed, to Joos de Momper (1564-1635), a well-known Flemish painter.

<sup>63</sup> Montias, 'Artists named in Amsterdam inventories'.

<sup>64</sup> He arrives at 553 inventories and auction sales: 5,593 lots. Without prints, dealers' stock and copies, which he analyzed separately: 3,971 lots. He also left out the paintings and drawings by individual artists they produced themselves.

<sup>65</sup> Montias, 'Artists named in Amsterdam inventories'. In another study Montias showed the results of collected samples in a later period: 1620-1649: of course says more about that time than the previous

This comparison of art-historical reference works with a variety of contemporary sources presents no large discrepancies. Obviously this is also due to a self-reinforcing mechanism. We simply know more about attributed paintings and painters whose biographies survived. Even so, it is evident that in the period of 1580-1610 there were three main locations of prominence: the Haarlem circle of Van Mander, Goltzius and Cornelis Cornelisz; the Utrecht Mannerists Bloemaert and Wytewael; and Amsterdam, with portrait artists such as Ketel and a select group of immigrants.<sup>66</sup> Approximately half of the prominent painters were born, and presumably trained, in the Southern Netherlands. This means that, compared to the trends derived from Ecartico, painters born in the northern Netherlands are overrepresented in the sample of prominent artistic production. Moreover, Amsterdam does not live up to what would be expected on the basis of the large number of new painters in town. This confirms that there was a new force in Dutch painting, independent of the Flemish and Brabant immigration.

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period, but still, it tells us that the name and fame of some early Golden Age artists lasted long: Roelant Saveryj, Pieter Aertsz, Abraham Bloemaert, Karel van Mander, Cornelis Cornelisz, Hendrick Vroom, Ambrosius Bosschaert, David Vinckboons, and Gillis van Coninxloo. Montias, 'Works of art', pp. 364-365.

<sup>66</sup> Haak, *The Golden Age*, pp. 166-176.

Figure 7.5 Distribution of prominent painters, according to main work location (C sample), birth cohort 1590



Source: Ecartico; Table 7.4

## 7.6 Styles, genres, and ties with related industries

Apart from raising the size of both supply and demand in a relatively short time span, the Dutch Revolt and the subsequent large-scale immigration also transformed qualitative elements of the Dutch art market. According to Jan Brieles, immigrant painters were not only decisive in terms of skills and quantity, but also for the extraordinary development of new genres in painting during the Dutch Golden Age. Many of the immigrant painters were specialists in genres in which the Dutch Republic did not have an established tradition. With the arrival of Flemish painters and (potential) customers, other subjects and new styles gained ground in the north, where portraiture and history painting had previously dominated.<sup>67</sup> For example, Gillis van Coninxloo introduced landscapes, Ambrosius Bosschaert and Roelant and Jacob Savery brought still lifes, and David Vinckboons brought with them merry companies and festivals in village landscapes.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 174; Kloek, 'North Netherlandish Art', p. 58; Bruyn, 'A turning-point in the history of Dutch art'.

<sup>68</sup> Haak, *The Golden Age*, pp. 173-176.



In discussing matters of style, we move deeper into the art-historical sphere. Consequently, a rudimentary overview of the art-historical highlights in the period of 1580-1610 needs to be provided. Until the 1590s, painting in Amsterdam had been almost exclusively focused on portraiture, with Pieter Pietersz (c.1541-1603) leading the trend.<sup>69</sup> In the 1570s, Pietersz lived in Haarlem, a locational choice that reflects the leading position of Haarlem in Northern Netherlands' painting during the sixteenth century. After the Alteration, Pietersz shifted his attention from history to portrait painting and moved to Amsterdam, where he joined a handful of other painters, most notably Cornelis Ketel (1548-1616). Whilst Pietersz and Ketel focused on portraits in Amsterdam, more exciting things were happening in Haarlem, and to a lesser extent in Utrecht. In Kloek's words: '[history painting] appears to have made an entirely new start around 1585, while in portraiture the continuation of traditional modes predominated.'<sup>70</sup>

Soon after Pietersz had left for Amsterdam, Karel van Mander (1548-1606) arrived in Haarlem, where he met Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem (1562-1638), one of Pietersz' pupils, and Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617), who had set up his printshop in 1577. Inspired by the Flemish painter Barthelomeus Spranger (1546-1611), and by Italian artists, whose drawings were brought to the area by Van Mander, these three painters and draughtsmen were responsible for the development of a specific painting style, often referred to as Dutch or northern Mannerism. The term Mannerism is used to describe a movement in European visual arts that developed between the high renaissance and the Baroque eras. The movement is generally considered to have started in Italy in the early sixteenth century, with its northern counterpart in Antwerp, and later in Haarlem and Utrecht. Mannerism favoured complex composition over naturalistic representation, with dramatic compositions featuring unnatural or unrealistic anatomical postures. In Utrecht, Abraham Bloemaert (1564-1651) and Joachim Wtewael (1566-1638) also successfully pursued the Dutch mannerist style. One of Cornelis Cornelisz' pupils, the Amsterdam-born Gerrit Pietersz (1566-c. 1612), brother of Dutch composer and organist Jan Pietersz Sweelinck (1562-1621), brought the Mannerist style and skills to Amsterdam after approximately 1590.

Meanwhile, genres new to the northern market, such as landscape and figure painting, were being introduced by Flemish immigrant-painters and print publishers. By 'figure painting', we refer to the (highly varied) category of paintings that depict

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<sup>69</sup> Based on *ibid.*, pp. 166-176 ; Kloek, 'North Netherlandish Art'. Pietersz was born in Antwerp and had been trained by his father, Pieter Aertsz (c. 1508-1575), whom he accompanied to Amsterdam around 1556.

<sup>70</sup> Kloek, 'North Netherlandish Art', p. 58.

everyday life, also known as 'genre painting'.<sup>71</sup> Hans Bol (1534-1593), Gillis van Coninxloo (1544-1607), David Vinckboons (1573-1639), and his pupil, the native Claesz Jansz Visscher (1587-1652), were paving the way for the development of the relatively new genres of landscapes and figure painting in the tradition of the Flemish painter Pieter Brueghel the Elder (c.1520-1569). The product and process innovations of the 1610s, which take centre stage in the next chapter, were built on these Southern-Netherlands genres, motifs and styles.<sup>72</sup> This was true not only for landscapes, but also for other genres and motifs.<sup>73</sup> Take, for instance, the painting of merry companies.

According to Elmer Kolfin, the formative years for Dutch seventeenth-century merry companies were between 1580 and 1610.<sup>74</sup> Until around 1610, the popularity of the merry company motif was focused in the Southern Netherlands, but it soon became increasingly popular in the north. Although by then more motifs than sub-genres, merry companies and landscapes thrived in paintings, especially in prints. Over the course of the seventeenth century, paintings depicting groups of people at leisure, so-called 'merry companies', became increasingly popular. The theme eventually developed into a genre in which a significant number of well-known artists specialised. The seventeenth century rise of the merry companies was strongly influenced by Hans Bol's designs from the period of 1570-1590. It was then further developed by David Vinckboons, Gillis van Coninxloo and Gillis Claesz d'Hondecoeter (c.1575/1580-1638).<sup>75</sup>

Vinckboons was one of many Flemish painters who settled in the north during the final decades of the sixteenth century.<sup>76</sup> His family had migrated from Malines to Antwerp, but by 1586 this town had become unsafe as well and so they moved further north. After a brief stay in Middelburg, the family settled in Amsterdam in 1591. By then David Vinckboons was fifteen years old and trained as a painter, probably by his father who was a watercolour tapestry painter from Malines.<sup>77</sup> Although Vinckboons had many talents, such as drawing designs for prints, book illustrations and windows, his genre paintings proved the most influential, particularly his scenes of fairs and garden parties.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> In order to avoid confusion about 'genre' as a generic category and genre used to designate a set of themes found in paintings, we use the term 'figure painting' for the latter. Cf. Haak, *The Golden Age*, p. 85.

<sup>72</sup> Sluijter, 'On Brabant rubbish'.

<sup>73</sup> Bruyn, 'A turning-point in the history of Dutch art', p. 120.

<sup>74</sup> Kolfin, *Young gentry*, p. 37.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> On Vinckboons: Franits, *Dutch seventeenth-century genre painting*, pp. 53-57; Goossens, *David Vinckboons*; Goossens, 'Nog meer over David Vinckboons'.

<sup>77</sup> Van Mander, *Schilder-boeck*, f. 299. Karel van Mander had referred to Philips, David's father, as 'a reasonably good painter in watercolour painting'.

<sup>78</sup> Franits, *Dutch seventeenth-century genre painting*, p. 53.

Vinckboons painted landscapes featuring figure and history staffage (human and animal figures that feature in the painting, but are not the main subject); scenes of fairs, peasants and elegant gatherings; and he was a prolific designer of single-sheet prints and book illustrations. In retrospect, compared to later innovations, his depictions of parties were always outdoors, and his landscapes and figures always served the narrative, rather than being developed into a separate subject matter. Although he worked with conventional themes and made no dramatic innovations, he did modify these to suit the fashions of the time, for instance in the details of the costumes and the portrayed pastimes. Though his modifications were small, Vinckboons was a crucial intermediary. Thanks in part to him, a flood of new print designs increased the number of available scenes.<sup>79</sup>

A comparable role can be identified for others who were active in the 'new' genres. The slightly younger Claes Jansz Visscher (1587-1652), a native Amsterdammer, was the most prolific print publisher of his day and the main producer of landscape prints in the first half of the seventeenth century.<sup>80</sup> Visscher would come to specialise in cityscapes and topical prints and he was also one of the first to publish a series of pure landscapes. Like Vinckboons he was not the most innovative artist, others had been publishing landscape drawings and etchings before him, and he was less daring than later Haarlem artists. But this can only be stated in hindsight. Vinckboons was incredibly prolific and a key figure in the dissemination of landscape prints throughout Holland and Europe.

It is no coincidence that Vinckboons and Visscher shared ties with book production, albeit in different ways. As discussed in previous chapters, books became more lavishly illustrated at the end of the sixteenth century. Cartography blossomed, and it is no accident that Claes Jansz Visscher started his career by decorating cartographic material. Other dynamic genres in book production were those of emblem books and illustrated songbooks, especially those featuring the theme of courtship. Vinckboons designed a large number of book illustrations of amorous couples and of gatherings in landscapes. The more light-hearted merry companies, which Vinckboons produced in prints and paintings, bore a strong resemblance to the literary fashions of the time.<sup>81</sup> In the period of 1590-1610 there was a gradual divergence between merry companies produced in the north and those produced in the south.<sup>82</sup> Following the examples of sixteenth-century foreign artists, painters made incremental but important innovations in genres that would eventually see Dutch painting gain global eminence.

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<sup>79</sup> Kolfin, *Young gentry*, p. 37

<sup>80</sup> Van Eeghen, 'De familie van de plaatsnijder C.J. Visscher'.

<sup>81</sup> Veldhorst, *Zingend door het leven*; Veldhorst, 'Pharmacy for the body and soul'.

<sup>82</sup> Kolfin, *Young gentry*.

During the phase of emergence, the relatively new genres of landscape and figure painting were closely linked to book and print production. Such ties were also evident in the more traditional genres and styles. Consider for instance Hendrick Goltzius, a leading printmaker who invented many designs and eventually took up painting, or his pupil Jacob de Gheyn II, another engraver turned painter.

## 7.7 Conclusion

Political independence, religious transformation, and economic growth all influenced the development of the Dutch art market, but the significant expansion would have been unimaginable without the exogenous shock of the Revolt. Whether supply side or demand side variables were the main drivers of the sudden 1580-1610 expansion of the Dutch art market is a question that is virtually impossible to answer, and even immaterial. The abrupt rise in the number of active painters was triggered by the immigration of both suppliers and customers. However, by 1610, the millions of paintings produced during the Dutch Golden Age were still very much in the future. The number of painters was significant, and growing, but the immigration from the Southern Netherlands was not quite the invasion it is sometimes made out to be.

During the transitional period from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, graphic works were an impetus for innovative painters to build and expand upon through the creation of works of art, adapting existing genres and expanding the trends for certain motifs to the Northern Netherlands.<sup>83</sup> The numerous print series from this period include a broad range of motifs that would determine the style of landscape and figure painting for the next 20 years.<sup>84</sup> Although immigrant artists did not drastically alter or expand upon the genres they introduced, their role as intermediaries was indispensable, especially in Amsterdam. At the same time, the towns of Utrecht and Haarlem, that had dominated artistic production before the Revolt, were central to the innovation of the more traditional genre of history painting and a lot less reliant on immigrant painters and imported styles.

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<sup>83</sup> Playter, 'Willem Duyster and Pieter Codde', p. 50.

<sup>84</sup> Goossens, *David Vinckboons*, p. 60.

## 8 A new growth dynamic, 1610-1650

### 8.1 Introduction

When in 1935-1936, art-historian Wilhelm Martin wrote that ‘nowhere [in the world] were there in such a small area so many and such great painters [as in the Dutch Republic]’, he must have been contemplating the events surrounding the year 1650.<sup>1</sup> Just 40 years prior to this, the great achievements and large scale production to which Martin refers were still very much in the future. Potential demand for paintings increased under the influence of economic growth and an increased tendency to purchase paintings as decorative items to cover walls. Still, Dutch painters were not yet able to exploit this potential. Fifty years on, hundreds of thousands, possibly even millions, of paintings had been produced in a variety of genres, styles, sizes, and price-categories by thousands of painters.<sup>2</sup> How could a relatively modest painting sector develop into an art market that was highly innovative, that accommodated an abundance of highly skilled painters and that, at the same time, was unprecedentedly large in scale and scope? This major question is divided between two chapters.

This chapter deals with the decades during which the Dutch art market expanded dramatically as demand for luxury goods increased and paintings became highly fashionable.<sup>3</sup> In order to analyse the relationship between Golden Age painting and its commercial side, such as the volume of production, this chapter will first present the main quantitative and qualitative developments of Dutch painting between 1610 and 1650.<sup>4</sup> By arguing that existing explanations for the surge of artistic innovation in Dutch painting do not suffice, the subsequent section the groundwork is laid for the following chapter. As Martin himself has observed, socio-economic and religious circumstances go a long way in explaining the popularity of certain genres and the volume of production, but they cannot fully account for the major artistic accomplishments.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ‘geen land ter wereld ooit geweest [is] waar de behoefte om het huis te versieren met schilderkunst van eigen bodem zó groot was en waar zó sterk aan die behoefte werd en kon worden voldaan’ and that ‘nooit ergens op een zó klein gebied zóvele en zó groote kunstenaars [hebben] gewerkt als toen in Holland’. Quoted from Martin, *Hollandsche schilderkunst*, vol. I, p. 36.

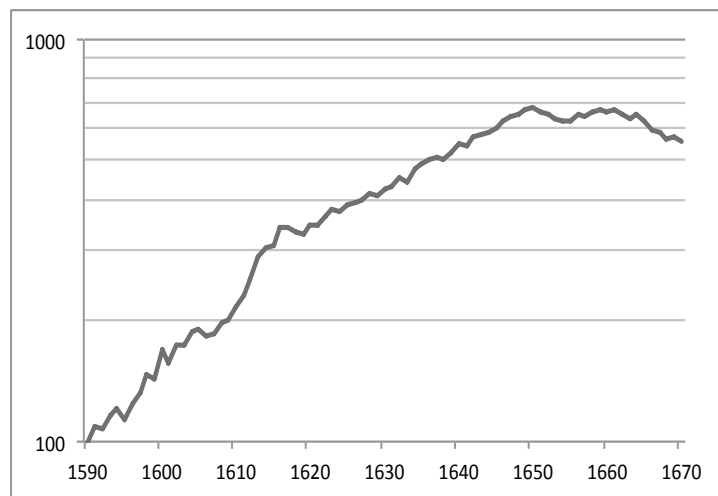
<sup>2</sup> Van der Woude, ‘The volume and value of paintings’.

<sup>3</sup> This period has also been interpreted as one of continuous crisis in the art market. Nijboer, ‘Bloeitijd als crisis’.

<sup>4</sup> De Vries, ‘Art history’, p. 255.

<sup>5</sup> Martin, *Hollandsche schilderkunst*, vol. I, p. 35.

Figure 8.1 Number of active painters in the Dutch Republic per year, 1590-1670, 10-year moving average, semi-logarithmic scale

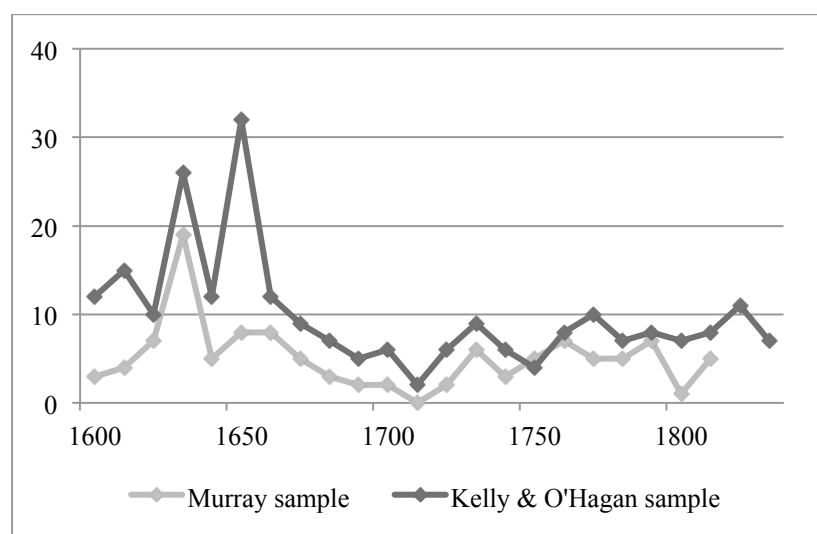


Source: Ecartico.

## 8.2 Golden Age painting

Both the quantity and the variety of seventeenth century Dutch paintings displayed in museum collections and, by extension, the number of Dutch painters included in art-historical canons, are perplexing. In art-historical studies of European painting between 1600 and 1700, the Dutch are also well-represented. When the distribution of the number of prominent European artists per age group is plotted (the decade in which the artists reached 40 years of age) over the period between 1600 and 1800, one or two peaks stand out, depending on the sample (Figure 8.2). Only a handful of prominent painters were active in Europe in any one decade, except for the 1630s and 1650s, when the number of painters peaked.

Figure 8.2 Age cohort significant European painters per decade, 1600-1820



Source: see chapter 7; Murray sample: N= 112; Kelly and O'Hagan: N=239.

The main cause of these disruptions in the trend was unquestionably the Golden Age of Dutch painting. No other country in the samples of Murray and Kelly & O'Hagan, with the exception of Italy in the fifteenth century, experienced the same concentration of so many prominent artists in such a short period of time. In Murray's selection, 64 European painters were active during this period, with the Netherlands and Italy slightly ahead of France, with 19, 16, and 12 painters respectively.<sup>6</sup> In the Kelly & O'Hagan sample of 101 painters, born and active in the seventeenth century, the Dutch Republic was also the main contributor, with 43 painters.<sup>7</sup> These figures are all the more remarkable given the small size of the Dutch Republic.

### 8.3 From large potential to real consumption

Over the course of the seventeenth century, a new standard for interior decoration developed in the Dutch Republic: Dutch citizens covered their walls with considerable numbers of paintings. Prior to this trend, only the wealthier houses had had portraits adorning their walls, which would have been panelled with wood, covered with tapestries, or painted with decorative patterns. As a result, in the Dutch Republic, the number of paintings per household increased and the segment of society that owned paintings broadened.<sup>8</sup> The average number of paintings in Delft

<sup>6</sup> Murray, *Human accomplishment*.

<sup>7</sup> Kelly and O'Hagan, 'Geographic clustering'. Thanks to the authors for sharing their dataset.

<sup>8</sup> Montias, *Le marché de l'art*, pp. 93-100.

inventories doubled from 20 to 40 between the 1620s and the 1670s, and Amsterdam saw an increase from 25 to 40.<sup>9</sup> Through research on notarised inventories we can make a reasonable assertion as to the subjects of paintings that adorned the walls of Dutch households.<sup>10</sup> In explaining the large number of paintings produced during the Golden Age, the buying behaviour of the mid-levels of society, not just Dutch burghers but also artisans and even the more prosperous peasants, is crucial. As in other European countries, wealthy citizens collected paintings. In the Republic, however, even the more modestly endowed households bought paintings to furnish their walls.<sup>11</sup>

Montias has collected data on Amsterdam inventories with attributed paintings in the period spanning 1620-1679. Not all paintings were described by subject, but the available data shows that landscapes became particularly popular, making up 20 per cent of the collections in the 1620s and circa 35 per cent in the period 1660-1689. The share of still lifes doubled from 5 per cent in the 1620s, to 10 per cent in the time between the 1620s and the 1660s, whilst figure paintings increased from 4 per cent, to 12 per cent in the 1680s.<sup>12</sup> The share of portraits increased from just over 11 per cent, to more than 15 per cent. The relative increase in these genres was at the expense of history paintings, including those of religious subjects, whose share declined from 40 per cent in the 1620s, to 10 per cent in the 1680s. The increase in the number of paintings hanging in the homes of Dutch citizens was mainly due to the increasing interest in new genres, and more specifically, those introduced by immigrants from the Southern Netherlands during the phase of emergence.

The proliferation of paintings in Dutch homes took place in a relatively short period of time.<sup>13</sup> In approximately 1630, Constantijn Huygens (1597-1687), secretary to the Stadtholder, stated that during his youth the popularity of paintings had increased significantly.<sup>14</sup> In 1678 Samuel van Hoogstraten wrote that 'in the beginning of this century, Holland's walls were not as densely hung with paintings as they are now.' The observed upsurge in the demand for paintings has been confirmed by quantitative research of probate inventories.<sup>15</sup> Given the reactions of foreign travellers regarding the number of paintings they encountered in the Dutch towns they visited,

<sup>9</sup> Montias, 'Works of art', pp. 67-88; Montias, *Artists and artisans*, p. table 8.3.

<sup>10</sup> Montias, 'Works of art'; Montias, 'Artists named in Amsterdam inventories'.

<sup>11</sup> Montias, *Artists and artisans*, p. 265. See also De Vries, 'Art history', p. 269.

<sup>12</sup> Montias, 'Works of art', pp. 336, table 332 and 333.

<sup>13</sup> Van Hoogstraeten, *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkunst*, p. 237; *ibid.*: 'In 't begin deezer eeuw waeren de wanden in Holland noch zoo dicht niet met Schilderyen behangen, alsze tans wel zijn.'

<sup>14</sup> Huygens, *Mijn jeugd*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>15</sup> Bok, *Vraag en aanbod*, pp. 53-54; Bakker, 'Gezicht op Leeuwarden', pp. 130-142; Nijboer, 'Fatsoenering van het bestaan', pp. 49-51; Boers-Goosens, *Schilders en de markt*, pp. 325-337; Montias, 'Works of art', pp. 67-88; Loughman, 'Een stad en haar kunstconsumptie'; Montias, *Artists and artisans*, p. table 8.3.



the popularity of paintings in Dutch society appears to have quite extraordinary.<sup>16</sup> In fact, it became commonplace to remark on the Dutch love for paintings.

Montias' sample of paintings found in Amsterdam inventories drawn up in the 1630s and 1640s, shows that many of these collections were relatively recently formed.<sup>17</sup> In the inventories of this period, some two-thirds of the attributed artists were still alive at the time of attribution. Collectors were increasingly buying fashionable works by contemporary masters. Paintings produced in the Dutch Republic by these contemporary masters entered the homes of both wealthy and less wealthy citizens and, within a relatively short period of time, the quantity, quality, and scope of Dutch painting expanded significantly. Although some genres, such as portraits, were still commissioned, most of the newly acquired paintings must have been purchased on the open market in a remarkably short period of time.<sup>18</sup> The changing consumption patterns were accompanied by the introduction of a whole string of artistic novelties.

#### 8.4 Artistic novelties of the 1610s and 1620s

During the phase of emergence, Southern Netherlands specialists introduced incremental innovations to genres that were already relatively new to the northern consumers. In short, they differentiated their products through variation, rather than through novelty value. In the 1610s and 1620s, Dutch art production entered a new phase, as a new generation of painters triggered innovation through originality. Though young painters fully applied and adapted existing subjects and techniques that had been developed in the Southern Netherlands in the sixteenth century, they also managed to break with existing traditions, in terms of iconography, technique, and composition.

In little more than ten years, the sixteenth-century fields of specialism from the Southern Netherlands, such as still lifes, landscapes, marines, merry companies and peasant scenes, developed a new look that would become the hallmark of Dutch Golden Age painting. The defining features of this evolved 'Dutch' fashion were broader subject matters, fewer motifs, and a more rapid production technique achieved by applying thin layers of paint in a swift manner, using a restricted

<sup>16</sup> Examples are quoted in: Sluijter, *Verwondering over de schilderijenproductie*, pp. 12-13. Sorbière, *Drie brieven van Samuel Sorbière [1660]*, p. 86; Mundy, *Travels of Peter Mundy*, vol. 4. Travels in Europe 1639-47, p. 70; Parival, *Les délices de la Hollande*, p. 25; Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn [1641]*, p. 39; Lemaitre, *Relation de mon voyage*, p. 291; Aglionby, *Painting illustrated in three dialogues*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>17</sup> Montias, 'Works of art', pp. 343, table 342 and 343.

<sup>18</sup> Loughman, 'Een stad en haar kunstconsumptie'; Bok and Schwartz, 'Schilderen in opdracht', p. 192. In Amsterdam inventories, this category made up some 10 to 15 per cent of the total, while in Dordrecht inventories from the period 1620-1719, this was almost 25 per cent.

spectrum of colour (palette). Images that were previously only available in prints or as mere motifs in paintings now became subjects in their own rights. In order to better understand the causes and consequences of these innovations, the main artistic developments in the Dutch Republic during the 1610s and 1620s will be briefly outlined.<sup>19</sup> This art-historical overview is not exhaustive and only serves to provide the necessary context.

The most popular and renowned Dutch genre was the landscape. In the 1610s, Amsterdam and Haarlem print designers and artists were moving away from the Mannerist tradition of fantastical views and extreme stylisation, but only with regards to prints and drawings. Esaias van de Velde (1587-1630) was the first to translate these novelties into paintings after 1614.<sup>20</sup> Moving away from the Flemish print designs and paintings he started to depict views of familiar landscapes near Dutch towns, applied a simpler palette, lowered the horizon, reduced the number of figures, and used a composition in which all elements are linked together by way of oblique lines. All these interventions created a sense of space that allowed the viewer of the painting to become increasingly involved.<sup>21</sup> Around the same time, Jan Porcellis (1584/87-1632) introduced similar innovations in the depiction of seascapes. In hindsight, these painters set the stylistic direction and conventions of what would become known as Dutch landscape painting. This was then further developed by specialists such as Jan van Goyen (1596-1656), Salomon van Ruysdael (1600/03-1670), and Pieter de Molyn (1595-1661). Under their guidance, the so-called tonal period gained momentum through the 1620s. Also known as the monochrome phase, this approach was characterised by the use of a smaller palette, simpler motifs, the blurring of lines, and more attention to sky and water. This is also clearly discernible in Dutch still lifes of the time. For instance, in the 1620s, Pieter Claesz (1596/97-1661) and Willem Claesz Heda (1596-1682) developed the subgenre of the breakfast piece, to which they also applied monochrome characteristics.

Travels to Italy inspired a very different subgenre, that of the Italianate landscape. In around 1620, Dutch and Flemish artists in Rome had established a semi-formal association, complete with initiation rules and club-names. The members were known as *Bentveughels*. In the 1620s, with the return of Cornelis van Poelenburch (1594/95-1667) and Barthelomeus van Breenbergh (1599-1657), two of the leading members of the first generation of *Bentveughels*, the Italianate landscape depicting ruins and statuary fragments bathed in Italian sunlight, started gaining ground in the Dutch Republic. Unlike the rapidly executed depictions of local

<sup>19</sup> For a more in depth art-historical overview consider: Haak, *The Golden Age*.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Gifford, 'Esaias van de Velde's technical innovations'; Keyes, *Esaias van de Velde*.

<sup>21</sup> See Sluijter, 'Jan van Goyen als marktleider', pp. 51-52 for a good discussion of these innovations.

landscapes by the likes of Van Goyen and De Molyn, Dutch Italianates produced elaborate and costly paintings that were highly valued in the Dutch Republic.

Meanwhile, others experimented with the production of the more traditional landscapes. Hercules Seghers (1589/90-1637/38) continued working on fantasy landscapes using original techniques. According to Seymour Slive, he was 'the most inspired, experimental, and original landscapist' of his period.<sup>22</sup> This had less to do with the subject matter, but more with his experiments in printmaking. Seghers experimented with printing in colour, by using horizontal formats and by printing on dyed paper or fabric. Unlike those introduced by Porcellis and Van de Velde, the techniques Seghers developed were never really adopted by the masses.

Esaias van de Velde was paramount to the development of Dutch landscape painting, but he also initiated what would become the genre of Dutch figure painting.<sup>23</sup> Building on David Vinckboon's banquet pieces, he lowered the horizon, used a diagonal composition, and adjusted motifs, but he did not break with his theme of elegant outdoor gatherings. Another painter should be credited with the invention of indoor Dutch merry companies. Rotterdam-born Willem Buytewech (1591/92-1630) arrived in Haarlem in the same year as Van de Velde and tried his luck at a range of genres and techniques, including print, drawing, and painting. Even if the moving merry company indoors had already taken place in prints designed in the late sixteenth century, it was still a radical break with the outdoor companies of Vinckboons and Van de Velde.

While new subjects and techniques were being explored in landscape and figure painting, Frans Hals (c. 1581-1666) was busy revolutionising portraiture. He animated group portraits through a whole range of artistic devices: arrangement, poses, contrast in colour, expressions and, last but not least, by applying a rough-mannered, loose and lively painting technique. Others in Hals and Van de Velde's peer group were changing the face of Dutch history painting. They made a departure from northern Mannerism as it had developed in Haarlem and Utrecht in the previous phase, to achieve a more realist depiction of subjects. In Amsterdam, for instance, Pieter Lastman (1583-1633), influenced by his stay in Rome in the 1600s and by the German-born painter and draughtsman Adam Elsheimer (1578-1610), was experimenting with the relationship between landscape and figures. He combined medium-sized figures and landscapes, without letting one or the other dominate the image. Lastman along with others in the Amsterdam history painters' circle, such as the brothers Jan (c. 1581-1631) and Jacob (1592/93-1650) Pynas and Nicolaes Moeyaert (1591-1655), are often anachronistically referred to as Pre-Rembrandtists,

<sup>22</sup> Slive, *Dutch painting*, p. 185. On Seghers see: Rowlands, *Hercules Segers*.

<sup>23</sup> The following is based on Kolfin, *Young gentry*, pp. 103-118.

due to their influence on Rembrandt. Like the Italianate landscapists, almost all of them had spent time in Rome where they were inspired by local painting styles.

Around the same time, in Utrecht, another group of painters was also strongly influenced by Italian painting. The main representatives of the Utrecht group were Dirck van Baburen (1594/95-1624), Gerard van Honthorst (1592-1656), and Hendrik ter Brugghen (1588-1629), who had all been in Rome in the 1610s and returned with new ideas about composition, colour, and subjects. Caravaggio (1571-1610) was their main source of inspiration and they became known as the Utrecht Caravaggists. These artists produced large history and figure paintings, using the artistic device of *chiaroscuro*, or *clair-obscur*, meaning large contrasts between areas of bright light and dark shading. Caravaggio achieved a strong natural realism by close physical observation and the dramatic use of *chiaroscuro*. Although their style was only popular for a decade or two, the Dutch Caravaggists made a big impact. According to Seymour Slive, they 'introduced one of the main currents of Baroque art into the Netherlands. Even the greatest masters of seventeenth-century Dutch painting, who were never in Italy, Hals, Rembrandt, and later also Vermeer, took decisive impulses from the Caravaggesque style'.<sup>24</sup>

What follows from this overview, is that artistic innovations took place in all genres. Moreover, artistic innovations developed alongside and built upon traditional conventions. Much of this happened in interaction with other countries, most notably the Southern Netherlands and Italy. Although by 1620 some of the prominent painters who were active during the phase of emergence had passed away, most notably Karel van Mander in 1606, Gillis van Coninxloo in 1607, and Hendrick Goltzius in 1617, the new generation of painters did not entirely replace the previous generation and their styles and subjects. In Utrecht, Abraham Bloemaert, Joachim Wytewael, and Paulus Moreelse continued their work, and were later joined by Roelant Savery and Ambrosius Bosschaert in around 1618. David Vinckboons continued to work in Amsterdam and Cornelis Cornelisz in Haarlem.

The question of why such dramatic transformations took place during this time and in this location will be saved for later. First the consequences of the product and process innovations that were developed in the 1610s and 1620s will be discussed, namely the broadening and democratisation of the Dutch art market.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Blankert, 'Onverdragelijk lelijk'.

<sup>25</sup> Montias, 'Cost and value'.

## 8.5 From artistic novelties to product and process innovations

Historical continuities and international influence notwithstanding, there is no denying that significant changes took place in the 1610s and 1620s. The number of paintings per household increased, the compositions of the collections was transformed, the number of painters increased, and new styles, subjects, and painting techniques were introduced. Analyses of the Dutch art market by economists and economic historians have combined all these observations in a single framework. This has generated a widely accepted consensus on the role of market forces in shaping the Dutch art market. They demonstrated how market forces not only affected the volume of production, but also stylistic developments and the quality of the artwork that was produced.<sup>26</sup>

Michael Montias has presented some of the inventions by Esaias van de Velde and Jan Porcellis as process innovations.<sup>27</sup> By combining a swifter painting technique with simpler compositions (fewer figures and objects) and more restricted colours, Porcellis and Van de Velde are considered to have set in motion a trend for producing cheaper paintings that could penetrate a broader market.<sup>28</sup> By using more sky, more shade and less crowding in their pictures, painters effectively reduced the amount of labour they needed to invest in the painting. Such specialised and 'painterly' works took much less time to complete than their meticulously executed counterparts, and since labour costs were the prime determinant of production costs, this had a dramatic impact on the price of paintings.<sup>29</sup> Montias asserted that the works of the realistic 'tonal' school of landscape painting, initiated by Esaias van de Velde and developed by Pieter Molijn, Jan van Goyen, and Salomon van Ruysdael, brought about substantially lower prices than those of their Mannerist predecessors (typically f15 to f30, versus f70 to f100 for the older works).<sup>30</sup>

In Chapter 3 it was shown that publishers cut back on production costs by reducing the size of the books. It has been suggested that painters also applied this strategy, but there is no quantitative evidence to corroborate this.<sup>31</sup> Fortunately, the few quantitative studies that exist on the size of Dutch paintings provide some clues.<sup>32</sup> Ad van der Woude's analysis of the average size of paintings in the Dutch *Rijksmuseum* produced by Dutch painters indicates a gradual decline in the size of

<sup>26</sup> See the historiography in the introduction.

<sup>27</sup> Montias, 'The influence of economic factors'; Montias, 'Cost and value'.

<sup>28</sup> On Van de Velde's innovations see: Gifford, 'Esaias van de Velde's technical innovations'.

<sup>29</sup> Sluijter, 'Determining value', pp. 10-12; Bok, 'Pricing the unpriced'; Boers-Goossens, 'Prices of Northern Netherlandish paintings'.

<sup>30</sup> Montias, 'The influence of economic factors', p. 54.

<sup>31</sup> Biesboer, ed., *De Gouden Eeuw begint in Haarlem*, p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> On the size of paintings see: Van der Woude, 'The volume and value of paintings', pp. 306-308; Miedema, 'Verder onderzoek'; Bruyn, 'Een onderzoek naar 17de eeuwse schilderijformaten'; Martin, 'Een "kunsthandel" in een klappermanswachthuis'.

paintings over time. On average, painters born between 1550 and 1599 produced larger paintings than the groups born in 1600-1649 and 1650-1699.<sup>33</sup> His data shows an overall reduction in the size of paintings, but does not explicate exactly when this took place.

A second clue can be found in the distribution of genres. Van der Woude found that the sizes of traditional subjects of religious, mythology, and other history paintings produced by the 1550-1649 cohort were on average significantly larger than landscapes, figure painting, or still lifes.<sup>34</sup> We can combine this finding, which is based on a limited sample of paintings, with the relative distribution of subjects in probate inventories in seventeenth-century Amsterdam, collected by Montias.<sup>35</sup> He compared inventories from the periods 1620-1649 and 1650-1679, finding that the share of landscapes, figure paintings, and still lifes increased, while the share of history paintings dropped significantly. This suggests that an increasingly large share of paintings in Amsterdam inventories were of a smaller size.

Finally, the fragmented data on the oeuvres of individual artists indicate an overall tendency to produce smaller pictures from the 1620s onwards, even in traditional genres.<sup>36</sup> Jonathan Israel has pointed out that artists such as Cornelis Cornelisz and Joachim Wtewael not only reduced and simplified designs and colouring, but also used smaller sizes. Likewise, mythological scenes by Cornelis van Poelenburch were smaller than those of his predecessors.<sup>37</sup> Amsterdam history painters like Lastman, Pynas, and Moeyaert also produced paintings of fairly modest size. Still, the high prices fetched for the smaller paintings by the aforementioned Van Poelenburch indicate that reductions in size did not necessarily mean that paintings became cheaper for the consumer. This points to a significant difference between the price-setting mechanisms in publishing and painting. In the case of the former, the price of the finished product, the book, relates almost perfectly to the inputs in terms of labour and material costs. Though many painters also used such a price-setting mechanism, there were also many exceptions.<sup>38</sup>

Whether the primary motives of the trendsetters were artistic or economic, the consequences were clear: productivity increased and paintings could be offered against lower prices without necessarily threatening painters' profits. By offering quality paintings for reasonable prices, the new generation of painters unlocked demand. As Montias put it: 'With these lower prices they created a demand for original works of art on the part of collectors who, in the past, could only have

<sup>33</sup> Van der Woude, 'The volume and value of paintings', pp. 306-308, table 316.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 306-308, table 317.

<sup>35</sup> Montias, 'Works of art', pp. 336, table 332.

<sup>36</sup> Israel, 'Adjusting to hard times'.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 455.

<sup>38</sup> Sluijter, 'Determining value'.

afforded copies. But their works were fashionable enough that they could also gain access to distinguished collections. For the first time, the products of a cost-cutting innovation were not considered somewhat inferior substitutes for 'top-quality' examples but desirable works of art in and of themselves.<sup>39</sup> The middle-income groups that previously could only afford copies or prints were now able to own new and original paintings by living masters.<sup>40</sup> Because the artistic novelties did not replace or exclude other subjects, styles, and techniques, the range of paintings on offer expanded dramatically.

At a glance, the explanatory framework of market forces seems to offer a straightforward interpretation of what occurred in the Dutch market. However, a closer look suggests that although the overall importance of market settings is indisputable, two areas of the existing representation need to be redressed. Montias' interpretation of the stylistic and iconographic changes in the Dutch Republic resulting from product and process innovations is convincing. Nevertheless, there is as yet no comprehensive explanation for the timing of such innovations. Secondly, the existing explanations do not substantiate the exceptionally high levels of production, nor the high levels of quality that accompanied the quantitative expansion of the art market. This is because these existing explanations treat paintings as mere commodities. The rest of this chapter will discuss the former issue and the latter will be revisited in the subsequent chapter.

## 8.6 The invisible hand of supply and demand

Montias asserted that innovation thrives when information flows freely between potential innovators. He also suggested that there should be a certain number, a critical mass, of active individuals competing and interacting to stimulate breakthroughs, though he did not pursue this generalisation.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, he did not take into systematic account that timesaving product and process innovations were also developed around the same time in other cultural industries. Books, tiles, and tapestries became simpler and/or smaller during the growth phase, adding a whole new market segment to the persistent production of large sized products and the expensive small format works.<sup>42</sup> The fact that the trend toward smaller and simpler products took place in several industries around the same time, suggests that the

<sup>39</sup> Montias, 'The influence of economic factors', p. 54.

<sup>40</sup> Chong, 'Market for landscape painting'. On prices of Dutch paintings see also: Boers-Goosens, 'Prices of Northern Netherlandish paintings'; Bok, 'Pricing the unpriced'; Sluijter, 'Determining value'.

<sup>41</sup> Montias, 'Cost and value', pp. 457-458.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 462. See chapter 3 of this book.

product and process innovations in Dutch painting could have been a response to circumstances influencing the overall market for cultural products.

A possible explanation of the parallel developments across differing cultural industries can be found in Jonathan Israel's interpretation of the development of painting's tonal phase.<sup>43</sup> In Israel's view the different phases in the development of Dutch painting are strongly related to phases in the restructuring of Dutch commerce, industry, and retailing. Israel distinguished between phase two (1609-1621) and phase three (1621-1647) in the lifecycle of Dutch world trade primacy. The middle period in Dutch Golden Age painting, characterised by the shift towards smaller paintings with more modest subjects, in different tones and colours, and by the development of new subject matter, was strongly related to the commercial crisis in phase three, following the end(ing) of the Twelve Years' Truce.<sup>44</sup> In his opinion, we should not regard the monochrome phase as an example of a simple 'market innovation', but rather as a much wider and more complex set of artist-responses, specific to the conditions prevailing in the Dutch art market between 1621 and the mid-1640s. Accordingly, the cutting of costs through stylistic adjustments can be interpreted as a response to the declining demand for paintings and the rising price of materials.

It has been noted that Israel's account of both the extent of the crisis and the impact of rising prices of pigments may be somewhat exaggerated. Economic circumstances may not have been as bleak as Israel made them out to be.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the development of product and process innovations took place during what Israel labelled as phase two, not in phase three. Nevertheless, we should not discard his observations. Whilst there is no evidence for a decline in demand for paintings, there is evidence for discrepancies between supply and demand. Sluijter implicitly extended and adapted Montias' point, providing a possible explanation for the innovations by falling back on the concepts of economic competition and artistic rivalry.<sup>46</sup> He has argued that open market demand for cheap decorative paintings was not met by local supply. The popularity in Dutch towns of public auctions selling cheap paintings from the Southern Netherlands points to a gap in the art market, which intensified around the time of the Twelve Year's Truce. This argument states that the competition for market shares, triggered by imports of (cheaper) paintings from the Southern Netherlands, stimulated the new generation to make timesaving product and process innovations that cut costs and improved quality.

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<sup>43</sup> Israel, 'Adjusting to hard times'; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, pp. 547-564, 873-880.

<sup>44</sup> Israel, 'Adjusting to hard times'.

<sup>45</sup> Ormrod, 'Art and its markets', p. 546.

<sup>46</sup> Sluijter, 'On Brabant rubbish'.



Regardless of whether or not product and process innovations were triggered by critical mass, by declining demand, or by increasingly expensive materials or by imports from the Southern Netherlands, the consequences were the same. As competitive pressure intensified, so did the need for differentiation. This suggests that the art market became increasingly crowded. Critical mass, or a number of painters competing in one specific location, is indeed an important explanation for the developments, in terms of innovation and quality in the Dutch art market, but it is too general to explain why and how changes occurred. Cluster theory, with its stressing of interactions, both competitive and collaborative, between producers, consumers, provides a better defined explanatory framework. Moreover, a distinction should be made between the explanations for the initial development of product and process innovations, and those for the innovations at the far end of the specialisation scale of Dutch painting, which occurred during the phase of exploitation.

### 8.7 Competition

Eric Jan Sluijter has suggested that the competitive pressure in the Dutch art market increased during the 1610s. The series of artists' complaints, dated around this time, have been discussed at length in previous studies, but are worth summarising here.<sup>47</sup> From the late Middle Ages, painters in the Low Countries were organised in guilds that encompassed a whole range of related crafts, such as the guilds of Saint Luke, Saddlers' guilds, or *Onze Lieve Vrouwe* Guild (*Our Lady*) in Amsterdam.<sup>48</sup> After the Revolt, painters started to organise themselves in independent 'visual arts' guilds. Along with painters, engravers, sculptors, glass painters, and producers of faience became members of the Guilds of Saint Luke. The first towns in the Northern Netherlands to take this step were Amsterdam (1579) and Middelburg (1585). In Amsterdam, as others have observed, this was part of a reorganisation of the economy in which the medieval guild-system was revived.<sup>49</sup> In Middelburg the goal appears to have been to attract refugees from Antwerp.<sup>50</sup>

A second round of guild establishments took place around the 1609 signing of the Twelve Years' Truce. It has been argued that new corporate activity was triggered by the threat of foreign competition.<sup>51</sup> Once Dutch borders opened up to

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.; Prak, 'Painters'; Romein and Korevaar, 'Dutch guilds'; De Marchi, 'The role of Dutch auctions'.

<sup>48</sup> For the history of painters' guilds see: Hoogewerff, *Geschiedenis van de St. Lucasgilden*.

<sup>49</sup> Prak, 'Painters', p. 152; Van Eeghen, 'Het Amsterdamse Sint Lucasgilde', p. 66; Lourens and Lucassen, 'Ambachtsgilden'.

<sup>50</sup> Prak, 'Painters', p. 152; Haak, *The Golden Age*, pp. 204-208.

<sup>51</sup> Haak, *The Golden Age*

imports from the Southern Netherlands, local markets were flooded with cheap paintings in styles and subjects familiar to the immigrant communities. Dutch painters responded to this competitive threat by voicing complaints to the town magistrates and requesting a ban on public sales of paintings by foreigners. As well as underlining the problem of competition for local painters, they emphasised the consequences for potential buyers. After complaining about the fact that the imported paintings were 'poor copies', 'rubbish', and 'inferior apprentices' works', they added that 'the good burgers here, who, by and large, have little knowledge of painting, [are being] deceived.'<sup>52</sup>

In a new request in 1613 it was again stressed that the imports were substandard and that burghers were deceived, as they often bought copies instead of originals by way of auctions. Sluijter has argued that the imports were simply inexpensive, not worthless as local painters claimed them to be. He also does not support the claim that most buyers were ignorant about what they bought.<sup>53</sup> The import of paintings from the Southern Netherlands was not new, but may have intensified after the signing of the Twelve Years' Truce. Given the absence of parallel increases in demand and the rising number of painters active in Dutch towns, the conclusion that competitive pressure grew is not implausible.

The local artists' complaints led to a tightening of existing guild privileges and the introduction of new ones, in addition to the establishment of new guilds in almost all artistically significant towns, such as Delft and Utrecht in 1611, as well as Gouda and Rotterdam in 1609.<sup>54</sup> Only in Leiden were painters prevented from establishing a guild, but after presenting the decisions from Amsterdam and Delft, they received regulations stating that only Leiden's citizens were allowed to sell paintings without the need for the burgomasters' prior consent, with the exception of the annual markets.<sup>55</sup>

The timing and character of guild regulation through the art market suggest that local painters were increasingly concerned with protecting their market share. They responded by strengthening local regulations concerning the sales of paintings, as well as by experimenting with artistic novelties, which developed into product and process innovations as Dutch painters started to capture new segments of demand. We cannot measure competition in the art market by estimating market

<sup>52</sup> Sluijter, 'On Brabant rubbish', pp. 3-4; Request published in Obreen, ed., *Archief*, vol. III, pp 164-177. Original: 'vodden ende slechte leerkinderen werck'.

<sup>53</sup> Sluijter, 'On Brabant rubbish', pp. 4-5; Request published in Obreen, ed., *Archief*, vol. III, pp 166-167. De Marchi takes the complaints more literal. De Marchi, 'The role of Dutch auctions', p. 205.

<sup>54</sup> It is noteworthy that in Middelburg there were already measures against import in 1592.

<sup>55</sup> See for the Amsterdam complaint: De Marchi, 'The role of Dutch auctions', pp. 163-164; Van Eeghen, 'Het Amsterdamse Sint Lucasgilde', p. 89; For Leiden: Romein, 'Knollen en citroenen', pp. 21-29. For statutes of Gouda and Rotterdam see Obreen, ed., *Archief*, vol. I, pp 62-66, vol. 62. For Delft see Montias, *Artists and artisans*, pp. 350-356. For Utrecht: Muller Fz., *Schildersverenigingen*, pp. 63-69; Hoogewerff, *Geschiedenis van de St. Lucasgilden*, p. 20.

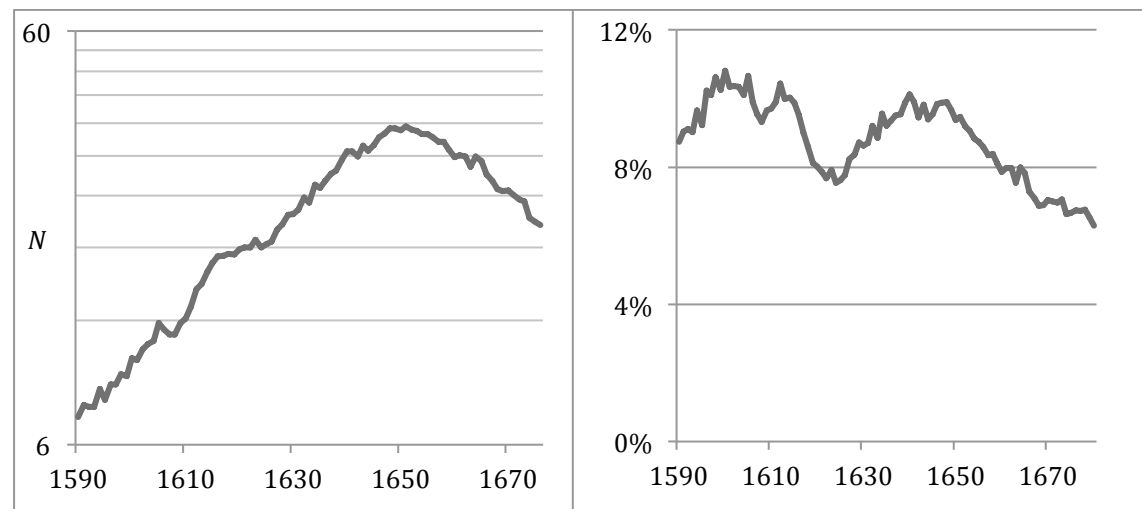
concentration, as we have done with the publishing industry. Instead of listing possible rivalries between painters, we will approach the matter quantitatively by taking a closer look at entry rates and entry barriers in the art market. There can be little doubt surrounding the fact that the supply side became increasingly crowded in the 1610s. When artists like Vinckboons, Bloemaert, and Cornelis Cornelisz entered the Dutch art market in around 1588-1590, they encountered few artists. Almost everyone was new in town and had only recently started. Painters who entered the market in the 1610s, faced a different challenge. They had to distinguish themselves, directly or indirectly, from both the generation of their masters and from each other. When we consider that the radical changes on the demand side had already taken root decades earlier, we would expect competitive pressure to have increased in the 1610s. We will attempt to test this theory by looking at entry rates.

The number of entrants in the sector has implications for industry competition. New entrants can erode the power of incumbent firms as they compete among themselves for a place in the market. Artists' entry years are determined by the year they were first mentioned in the Ecartico database. Their exit years are not so easy to obtain. The last year in which an artist received a mention in the Ecartico database was often the year the artist passed away and therefore not significant for our purposes. We have made two adjustments to the Ecartico data. The cumulative data showed a large spike in the 1610s for the number of new painters in the seven largest artistic communities in the Dutch Republic. A closer look at the underlying figures revealed that this was, to some extent, due to biased sources. Establishment of guild-like organisations in several towns through the 1610s prompted the drawing up of membership lists. Such lists have been important sources for estimating the number of active painters in towns and, as a result, the data displays sudden leaps in the number of active painters; in just a single year there were 11 new painters in Delft and seventeen new painters in Utrecht. These figures do not mirror the actual increase for that year, but rather the more gradual growth in the previous phase.<sup>56</sup> If we adjust for the bias in the data for Delft and Utrecht by using the average number of painters in the years preceding 1613 and subsequent to 1616, the bump decreases significantly, but it is still visible. In Figure 8.3 we present the number of entrants and the entry rates.

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<sup>56</sup> Cf. Montias, *Artists and artisans*, table A.2.

Figure 8.3 Number of entrants per year and entry rates in the seven largest artistic centres in the Dutch Republic, 1600-1670, 10-year moving average, semi-logarithmic scale



Source: Ecartico

Absolute figures do not tell us much about the impact of new entries on the industry as a whole. After all, the total number of active painters was increasing rapidly. Therefore we should consider entry rates, measured by dividing the number of new or retiring painters by the total number of painters active in that same year. When translated into entry rates we find that from the second half of the 1610s overall numbers of newcomers started to decline. This is hardly surprising given the fact that entry rates were so high to begin with, due to the large influx of immigrant painters. What is more interesting is that entry rates started to increase again from the 1620s, this time in the absence of any exogenous shock, such as the Revolt, or other exogenous factors which significantly stimulated demand for paintings.

### 8.8 Quantity and quality

The profusion of prominent Dutch painters during the Dutch Golden Age has been interpreted as a result of the large number of active painters, which was in turn explained by the large demand for paintings. The relationship between quality and quantity has been made explicit by Michael Montias, in his book about Delft, stated: '[b]ecause there were many painters in town, young people had a choice of masters from whom to learn; a wide variety of ideas sprouted to fructify even the barest soil; and there were good statistical chances that an extraordinary talent as Vermeer's

would one day or another reveal itself.<sup>57</sup> Assuming that talent was roughly equally distributed over time and place, the Dutch Golden Age was undoubtedly a favourable environment to unlock artistic potential and turn potential demand in real consumption.

The samples listed in the previous chapter make it possible to distinguish between different segments of the Dutch market for paintings. In Figure 8.4 the chronology of the six different samples is charted, according to the number of births per decade. All samples show an inverse U-shape, much like the one in Figure 8.1. Not surprisingly, this trend is comparable to the distribution of birth cohorts in Jan de Vries' sample of 1,760 pre-nineteenth century Dutch painters, based on a sample of painters represented in Dutch and American museums.<sup>58</sup> Overall, the high quality samples show the same trend as the mass market for paintings, as represented by sample D. This suggests that the two were closely related. However, a closer look at the similarities and differences between the samples shows three features that are worth noting and that warrant further investigation.

Firstly, there was a group that, in art-historical hindsight, had trouble differentiating their artwork from each other, as well as from their predecessors. The 1600s and 1610s are underrepresented in the samples. This may be a reflection of the different stages in the lifecycle of Dutch art production. The 1610s and 1620s, when the group born between 1580 and 1590 set up shop, are known as innovative years in Dutch painting, as are the 1650s, when a new round of product and process innovations took place, mainly, but not exclusively, initiated by a group of artists born in the 1620s and 1630s. Arguably, the period in between these two rounds of artistic prominence was one of expansion in terms of scale and specialisation rather than in terms of product and process innovations. Secondly, all decades witnessed the birth of acclaimed future artists, but the peak decade of birth was the 1620s.<sup>59</sup> Only the A+ sample shows a high point in the 1610s. The 1620s cohort entered the market between 1640 and 1650; their work is seen as the apex of the Golden Age. They refined previous innovations and variations, most visible in the figure paintings of the so-called *fijnschilders* and the landscapes by Van Ruisdael.

Finally, whereas most samples show a rather sudden decline in the number of births per decade, especially after the 1630s – the group of, for example, Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675) and Meindert Hobbema (1638-1709) – the C and D samples

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., pp. 105-106.

<sup>58</sup> De Vries, 'Art history', table 1 and table 3.

<sup>59</sup> Rembrandt (1606-1669) and Jan Lievens (1607-1674) in the 1600s; Gerard Dou (1613-1675), Barthelomeus van der Helst (1613-1670), Govert Flinck (1615-1660), and Gerard Ter Borch (1617-1681) in the 1610s; and Nicolaes Pietersz. Berchem (1620-1683), Aelbert Cuyp (1620-1691), Jan Steen (c. 1626-1679), Jacob van Ruisdael (c.1628-1682), Pieter de Hooch (1629-1684), and Gabriel Metsu (1629-1667) in the 1620s.

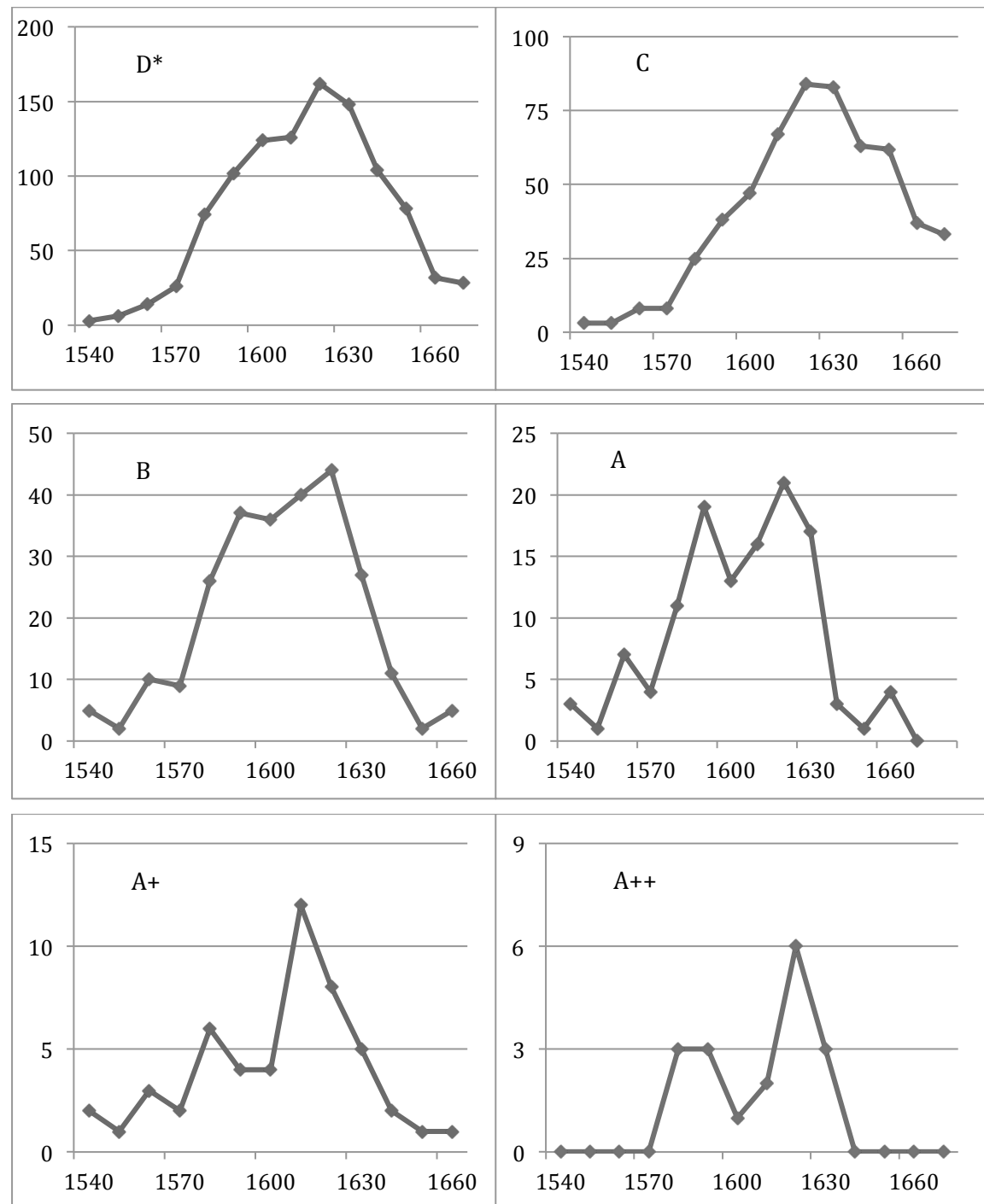
show a more gradual decline. The C sample in particular still shows painters from the birth groups of the 1640s and even the 1650s, including Gerard de Lairesse (1640/1641-1711), Godfried Schalken (1643-1706), and Adriaen van der Werff (1659-1722). In the eyes of contemporary observers, the 'sudden pull of the curtain' De Vries observed was a lot less abrupt than museum holdings suggest.<sup>60</sup>

Although there was an overall correlation between prominent painters and the volume of production, as represented by Figure 8.1 and the D-sample in Figure 8.4, it was not clear-cut. The observed differences between the samples can be related to the three different stages in the lifecycle of early modern Dutch painting and the type of innovation connected to the different stages. Firstly, a new route was entered into in the 1610s, initiated by the 1580s birth group, and developed by a group of slightly younger painters. Hereafter, the two birth groups of the 1600s and 1610s competed more on product variations than on radical novelties, depressing the chances of entering the art-historical canons. Secondly, the groups of the 1620s and 1630s are associated with a period of refinement, which was a sign that the art market was maturing. Finally, the rapid downturn after the 1650s marks the transition from the mature phase to the phase of decline. In the following paragraph this hypothesis will be further explored.

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<sup>60</sup> De Vries, 'Art history', p. 267.

Figure 8.4 Number of prominent painters born per decade, 1540-1680, per sample



Sources: see chapter 7. \*= Sum of the number of births in the ten largest artistic centres.

## 8.9 Specialisation and product variants

After the trendsetters had introduced new genres, styles, subjects, and compositional arrangements, demand for paintings could further expand. Data on the number of active painters show a steady rise up until circa 1650. Painters started specialising not only in specific genres, such as landscapes, still lifes, figure painting, portraits, and history paintings, but also in sub-genres, such as merry companies and ice-skating scenes. Still lifes, one of the mainstays of Dutch painting, also consisted of many sub-specialisations, from flower pieces, *banketjes* or 'banquet pieces', *ontbijtjes* or 'breakfast pieces', to depictions of dead fish. In the following section we will focus our attention on the particular (sub-)genre of figure painting, more specifically merry companies, to demonstrate how after the introduction of product and process innovations, artistic novelties were copied, emulated, adapted and improved upon.<sup>61</sup> The merry company had developed into an independent genre, visible by a sharp rise in the production, matched by increased variety on a limited number of motifs.<sup>62</sup>

Van de Velde and Buytewech had introduced important stylistic changes to the motif of merry companies. Though Buytewech may have produced his few merry companies upon return to Rotterdam, and Van de Velde continued to produce elegant outdoor companies in The Hague, both left a legacy in Haarlem. Their departure from Haarlem gave way to the first true specialist in merry companies: Dirck Hals (1591-1656), brother of Frans Hals. Presumably Van de Velde and/or Buytewech were responsible, in part at least, for his training as there are great similarities between their works and Hals' first paintings. Hals used spatial construction and figures from Van de Velde, compositions, iconography, and technique from Buytewech and added stylistic, compositional, and iconographic variants to blending their creations. Elmer Kolfin has emphasised how 'Dirck Hals was not an original artists who managed to create a new genre from little-known pictorial or literary traditions. He was, though, the one who succeeded in expanding a subject into a genre by specialising and by developing different types'.<sup>63</sup> When it came to indoor companies, he was more inventive, introducing the gathering of only men, smaller single figure paintings, and the adaptation to monochrome palettes.

Soon many copies were made of his work, often anonymously. Artists in other towns picked up on the successful genre of indoor merry companies and developed their own, local, specialisations.<sup>64</sup> In Amsterdam, variants on Haarlem's indoor companies were developed, differentiated by the theme of the guardroom

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<sup>61</sup> Based on Kolfin, *Young gentry*, pp. 105-118.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>64</sup> Based on ibid..



which depicted soldiers during their down time. The three most renowned representatives were Pieter Codde (1599-1678), Willem Duyster (1599-1635), and Pieter Quast (1606-1647). Codde produced various styles, but Duyster seems to have concentrated on fire-lit guardrooms. These were soon imitated in Amsterdam as well as in other towns, such as Delft, Utrecht, and Dordrecht. In Utrecht, Jacob Duck (1600-post 1660) started out with guardroom scenes, but would go on to specialise in comical brothel scenes, while Jan van Bijlert (1597/98-1671) produced brothel scenes with Caravaggist influences. In Delft there was one painter who specialised in merry companies: Anthonie Palamedesz (1601-1673). In terms of iconography he did not share links with Haarlem, Amsterdam, or Utrecht, but to the fancier merry companies produced in The Hague, especially those by Esaias van de Velde.

Strategies of specialisation, differentiation, imitation and emulation were obvious. Montias pointed out: 'Consider an artist with an average talent and ability. What would he have done to succeed economically? One option open to him [...] was to imitate artists with a popular following. This was all the more likely when he lived in another city than the artist he wished to imitate.'<sup>65</sup> Alongside innovators like Jan van Goyen, Gerard Dou, and Rembrandt, worked a wide range of less gifted painters, specialising in one niche or another.<sup>66</sup> Specialties were so narrow that they limited possibilities for imitation and allowed a modest monopoly rents to accrue to the specialist. They built on the novelties developed by the generalist generation of the 1610s and were, in turn, imitated and emulated by other painters. After 1625 no radical iconographic, compositional, or technical innovations were introduced. The art market expanded through imitation and differentiation, which resulted in a rapid succession of new variants. These artists filled the gap between mass market, or the D sample, and the high quality samples. In other words, they represent what distinguished the Republic from other countries, and the Golden Age from other periods.

## 8.10 Conclusion

Referring to the period of the Twelve-Years Truce (1609-1621), Wouter Kloek has stated that 'The surge of artistic activity [...] continued unhindered [after 1620]'; Bob Haak pointed out that 'there was no renaissance in 1609, nor any decline when the truce expired in 1621'; and Lyckle de Vries even went as far as to say that the chronological division between two periods, before and after the 1610s, hinders our

<sup>65</sup> Montias, 'The influence of economic factors', p. 50.

<sup>66</sup> Consider for example Sluijter, 'Jan van Goyen als marktleider' on Jan van Goyen.

understanding of Dutch art, because it overstates the artistic novelties of this period, due to a chauvinistic bias.<sup>67</sup> From a socio-economic perspective, choosing the 1610s as a starting point for this chapter is neither chauvinistic nor arbitrary. It was exactly in these years that the Dutch art market reached a critical juncture.

The timing of product and process innovations was the result of relative stagnation in the traditional market for cultural products. When new parties entered the market, it became increasingly crowded. Faced with competitive pressure from Flemish competitors, from established masters in the traditional fields of history and portrait painting, from Dutch/Flemish specialists, and from each other, the members of the 1580/1590-group initiated product differentiations. In the large potential market for works of art, these soon developed into the famous cost-saving product and process innovations of the 1610s and 1620s.

After the exogenous shock that sparked the expansion in scale and scope of the Dutch art market between 1580 and 1610, a series of product and process innovations triggered a new growth dynamic. In the following chapter will be explored how positive feedback loops and the economic geography of the Dutch Republic further strengthened the scale, scope, and quality of the production of paintings. Even without the endogenous dynamic that ensued, the art market would have presumably increased in size during the Golden Age. In favourable economic circumstances, labourers and farmers could afford to buy cheap prints and the increasingly wealthy upper class commissioned expensive paintings, fostering high quality painters and a range of incremental innovations. However, museums across the globe testify to the fact that what actually happened was much more than this.

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<sup>67</sup> Haak, *The Golden Age*, p. 179; Kloek, 'North Netherlandish Art', p. 105; De Vries, 'The changing face of realism', p. 234.

## 9 Local buzz and inter-local pipelines, 1610-1650

### 9.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the organisation of Dutch painting will be analysed. Focusing on the distinct features of artistic production, the interpretation of Dutch Golden Age painting that was laid out in the previous chapter will be substantiated. The degree to which Dutch artists were embedded in local production systems and how knowledge and skills were reproduced and transferred will be the main topics. On top of the large and varied demand and the artistic innovations, a specific combination of external openness and local entrenchment strengthened positive feedback loops and, in so doing, increased the volume of production, sustained the rapid succession of product variants, and maintained the high quality that all characterised the growth phase of Dutch painting.

Following the initial insights of the frontrunners, new styles, compositions, and techniques were exploited by means of innovation through variation. Features specific to the Dutch art market reinforced the diffusion and adaptation of innovations at both a local and inter-local level. This turned Dutch art production into a pressure cooker of artistic imitation and emulation. On the one hand, artists could acquire and profit from skills and knowledge at a local level by being embedded in tightly knit networks. These local production systems also provided a certain degree of protection through guild regulations. On the other hand, the external openness, inherent in the polycentric urban structure, facilitated geographic diffusion of skills and innovations and provided access to varying sources of skills and knowledge. This resulted in the rapid rise in the number of active painters, the wide variety of specialisations, the success of certain towns, and the highly innovative and qualitative output.

### 9.2 Geography of production

Table 9.1 presents the number of painters active in the top fifteen artistic centres in the Northern and Southern Netherlands between 1600 and 1699. A distinction can be made between five categories: major artistic communities with over 400 painters;

large communities that housed between 230 and 270 painters; medium-sized communities with a little over 100 painters; minor painting sites with 20 to 25 painters; and a final 'other' category, which includes towns with less than 20 active painters during the seventeenth century. The Hague's share was comparable to that of Brussels, which is not particularly surprising, given the fact that they were both political centres. What is more interesting, is the relatively modest position of Amsterdam, both compared to its counterpart Antwerp, and to its dominance in, for example, publishing. In the Dutch Republic, medium-sized towns were able to accommodate significant numbers of painters. Part of the difference in distribution between the Dutch Republic and the Southern Netherlands can be explained by an underrepresentation of Southern Netherland's painters in the database, as well as double calculations in the case of the Dutch Republic.<sup>1</sup> These double calculations are the result of the relatively high mobility of Dutch artists, something that will be expanded upon later.

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<sup>1</sup> The Ecartico database is biased towards Dutch painters.

Table 9.1 Number of painters active in the Dutch Republic and the Southern Netherlands in top-fifteen towns, 1600-1699

Town in Northern Netherlands	N	%	Town in Southern Netherlands	N	%
Amsterdam	1,017	26.0	Antwerp	847	65.5
The Hague	636	16.3	Brussels	145	11.2
Haarlem	419	10.7	Malines	93	7.2
Delft	271	6.9	Ghent	53	4.1
Utrecht	246	6.3	Bruges	52	4.1
Rotterdam	239	6.1	Liege	47	3.6
Leiden	232	5.9	Tournai	13	1.0
Dordrecht	119	3.0	Louvain	8	0.5
Leeuwarden	108	2.7	Courtrai	6	0.3
Alkmaar	106	2.7	Namur	4	0.3
Middelburg	101	2.6	Diest	4	0.3
Gouda	26	0.7	Oudenaarde	4	0.3
Zwolle	23	0.6	Ypres	4	0.3
Amersfoort	22	0.6	Cambrai	2	0.2
Enkhuizen	22	0.6	Lier	2	0.2
Rest	328	8.3	Rest	4	0.3
Total	3,914	100	Total	1,294	100

Source: Ecartico.

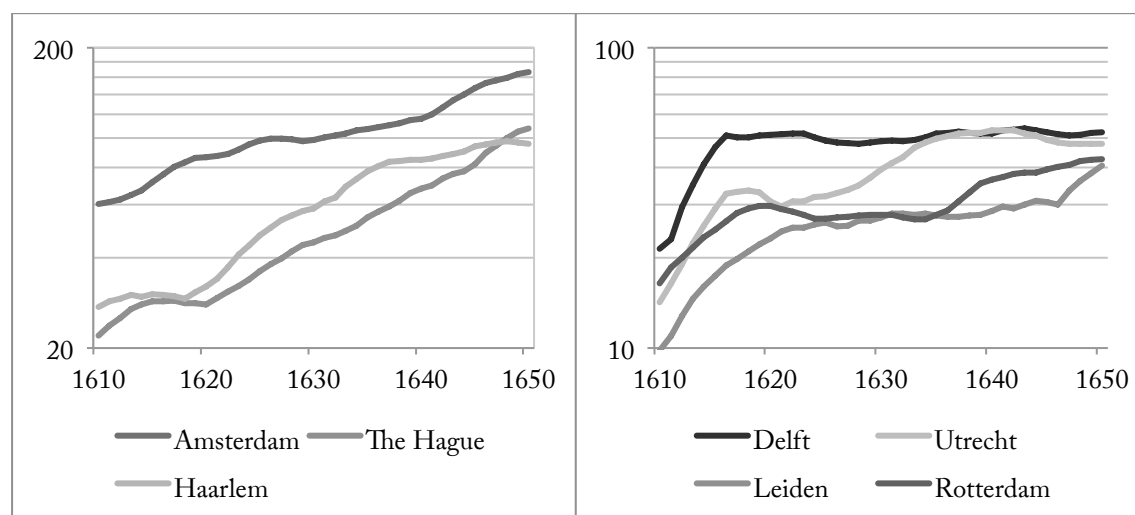
The number of active painters increased rapidly in the period of 1610-1650, not only in absolute terms, but also relative to population growth (Figure 9.1). Based on estimates for Antwerp and Delft, Van der Woude has estimated that in the seventeenth century, painters made up 5 per cent of the male labour force in Dutch towns.<sup>2</sup> This has been confirmed by Montias for 1650, on the basis of guild registration lists.<sup>3</sup> When population data is adjusted to produce estimates on the labour force, the results from the Ecartico database can be compared to the densities calculated by Van der Woude and Montias. Based on the Ecartico database, we can now expand the selection of towns for which data was available and more clearly distinguish between different periods (Table 9.2). Ten benchmark years and data on the top seven artistic centres, results in an average of 3.7 percent (median 2.7 per cent) for the seventeenth century. This expanded dataset confirms an estimate of circa 5 per cent for 1650, whilst by the end of the seventeenth century, this had

<sup>2</sup> Van der Woude, 'The volume and value of paintings'.

<sup>3</sup> Montias, 'Estimates', p. 61.

declined to an average of around 2 per cent (1.6 per cent median). In the 1650s there is a peak in terms of the average, but this is strongly biased by date on The Hague. When median is used instead of average, the same peak can be observed in the 1640s.

Figure 9.1 Number of painters active in the seven largest artistic communities, 1610-1650 10-year moving average, semi-logarithmic scale



Source: Ecartico.

Table 9.2 Number of painters per 10,000 inhabitants, 1610-1640

Town	A	H	U	TH	D	L	R	M	Do	Lee	Average
1600	7.8	5.8	3.1	17.6	11.4	4.0	5.0	3.0	6.3	5.8	6.7
1610	7.1	7.8	4.1	15.8	11.8	3.1	11.2	2.3	4.4	9.6	7.9
1620	8.3	9.1	8.7	19.0	26.8	5.4	17.2	2.5	9.2	15.2	11.6
1630	8.2	17.2	14.0	30.1	23.3	6.1	20.0	2.2	8.5	15.6	14.6
1640	8.9	24.2	16.7	44.8	24.1	5.8	14.2	2.8	8.0	9.7	16.0

Source: Ecartico; (Lourens and Lucassen 1997).

Initially, the working location of an artist was determined largely by market conditions and artistic traditions. In the growth phase, local market conditions became a less important factor. The size of artist communities only partially reflects the size of the local market, as determined by the number of inhabitants. In general, the location of artists was still strongly concentrated in the province of Holland. Presumably, producers benefited from, and added to, the benefits offered by relatively large urbanised economies, available to all firms in the city. However, not all artists flocked to the largest market or to the towns that would offer the best chances for profiting from urbanisation externalities. We find that the density of

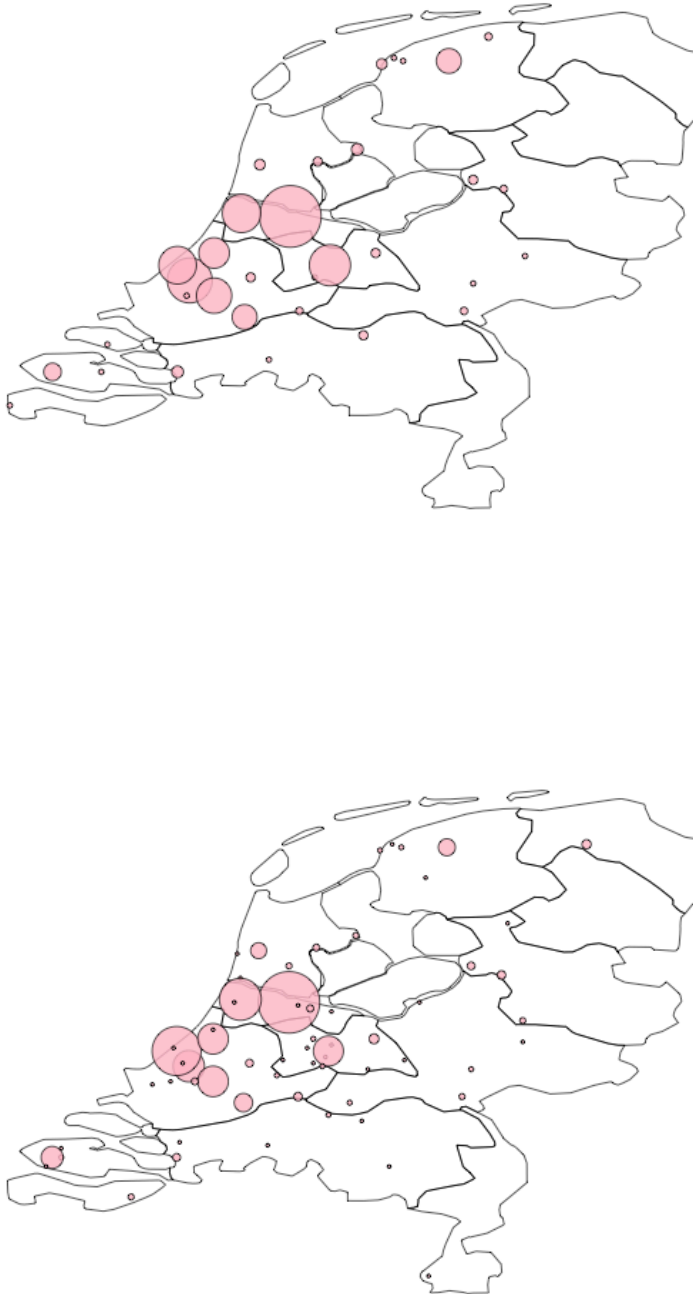
painters increased in all towns, but not consistently. The Hague shows a spectacular increase after 1630 and had, by far, the highest density of painters. Delft, Haarlem and, to a lesser extent, Utrecht also had an above average concentration of painters. Amsterdam and Leiden, on the other hand, ranked relatively low. The differences between the towns, as measured in number of painters per 10,000 inhabitants, correspond fairly closely with the estimates made by Montias for the year 1650, but the exact estimates differ significantly, especially for The Hague.<sup>4</sup> This is mainly due to the fact that Montias worked with guild membership lists, while the Ecartico database also includes non-registered painters.

The overall trend in the number of painters active in the Dutch Republic appears to be relatively straightforward, displaying steady growth from circa 1620 to circa 1650. However, the breakdown per town is more complex. Local artistic communities did not necessarily follow the life cycle of the painting industry. Certain ones exhibited above average growth rates, whereas others performed well below the overall standard. To some extent the differences between the towns are skewed by the composition of the dataset. It does not differentiate between artistic painters, decorative painters, or watercolour painters, nor between painters who were just passing through or painters who firmly locally embedded. As a consequence the positions of Amsterdam and The Hague are amplified in these figures.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.; Bakker, 'Gezicht op Leeuwarden'.

Figure 9.2 Distribution of painters (D sample) in 1610 (above) and 1650 (below)



Source: Ecartico.



*Agglomeration of quality*

The geographic distribution of prominent painters can also be plotted according to the different samples. This makes it possible to capture duplicated counts in the dataset, to distinguish between market segments, and to trace changes over time. A distinction is made between the geographic distribution of painters, according to place of birth and main work location; the latter being defined as the place in which at least half a career was spent (Table 9.3 and Table 9.4). The A++ sample shows no distinct concentration, apart from a slight overrepresentation of Leiden in terms of birth location, whereas the A sample, for instance, shows a dominance of Amsterdam and Haarlem. Apparently, chances of becoming a prominent artist depended not only on general economic or individual social circumstances, but also on distinct local features. Moreover, we observe discrepancies between the place of birth and the main working location. Many painters born in Leiden, for instance, ended up working in Amsterdam. In the A sample, Amsterdam, Haarlem, Utrecht, The Hague, and Delft score relatively high in terms of work location. Towns with a relatively high artist-density also feature prominently in the art-historical accounts of painting in the Golden Age.

These results show that not all towns appear to have offered comparable conditions for (prominent) painters. And why did some towns, Haarlem and Utrecht, see early success whilst other towns, Leiden and Delft, only developed into artistic hotbeds at a later stage? Estimates of the size of local markets could not fully explain the geographic distribution of painting after the 1610s. In the following section explanations for spatial inequalities in artistic production will be explored, as well the relationships between quality and quantity.

Table 9.3 Distribution of painters according to place of birth, 1540-1670

N	A++	A+	A	B	C <sup>3</sup>	D <sup>4</sup>	Population 1670
Amsterdam	1	10	25	41	56	312	219,000
Haarlem	2	9	20	30	35	173	38,000
The Hague	1	1	4	10	28	135	20,000
Leiden	4	8	10	19	23	105	67,000
Rotterdam	2	2	5	14	10	84	45,000
Utrecht	1	3	6	14	22	80	30,000
Delft	1	3	7	12	16	85	25,000
Dordrecht	2	3	5	12	24	55	20,000
Leeuwarden	0	0	0	4	5	45	15,500
Middelburg	0	0	0	6	1	25	27,000
Alkmaar	1	2	4	5	12	19	13,500
Gorinchem	0	0	0	6	7	27	9,300
Foreign	0	9	16	33	80	-	-
Unknown	0	0	2	3	7	-	-
Other	3	8	17	46	71	-	1,370,700
Total	18	58	121	255	397	1,145	1,900,000

%	A++	A+	A	B	C	D	Population 1670
Amsterdam	5.6	17.2	20.7	16.1	14.1	27.2	11.5
Haarlem	11.1	15.5	16.5	11.8	8.8	15.1	2.0
The Hague	5.6	1.7	3.3	3.9	7.1	11.8	1.1
Leiden	22.2	13.8	8.3	7.5	5.8	9.2	3.5
Rotterdam	11.1	3.4	4.1	5.5	2.5	7.3	2.4
Utrecht	5.6	5.2	5.0	5.5	5.5	7.0	1.6
Delft	5.6	5.2	5.0	4.7	4.0	7.4	1.3
Dordrecht	11.1	5.2	4.1	4.7	6.0	7.3	1.1
Leeuwarden	0	0	0	1.6	1.3	4.8	0.8
Middelburg	0	0	0	2.4	0.3	3.9	1.4
Alkmaar	5.6	3.4	3.3	2.0	3.0	1.7	0.7
Gorinchem	0	0	0	2.4	1.8	1.7	0.5
Foreign	0	15.5	13.2	12.9	20.2	-	-
Unknown	0	0	1.7	1.2	1.8	-	-
Other	16.7	13.8	14.0	18.0	17.9	-	72.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Sources: see chapter, 7; Ecartico.

<sup>3</sup> Born between 1540 and 1670.<sup>4</sup> Data from Ecartico.

Table 9.4 Distribution of painters according to main work location, 1540-1670

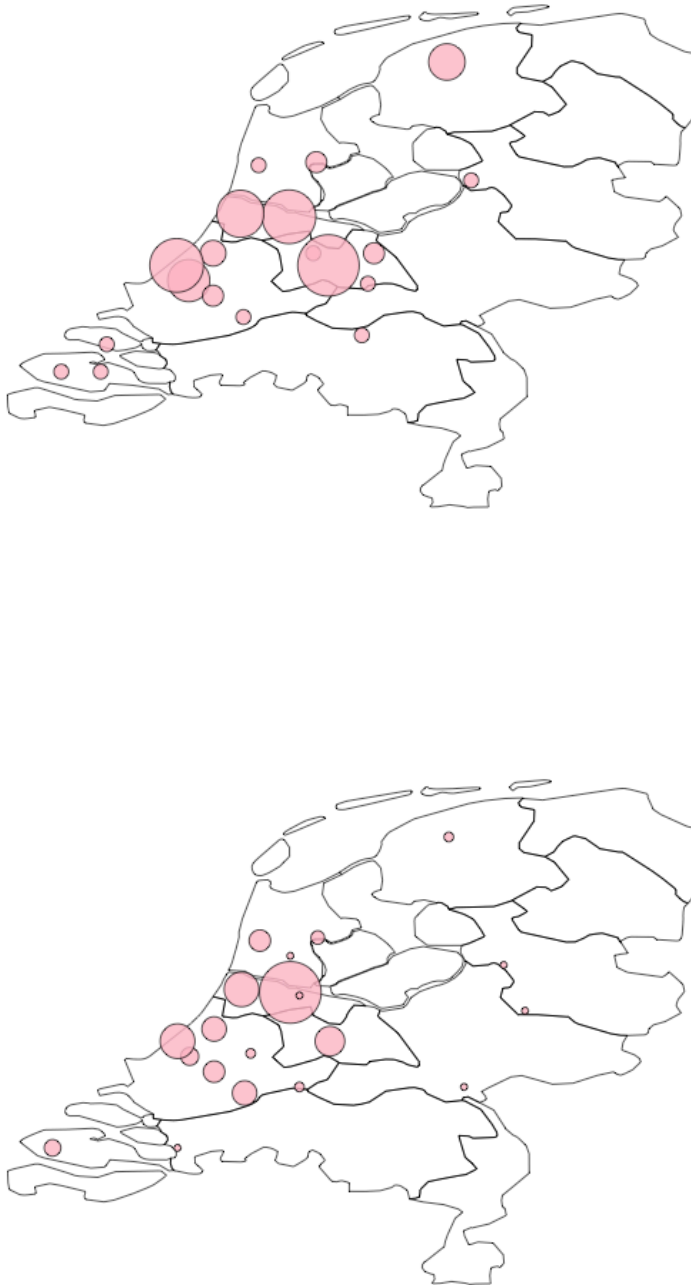
N	A++	A+	A	B	C	D	Population 1670
Amsterdam	7	24	40	82	92	306	219,000
Haarlem	3	10	21	38	27	122	38,000
Utrecht	2	5	9	20	18	73	30,000
The Hague	1	5	9	14	35	177	20,000
Delft	2	2	8	14	13	78	25,000
Leiden	1	2	4	13	15	69	67,000
Rotterdam	0	2	4	10	9	70	45,000
Dordrecht	2	2	2	9	14	36	20,000
Middelburg	0	-	3	6	4	32	27,500
Leeuwarden	0	-	0	6	7	31	15,500
Zwolle	0	-	0	4	1	32	10,900
Alkmaar	0	-	0	2	1	7	13,500
Various	0	-	13	26	39	-	-
Unknown	0	-	0	2	15	-	-
Other	0	7	9	16	107	-	1,368,600
Total	18	59	121	262	397	1,033	

%	A++	A+	A	B	C	D	Population 1670
Amsterdam	38.9	40.7	33.1	31.3	23.2	26.9	11.5
Haarlem	16.7	16.9	17.4	14.5	6.8	10.7	2.0
Utrecht	11.1	8.5	7.4	7.6	4.5	6.4	1.6
The Hague	5.6	8.5	7.4	5.3	8.8	15.6	1.1
Delft	11.1	3.4	6.6	5.3	3.3	6.9	1.3
Leiden	5.6	3.4	3.3	5.0	3.8	6.1	3.5
Rotterdam	0	3.4	3.3	3.8	2.3	6.2	2.4
Dordrecht	11.1	3.4	1.7	3.4	3.5	3.2	1.1
Middelburg	0	0	2.5	2.3	1.0	2.8	1.4
Leeuwarden	0	0	0	2.3	1.8	2.7	0.8
Zwolle	0	0	0	4	0.3	2.8	0.6
Alkmaar	0	0	0	2	0.3	0.6	0.7
Various	0	0	10.7	26.0	9.8	-	-
Unknown	0	0	0	2	3.8	-	-
Other	0	11.9	7.4	16.0	27.0	-	72.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Sources: see chapter, 7; Ecartico.

Figure 9.3 Distribution of prominent painters (C sample), according to main work location, birth cohort 1590 (above) and 1630 (below)



Source: Ecartico; table 7.4.

### 9.3 Critical mass, clusters, and path dependence

The relationship between local characteristics and artistic achievements has been examined before. Frits Lugt has asked with regards to Rembrandt's brilliance: 'But was this big town [Amsterdam], with all its advantages, a necessary condition for the artist and would he not have made the same advancements in a different setting, Leiden for instance?'. Lugt's answer was a resounding 'no' and he downplayed the importance of Amsterdam as a working location for Rembrandt's artistic achievements. While this may be true on an individual level, economic literature suggests otherwise for industrial clusters. The performance of individuals can be improved by being in a certain environment through urbanization economies and/or localization economies.

Montias has linked the relation between quality and quantity to the concept of critical mass.<sup>8</sup> The concept of critical mass has only been systematically explored in studies on academic research groups, in which critical mass has been defined as the group size above which research quality per capita significantly improves.<sup>9</sup> Results indicated that, up to a certain point, research quality is proportional to group size, with the precise point in question being discipline dependent. For instance, on average, a group of ten researchers turns out to be twice as strong (per head) as a group of five. In addition to a lower critical mass, evidence indicates the existence of an upper critical mass; that being the maximum number of people with whom researchers can interact in a meaningful way. When the research group exceeds an upper limit, it tends to fragment.

Empirical and theoretical literature on clusters has also used the concept of critical mass in explaining cluster formation. Historical 'accidents' cause the number of firms in certain areas to exceed a quantitative threshold, or critical mass. Following this threshold, location-specific advantages, such as the transfer of knowledge and the pooling of the labour market, develop. From this point onwards, certain towns began attracting more start-ups than other regions, while companies in a cluster became more innovative than non-clustered companies, through spin-offs and start-ups.<sup>10</sup> Exactly how many producers were needed to reach critical mass is unspecified in this literature and this presumably varies between industries. Was this also the case in Dutch painting? What was the relationship between quality and quantity, and between size and prominence on the one hand and local characteristics on the other.

<sup>7</sup> 'Was die groote stad, met de voordeelen die zij bood, echter een vereischte voor den kunstenaar, en zou hij in een andere omgeving, bijv. Leiden, niet tot een dergelijke ontwikkeling zijn geraakt Lugt, *Wandelingen met Rembrandt*, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Montias, *Artists and artisans*, p. 105. The issue of the relationship between quantity and quality was also raised in De Vries, 'Art history', pp. 267-268.

<sup>9</sup> Kenna and Berche, 'Critical mass'.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Arthur, *Increasing returns*.

Two groups of towns in 1610: towns with one to five painters, and towns with more than ten painters (Amsterdam, Delft, Haarlem, The Hague, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Leiden, Leeuwarden, and Dordrecht). Only the second group would become significant in the latter part of the century (except for Leeuwarden). It can be considered that the former group never exceeded the critical value of an artistic community to begin with. In 1610, Dordrecht, Leiden, and Leeuwarden lagged a little behind, but whilst all three managed to retain their place in the latter group, they never really belonged at the top.

Only towns that had already taken a lead in the previous phase would sooner or later develop into artistic concentrations. In other words, in the growth phase it was hard to make a silk purse out of what had been a sow's ear during the phase of emergence. If an artistic community in a certain town was relatively small at the outset, it would never be able to compete with larger towns. The geographic divergence that took place during the phase of emergence strongly determined the artistic opportunities in later stages. Montias was therefore correct to highlight 'critical mass', but it can be defined here as the minimum number of practitioners required to sustain a proper local art market. As pointed out above, the gap between the different categories became more pronounced from 1620 onwards.

Based on the above, all towns that reached the critical threshold of ten active painters in 1610 were potential clusters. Generally, but not exclusively, these were all towns with a relatively large population size. The divergence between firms in non-clusters and those in clusters took place under the pressure from competition during the 1610s. Around 1610 the largest artistic centres were roughly of the same size, with circa 25 painters per town. Amsterdam and Delft were ahead, housing relatively large numbers of painters, while Leiden lagged somewhat behind. In the new growth phase, Haarlem, The Hague, and Utrecht surged ahead. In Amsterdam, although still the largest centre by far, growth rates were modest. In the 1630s the number of new painters in Amsterdam increased by 24, in Haarlem by 27, and in The Hague by 29. Combined, this represented 75 per cent of all growth in the seven largest towns.

During the phase of emergence, Amsterdam's share in the total number of painters had expanded, but during the growth phase it started to decline from circa 30 per cent in the 1600s and 1610s, to 24 per cent in the 1630s. In around 1635, there were approximately 50 painters active in Delft, Utrecht, and The Hague, twice as high as in Leiden and Rotterdam. Haarlem housed approximately 75 and Amsterdam house in the region of 100 active painters. Fifteen years later, Utrecht, like Delft, still housed just under 50 painters, while Leiden and Rotterdam had almost bridged the gap. The only towns to surpass the figure of circa 50 active painters were Amsterdam, Haarlem, and The Hague.

The 1610 size of a local artistic community cannot entirely explain its early lead or lack thereof. Likewise, a large number or high density of painters was not sufficient to trigger artistic innovation. Delft, for example, had some strength in portrait painting and housed a significant number of prominent painters who managed to differentiate their work through developing variants on existing specialties, such as seascapes, church interiors and battle scenes, but it was only in the late 1640s that Delft-based painters became innovative.<sup>11</sup> The Hague is another example. Even though the number of painters was relatively high, this did not give rise to many local virtuosos. Even the presence of the court was no guarantee. In fact, paintings were not the common luxury wall decoration among the nobility and for commissions of portrait or history paintings; specialists from elsewhere were called in.<sup>12</sup> The mid-levels of society were underrepresented in the town of The Hague and presumably the many mediocre painters in town catered to the people coming to The Hague for political or business purposes. In the chapters on publishers it was also observed that the presence of the court in The Hague did not make for local specialisation of luxurious books. Rather, high-quality books were imported from other towns. Moreover, the relatively small local demand for the middle segments of the market had prevented the development of an innovative local book production in these fields.

#### 9.4 Spatial concentration and spinoffs

Spatial inequality and the sustained growth of local clusters are generally ascribed to the benefits of co-location and self-reinforcing mechanisms. What triggers the initial concentration of firms in a particular location is commonly considered to be a set of contingent events, unrelated to later innovations and localisation benefits. However, in evolutionary economic geography, cluster formation is interpreted as an outcome of rather than a precondition for already present local advantages.<sup>13</sup> In this view, the formation of new clusters can be stimulated through spin-off processes and interactions with established related and supporting industries. Accordingly, cluster formation can be based on more historically and locally rooted sources than the more static approach to clustering has implied.

This more dynamic approach fits well with the case study of early modern painting. A late eighteenth-century analysis of Haarlem's prominence provides us

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<sup>11</sup> Montias, *Artists and artisans*, p. 181.

<sup>12</sup> See Wijsenbeek-Olthuis, *Het Lange Voorhout* on The Hague.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Wenting, 'Evolution of a creative industry'; Frenken and Boschma, 'A theoretical framework'; Boschma and Wenting, 'The spatial evolution of the British automobile industry'.

with some clues.<sup>14</sup> Haarlem painter Vincent Jansz van de Vinne (1736-1811) addressed this issue in an introduction to membership lists of the local guild of St. Luke. In his opinion, the presence of skilled masters who transferred their skills was an important factor in the prominence of Haarlem in Golden Age painting, but not as important as the protection of local guild masters against (unfair) competition.<sup>15</sup> At the time Van de Vinne expressed his thoughts, the guild system had come under attack and his argument may be interpreted as a defence for the benefits offered by forms of corporate organisation. In any case, his suggestions are worth exploring, starting with the importance of the reproduction of skills and routines.

The fact that the observed gap between supply and demand for paintings at the end of the phase of emergence was rapidly filled by painters trained in the Dutch Republic suggests that there was no break in skill transferral during the phase of emergence. Moreover, Haarlem and Utrecht, towns with a strong artistic tradition and an above average artistic performance during the growth phase, were the first to develop into clusters of painters. In other words, in the case of painting it was not merely an historical accident that triggered cluster dynamics. Presumably, the quality of the 'incubators' determined later success, as their routines were passed on through spin-offs and replication. Both immigrant specialists and the local artists of Haarlem and Utrecht played a significant role in training part of the next generation that would instigate a series of product and process innovations that would trigger the growth phase.

Haarlem mannerists Van Mander, Goltzius, and Cornelisz are known to have trained at least 30 apprentices all together; in Utrecht, Paulus Moreelse (1571-1638) and Abraham Bloemaert (1564-1651) were the leading trainers with at least 28 and fourteen pupils respectively; and in Amsterdam, the Flemish trio of Bol, Van Coninxloo, and Vinckboons took at least fifteen students under their wings.<sup>16</sup> Gerard Honthorst in Utrecht, Gerard Dou in Leiden, Rembrandt in Amsterdam, and Frans Hals in Haarlem are other examples of artists who were highly active in the transferral of skills, knowledge and routines. Their apprentices, largely second generation immigrants, would be responsible for an acceleration in specialisation and innovation.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Vincent van de Vinne Jansz in 1796 as an introduction for the membership lists he drew up on the basis of the guild administration. Boers-Goosens, *Schilders en de markt*, p. 15; Miedema, ed., *Archiefbescheiden*, vol. II, p. 1030.

<sup>15</sup> 'Dat eertyds in Haarlem zoveele schilders gewoont, en de konst geoeffend hebben, word door veelen aangemerkt, als of alhier het Queekschool, of de Lust tot schilderkunst groter was dan elders, waar doorze tot zoo groot een getal vermeerderde. Eensdeels ist waar daar groote Meesters zijn, ist mogelijk disiepels te vinden welke uijtmunten en goede meesters worden en ligt een groot getal uijtmaaken. Maar de voorname reden dat in deeze stad zoovele schilders gewoond hebben is bij het bovengezegde dat het Sint Lucas of schilders gild in hare voorregten had dat niemant, onder het Gild niet begreepen eenge Conterfijters mogt aanbieden en verkoopen.'

<sup>16</sup> These counts are based on the Ecartico database and Bok, *Vraag en aanbod*, p. 185.

<sup>17</sup> Sluijter, 'On Brabant rubbish'.



Did strong local knowledge and skill transferral, in the form of extensions and spinoffs, strengthen local growth dynamics? Spinoff processes are one of the most important and visible mechanisms for transferring knowledge and routines from incumbents to new firms.<sup>18</sup> This can strengthen geographical concentrations of local industries when spinoffs locate in their parent company's region and it can further specialisation and growth when they inherit parent firms' routines. In the case of painting, extensive information exists on master-apprentice relationships, permitting a comparison between the location of spinoffs and parent firms. In Table 9.5 and Table 9.6 the distribution of spinoffs is mapped, according to their main work location and their starting location. For example, sixteen of the artists who were trained in Haarlem remained in the town to initiate their career. In contrast, twelve Haarlem-trained artists continued to use the town as their main working location, whilst six others moved on to Amsterdam. These figures display an overall tendency to pursue a career in the town of one's training, although the strength of local spinoff dynamics differed per town. Utrecht, for example, ranked relatively high as a training site, with 21 artists, but only six ended up spending most of their career there.

Table 9.5 Distribution of spin-offs according to main work location, A-sample

		Main work location									
Training location		A	H	TH	U	L	D	R	Do	Other	Total
	Amsterdam	24	0	3	0	0	1	0	1	8	37
	Haarlem	6	12	2	0	0	0	1	0	4	25
	The Hague	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	4
	Utrecht	7	2	0	6	0	1	0	1	4	21
	Delft	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	5
	Rotterdam	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	4
	Dordrecht	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	5
	Leiden	2	0	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	8
	Other	5	2	4	2	0	0	1	0	4	18
	Unknown	11	7	1	0	0	2	1	0	7	29
Total		58	21	15	8	4	6	4	6	32	156

Source: Ecartico; Table 7.4.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Wenting, 'Evolution of a creative industry', pp. 70-71.

Table 9.6 Distribution of spin-offs according to starting location, A-sample

		Starting location									Total
		A	H	TH	U	L	D	R	Do	Other	
Training location	Amsterdam	21	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	28
	Haarlem	1	16	0	0	1	2	1	0	2	23
	The Hague	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	4
	Utrecht	3	2	0	3	1	1	0	1	7	18
	Delft	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	2	5
	Rotterdam	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	4
	Dordrecht	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
	Leiden	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	2	7
	Other	4	3	0	1	0	0	1	0	10	19
	Unknown	3	11	0	0	1	2	0	0	9	26
Total		33	34	4	5	10	8	5	1	39	139

Source: Ecartico; Table 7.4.

Table 9.7 presents the relationships between place of birth, training location, starting location, and main work location. The group born prior to 1580 consisted, for a large part, of immigrants, which explains the weakness of the relationship between place of birth and main work location. Only one-third of the A-sample, born between 1580 and 1599, started their careers in their place of birth, while twice as many were trained there. The relationship between training location and main work location was just as strong. Even when the group born before 1580 is excluded, the overall correlation between place of birth and main work location was less than 50 per cent. These results leave much room for interpretation, but at least they illustrate the previously discussed ambiguity regarding the local character of Dutch painting.

Table 9.7 Relation between variables, per birth cohort. A-list sample

Birth cohort	<1580	1580-1599	1600-1619	1620-1639	Total
	%	%	%	%	%
Birth and starting location	20	33	62	74	47
Birth and training location	62	60	70	68	65
Birth and main work location	27	37	41	53	40
Starting and training location	46	50	78	74	62
Starting and main work location	53	43	59	55	53
Training and main work location	46	60	57	50	53
N total	15	30	29	38	112
N (trained)	13	20	23	34	90

Source: Ecartico; Table 7.4

Admittedly, these figures only reflect the top tiers of Dutch painting. Data on the C and D samples show a stronger relationship between place of birth and main work location, but not as robust as might be expected. In the phase of emergence, the

expansion of the art market had been strongly facilitated by a wave of immigrant producers. However, during the growth phase, as is to be expected, the share of painters born in the Dutch Republic increased significantly. The share of foreign-born painters active in the Dutch Republic decreased from over 80 per cent in the 1590s, to 55 per cent in the 1610s, and just over 25 per cent in the 1630s.<sup>19</sup> Of the 92 Amsterdam-based painters active in 1631 whose place of birth was known, 39 had been born in Amsterdam. Not even 50 per cent.<sup>20</sup>

In all, the results is ambiguous. Although there were strong patterns, for instance the many landscapists in Haarlem or the return to Utrecht by painters who had visited Italy, many painters were not tied to one particular location. On the one hand, painters were very mobile, while on the other hand skills were for a large part reproduced locally. And, of course, statistics do not reveal everything. Painters could maintain strong ties to towns even after they had left them to work elsewhere. Consider the example of Haarlem; although the innovators Esaias van de Velde and Willem Buytewech were only in Haarlem for a few years, they passed on a clear legacy.<sup>21</sup> In the case of figure painting, Dirck Hals picked up where Van de Velde and Buytewech had left off.<sup>22</sup> Jan van Goyen worked in Leiden and The Hague, but had numerous imitators in Haarlem, whereas he had virtually none in Delft.<sup>23</sup>

The second element, knowledge transferral, is considered to be important because it reduces search costs, speeds up learning curves and enhances the chance for innovative activity. Learning process and knowledge transfers are notoriously hard to measure. Paul Krugman, for instance, did not question their existence, but warned that: empirical measurement of knowledge spillovers was to be impossible because 'knowledge flows are invisible, they leave no paper trail by which they may be measured and tracked'.<sup>24</sup> As a consequence, many cluster studies have focused on increasing returns to scale, rather than to knowledge flows. The latter were simply assumed to exist, because geographical proximity enhances firms' abilities to exchange ideas and to receive and process information. A similar assumption can be made in the case of Dutch painting. First of all, centres of Dutch towns were fairly small. Frits Lugt's *Rembrandt's Amsterdam* provides a vivid image of Amsterdam in 1647.<sup>25</sup> He takes us on a tour to the famous painter's house, passing important landmarks and calling attention to art lovers and patrons but also creditors,

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<sup>19</sup> Ecartico.

<sup>20</sup> Prosopography.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Biesboer, ed., *De Gouden Eeuw begint in Haarlem*.

<sup>22</sup> Kolfin, *Young gentry*, p. 110.

<sup>23</sup> Montias, *Artists and artisans*, p. 254; Sluijter, 'Jan van Goyen als marktleider'

<sup>24</sup> Krugman, *Geography and trade*, p. 53.

<sup>25</sup> Lugt, *Wandelingen met Rembrandt*, pp. 13-39. The English translation, *Rembrandt's Amsterdam*, is available as eBook through the Gutenberg project.

colleagues, inns, and the shop of the most important seller of Rembrandt's, Clement De Jonghe at the 'ninth house from the Dam'.<sup>26</sup>

Whilst engravers, print publishers, and cartographers were based close to the booksellers and publishers around the Dam, a concentration of painters could be found only a couple of blocks away, in the St. Antoniesbreestraat. Throughout the seventeenth century numerous of artists, but also jewellers and other highly skilled craftsmen, lived and worked in this neighbourhood, amidst shops, warehouses, and homes of affluent burghers.<sup>27</sup> To mention a few: Barthelomeus van der Helst and the lesser known Steven Jansz van Goor at the Nieuwmarkt, Thomas de Keyser, Nicolaes Elias, Hans Rem, Nicolaes de Helt Stockade, Adriaen van Nieulant, Dirk Dircksz Santvoort, Pieter Codde, Cornelis de Bie, the Vinckboons family, Cornelis van der Voort, Roelant Savery, Esaias Bourse, Govert Flinck, Pieter Lastman, and of course Rembrandt and the art dealer Hendrick van Uylenburgh.<sup>28</sup> Some painters entered the circles of the well-to-do and were to be found in the fancy houses along the canals. After his retirement from painting, Ferdinand Bol moved to the newly designed residences at the Keizersgracht.

Of course, knowledge transfers were not limited to neighbours, but they are assumed to occur more easily in geographic proximity. During the early 1630s, Salomon van Ruysdael, based in Haarlem, and Jan van Goyen started to paint river scenes in such a similar style that the attributions are not always clear. Despite the fact that Van Goyen had already returned to his birthplace of Leiden by the time Van Ruysdael joined the guild in 1623, there can be no doubt that the two painters knew each other personally. In 1634, Van Goyen was found painting in Haarlem, in the house of Isaack van Ruysdael, Salomon's brother.<sup>29</sup>

In some cases the exchange of skills and knowledge is almost tangible: workshops and societies. Rembrandt's workshop was populated by a large number of younger painters and functioned as a form of private academy.<sup>30</sup> According to the German painter Joachim Von Sandrart, who worked in Amsterdam from 1637 to 1645, Rembrandt's studio attracted many apprentices. Other large studios in the Northern Netherlands included those of Gerard van Honthorst, Abraham Bloemaert, and Paulus Moreelse.<sup>31</sup> Another important phenomenon in this respect was that of the emergence of group training.<sup>32</sup> Whether or not these gatherings were formalised in drawing academies (*tekenscholen*) or not, the most important point here is that several

<sup>26</sup> See the cover of this dissertation.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Ten Cate, *Dit volckje seer verwoet*, pp. 17-22.

<sup>28</sup> Names from *ibid.* and Lugt, *Wandelingen met Rembrandt*, p. 35.

<sup>29</sup> Haak, *The Golden Age*, p. 243.

<sup>30</sup> Bevers *et al.*, eds., *Drawings by Rembrandt and his pupils*, pp 1-30.

<sup>31</sup> Bok, *Vraag en aanbod*, pp. 185-186; Bok, "'Nulla dies sine linie'", appendix 1.

<sup>32</sup> On the issue of whether these were true academies see Miedema, 'Over vakonderwijs', vol. 5-6; Miedema, 'Kunstschilder, gilde en academie'. Consider also De Klerck, 'Academy-beelden'.

masters in Utrecht joined forces to provide teaching.<sup>33</sup> Contemporaries also made mention of an academy in reference to Haarlem.<sup>34</sup> Even though the existence of a genuine academy has been refuted, the term presumably referred to gatherings organised by Van Mander, Goltzius, and Cornelisz van Haarlem to draw after live models and antique examples. These 'academies' were more about established painters practicing live drawing in groups than about teaching to the new generation.<sup>35</sup> In addition to the almost intangible exchanges personal and business relations, the traditional master-pupil relationships, and the interactions in the larger studios, there were evidently also other semi-loose associations that made for knowledge and skill exchange.

Some scholars have attempted to measure such spillovers by linking 'output', in the form of patents, with 'input', such as corporate expenditure on research and design.<sup>36</sup> Although such a method is, of course, not readily applicable in the case of early modern Dutch painting, it may be worthwhile to look at outcomes, such as the phenomenon of local schools of painting.

### 9.5 Local schools of painting?

The qualitative and quantitative explorations of Dutch painting above do not definitely answer the questions on the extent to which Dutch painters were embedded in their locale and the role that local knowledge transfers may have played in spatial and diachronic growth patterns. Yet, it has long been recognised that there were several artistic centres in the Dutch Republic.<sup>37</sup> It is hardly a coincidence that in his seminal work on Dutch Golden Age painting, Bob Haak not only distinguished between certain time periods, but also selected specific towns: Haarlem, Amsterdam, Leiden, Delft, Utrecht, The Hague, and, to a lesser extent, Middelburg, Dordrecht, Rotterdam, and Leeuwarden.<sup>38</sup> Haak does not provide a justification for this selection, but the suggestion is that activities in other towns were less interesting from an art-historical perspective. Moreover, this categorization implies there was a local component to Dutch painting.

Other art-historians have argued against the classification by town.<sup>39</sup> Wilhelm Martin, for example, acknowledged that certain towns became artistic centres, but he

<sup>33</sup> See also Bok, "Nulla dies sine linie", p. 59.

<sup>34</sup> Miedema, 'Kunstschilder, gilde en academie'.

<sup>35</sup> On this development see: Knolle, 'Tekenenacademie'.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Jaffe and Trajtenberg, *Patents*; Jaffe, Trajtenberg, and Henderson, 'Geographic localization'.

<sup>37</sup> Martin, *Hollandsche schilderkunst*, vol. I, p. 65.

<sup>38</sup> Haak, *The Golden Age*.

<sup>39</sup> This issue was discussed by Eric Jan Sluijter in the lecture *Neat concepts and messy realities: local schools, tastes and identities* on April 24 in the conference *City Limits: Urban Identity, Specialisation and Autonomy in*

has also argued that there were no local 'schools' in the Dutch Republic in terms of genre or style.<sup>40</sup> While at first sight it may appear that some subjects were linked to certain towns, Martin maintains that what characterised Dutch production was the variation within towns and unity across town borders. The implication is that there were no coherent local schools of artistic styles and ideas, but that there were artistic concentrations, most notably with Utrecht's history painters, with Hals and his circle, with Leiden *fijnschilders*, and with Rembrandt and his pupils.<sup>41</sup>

Although it may be reasonably assumed that a wide range of paintings, in terms of price and genre, could indeed be purchased in most towns in Holland, several locations did develop their own specialisations.<sup>42</sup> This is not to say that these were unique or necessarily related to the character of the town itself, but rather that in certain towns, specific types of paintings were produced in such quantity and quality that the two became closely associated. Haarlem acquired a reputation for landscape painters, Utrecht for Italianate works, Rotterdam for farm interiors, and, around the middle of the seventeenth century, Delft for urban interior and exterior perspectives, while Leiden became known for the style of *fijnschilders*. Often these specialisations formed around key figures and were relatively short-lived. Consider, for example, Middelburg's flower paintings or Utrecht's fish-still lifes, and even the famous Delft school.

Nonetheless, Martin's assertion reflects an on-going ambiguity in art-historical literature on the Golden Age. Geographic classifications do not do art-historical diversity justice, but at the same time it is impossible to discuss stylistic developments without referring to geography. A closer look at some characteristics of Porter's diamond will be employed to further explore the relationships between different sets of determinants on a local and inter-local level.

## 9.6 Market organisation

Several economic historians have attributed the spatial concentrations of painters and, by implication, the remarkable rise of Dutch Golden Age painting, to the specific organisation of artistic production in the Dutch Republic.<sup>43</sup> There are three main elements in this line of reasoning: guilds, art dealers, and an efficient transport system. Neither one of these was directly responsible for the initial artistic spark, but

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*Seventeenth-century Dutch Art* (Dublin 2009).

<sup>40</sup> 'dat hier te lande van een specialiseering naar plaatsen, scholen of ateliers geen sprake was.' Martin, *Hollandsche schilderkunst*, vol. I, p. 64.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>42</sup> Haak, *The Golden Age*.

<sup>43</sup> Prak, 'Painters'; De Marchi and Van Miegroet, 'The history of art markets', p. 95; Bok, 'Rise of Amsterdam', p. 201; De Vries, 'Art history'.

combined they have been considered to have facilitated or even reinforced the subsequent growth in quantity and quality.

Jan de Vries has argued that the organisational changes in the Dutch art market, including the (re-)establishment of the guilds of St. Luke, accelerated the scale and scope of Dutch art production, and in turn facilitated product and process innovation. He did not further explain how this may have worked, but Maarten Prak has further analysed the possible role of guilds in the Dutch art market. In his opinion, 'they managed to corner a significant part of their home markets and at the same time [...] deepen[ed] those markets by creating the transparency necessary to create consumer confidence'.<sup>44</sup> Another mediating party were art dealers. As the Dutch art market became increasingly varied and specialised, art dealers gained in importance.<sup>45</sup> Neil De Marchi and Hans van Miegroet have argued that the canal network facilitated the trade in paintings across town borders.<sup>46</sup> As a result, local specialisations were able to develop in towns that would have otherwise been too small to sustain them, given the size of local demand. Regarding the role of art dealers, Marten Jan Bok has pointed out that they contributed to the explosive growth of art market by adding to the hype of paintings as wall decoration.<sup>47</sup>

By implication, local artists' guilds, art dealers operating on an intra-local level, and efficient transport possibilities could provide some of the instruments necessary to exploit potential demand on the one hand, while developing potential artistic talent on the other. When the three arguments are combined two new factors in explaining the high levels of quality and the volume of production are revealed: openness and protection. Without a certain degree of local protection or inter-local networks, these painters would have had to work in either the largest of markets or in small local markets. In case of the former, the market would have quickly become too crowded to sustain such a scale or specialisation, while in small towns painters could not have developed successful specialisations to begin with. These two, at first glance contrasting, factors will be further explored through a discussion of entry barriers and embeddedness.

### *Entry barriers*

Between 1629 and 1631, Constantijn Huygens wrote that: 'When I [Huygens] consider the parentage of each [Rembrandt and Lievens] I think no stronger argument can be given against nobility being a matter of blood. [...] The father of one of these young men [Lievens] is an embroiderer and a commoner; the other's

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<sup>44</sup> Prak, 'Painters', p. 170.

<sup>45</sup> Montias, 'Art dealers in Holland'.

<sup>46</sup> De Marchi and Van Miegroet, 'The history of art markets', p. 95.

<sup>47</sup> Bok, 'Paintings for sale', p. 12.

[Rembrandt's] is a miller and surely not of the same grain. Who could help but marvel that two prodigies of talent and creativity could emerge from these farmers. When I look at the teachers these boys had, I discover that these men are barely above the good repute of common people. They were the sort that were available for a low fee, namely within the slender means of their [Rembrandt's and Lievens'] parents.'<sup>48</sup>

With these remarks Huygens discloses three interesting features about the two promising young painters: their social background was humble, their masters were not quite worthy of the talent of their pupils, and the training they had received was inexpensive. That Rembrandt and Lievens had nothing to thank their masters for is not quite true. Huygens presumably insinuated this in order to stress the pair's innate talent and hard work, rather than suggesting that their masters had been minor painters.<sup>49</sup> The other two points he makes are more interesting, as they refer to entry barriers. Could anyone become a master painter?

Assuming that talent is more or less evenly distributed across space and time, the logical consequence would be that the birth variable of artistic talent is dependent on both population size and the opportunities to convert this talent into real skill. The career of a potential artistic talent started with an estimation of future demand for their specific skills, no different than for any other early modern livelihood. Early modern artists had to make a living from painting and the decision to send boys, and less often girls, to apprentice with master painters reflects expectations of future earnings. In a society with little demand for art works, few parents would set their child off on an artistic career path. Needless to say, the large number of painters in the Dutch Republic leaves little doubt about the expected returns on training in the arts. The fact that there was an anonymous and expanding market for art stimulated the choice for painting as a profession.

Research on the socio-economic backgrounds of Dutch painters has shown that most of them were of middle-class origin whereas other groups of painters, referred to as *kladschilders* or *plateelschilders*, such as decorative or artisan-painters, and house painters were of distinctly lower socio-economic origins.<sup>50</sup> This dissimilarity was presumably more related to the parents' ability to finance training than to formal entry barriers or the capital intensity of a painting business.<sup>51</sup> In the Dutch Republic the training of artists was organised through the apprenticeship system. Training pupils was organised in a guild-based apprenticeship system. The large workshops of Rembrandt, Honthorst, or Bloemaert, were the exception to this

<sup>48</sup> Strauss *et al.*, eds., *The Rembrandt documents*, pp 69-72.

<sup>49</sup> Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude*, p. 102.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Montias, *Artists and artisans*, chapter 5; Boers-Goosens, *Schilders en de markt*, pp. 51-59.

<sup>51</sup> On tuition fees: De Jager, 'Meester, leerjongen, leertijd', pp. 75-79; Boers-Goosens, *Schilders en de markt*, p. 87.



rule. Moreover, most of Rembrandt's pupils were not beginners, but had previously apprenticed with another master in or outside of Amsterdam. Generally, artist-painters, like printers and bookbinders, were literate and had attended school full-time for three years.<sup>32</sup> After the initial investment, an accumulated expense of f 150 to f 200, aspiring artists had to invest in an apprenticeship period. It is estimated that pupils who lived at home paid anywhere from f 20 up to f 50 per year, while those living with their master were charged between f 50 and f 100, depending on the reputation of the master and the age and previous education of the pupil.<sup>33</sup>

The drawing manual by Willem Goeree (1668) and the recommendations by Rembrandt's pupil Samuel van Hoogstraeten (1678) in his treatise on painting, provide an idea of what apprentices had to learn.<sup>34</sup> The first stage in the training included basic preparation skills: putting up a canvas, grinding colours, and washing the master's palette and brushes. Then students learnt how to draw before finally learning how to paint, often by copying other paintings, engravings, or drawings.<sup>35</sup> Depending on the master, the apprentice would not only learn how to paint in basic terms, but he would also be taught specific styles, techniques, and specialisations. Each and every mystery and secret of the master's style and skills were to be passed on.<sup>36</sup> On top of the standard duration of training – in Haarlem, for example, it was three years – the route to becoming an independent master was considerably longer. This first stage of apprenticeship was usually followed by an advanced training period with a different master. As Prak has pointed out 'it is a matter of definition whether we want to define the entire period as training, but we may plausibly assume that the formal period of apprenticeship covered merely basic skills, and that the subsequent period was needed to develop into a master painter who would be able to set up a shop on his own.'<sup>37</sup>

When the loss of income during the apprenticeship period is taken into account, it is safe to say that only fairly wealthy parents could afford to pay for the direct and indirect costs of having their child trained as an independent artist-painter.<sup>38</sup> Sons of master painters had clear advantages, a fact that is reinforced by a relatively high share of father-son relations among painters of whom the social background is known. Nonetheless, the fact that many of the boys that started an apprenticeship with master painters never became independent masters, suggests that entry barriers to the apprenticeship stage were not very high. Even after having

<sup>32</sup> On tuition fees: De Jager, 'Meester, leerjongen, leertijd', pp. 75-79; Boers-Goosens, *Schilders en de markt*, p. 87.

<sup>33</sup> Montias, *Artists and artisans*, p. 169.

<sup>34</sup> Van Hoogstraeten, *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkunst*; Weststeijn, *The visible world*; Goeree, *Inleydinge tot de al-ghemeene teycken-konst*; Kwakkelstein, W. Goeree: *Inleydinge*.

<sup>35</sup> De Jager, 'Meester, leerjongen, leertijd'; Hoogewerff, *Geschiedenis van de St. Lucasgilden*.

<sup>36</sup> Prak, 'Painters', p. 157.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.. Cf. Boers-Goosens, *Schilders en de markt*, p. 85.

<sup>38</sup> Montias, *Artists and artisans*, p. 160.

started an apprenticeship, many never set up their own shop and subsequently disappeared from the records.<sup>59</sup> The gap between the number of apprenticeships and the number of master painters might be explained by the use of training with master painters by aspiring craftsmen in other fields that required a basic or even more advanced command of drawing, such as goldsmiths and silversmiths or embroiders. Their absence cannot be ascribed to high entry barriers in the form of start-up costs or heavy formal requirements. Although the training period was costly, establishing oneself as an independent painter could be done at relatively low costs. As seen in the chapters on publishing, the guilds of St. Luke were relatively relaxed about entry. The fees were fairly modest, ranging between circa *f* 3 and *f* 12, depending on the town and whether the applicant was a local and/or a master's son.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, although guilds offered an administrative framework for training, they were not involved in outlining the contents of the training trajectory and they did not require a masterpiece as a proof of mastery. It is worth noting that even when guilds required masters to register their apprentices, they did not always do so.<sup>61</sup>

The absence of a formal appraisal of skills cannot simply be explained by an unfamiliarity with masterpieces. In several towns, for instance Delft, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam, other members of the guild, such as glass-engravers or *kladschilders*, did have to produce a masterpiece.<sup>62</sup> The reason why artist-painters were exempt from the same criteria has been explained by Michael Montias by the fact that there was no single standard of quality.<sup>63</sup> Presumably the years of apprenticing would suffice, after which it would be up to the open market or the commissioners of paintings to judge painters' skills. Whatever the motivation, the result was that entry restrictions were relatively low. Furthermore, there were no perceivable religious barriers as many painters, prominent or not, did not belong to the orthodox Calvinist community.<sup>64</sup> These low entry barriers might explain why, in Delft, virtually every independent painter was a member of the guild.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Cf. Boers-Goosens, *Schilders en de markt* for examples from Haarlem.

<sup>60</sup> Montias, 'The influence of economic factors', p. 55; Prak, 'Guilds and the development of the art market', pp. 156-157.

<sup>61</sup> For Haarlem: Boers-Goosens, *Schilders en de markt*, p. 77 and Miedema, ed., *Archiefbescheiden*, vol. II, pp. 497, 514, 518, 525. This was no different in other towns: Obreen, ed., *Archief*, vol. IV, 45, 63, 66, 77.

<sup>62</sup> Montias, *Artists and artisans*, p. 90.

<sup>63</sup> Montias, 'The influence of economic factors', p. 55.

<sup>64</sup> Montias, *Artists and artisans*, p. 158.

<sup>65</sup> Montias, 'The Guild of St. Luke', p. 95. This did not mean that every painter known to have been active in Delft became a member, but unregistered painters can be mainly explained from the fact that they lived elsewhere and worked on commission, or that they were sons of masters who died before they could set up own shop. Very few lived in Delft for a substantial number of years without registering.

*Local markets and the protection of local painters*

Creating 'monopolies' for its members in terms of production and sale is often considered to be the main concern of local guilds, and Dutch painters' guilds seem to have been no exception. Guild regulations, various repeated requests for stricter measures, and guild minutes, for instance those of Haarlem, reveal an on-going concern with illegal sales.<sup>66</sup> The exact requirements concerning the time, place, and annual number of legal sales varied, depending on the town, but in general the following applied: no works by non-local masters could be sold at public sales, auctions, or lotteries and dealers wishing to sell paintings in a certain town also had to be guild members.<sup>67</sup> Guilds were not entirely successful in controlling local markets. Not only were customers free to purchase paintings in other towns, local members of the artists' guilds were also allowed to act as dealers and sell paintings that had been produced elsewhere. Moreover, art dealers from elsewhere were free to sell at local fairs.<sup>68</sup> Another indicator as to the lack of regulatory enforcement is the intensification of public sales of both local and out-of-town paintings, by residents and non-residents, outside of annual public fairs.

Analyses of paintings in local collections have been interpreted as showing an 'overrepresentation' of local artists.<sup>69</sup> Research by Montias has demonstrated that, depending on the town, between circa 40 and 80 per cent of attributed paintings in inventories were by local masters. In Delft and Haarlem, local masters made up between 60 and 80 per cent of the attributed paintings, while the most popular artists in these samples were overwhelmingly local.<sup>70</sup> Data on Amsterdam, admittedly not the most typical town in the Dutch Republic, has shown that that only 35 per cent of the original paintings in inventories dating from 1620-1679 can be attributed to artists who worked exclusively in Amsterdam. This figure rises to 53 per cent artists who worked in other towns as well as Amsterdam are included.<sup>71</sup> Overall, 14 per cent of the paintings came from artists working exclusively in Haarlem (24 when we count Haarlem and elsewhere), 12 per cent from Antwerp, and 8 from artists who worked solely in Utrecht.

Fock's analysis of personal relationships between consumers and artists on the basis of Leiden inventories revealed that these were overwhelmingly of a local character: 25 of the 36 painters worked in Leiden.<sup>72</sup> The data Montias collected may be biased towards collections of upper-class painters, due to overrepresentation of attributions in their collections, but on the other hand the sources may reflect an

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<sup>66</sup> Prak, 'Painters', p. 158.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Romein and Korevaar, 'Dutch guilds'.

<sup>68</sup> Bok, 'Paintings for sale', p. 19 for some examples of this.

<sup>69</sup> Prak, 'Painters', p. 161.

<sup>70</sup> Slokker, 'Ruggengraat van de stedelijke samenleving', p. 68.

<sup>71</sup> Montias, 'Works of art', p. Table 8; Montias, 'Works of art'.

<sup>72</sup> Fock, 'Kunstbezit', p. 271.

alternative bias, as both local clerks and owners would have been more familiar with the work of local painters.<sup>73</sup> Montias suggests that when taking both predispositions into account, the proportion of Delft-based artists would still not fall below 40 or 50 per cent.<sup>74</sup> Whether or not local guilds can be considered as successful in controlling local markets depends on the question of whether this percentage is deemed high or low. If only population size and artistic importance are taken into account, Leiden and Amsterdam were strongly underrepresented in Delft, while Utrecht was overrepresented. Haarlem and The Hague would be expected to be dominant, given the former's esteem and the latter's close ties with Delft. In the case of Amsterdam, Utrecht and Haarlem, painters were well represented, but Leiden, The Hague, Delft, and Rotterdam only made up very small fractions of the attributed samples.<sup>75</sup> In Leiden, Haarlem painters were very popular, especially during the second half of the seventeenth century.<sup>76</sup> In comparison, colleagues from Amsterdam, The Hague, Delft and only occasionally Utrecht, were much less prominent in Leiden inventories.

Montias has tentatively attributed the overrepresentation of certain towns and painters in the Delft inventories to the absence of suitable local substitutes.<sup>77</sup> De Marchi and Van Miegroet have suggested that the representation of certain towns 'correlates loosely' to the geographic reach of the canal network.<sup>78</sup> While it was certainly true that Amsterdam was well connected to both Haarlem and Utrecht, this factor alone cannot explain the high share of painters from Haarlem who appeared in Delft's inventories, nor can it account for the relatively low share of out-of-town painters in Haarlem's inventories. It was not simply a geographic consequence, or just a matter of substitution that caused the painters of Utrecht and Haarlem to be relatively well represented in other towns.

These two towns had been the in which first clusters emerged and the first in which they subsequently stagnated. In Haarlem and Utrecht this stagnation took root in around 1630-1635. Presumably, just prior to this, the supply of paintings started to overtake demand leading to two modifications. Firstly, painters increasingly migrated, especially to Amsterdam, and secondly, art-dealers stepped in to redistribute excess paintings.<sup>79</sup> The density of painters in Leiden and Amsterdam was relatively low, which corresponds with the reputation of Amsterdam as a significant importer of paintings. Although local painters were most popular in Leiden before

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<sup>73</sup> Montias, *Artists and artisans*, p. 249.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid..

<sup>75</sup> Montias, 'Works of art', Table 8.

<sup>76</sup> Fock, 'Kunstbezit', pp. 273-277.

<sup>77</sup> Montias, *Artists and artisans*, p. 254.

<sup>78</sup> De Marchi and Van Miegroet, 'The history of art markets'.

<sup>79</sup> Boers-Goosens, *Schilders en de markt*; Cf. De Marchi and Van Miegroet, 'The history of art markets', p. 94.

the turn of the century, the fact that their numbers increased after the establishment of a local guild suggests that there was still room for expansion.<sup>80</sup>

And so we find that there were entry barriers for apprentices and for masters in terms of tuition fees, entry fees, but that these barriers were relatively low. A similar observation goes for the access to local markets. Import of paintings from outside was regulated, yet there were ample opportunities to get them in anyway. On a local level painting was protected, but not monopolised or secluded.

### *Distribution*

As demand for, and supply of paintings, expanded, so did the range of entrepreneurial strategies regarding the dealing in art. Although some customers ordered or bought their paintings directly from the painter, in his workshop, this was not common practice.<sup>81</sup> Art dealers and different means of distribution became increasingly important during the period of growth. In addition to the traditional channels of shops, auctions, and fairs, art dealers experimented with new strategies, such as lotteries and dice games (*rijfelarijen*). In Delft art dealers even introduced paintings as prizes in shooting games.<sup>82</sup>

As in publishing, art dealers also became more important in the production of paintings from the 1630s onwards.<sup>83</sup> They were intermediaries between supply and demand, a function that will be discussed at length in the following chapter, but some merchants also directly induces supply. They financed and mediated production, putting artists to work, and marketed their products. According to Montias, the most direct way – the so-called ‘galley method’ – must have been popular, especially at the lower ends of the market, for copies and works-by-the-dozen. The practise and extent of this type of production is, as so often is the case, largely unknown and most of the few traces in the sources conflict with each other.<sup>84</sup>

On at least one occasion, merchant Jan Thivaert also acted as such a supply-augmenting dealer, but how typical this was, is unknown.<sup>85</sup> In 1625, painter Jacques de Ville decided upon delivering f 2,400 worth of paintings over the course of a year and a half, to shipper Hans Melchiorz, who in turn was responsible for paying all production costs.<sup>86</sup> Twenty years later, Pieter van den Bosch promised Marten Kretzer

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<sup>80</sup> Cf. Prak, ‘Painters’, p. 161.

<sup>81</sup> Bok, ‘Paintings for sale’, p. 9.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>83</sup> Montias, ‘Art dealers’.

<sup>84</sup> Hopefully the research by Angela Jager (PhD candidate, University of Amsterdam) on this type of production will shed light on the lower end of the markets.

<sup>85</sup> On Thivaert: Montias, *Art at auction*, pp. 126-129.

<sup>86</sup> Floerke, *Der Niederländische Kunst-Handel im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, p. 35. Also in Montias, ‘Cost and value’, p. 65.

to paint for *f* 1,600 guilders a year.<sup>87</sup>

At the upper end of the market, where there were no such galleys with low-paid artists, yet there was increasing interaction with merchant-dealers. The best-known example for the Republic is Hendrick Uylenburgh, Rembrandt's business agent.<sup>88</sup> Although little is known about the practices of Uylenburgh's workshop and the marketing of the paintings produced there, we do know that he supplied painter and art dealer Lambert Jacobsz in Leeuwarden with stock produced in Amsterdam.<sup>89</sup> For 50 years from 1625, Hendrick Uylenburgh (c. 1584/9-1661) and his son Gerrit (c. 1625-1679) operated as both art dealers and as owners of an important painters' workshop.<sup>90</sup> Even famous painters took this route. Jan Porcellis indentured himself to an Antwerp-based art dealer, signing a contract to paint 40 panels in 20 weeks.<sup>91</sup> In 1630, Roelant Saverij, a famous landscape and animal painter living in Utrecht at the time, signed a contract to paint seven panels for Thivaert. However, he had a change of heart and the two had to resolve their differences before the court of Utrecht. In 1641, art dealer Leendert Volmarijn is known to have ordered 13 pictures from Isaac van Ostade.<sup>92</sup> Presumably, such contracts were particularly appealing to painters who were having financial difficulties. An example is the heavily indebted Emanuel de Witte, who contracted with art dealer Joris de Wijs to paint for *f* 800 a year plus room and board.<sup>93</sup>

Painting was much less capital intensive than publishing, but this does not mean it was not embedded in credit markets.<sup>94</sup> Investments in a painting career could run into significant figures and for master-painters and art dealers a well-developed credit network was certainly no luxury. The fact that the industry enjoyed a well-developed capital market, low interest rates, and an abundance of available funds, supported all entrepreneurs, including painters and art dealers. Like many other merchants, they depended primarily on local connections. Painters who did not paint on commission needed to invest upfront, facing demand uncertainty. Moreover, working capital was needed to pay for pigments, panels, and canvases. Many painters acquired debts; even highly skilled and praised artists such as Jan Porcellis, Jan van Goyen, Frans Hals, Jan Steen, Hercules Seghers, Pieter de Hooch, and

<sup>87</sup> Bredius, 'De kunsthhandel te Amsterdam in de xviie eeuw', pp. 56-57. Also in Montias, 'Cost and value', p. 65.

<sup>88</sup> On Uylenburgh: Lammertse and Van der Veen, *Uylenburgh & Co*; Montias, *Art at auction*, p. chapter 14.

<sup>89</sup> Montias, *Art at auction*, p. 123.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Lammertse and Van der Veen, *Uylenburgh & Co*.

<sup>91</sup> Crenshaw, *Rembrandt's bankruptcy*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>92</sup> Montias, 'Art dealers', p. 99.

<sup>93</sup> Montias, 'Cost and value', pp. 65-66.

<sup>94</sup> Montias estimates the costs of paints and canvas of a portrait commission in the 1650s at no more than five per cent of the rewards. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

Vermeer experienced cash flow problems. Some, including Rembrandt, even went bankrupt.<sup>95</sup>

Although the causes for financial troubles could vary, ranging from failures in investments to personal problems, one thing is certain: the painters in question had acquired debts and failed to repay them.<sup>96</sup> As in other economic activities, including that of book production, borrowing, auctioning off stock, or the transferral of bonds could be used to acquire cash.<sup>97</sup> Jan Porcellis' public sales of 1626 and 1627, and Rembrandt's similar auctions in 1655 are good examples of public auctions.<sup>98</sup>

Large dealers were permanently short of capital.<sup>99</sup> In 1640, Amsterdam art dealer Hendrick Uylenburgh stated before a notary that he had borrowed 'a good sum of money to benefit and advance his occupation and commerce' from a number of artists and merchants.<sup>100</sup> Art dealer Johannes de Renialme borrowed against five per cent interest in 1653, from merchant Herman Becker.<sup>101</sup> In April 1639, Uylenburgh borrowed f 1,600 from Gilbert de Flines and Pieter Sey at an interest rate of six per cent.<sup>102</sup> As a security, he pledged 'all his paintings' as well as those he might acquire. The creditors were free to store the paintings in their houses for further reassurance. Rembrandt, Frederick de Moucheron, and Jan Lievens are also known to have borrowed from Becker, probably in return for paintings. Amsterdam art dealer Johannes de Renialme, who probably became Rembrandt's most privileged dealer, was the first Dutch dealer to operate on a significant international scale.<sup>103</sup> He had a large inventory of high-priced paintings, which, as we have also seen with publishers, required a great deal of capital. As Montias has pointed out, marrying four prosperous wives was highly advantageous, but de Renialme still had to borrow money to keep his business afloat.<sup>104</sup>

A final important function of art dealers – that of arbitrage between clients and artists – cannot be underestimated. This became increasingly important when local markets became saturated and the overall art market became increasingly large and diverse. De Marchi and Van Miegroet have observed how art dealers could serve as intermediaries between artists and clients in different towns, saving the latter search costs.<sup>105</sup> Montias has interpreted the increasing importance of dealers' services as a consequence of artists' specialisation and the variegation of consumers' tastes.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Crenshaw, *Rembrandt's bankruptcy*, p. 17.

<sup>96</sup> Strauss *et al.*, eds., *The Rembrandt documents*.

<sup>97</sup> Crenshaw, *Rembrandt's bankruptcy*, p. 56.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>99</sup> Montias, 'Art dealers in Holland', p. 94.

<sup>100</sup> Montias, *Art at auction*, p. 124.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>103</sup> On De Renialme: *ibid.*, pp. 121-126

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> De Marchi and Van Miegroet, 'The history of art markets', pp. 94-95.

<sup>106</sup> Montias, 'Art dealers', p. 245.

The increasing attention paid to the authenticity and originality of paintings can be seen as signs of such developments.<sup>107</sup> Another sign can be found in the development of selling prices. Although data on early modern selling prices of paintings is scarce, Eric Jan Sluijter has suggested that in the 1630s, prices between first rate and second or third rate painters started to diverge.<sup>108</sup> Some painters, most notably Rembrandt, acquired *hors-categorie* status.<sup>109</sup> The issue of uncertainty regarding quality appears to have become increasingly critical during the growth phase, not necessarily in the case of cheap paintings used as decorations, but primarily at the high end of the market where collecting as a pastime became more established, and selling prices came to be used as marketing tools.<sup>110</sup>

## 9.7 Conclusion

This chapter started with ambiguity concerning local entrenchment and so we end with it. In painting during the growth phase, there was never one dominant town, akin to Antwerp in the Southern Netherlands, or a dominant style or genre, nor was there one dominant master per town.<sup>111</sup> Dutch painters and their products were fairly mobile, aided by a well-developed transport system and low formal entry barriers. This eased the diffusion of innovations and enabled flexible responses to local market issues. The demand for paintings seems to have been relatively well integrated. Several towns were able to develop export functions, specialisations, or at least local versions of common genres. Consider, for example, the case of merry companies, with distinct variants through Haarlem, Amsterdam, Utrecht, and The Hague.

Painters often lived in the same neighbourhoods and were related through family or credit relations, and by means of other personal and business networks, and from the 1610s painters were also united in a formal group structure, guilds. Whether or not the regulations were always followed, painters had already become increasingly organised in independent corporations early in the growth phase, which further strengthened local entrenchment. Such local entrenchment nourished the transfer of knowledge, encouraged spinoffs, and build trust and legitimacy, which may have triggered self-reinforcing growth mechanisms.

After discussing the various ways in which painters were embedded in local networks, it was argued that it was exactly this balance between openness and

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid..

<sup>108</sup> Sluijter, 'Determining value', p. 21.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid..

<sup>110</sup> Van der Veen, 'By his own hand', vol. 4.

<sup>111</sup> Martin, *Hollandsche schilderkunst*, vol. I, pp. 64-65.



embeddedness that provided the Dutch art market with a competitive advantage. Dutch clusters of painters were not isolated or self-contained entities, but they did offer benefits associated with geographic and social proximity. The simultaneous existence of 'local buzz' in the form of spillovers and spinoffs and 'inter-local pipelines' in the form of mobility of artists and works of art, allowed for the rapid diffusion and adaption of innovations.<sup>112</sup> It also made for the existence of a large middle group of high quality painters. These characteristics enabled extensive specialisation and explosive production, but also made for high levels of competition and short life cycles of product variants. A constant flow of paintings with new stories and designs, which added to, and sometimes replaced older versions, rapidly saturated the market for affordable paintings and ended the life cycle of the new styles and genres of the 1620s.

By 1650, the market for paintings had matured, making this cut-off point significant, rather than arbitrary.<sup>113</sup> In the next chapter we will see that paintings, up until now accommodatingly considered to be commodities, were in actual fact much more than that. The common denominator in economic studies of the Dutch art market has been the assumption that paintings are commodities and, by that implication, that the production of paintings is an industry like any other. While this intentional simplification has greatly assisted the understanding of the quantity and quality of Dutch artistic production, there is a risk of economic determinism. Early modern art production was subject to the basic laws of supply and demand, but paintings were more than just commodities. The painting industry was characterised by distinct properties, which had implications for the ways in which it was organised and by extension also for its growth patterns.

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<sup>112</sup> See for these terms: Bathelt, Malmberg, and Maskell, 'Clusters and knowledge'.

<sup>113</sup> Haak, *The Golden Age*, p. 346.



## 10 Confronting the legacy of Golden Age painting, 1650-1800

### 10.1 Introduction

The extraordinary commercial and artistic achievements of the Golden Age have cast a shadow over the subsequent period, resulting in relatively underdeveloped art-historical and socio-economic literature concerning the late seventeenth and eighteenth century art market.<sup>1</sup> The reputation of eighteenth-century Dutch painting in particular is notoriously poor.<sup>2</sup> Due to these constraints, the two chapters dedicated to this period will be of a more general and tentative nature than the chapters on publishing over the corresponding timeframe. They should be read within the framework of recent revisionist literature in which both the eighteenth century in general, and its art market and artistic achievements, are being re-evaluated.<sup>3</sup>

Because this chapter covers a period of around 150 years, a broad-brush strokes approach is inevitable. It may come as a surprise that a painter such as Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675) is discussed in the same chapter as classicist Gerard de Lairesse (1641-1711), flower painter Jan van Huysum (1682-1749), and painters of mural canvases Jurriaen Andriessen (1742-1819). The reason for doing so is that they were all active during a period in which the market for newly produced easel paintings contracted. The works of these artists and their peers reflect specific strategies to deal with mature markets. In this chapter developments in market conditions, and specific strategies in terms of product adaptations and innovations take centre stage. The main aim is to expound on existing perceptions of the extent and timing of the artistic and commercial decline in the art market. In the following chapter substitution and organisational changes will be discussed.

The established explanations on market conditions in relation to the demise of Golden Age painting will be complemented by focusing on the spatial and diachronic distribution of Dutch art production. As argued in the previous chapter,

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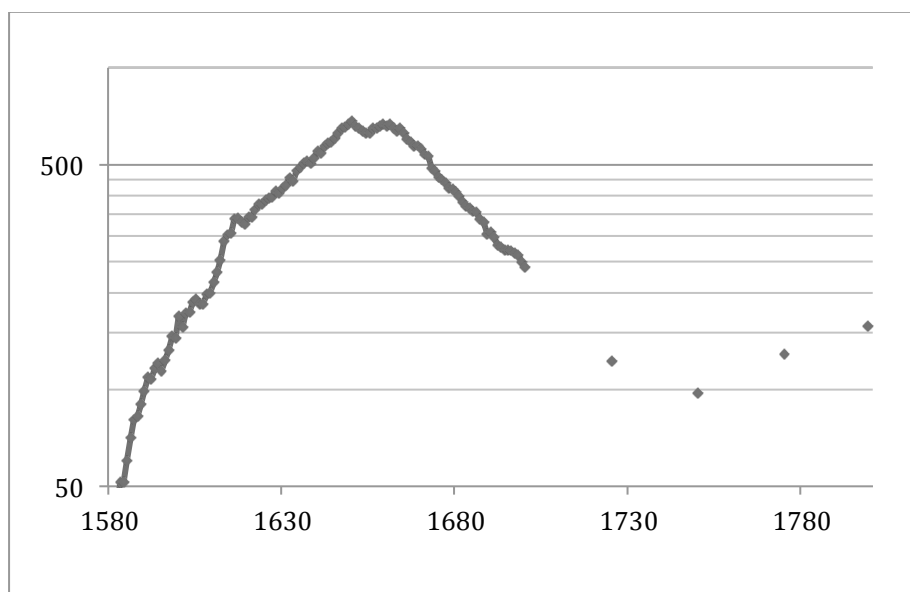
<sup>1</sup> Bob Haak's overview of Dutch Golden Age painting ends rather abruptly in 1680; he spends only a few pages on post-1680 painting. Ibid..

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Grijzenhout, 'Myth of decline'.

<sup>3</sup> Hecht, 'Het einde van de Gouden Eeuw'. The recent work on the Leiden art market by Piet Bakker is particularly relevant for our purposes Bakker, 'Crisis? Welke crisis?'. Cf. Jacob and Mijndhardt, eds., *The Dutch Republic*. Cf. Aono, 'Imitation and innovation' on art production in one particular genre. On art theory and contemporary appreciation see for example: De Vries, 'The felicitous age of painting'; Hecht, 'Browsing in Houbraken'; Horn, *The Golden Age revisited*. On auctions, collecting, and interational art trade: Jonckheere, *The auction of King William's paintings*; Altes, *De verovering van de internationale kunstmarkt*; Plomp, 'Het verzamelen van tekeningen'.

the importance of rising purchasing power in explaining the rise of Dutch painting cannot be underestimated. However, the specific organisation of Dutch painting on a local and inter-local level contributed strongly to the volume, variety, and quality of Dutch painting. This suggests that the ‘purchasing power’ explanation should also be balanced with a closer look at organisation, in order to understand the rapid downturn. Richard Caves has listed the following factors of cultural industries: ‘nobody knows’, ‘infinite variety’, ‘art for art’s sake’, ‘motley crew’, ‘time flies’, ‘ars longa’, ‘A list/B list’.<sup>4</sup> These features can cause problems in industrial production, such as structural overproduction, quality uncertainty, and information asymmetries. From the second half of the seventeenth century, these issues became particularly persistent for painters and customers. In the following sections the business strategies Dutch painters developed from the middle of the seventeenth century will be discussed, as well as the consequences this had for the organisation of artistic production, and for growth rates and innovation patterns.

Figure 10.1 Number of painters active in the Dutch Republic, 1580-1800, semi-logarithmic scale



Source: Ecartico, RKD.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 1.

## 10.2 Artistic decline and the art-historical bias

It is well known that art-historical studies and museum collections suffer from a strong Golden Age-bias.<sup>5</sup> Late seventeenth century and eighteenth-century paintings have long been brushed aside as a derivative of international fashion and of Golden Age painting. An element of this generally negative perception can be traced directly back to eighteenth century sources, in which the same criticism was levelled in view of a perceived general decline of morals and manners. This fascination for seventeenth-century art was strengthened during the nineteenth century when the notion of typically 'Dutch art' developed.<sup>6</sup> Following the Second World War, interest in the eighteenth century increased, but it remained somewhat apologetic, as evidenced by the tendency to over-justify the attention paid to eighteenth century masters. Eighteenth-century art gained more ground with the rehabilitation of styles and genres previously disregarded as not representative of Golden Age painting, such as the Leiden *fijnschilders* and classicist history painting.<sup>7</sup> The enduring idea that post-1670 art was symptomatic of the decline of the art market has become more nuanced. Viewpoints of contemporaries have played an important role in this. Painters such as Gerard de Lairesse (1640-1711), Adriaen van der Werff (1659-1722), Caspar Netscher (1639-1684), Jan Weenix (c. 1645-1719), Nicolaes Verkolje (1673-1746), Jan van Huysum (1682-1749), Willem van Mieris (1662-1747), Rachel Ruysch (1664-1750) and several others are now reconsidered and associated with quality.<sup>8</sup>

Art critics such as Arnold Houbraken, Johan van Gool (1685-1765), and Jacob Campo Weyerman acknowledged the decline in the art market, but their opinions on when this began differed somewhat.<sup>9</sup> More importantly, these earlier art-historians were more forgiving than their later counterparts in their judgements of late seventeenth and eighteenth century artists. In fact, classicist painter and art theorist Gerard De Lairesse held artists such as Adriaen Brouwer (1605-1638) and Pieter van der Laer (1599-c.1642) responsible for the decline of Dutch art, and believed that his own generation restored it to its former glory.<sup>10</sup> Painter and poet Samuel van Hoogstraeten (1627-1678) observed that 'the painting in our country, as in a new

<sup>5</sup> Cf. De Vries, 'The felicitous age of painting'; Grijzenhout, 'Myth of decline'; De Vries, 'The felicitous age of painting'.

<sup>6</sup> De Vries, 'The felicitous age of painting'.

<sup>7</sup> Consider two titles devoted to previously disregarded work: Loos, Jansen, and Kloek, *Age of elegance*; Mai, Paarlberg, and Weber, eds., *Kroon op het werk*. Pioneering work was done in 1971 with the exhibition *Dutch masterpieces from the eighteenth century: paintings and drawings 1700-1800*. Catalogue: Mandle and Niemeijer, *Dutch masterpieces*.

<sup>8</sup> The recent exhibitions devoted to some of these painters are testament to this rehabilitation.

<sup>9</sup> Houbraken, *Groote Schouburgh*, pp. 130-135, vol. II; Van Gool, *Nieuwe Schouburg*, pp. 357-358, vol. I; Weyerman, *Levens-beschryvingen*, pp. 395, vol. IV. Cf. Aono, 'Imitation and innovation', pp. 16-17; De Vries, 'The felicitous age of painting'; Horn, *The Golden Age revisited*, pp. 93-103; Hecht, 'Browsing in Houbraken'; Grijzenhout, 'Myth of decline'. Sluijter, Enklaar, and Nieuwenhuizen, eds., *Leidse fijnschilders* also covers an extended period of time.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. De Vries, 'The felicitous age of painting', p. 34.

Greece, is at the peak of its florescence', and painter/authors Arnold Houbraken (1660-1719) and Johan van Gool (1685-1763) likened painters such as Adriaen van der Werff with the great seventeenth-century masters.<sup>11</sup> Koenraad Jonckheere had demonstrated that this theoretical approval was matched by monetary appreciation; works by contemporary painters, most notably those by Van der Werff, were sold at auction for prices comparable to those of the old masters.<sup>12</sup>

It is now possible to chart these art-historical and contemporary evaluations in quantitative terms. In order to map the chronology of creativity and innovation in painting, we turn to our samples of prominent painters active after approximately 1670, based on art-historical and contemporary sources. Art-historically, the eighteenth century, a period of late Baroque and Rococo styles, does not appear to have been a particularly successful time for European painting in general, if the studies by Kelly and O'Hagan, as well as by Murray, are any indication.<sup>13</sup> Although the authors use different sources and criteria, both datasets demonstrate a circa 25 per cent decline in the number of painters in Europe, compared to the seventeenth century. In Murray's selection, the United Kingdom, Italy, and France housed between 20 and 30 per cent of the 48 painters in total. In Kelly and O'Hagan, France accounted for circa 20 per cent and the British Isles for as much as 50 per cent.<sup>14</sup> During the seventeenth century, the number of prominent painters in Europe had been considerably higher than in the eighteenth century, not least because of the many excellent Dutch painters. During the eighteenth century, the Dutch Republic went from an innovative and large production area, to being almost non-existent in the international ranking of painters. Jan de Vries' analysis of Dutch and American museum holdings shows a similar pattern.<sup>15</sup>

The small number of painters for this period justifies a combination of the A and B samples. In *The Oxford Dictionary* 16 prominent painters who were active in the Republic at some point in the eighteenth century were listed, 39 were referenced in *Kroon op het werk*, and 30 in *Age of Elegance*. Adjusting for the recurrence of names, this totals 67 painters. The decline in the number of art-historically valued painters is obvious, but interestingly the 1680s display a revival of Golden Age levels (Figure 10.2 and Figure 10.3). This was the decade when painters such as Jan van Huysum and Frans van Mieris the Younger (1689-1763) were born. Moreover, there is an obvious discrepancy between the number of painters referenced in art-historical

<sup>11</sup> Van Hoogstraeten, *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkunst*, p. 300; Houbraken, *Groote Schouburgh*, pp. 387-408, vol. III; Van Gool, *Nieuwe Schouburg*, pp. 376-410 vol. II.

<sup>12</sup> Jonckheere, *The auction of King William's paintings*, appendix A3.

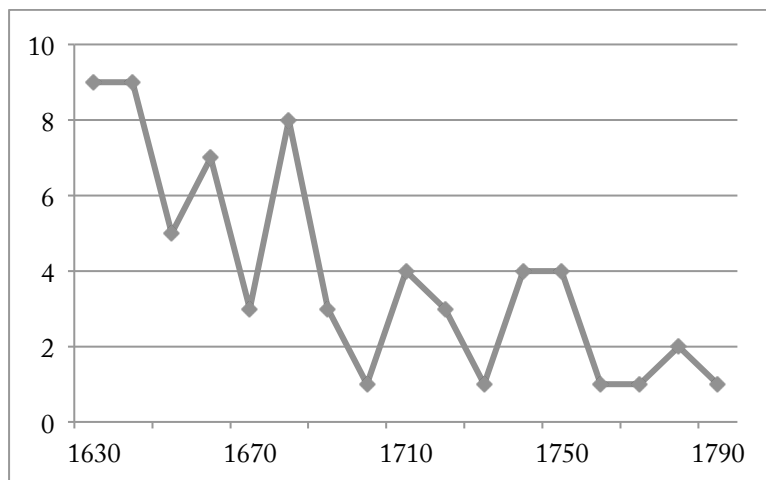
<sup>13</sup> Murray, *Human accomplishment*; Kelly and O'Hagan, 'Geographic clustering'.

<sup>14</sup> We find a comparable discrepancy between the two samples for the seventeenth century. The Low Countries were responsible for circa 50 per cent in Kelly and O'Hagan and 30 per cent in Murray.

<sup>15</sup> De Vries, 'Art history'.

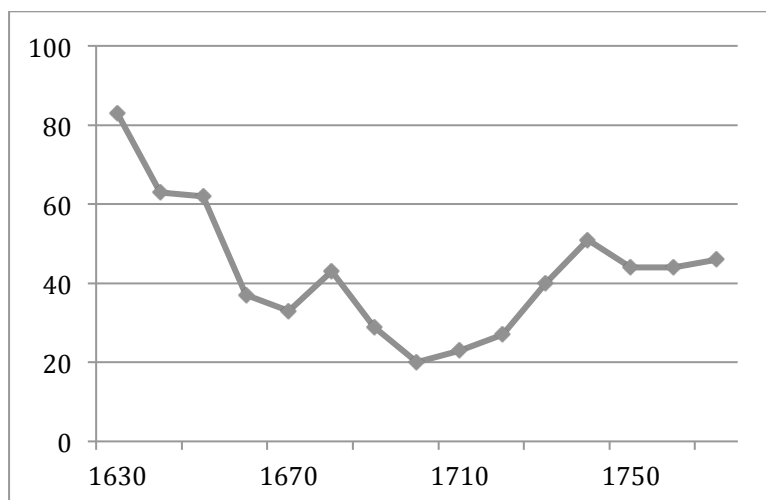
reference works and the number referenced in contemporary accounts. The sample reflecting contemporary appreciation (the C-sample) shows that the low point was reached in the birth decades of 1700 and 1710. However, the number of painters worth mentioning in contemporary reference works soon increased to the level of circa 1650-1660. This proves once more that the present-day conception of artistic decline differs from that of contemporaries. In artistic terms, at least, the crisis in the art market was less pronounced than has long been presumed.<sup>16</sup>

Figure 10.2 Artists in A&B samples, distributed according to decade of birth, 1630-1790



Source: See chapter 7. N=67.

Figure 10.3 Artists in C-sample, distributed according to decade of birth, 1630-1790



Source: See chapter 7. N= 645.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Bakker, 'Crisis? Welke crisis?'.

### 10.3 The downturn in the art market

It is generally accepted that from the 1660s onwards, the expansion of the Dutch art market had come to an end.<sup>17</sup> Montias has demonstrated that the share of paintings that could be attributed to contemporary masters dropped to under 50 per cent after the 1650s and less than 20 per cent after the 1670s.<sup>18</sup> According to Jan de Vries, the 'collapse [of the art market] after 1660 was much more abrupt than the surprising emergence of Dutch art early in the century'.<sup>19</sup> Figure 10.1 shows that this was not entirely true, but the number of painters active in the Dutch Republic declines considerably after circa 1660.<sup>20</sup> The period of 1650-1674 did not witness any significant increase in the number of active painters and, throughout most of the eighteenth century, the number of painters lingered at the 1600-1624 level. Even if the decline did not happen overnight, these figures also clearly show that the mass market for newly produced easel paintings collapsed during the second half of the seventeenth century.<sup>21</sup>

The quantitative slump did not go unnoticed at the time. Contemporaries attributed falling demand to changes in taste, more specifically the new fashion for painted wall hangings and the revived interest in old masters, and to the fallout of war.<sup>22</sup> Socio-economic interpretations of the decline of the Dutch art market point to two sets of factors: a decline in purchasing power and a systemic overproduction of paintings.<sup>23</sup> Paintings were durable and, as a result, by 1650 there was an abundant supply and range of good and affordable products on the Dutch art market. Moreover, as many Dutch consumers were using paintings as wall coverings, and as their wall space was limited, there was a fundamental limit on the number of individual pieces they would buy for this purpose.<sup>24</sup> In other words, consumers, especially those who drove the development of the mass market for paintings, lost interest in purchasing new ones. Marten Jan Bok has argued that the years of post-war distress after 1672 dealt the final blow to the already struggling contemporary art market.<sup>25</sup>

The literature suggests that the rapid downfall of the art market can be

<sup>17</sup> Bok, *Vraag en aanbod*, pp. 100-102; De Vries, 'Art history', pp. 273, table 272.

<sup>18</sup> Montias, 'Works of art', p. 363.

<sup>19</sup> De Vries, 'Art history', p. 267.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Bok, *Vraag en aanbod*, pp. 120-127; De Vries, 'Art history', p. 273. The estimates on the number of painters active per 25 years are based on the RKD-database. De Vries based his estimates on attributions in probate inventories and museum collections; as a result his figures are biased towards trends in prominent painters, rather than the mass market.

<sup>21</sup> De Vries, 'Art history', p. 267.

<sup>22</sup> Bok, 'Rise of Amsterdam'. Houbraken, *Groote Schouburgh*, pp. 130-136; Cf. De Vries, *Diamante gedenkzuilen*, pp. 87-101 on Van Gool's opinion.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Bok, 'Rise of Amsterdam'; Bok, *Vraag en aanbod*, pp. 120-127; De Vries, 'Art history', pp. 248-282.

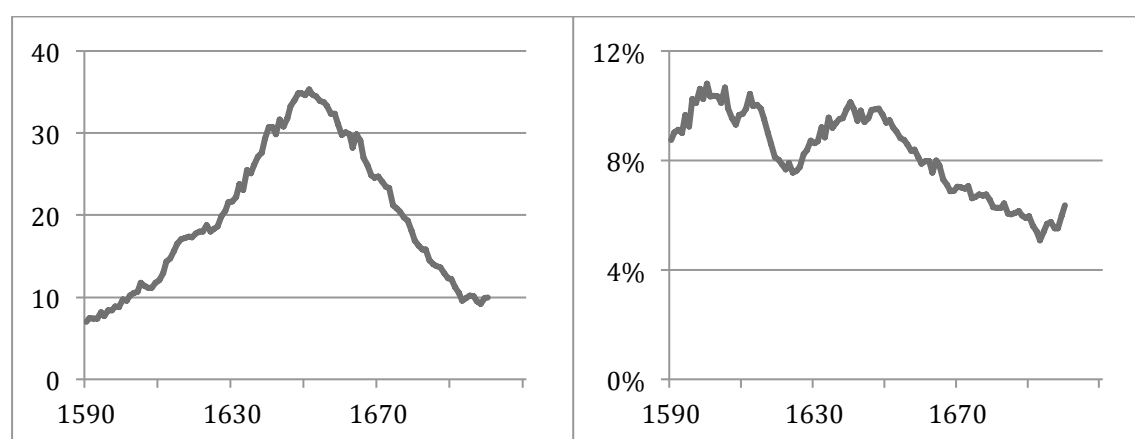
<sup>24</sup> Cf. De Vries, 'Art history', pp. 248-282.

<sup>25</sup> Bok, 'Rise of Amsterdam'.



attributed to a combination of a downward trend in entry rates and an upward one in exit rates. Regarding the latter, several painters and dealers were suffering financial difficulties, the most famous ones being Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675) and Gerrit Uylenburgh (c. 1625-1679).<sup>26</sup> Others were leaving the country. On top of this, the number of new painters registering for marriage licences in Amsterdam also decreased significantly, which means that there were fewer aspiring painters.<sup>27</sup> Entry rates can only be calculated for the period prior to 1700 because the Ecartico database does not cover the eighteenth century and the RKDartists-data does not currently allow for this. The statistics presented in Figure 10.4 clearly show that after the growth dynamic, made possible by a series of innovations and by increasing returns between circa 1620 and 1640, entry rates started to decline. This suggests that the wheels of decline were set in motion well before the 1660s, and that the events of the 1670s played a smaller role than commonly believed.

Figure 10.4 Number of entries and entry rates of painters in the seven largest artistic communities, 1590-1700, 10-year moving average



Source: Ecartico.

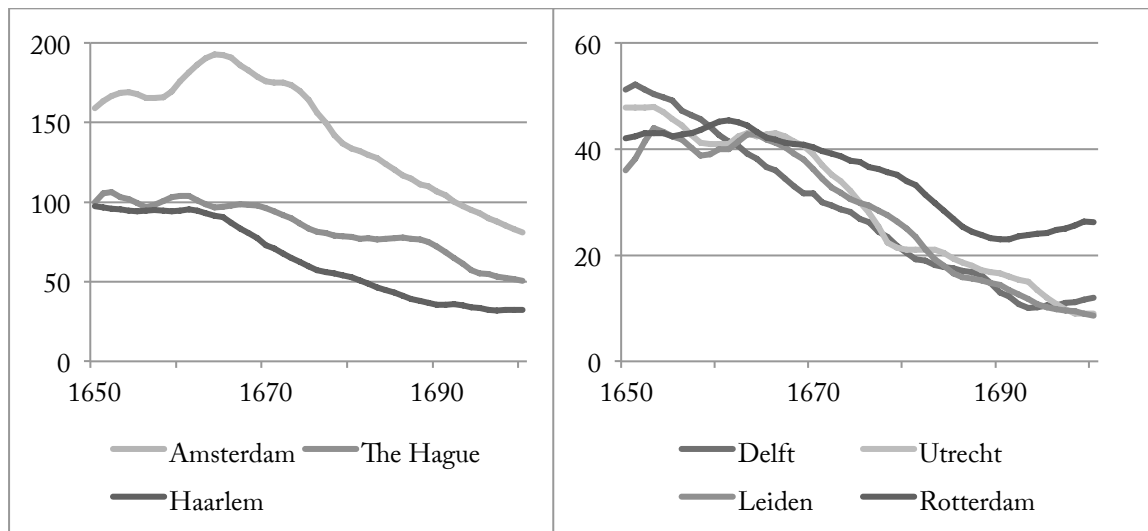
When focus is shifted to a local level, it becomes clear that all artistic centres witnessed a period of stagnation before the decline set in. Delft had reached its quantitative limits relatively early in the century; Haarlem and Utrecht were next, followed by Leiden, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and The Hague. Rotterdam was the least effected, followed by Amsterdam and The Hague. Artistic communities in Haarlem, Delft, Utrecht, Dordrecht, and Leiden fell by 20 or 30 per cent of their 1650 size. There were industry-wide factors that determined stagnation and general decline, but local features also influenced the extent and timing. On a local level,

<sup>26</sup> Lammertse and Van der Veen, *Uylenburgh & Co*, pp. 105-110.

<sup>27</sup> Bok, *Vraag en aanbod*, pp. 104-107.

several markets had become saturated already before the middle of the seventeenth century.

Figure 10.5 Number of active painters in 7 largest artistic communities, 1650-1700



Source: Ecartico

Changes in fashion cannot fully account explain the timing of decline in the art market. The use of paintings as decorative wall covering did become less popular, but only by the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>28</sup> The timing of the decline further suggests that trends in purchasing power are less important in explaining the declining numbers of active painters than is generally assumed. To be more precise, there was no dramatic decline in Dutch purchasing power during the period in which stagnation and decline set in; real wages in Holland continued to increase until the end of the seventeenth century, albeit more modestly than before.<sup>29</sup> In fact, demand for many luxury goods increased.<sup>30</sup> During and especially by the end of the seventeenth century, wealth distribution did become more skewed, but this alone cannot explain these trends.<sup>31</sup> While it may well be true that the absence of further increases in purchasing power could have limited potential expansion, this does not fully explain the dramatic fall in the number of painters in general and in the number of prominent painters.

A major factor of the mid-seventeenth century decline in the number of new painters was structural overproduction.<sup>32</sup> The problem in the art market was not so much a loss of interest in paintings in general, but rather a decline in demand for

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Fock, 'Het interieur in de Republiek'.

<sup>29</sup> Van Zanden, *Long road*, p. 247.

<sup>30</sup> Lesger, 'Vertraagde groei'; Lesger, 'Vertraagde groei', vol. II-2.

<sup>31</sup> Van Zanden, 'Economic growth', p. 23; Soltow and Van Zanden, *Income and wealth inequality*.

<sup>32</sup> Bok, *Vraag en aanbod*, pp. 120-127.

newly produced paintings.<sup>33</sup> Paintings were durable goods and this, combined with a finite space on middle-class walls, meant the market was bound to reach a saturation point. This aspect of the production of easel paintings has been addressed by previous studies, but here it will be placed in the broader framework of cultural industries.<sup>34</sup>

#### 10.4 Luxury and elegance

Around circa 1650, a new string of artistic novelties occurred. This time brighter colours, stylisation, and more meticulous production methods characterised the innovations, in contrast to the restrained compositions and rapid techniques of the 1610s and 1620s. The most obvious examples were the Leiden *fijnschilders*, whose style had already been developed in the 1630s by precursor Gerrit Dou (1613-1675), but who found an increasing following after circa 1650.<sup>35</sup> Frans van Mieris (1635-1681), for example, fits well in the broader tendency toward refined techniques, smooth surfaces, and much detail. Examples include interiors by Gerard ter Borch (1617-1681) and Gabriel Metsu (1629-1667), luxurious still lifes by Jan Davidsz de Heem (1606-1684) and Willem Kalf (1619-1693), Italianate landscapes by Nicolaes Pietersz Berchem (1620-1683), and Jan van der Heyden's (1637-1712) townscapes. Furthermore, in Delft a number of painters started to produce labour-intensive interior and exterior urban perspectives. The styles and compositions of the newly popular paintings required extensive working hours and were generally painted for a select group of rich collectors, rather than produced for the open market.

As had been the case in the previous round of product and process innovations, these stylistic adaptations and innovations were also inspired by economic circumstances. During the previous phase of competitive pressure, in around 1610, painters had responded with market strategies of cutting labour costs, specialisation, and differentiation, and succeeded in broadening the market for paintings. When markets became saturated during the 1640s, these strategies had already achieved all they could. The walls of middle class homes had become crowded with pictures in all shapes and sizes and the cost price of paintings could not be further reduced. With an ample supply of good and cheap paintings on the markets, demand for newly produced ones declined.

In the genre of merry companies 'the continual variation, without the introduction of true innovations, could not keep the public interested forever, and by

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<sup>33</sup> Montias, 'Artists named in Amsterdam inventories'.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Bok, 'Rise of Amsterdam'; Bok, *Vraag en aanbod*; Montias, 'Works of art'; De Vries, 'Art history'.

<sup>35</sup> Sluijter, Enklaar, and Nieuwenhuizen, eds., *Leidse fijnschilders*.

the mid-1640 there was no flexibility left, with the result that the merry company stagnated both in quantity and quality.<sup>36</sup> The genre overcame this impasse in around 1650, when a new generation started producing merry companies in more refined styles, themes, and techniques. Painters such as Gerard ter Borch, Gerbrand van den Eeckhout (1621-1674), Jacob van Loo (1614-1670), Frans van Mieris, Pieter de Hooch and Gabriel Metsu embraced luxury and elegance, allowing the genre to reach its zenith.

In theory, cultural products have the potential for infinite variety, but this was not the case in the early modern Dutch Republic. As Marten Jan Bok has also pointed out, 'creative freedom was an ideal rather than a reality'.<sup>37</sup> Like their predecessors and their foreign peers, Dutch painters had to relate to the existing format in order to appeal to customers. The observation by Eric Jan Sluijter on the popularity of certain subjects and the virtual absence of others is significant: 'although the tremendous wealth and diversity of subject matter and motifs in the visual arts give the impression that literally anything and everything was depicted, we see time and again just how selective artists were, and how limited their repertoire.'<sup>38</sup> Clearly, there were limits to the potential of differentiation and cost efficiency.

In response to market saturation and increasing demand uncertainty, painters experimented with more laborious painting techniques, such as *fijnschilderen* and international classicist styles, used larger sizes, and more decoration. Moreover, and opted for the safer route: personal relationships and commissions. As only collectors and financially secure citizens maintained a relatively stable interest in buying newly produced paintings, painters geared their production towards these market segments.

### 10.5 Substitute forms of interior decoration

Around the middle of the eighteenth century, artist biographer Johan van Gool and art dealer Gerard Hoet had a fierce discussion about the causes of the eighteenth-century artistic downturn. They agreed on two factors: the demise of artists' specialisations, and that the painted mural canvas was substituting paintings as the medium for wall decorations.<sup>39</sup> From the end of the seventeenth century, a general expansion in the variety of available decorative items reduced demand for paintings

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<sup>36</sup>Kolfin, *Young gentry*, p. 117.

<sup>37</sup> Bok, 'Rise of Amsterdam', p. 202.

<sup>38</sup> Sluijter, *Seductress of Sight*, p. 15.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Van Gool, *Nieuwe Schouburg*; De Vries, 'De kunsthandel is zoo edel als eenigen'; De Vries, *Diamante gedenkzuilen*, pp. 87-101.

as interior decoration.<sup>40</sup> Although porcelain, silver, chinaware, and mirrors were not direct substitutes for paintings, they competed for a share of the limited money available for interior decoration expenditure. Even in households without extensive collections in every room, paintings increasingly disappeared from living rooms, bedrooms and hallways, as they no longer belonged in 'modern' interiors.<sup>41</sup> In this section we delve into the development of decorative painting, a new market segment that provided the most direct competition for easel paintings.<sup>42</sup>

Grand decorative wall and ceiling paintings gained in popularity in the Dutch Republic from the 1660s onwards.<sup>43</sup> The idea of covering a wall with a large image was not new; think of tapestries, gilded leather, large Southern Netherlands watercolour paintings, and Italian frescos. Tapestries and gilded leather were relatively expensive became popular with wealthy burghers from the 1620s onwards.<sup>44</sup> From the 1670s onwards, full mural canvases became increasingly sought after in the Dutch Republic. This type of wall decoration was popularised through the Italianate landscapes, a genre that was also popular in cabinet pieces at the time. Gerard De Lairese and Daniel Marot can be regarded crucial figures in the development of decorative painting in the Republic.<sup>45</sup> During the eighteenth century, as paintings became less fashionable as wall decoration, separate cabinets, in which paintings were used for display rather than decoration, became more prominent.<sup>46</sup>

Painted and printed mural canvases also became increasingly popular during the eighteenth century. This new fashion meant increasing competition for producers of cabinet pieces, but they also offered a possible exit strategy from a market that was already saturated. We argue that whilst a limited group of painters were very successful in adapting to the new fashion, most were not. A distinction should be made between painters of commissioned grand interior scenes on ceilings, walls, and doors, such as Isaac de Moucheron (1667-1744), Jacob de Wit (1695-1754), Dirck Dalens III (1688-1753), Jurriaen Andriessen (1742-1819), and Hendrik Willem Schweickhardt (1746-1797), decorators who could also supply mural canvases, and

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Fock, 'Het interieur in de Republiek'. Cf. Thera's Wijsenbeek seminal work on material culture in Delft. Wijsenbeek-Olthuis, *Achter de gevels van Delft*. See also De Vries, *The industrious revolution on increasing demand for 'luxury items'*.

<sup>41</sup> Fock, 'Het interieur in de Republiek'.

<sup>42</sup> There have been few studies on Dutch mural canvases, a neglect that can be attributed to the poor reputation they acquired during the nineteenth century and to the fact that so few have survived. An dissertation on Jurriaen Andriessen by Harmanni includes the most comprehensive discussion of mural canvases. Harmanni, 'Jurriaen Andriessen', pp. 111-153. The following is based on his work, unless otherwise indicated. Many thanks to and Richard Harmanni and Aagje Gosliga. On the beginnings of the fashion of wall-covering paintings and the production of Ferdinand Bol in the 1650s in Van Eikema Hommes, *Art and allegiance*.

<sup>43</sup> On Schweickhardt: Sluijter, 'Hendrik Willem Schweickhardt'.

<sup>44</sup> Dudok van Heel, 'Amsterdamse kamerbehangsels', p. 13.

<sup>45</sup> Harmanni, 'Jurriaen Andriessen', pp. 130-134. On De Lairese: De Vries, *Gerard de Lairese*; De Vries, *How to create beauty*. On Marot: Ottenheym, Terlouw, and Van Zoest, eds., *Daniel Marot*.

<sup>46</sup> Fock, 'Het interieur in de Republiek', pp. 82-84; Baarsen, 'Art for the interior'; Pijzel-Dommisse, '1700-1750'.

so-called factories that mass produced painted and printed wall coverings.

Grand interior scenes were executed by the most prominent painters of the period and held in high regard.<sup>47</sup> In fact, it has been argued that the scale, variety, and quality of Dutch interior scenes, landscapes in particular, were remarkable. Though they were not a Dutch innovation, high-quality and large-scale production developed relatively early in the Republic. Moreover, the scale and scope was exceptional, virtually all houses of the Dutch well-to-do had one or two rooms with painted murals. Painted mural canvases could be found in the Southern Netherlands and German areas, but were not a widespread phenomenon in France or England.<sup>48</sup> Possibly Dutch consumers were atypical in this respect, but the profusion of this type of wall decoration may also have been supply-driven. In that case, Dutch painters, when faced with decreasing demand for cabinet pieces, chose a logical strategy by adapting to developing grand interior scenes.

Due to limited demand or talents, not everyone could make the move to high-end commissions. This saw other painters beginning to experiment with the more reproductive techniques in wall decoration. During the first decades of the eighteenth century, mural canvases were advertised as cheaper imitations of the more expensive tapestries. Soon, however, the more durable oil on canvas paintings, no longer a mere imitation, started to replace both watercolour hangings and tapestries. Furthermore, the producers of serial works who advertised their wares also introduced the painting and printing of ornaments or patterns on linen. They also often produced a whole range of items, such as tablecloths. During the second half of the eighteenth century, several artists established a range of smaller studios. Of these, Jurriaen Andriessen was practically the only one able to specialise in high-quality decorative paintings after the 1770s.

The new fashion posed a threat to easel painters. An increasing number of painters tried their luck at setting up their own studio, but few succeeded in building a noteworthy business. They proved incapable of managing the more complex chain of production and other entrepreneurs, familiar with the range of techniques and specialties required to deliver a finished product, stepped in. Tapestry weavers in particular were responsible for developing the wall-hanging workshops (*fabrieken*) that would eventually offer employment to individual painters on a structural or temporary basis. In fact, during the second half of the eighteenth century, the Amsterdam market became dominated by a handful of large firms, of which Troost van Groenendoelen was the most prominent. Many painters would find both

<sup>47</sup> Painting ceilings, grisailles, and mural canvases required a more thorough knowledge of perspective.

<sup>48</sup> Harmanni, 'Jurriaan Andriessen', pp. 166-167.

training and employment in these firms.<sup>49</sup>

## 10.6 Decorative painting

Whilst some painters shifted their focus from easel paintings to mural paintings in the upper level of the market, a new market for decorative painting developed that offered ample opportunities for their counterparts in other market segments. Piet Bakker has broadened the scope of the art market to include *kladschilders*, who decorated furniture, carriages, but also the interior and exterior of buildings, including walls, panelling, and mantelpieces.<sup>50</sup> He showed that, using this definition, the Leiden market remained relatively stable in terms of size during the last decades of the seventeenth century.<sup>51</sup> Such a study has not yet been undertaken for the eighteenth century and a tentative look at the Amsterdam guild registration is only marginally instructive. The annual registration of new members in the Amsterdam guild of St. Luke between 1748 and 1809 reveals that as many as 1,564 new members were registered during the period. Because these figures cannot be compared to the previous stages in the life cycle, they do not mean much. Nor have these members been identified by occupation, as Piet Bakker did for the earlier period in Leiden.

The rapid drop in at the end of the century does not necessarily reflect changes in the art market, as it was around this time that the guilds were being abolished. Figure 10.6 shows that the share of painters in the total number of entrants was relatively stable throughout the 50 years presented here. In around 1784 there was a peak in the number of painters who had also completed the glassmaker's master test (Figure 10.7), but this can be traced back to a 1784 ordinance on the formal requirements of painters involved in glassmaking.<sup>52</sup> The label 'painters' includes the *kladschilders*. The findings of Bakker suggest that as in publishing, segmentation of the market took place. Through the loss of middle segments of the market, the Dutch art market came to resemble other European art markets of the time. Like publishers, many artists turned to a different and familiar 'reproductive technique', that of copying.

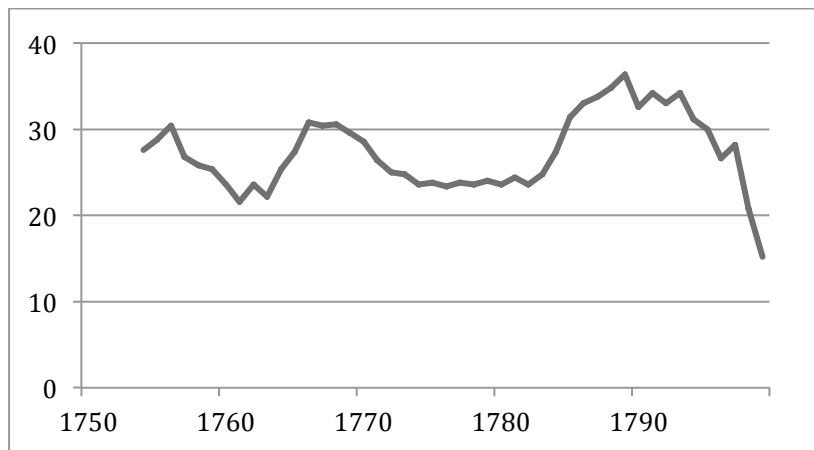
<sup>49</sup> Numerous mentionings in Van Eynden and Van der Willigen Pz., *Geschiedenis der vaderlandse schilderkunst*.

<sup>50</sup> On the skills and activities of *kladschilders*: Bakker, 'Crisis? Welke crisis?', pp. 242-252.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*.

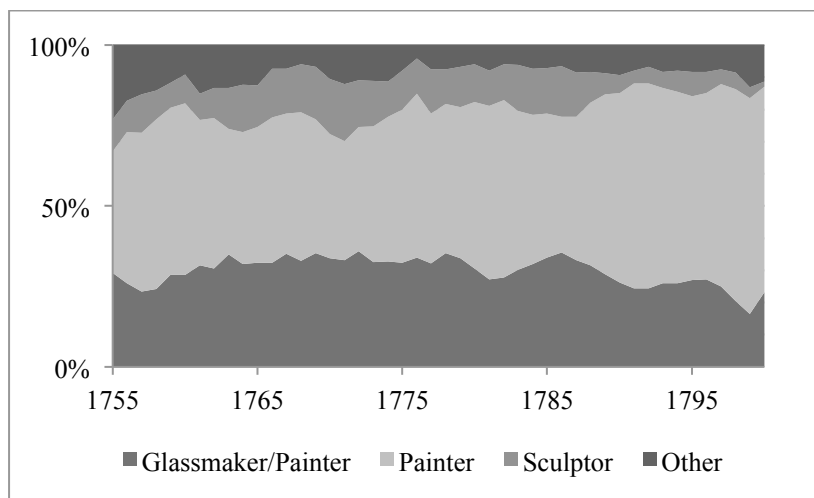
<sup>52</sup> SA Archief van de Gilden en het Brouwerscollege, inv. 1399, p. 107. 27 January 1784.

Figure 10.6 Number of annual registrations in the Amsterdam guild of St. Luke, 1750-1800, 10-year moving average



Source: SA, inv. 366 Archief van de Gilden en het Brouwerscollege, inv. 1405-1406.

Figure 10.7 Occupational distribution of entrants in the Amsterdam guild of St. Luke, 1755-1800



Source: SA, inv. 366 Archief van de Gilden en het Brouwerscollege, inv. 1405-1406.

### 10.7 'Adept, but weaker extracts'<sup>53</sup>

From the last decades of the seventeenth century onwards, collectors began to increasingly focus on work by 'old masters'. With consistent domestic and foreign demand for paintings by masters who had been active during the second half of the seventeenth century, such as Gerard Dou and Frans I van Mieris, scarcity and

<sup>53</sup> Bob Haak on post-1980 figure painting: 'Technically, these works are often adept; in other respects they are weaker extracts from the work of the seventeenth-century masters.' Haak, *The Golden Age*, p. 78.



thereby potential value increased. This had significant consequences for the role of copies.<sup>54</sup> The prolific production of copies was, in itself, nothing new. It has been estimated that as many as 50 per cent of all seventeenth-century paintings were copies.<sup>55</sup> Producing imitations of existing paintings was an integral part of painters' apprenticeships, and some masters also produced autographed copies. These did not only serve as exercises and models within painters' workshops, but they could also be sold.<sup>56</sup> Aono has observed a change in the function of early eighteenth-century copies, as commercial objectives became more important and copies increasingly served as cheaper and more readily available substitutes.<sup>57</sup> If the copies were of high quality, they could fetch high prices, but were still cheaper than the originals. Aono demonstrates that collectors could commission painters to make copies to substitute an unavailable original and that copies were also produced for the open market.<sup>58</sup>

Copying paintings was a fair strategy in the transforming art market of the late seventeenth century. Old master paintings were in demand with collectors, and the supply of these paintings was limited, not only because the death of the artists in question prevented expansion of the supply pool, but also because collecting became increasingly popular, both in and outside the Republic. Moreover, imitation provided an association with the renowned names, which could boost artists' reputations.<sup>59</sup> Strategies of new design and copying could be easily combined, with the latter adding value to the former. Certainly, if one could copy well, it was proof of skill. By offering substitutes for scarce and expensive seventeenth-century paintings, painters could instigate demand.

Aono has also pointed out that not all figure paintings that resembled seventeenth-century originals were genuine copies. She distinguishes between different forms of imitation: outright reproductive paintings, emulation updates according to contemporary vocabularies, and the more innovative combination of the classicising trend with seventeenth-century figure painting. Artists emulating seventeenth-century masters made use of established motifs, compositions, and themes, but adapted them to contemporary fashions. In other words, they were recognisable, but different.<sup>60</sup> These artists did not only copy; they selected certain motifs and compositions, thereby creating new niches.

<sup>54</sup> On copies see: Aono, 'Imitation and innovation', chapter 2.

<sup>55</sup> Bok and Schwartz, 'Schilderen in opdracht'.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Altes, *De verovering van de internationale kunstmarkt*, p. 34.

<sup>57</sup> Aono, 'Imitation and innovation', p. 53. Aono's research is limited to figure painting.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 57-61.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 3;

## 10.8 Mezzotint

Developed during the 1640s, mezzotint gained in popularity in the Dutch Republic through the 1670s, and reached its zenith in the 1680s.<sup>61</sup> Given the timing and the shape of the art market, we may argue that it was more than a pastime, a commercial strategy. Gerdien Wuestman has observed that a striking number of painters attempted the technique, including Michiel van Musscher (1645-1705), Ludolf Backhuysen (1630-1708), and Gerard de Lairesse. The latter explained that he preferred mezzotint to engraving, observing that it could be 'a delightful diversion to painters'.<sup>62</sup>

Mezzotint's potential as a medium for reproductive techniques was vast and it successfully lent itself to the depiction of materials and to the contrast of light and dark. Struggling painters could use the technique as a substitute for painting original work, or as a means to acquire additional income from original designs. That mezzotint prints could be utilised in the same way as paintings is visible in the sizes and the mediums in which they were printed. According to De Lairesse 'It [the mezzo-tint] may even compare with a painting, how soft and fluent so ever, abating for the colours'.<sup>63</sup> During the 1680s, mezzotint was practiced at the highest level by engravers such as Wallerant Vaillant, Petrus Schenk and Abraham Blooteling, but its popularity was relatively short-lived. Of the 63 artists in our 1710 prosopography, nine were involved in mezzotint, a ratio that declined to one out of 35 in 1740. Of the 54 artists active in 1780, not one was characterised as a mezzotint artist.<sup>64</sup> After the deaths of a handful of specialists such as Vaillant and Schenk, mezzotint was practiced alongside paintings, drawing and other graphic techniques.<sup>65</sup>

Why then was the technique gradually abandoned?<sup>66</sup> Mezzotint prints remained a fashionable collectors item, which suggests that the explanation should be sought on the supply rather than the demand side. Wuestman lists several reasons. Primarily, the technique did not lend itself to the type of bright compositions that were fashionable during the eighteenth century. The lack of colour was also major shortcoming, and even though Jacob Christoph le Blon (1667-1741) invented colour mezzotint, the results were disappointing and the process time consuming. While these factors may have played a role, they do not explain why the technique continued to thrive in England. Dutch engravers experienced fierce competition from the high-quality products imported from England during the eighteenth century.

<sup>61</sup> Wuestman, 'The mezzotint in Holland', pp. 72-73. There are few studies on mezzotint engraving in the Dutch Republic,

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>63</sup> Citation from *ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>64</sup> RKDartists, accessed 12-03-2011.

<sup>65</sup> Wuestman, 'The mezzotint in Holland', p. 84.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

Although more research is required, the reason high-level mezzotint did not endure in the Dutch Republic may perhaps be sought in the fact that the technique was deemed inferior to painting and engraving and 'was seen mainly as an adjunct to the existing techniques, one giving different but not superior effects.'<sup>67</sup> Compared to England, both painting and engraving were firmly established traditions in the Dutch Republic. Artists already had specific skill sets, and although De Lairese referred to the technique as 'easily learned', in practice it was rather difficult. Few painters who tried became skilful.<sup>68</sup>

### 10.9 Internationalisation

The often-quoted foreign travellers were amazed at the large number of painters and paintings they encountered in the Dutch Republic, but in general, typical Dutch styles and subjects were not well received outside the Republic during the seventeenth century. Apart from the individual exception here and there, Dutch art in general only achieved a positive international reputation after circa 1660. Dutch painters' craftsmanship, though recognised, was deemed of little value in the absence of 'great ideas'. These accusations of the lack of ideas stem from sixteenth century humanist treatises that were fairly condescending with regards to northern styles and their depiction of realistic scenes and landscapes. This did not change much in later centuries.

In French academic circles, Northern Netherlands' art was not held in high esteem until well into the eighteenth century. The collection of the French king Louis XIV contained hardly any paintings by Dutch masters.<sup>69</sup> In the treatise on painting by the French art critic Roger De Piles, Dutch seventeenth century painting only featured marginally.<sup>70</sup> In De Piles opinion, Rembrandt had a 'beau Génie et un Esprit solide', but proved unable to match the taste and ingenuity of Italian painters, due to his Dutch (read: misguided) origin, training, and background.<sup>71</sup> In England, the appreciation of Dutch art intensified after the Restoration in 1660 and the crowning of William III in 1689, but during the eighteenth century, art critics still poured scorn on the lack of a 'deeper meaning'.<sup>72</sup> Despite these overall judgments, seventeenth

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., pp. 73-74.

<sup>69</sup> Grijzenhout, 'Myth of decline', p. 33. He had one work by Rembrandt, one by Jan Davidsz de Heem and three panels by Cornelis van Poelenburch.

<sup>70</sup> De Piles, *Conversations sur la Connoissance de la Peinture*.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 424.

<sup>72</sup> Sir Joshua Reynolds in 'Discourse IV', 10 December 1771: '... The painters of this [Dutch] school are excellent in their own way; they are only ridiculous when they attempt general history on their own narrow principles, and debase great events by the meanness of their characters'. Beechy, *The literary works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, p. 358.

century Dutch painting became relatively popular in eighteenth century England and France. During the Romantic period, 'the picturesque' works of Dutch landscapists became increasingly popular and in (pre-) revolutionary France the artistic focus moved away from royal classicist elite styles, toward a re-evaluation of simple, honest *burgerlijke* themes. In view of this, the realistic Dutch depiction of everyday life, derided during the previous century, proved inspiring.<sup>73</sup> During the eighteenth century, when classicist ideals lost ground, Dutch masters moved to the fore internationally, particularly the *fijnschilders* and Italianists.

Even if art theorists still marginalized Dutch painting, foreign collectors started showing interest shortly after the middle of the seventeenth century. Ignoring Rembrandt for the moment, the interest of international collectors started to gain in importance with regards to the *fijnschilder* style. The styles of Frans van Mieris and his master Gerard Dou, who had both specialised in figure painting, proved particularly popular with foreigners, such as Cosimo de Medici and Archduke Leopold Wilhelm.<sup>74</sup> Gradually, Dutch painters embraced Supposedly, in 1675 Cosimo de Medici commissioned Van Mieris to paint the Holy Franciscus Xaverius, which Van Mieris refused, explaining that he could only depict what he was able to observe in reality.<sup>75</sup> The highly skilled painters Adriaen van der Werff (1659-1722) made a full transition to painting historical and biblical repertoire. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, a combination of highly refined painting technique and classical repertoire became increasingly prominent, which most notably in the work of Van der Werff (1659-1722) and his master Egmont van der Neer (1635/1636-1703).

During the seventeenth century, several Dutch painters were active at European courts whilst others travelled around, but the export trade was not thriving.<sup>76</sup> In his *Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst* (1678), Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627-1678) pointed out that a conscious pursuit of the export of painting could be lucrative for the Dutch state and its inhabitants.<sup>77</sup> Using France as an example, he explained that, given the high level of Dutch painting, hardly any investments had to be made in order to start profiting from this resource. In France, domestic art had been nurtured, so as to cut off Italian imports. In Van Hoogstraten's words, painting 'as befits our fatherland, like an invaluable quarry, a pearl fishery, or a mine of precious stones, can daily produce many rich jewels of cabinet paintings, which without squandering too much costs could be turned into objects of great

<sup>73</sup> Grijzenhout, 'Myth of decline', p. 33.

<sup>74</sup> Sluijter, 'Schilders van "cleyne, subtile ende curieuse dingen"', p. 15.

<sup>75</sup> Hecht, 'Het einde van de Gouden Eeuw'.

<sup>76</sup> On the export of Dutch paintings see Altes, *De verovering van de internationale kunstmarkt*; Gerson, *Ausbreitung und Nachwirkung der holländischen Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts*.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Koolhaas-Grossfeld, 'The business of art'.

value through the ingenuity of only a few eaters.’<sup>78</sup> Van Hoogstraten advised the authorities to increase foreign demand for Dutch paintings by offering privileges to art dealers and presenting representative paintings to foreign heads of state.

As before, Dutch painters incorporated foreign trends, such as international classicist ideals and the French fashion of ceiling-paintings. However, what was highly valued internationally were not the French-style products, but rather the highly refined, and as such very Dutch, works by Van der Werff and Rachel Ruysch. Building on over half a century of local painting traditions, Dutch painters managed to connect to export markets. However, the export market was mainly built on second-hand paintings by, or in the tradition of, Dou, Van Ostade, and Van Mieris.

#### 10.10 Conclusion

In this chapter two cases were made. Firstly, it was argued that market saturation had set-in significantly earlier than is usually recognised. Already in the 1640s, Dutch painters were feeling the dual burden of stagnating demand and increasing competition. The economic and political difficulties of the 1670s aggravated structural problems in the Dutch cultural industries in general, and in the artistic production industry in particular. On the other hand, in line with the recent rehabilitation of late seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century painters, the artistic collapse and commercial downturn of the art market were challenged. This had two elements: bypassing the art-historical bias and interpreting the art market as something more than the market for easel paintings.

Unquestionably, existing and aspiring painters faced very different market situation than previous generations, but they responded to these challenges with rational strategies. They turned to the market segments that held more potential, i.e. the upper levels of society, collectors, and international markets, by incorporating foreign fashions, turning to decorative painting, and by building an association with the work of Dutch predecessors. The export strategy was grounded in a second-hand Dutch market. But in all, producers in the painting sector were not entirely successful at making such a rapid transition to foreign market demand.

The result of the focus on older Dutch works was that less truly original work was produced. This justifies the art historical bias, at least up to a certain extent, and this substantiates Seymour Slive’s observation of ‘a decline in the creative impulse of

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<sup>78</sup> Van Hoogstraeten, *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkunst*, p. 330; Koolhaas-Grossfeld, ‘The business of art’, p. 115.

Dutch artists' from the last quarter of the seventeenth century.<sup>79</sup> But still, this loss of creativity in a period of market saturation is not as self-evident as it may seem. This can be illustrated by referring to the case of Antwerp. After a severe post-Revolt crisis in the Southern Netherland's art market at the end of the sixteenth century, it then recovered and experienced an 'Indian summer', with Baroque painters Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), Jacob Jordaens (1593-1678), and portraitist Anthony Van Dyck as leading men (1599-1641). Antwerp retained its status as a commercial centre within the Spanish empire and an artistic and cultural one in the framework of the Catholic Counter Reformation.<sup>80</sup> It is true that Dutch painters, when dealing with the same market saturation and war-based complications, did not have the court and church patronage that their southern counterparts had benefited from 50 years earlier, but this does not mean that they were predestined to lose their creativity. Why did Dutch painters focus on 'older' work? Antwerp painters and merchants did manage to set up a mass production of affordable paintings for export market, and Dutch publishers did make a transition to newly produced titles for export markets.

In the following chapter substitutes and organisational adaptations will be discussed. Painters and dealers innovated in terms of marketing and distribution, they formalised advanced education, and they attempted to reduce competition by strengthening guild regulations and by social differentiation.

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<sup>79</sup> Slive, *Dutch painting*, pp. 299-300.

<sup>80</sup> On Antwerp see for example: Vermeylen, *Painting for the market*; Honig, *Painting and the market*; Vlieghe, *Flemish art and architecture*.

## 11 Transformation of the art market, 1650-1800

### 11.1 Introduction

In this chapter the discussion of the Dutch art market during the period 1650-1800 will be continued. Attention is drawn to institutional changes. In addition to product adaptations and the production of substitutes, painters also responded to stagnating demand by implementing organisational modifications. In the previous chapter the two rounds of institutional restructuring as identified by Prak were discussed. Here two more are brought to the table. The third round took place around the middle of the seventeenth century, as is most evident by the strengthening of guild regulation and the organisation of artists' societies. The fourth round is characterised by the establishment of formal urban drawing academies.

Apart from the founding of artists' guilds in the early 1630s in the relatively small artistic centres Alkmaar and Amersfoort, and the reissuing of regulations concerning selling by interlopers, the guilds of St. Luke do not appear to have been particularly active in the 1620s and 1630s. However, in the 1640s and 1650s, when the landscape was becoming increasingly competitive due to market saturation, the activities of the Dutch painters' guilds became more pronounced. It is no coincidence that issues concerning competition and transparency first arose in the two front-running towns of Haarlem and Utrecht, and that such issues in the large and more secure markets of Amsterdam and The Hague occurred relatively later.<sup>1</sup> The increasing activity of guild members and guild masters during the onset of the mature phase in the industrial lifecycle shows that local painters were once again experiencing problems of competition and selection. In this chapter it is highlighted how fundamental features of cultural production became particularly pressing during the period of market saturation and market decline, and how certain players in the art market responded in terms of organisation.

These changes clearly reflect attempts to deal with the issues associated with cultural industries, such as structural overproduction, uncertainty surrounding quality, and information asymmetries. Such features were not new or exclusive to Dutch art production, but they became increasingly significant as painters were faced

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<sup>1</sup> Leiden can be seen as somewhat of an anomaly, because it was the only sizable art market not under guild control until the 1640s.

with stagnating demand. In order to manage the dynamics of durability, quality uncertainty and the increasing demand for 'old masters', a secondary market was established and instruments for art criticism were developed. In the new market situation, the middle segments were saturated and the gap between lower-end and higher-end painters increased. Painting increasingly evolved from a craft into an art, as art lovers and dilettantes gained prominence and joined the ranks of professionals in artists' associations, such as societies and drawing academies.

## 11.2 A lively second hand market

The number of auctions held in the Dutch Republic, Amsterdam in particular, and the numbers of paintings by Dutch masters in foreign collections and in French auctions indicate that a successful export of Dutch paintings developed.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the Dutch government had to do next to nothing to make this happen. The stylistic changes of the 1640s and 1650s, the *fijnschilderstijl*, and the popularity of Italianate landscapes held much more foreign appeal than the Dutch figure paintings and monochrome landscapes of the growth phase.

As De Marchi and Van Miegroet have pointed out: 'affordable yet acceptable substitutes helped engender interest in the unfamiliar or lesser-known Netherlandish artists that [Parisian art dealer] Gersaint gathered together at sales in the North and took with him back to Paris. There, Nicholas Berchem and Jan Both, for example, were presented as supplying, within the family of Italianate landscapists, comparable pleasing properties to those of the unavailable and unaffordable Claude Lorrain. And for buyers charmed by Jan I Brueghel's peasant festivities, but unable to consider (or find) an original, or who preferred their peasants a little more couth than Brueghel's or Brouwer's kind, there was David II Teniers, whose works were already appreciated by some collectors in Paris and had been reproduced as prints.'<sup>3</sup>

A number of factors facilitated the successful export of Dutch paintings. Initially it was not just paintings, but other luxury Dutch products, such as garden architecture, porcelain, prints, lacquered cabinets and books that were popular export goods.<sup>4</sup> Korthals Altes has pointed out that a number of foreign rulers developed galleries of paintings, as well as cabinets. In the case of the latter, the

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<sup>2</sup> On international art trade see; Altes, *De verovering van de internationale kunstmarkt*; Jonckheere, *The auction of King William's paintings*. On Dutch auctions of paintings in the eighteenth century, see also Fredericksen, 'The art dealership of merchant and diplomat Jan van Beuningen'; Lyna and Vermeylen, 'Rubens for sale'; De Marchi and Van Miegroet, 'The rise of the dealer-auctioneer in Paris'; Bille, *De tempel der kunst*, pp. 156-159.

<sup>3</sup> De Marchi and Van Miegroet, 'The rise of the dealer-auctioneer in Paris', p. 151.

<sup>4</sup> Altes, *De verovering van de internationale kunstmarkt*.



smaller frames were particularly well suited.<sup>5</sup> The smaller Dutch paintings were a good alternative to expensive Italian art, which was hard to come by due to closed circuits of art exchange in Italy, and due to other royal families. Cabinet pieces were also cheaper and easier to transport. In all, they were more collectable. Furthermore, Dutch art was also in demand because, in order to judge and compare every school and master, collectors were required to pursue a varied art collection. The developing eighteenth-century art literature also had a role in improving the reputation of the Dutch school, though according to Korthals Altes, it adhered mostly to the existing fashion rather than to shaping it.<sup>6</sup> The long-standing assumption has been that the print reproductions of Dutch masters was of great significance for the international reputation of Dutch art, but Gardien Wuestman has argued that this was not the case.<sup>7</sup>

*Public sales and the specialised art auction*

During the 1640s, guild regulations were adapted to the changing market situation. The key issue was the regulation of public sales, but entry barriers were raised by increasing entry and membership fees and enforcing stricter controls on members. With the establishment of the Utrecht *Schilder-Collegie* in 1644, annual fees were required. This development was new for Utrecht, but common in other towns. An annual contribution was set at 12 *stuivers*, which was fairly high in comparison to other towns. Furthermore, in 1664 the entry fees were raised again, from *f* 10 to *f* 20 for complete unknowns and from *f* 3 to *f* 5 for masters' sons (in the 1611 ordinance, the fee had been 30 *stuivers*).<sup>8</sup> In Haarlem and Dordrecht, entry fees also increased significantly.<sup>9</sup>

The most frequently cited example of the concerns of guilds in this phase stems from Haarlem.<sup>10</sup> Haarlem was the first cluster to take off and its market was the first to experience local market saturation. Whilst at the start of the growth phase it was outsiders and imports that threatened guild members, in the maturity phase it was local, rather than foreign competition that needed to be controlled. Controversies about public sales are exemplified by a case found in the history of the Haarlem guild. In 1644 there was a serious dispute following a 1642 ruling concerning public sales.<sup>11</sup> The main cause of friction was the attempt to regulate public sales and

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 15-16.

<sup>7</sup> Wuestman, 'De Hollandse schilderschool in prent'. At least not in the sense that work of artist who had become famous early, also developed in print early, or that painters who had many paintings printed acquired an international reputation more quickly than others.

<sup>8</sup> Muller Fz., *Schildersverenigingen*, p. 19; *ibid.*, appendix II, Ordonnantie van het St. Lucasgild 13 september 1611, pp. 63-69; *ibid.*, appendix III, Ordonnantie van het Schilders-College 24 Februari 1644.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Hoogewerff, *Geschiedenis van de St. Lucasgilden*, p. 187.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Boers-Goosens, 'Een nieuwe markt', vol. 50; Romein and Korevaar, 'Dutch guilds'.

<sup>11</sup> Miedema, ed., *Archiefbescheiden*, vol. II, p 236.

lotteries of works of art. In 1642 the guild was asked to pass a new rule 'to forbid improper sales, as they are held at present' to which the officers of the guild responded positively. This invoked a fierce reply of 28 articles, signed by established Haarlem painters Frans Pietersz de Grebber, Pieter de Molyn, Cornelis van Kittensteyn, Salomon van Ruysdael, Frans Hals, and Cornelis Vroom.<sup>12</sup>

The group was highly convinced of the benefits of public sales and objected that art dealers and retailers would be the ones to benefit from the new requests, not the painters themselves. They presented four arguments: master painters should be entitled to sell their own paintings in any way they saw fit; *liefhebbers* should have the ability to rid themselves of their old paintings and buy new, better ones with the profits; public sales were beneficial to young painters, as a way of selling work and a means of artistic inspiration; public sales stimulated new markets, as they appealed to people who would otherwise not buy paintings through the regular channels of distribution. Evidently they rejected the idea that the market was static and actively sought to include new demand groups. Apparently, open public sales were considered to be one of the main venues where amateur buyers could develop a taste for art, become *liefhebbers*, and later register with the guilds.

Durability and the increasing turnover time strengthened the need for distributional adaptations, specifically more efficient distribution methods. These could be found in a less restrictive policy towards public sales as well as better regulation. Guild boards initially resisted, but within a few decades they began to adapt and even organise auctions themselves.<sup>13</sup> From 1664, biannual auctions were permitted in Haarlem for reason of limited local demand ('*sommige schilders alhier ter stede weijnigh afftreck was*').<sup>14</sup> Amsterdam gained permission relatively late, in around 1700. The local guild of St. Luke altered its regulations concerning auctions three times: once in 1701, once in 1702 and then again in 1704. The new rules regarding public sales resembled those drawn up decades earlier by the booksellers' guild. Two issues stood out. Firstly, in order to discourage the practice of including illegal works in auction sales, sales catalogues, hand-written or printed, had to be presented to representatives of the guild three days before the sale and overseers would also visit the auction.<sup>15</sup>

Secondly, there was a conflict between the overseers of the booksellers and the overseers of the painters as to who should examine which auctions. The solution was that booksellers' guilds would take charge when pictures' share of the auction revenue was less than *f* 100, and, in turn, the artists' guilds would take charge when

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 249; *ibid.*, p. 280.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Romein and Korevaar, 'Dutch guilds'.

<sup>14</sup> Miedema, ed., *Archiefbescheiden*, vol. II, pp 289-290; *ibid.*, p. 280.

<sup>15</sup> SA, Archief van de Gilden en het Brouwerscollege, inv. 1398, p. 36, article 3; inv. 1399, article 7.

books' share of the revenue was less than  $f$  100. In the event that both categories would exceed this sum, both guilds would have visitation rights.

The increased guild activity was the consequence of an increasing use of auctions and catalogues as channels of distribution and marketing. Auctions had been a common feature of the art market, but now this practice was professionalized. In fact, it was only during the last quarter of the seventeenth century that formal specialised art auctions came into being. The Dutch Republic had been the cradle of specialised book auctions as early as the seventeenth century, but specialised art auctions only developed later. A collection of sales catalogues from the period 1684-1752, assembled by art dealer Gerard Hoet and published in 1752, clearly shows that specialised art sales featuring printed catalogues became more widespread during the 1690s.<sup>16</sup> A sample of advertisements for art sales published in the *Amsterdamsche Courant* between 1672 and 1725 confirms this and suggests that the rise in the number of catalogues found in Hoet's data not only reflects an increase in the use of auction catalogues, but also in the public art sale as a general distribution method.<sup>17</sup> Amsterdam was the metropolis of art auctions: 70 per cent of the auctions listed by Hoet for the period 1676-1739 took place in Amsterdam, with seven per cent in The Hague, six per cent in Rotterdam, and the rest in Haarlem, Utrecht, Leiden, Dordrecht, Leeuwarden, Antwerp, and Brussels, excluding isolated events in smaller towns, such as Hoorn and Groningen.<sup>18</sup>

The key figure in the development of specialised paintings auctions and the use of catalogues and advertisements was Amsterdam dealer Jan Pietersz Zomer.<sup>19</sup> He had been trained as a glass painter and in 1673 he took over the glass business from his master and uncle. By the time of his death in 1724, he was a key figure of the Amsterdam art market, dominating the auction sales. Between 1687 and 1724 he auctioned off 62 collections of paintings and played a central role in the local connoisseurs' milieu.<sup>20</sup> From 1700 to 1710 between 60 and 90 per cent of the Amsterdam auctions were organised by Zomer. He was the first broker of art, or at least the first to register as such with the brokers' guild.<sup>21</sup> In theory, every broker could auction off paintings, but in practice, after 1690, it became the prerogative of

<sup>16</sup> Hoet, *Catalogus of naamlyst van schilderyen* and Hoet and Terwesten, *Catalogus of naamlyst*. The latter is effectively the third volume to the former. See on this database Jonckheere, 'Kunsthandel en diplomatie', pp. 208-211; Jonckheere, *The auction of King William's paintings*, appendix A3. The Hoet-Terwesten database is part of the *Getty Provenance Index*. [www.getty.edu/research/tools/provenance](http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/provenance).

<sup>17</sup> S.A.C. Dudok van Heel has published surveys of all advertisements for art auctions in the *Amsterdamsche Courant* for the period 1672-1725 (N=259). Dudok van Heel, 'Honderdvijftig advertenties' and *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Jonckheere, *The auction of King William's paintings*, appendix A3.

<sup>19</sup> On Zomer see: Dudok van Heel, 'Jan Pietersz. Zomer'.

<sup>20</sup> Jonckheere, *The auction of King William's paintings*, p. 57.

<sup>21</sup> Dudok van Heel, 'Jan Pietersz. Zomer', p. 101.

Zomer.<sup>22</sup> He did not buy and resell exclusive works of art but he lived off the intermediary commissions.<sup>23</sup>

Zomer professionalised the auctioning of pictures through his pioneering use of newspaper advertisements and catalogues.<sup>24</sup> Although neither of the two were genuine innovations, as they were already in use in the book trade, he was the first to systematically employ them for art auctions. Zomer increased the transparency of the secondary art market by including information on type, style, and brand (using the master's name as brand name whether master, studio, or school).<sup>25</sup> Later commentators, Jacob Campo Weyerman for instance, criticised this 'branding' of painters by art dealers, but nevertheless it appears to have been an effective marketing strategy for sellers of the late seventeenth century onwards.<sup>26</sup> The dissemination of printed catalogues, and the inclusion of information true or false, stimulated further internationalisation and may even have enabled an increase in demand, as less experienced buyers could gain easier access to second-hand paintings.<sup>27</sup>

After the failing demand for newly produced art works, Dutch artists and dealer transformed the art market from a primary to a secondary market, placing themselves at the centre of an integrated European art trade.<sup>28</sup> The modernisation of the auction system must have stimulated this. For this period, the only other specialised art auctions were known to be in London, but these were much less transparent and organised.<sup>29</sup> The early advantage certainly paid off, as the Dutch Republic became the centre of international art auctions until Paris and later London took over in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The modernisation of the auction method would further developed in France where transparency increased. As trust and transparency were crucial to the success of art markets both primary and secondary, this development should not be underestimated.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>23</sup> Jonckheere, *The auction of King William's paintings*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>25</sup> Jonckheere and Vermeylen, 'A world of deception and deceit?', pp. 77-81.

<sup>26</sup> Jonckheere, 'Supply and demand'; Jonckheere and Vermeylen, 'A world of deception and deceit?', p. 104.

<sup>27</sup> Jonckheere and Vermeylen, 'A world of deception and deceit?', p. 108.

<sup>28</sup> Jonckheere, *The auction of King William's paintings*, pp. 58-59; Jonckheere and Vermeylen, 'A world of deception and deceit?', p. 101.

<sup>29</sup> Frits Lugt's *Répertoire des catalogues de ventes publiques* covers the period 1600 to 1925, listing more than 100,000 art sales catalogs from libraries in Europe and the United States. See also:

<http://asc.idcpublishers.info>. For other countries in Europe, cf. Lyna and Vermeylen, 'Rubens for sale'; De Marchi and Van Miegroet, 'The rise of the dealer-auctioneer in Paris'; Cowan, 'Arenas of connoisseurship'; De Marchi, 'Auctioning paintings', vol. 260.

<sup>30</sup> Also stressed in Jonckheere, *The auction of King William's paintings*, p. 108.

### 11.3 Quality uncertainty

By the 1640s, mediocre paintings in a wide range of genres and styles had swamped the Dutch art market. The broad variety of styles, techniques and genres put pressure on the objective notions of quality. In medieval Europe, guilds arose in part as a reputational device. The exclusive right of the guilds to sell certain goods in certain markets, together with quality standards written into the guild regulations, assured buyers that all goods under the guild's jurisdiction would be of a certain quality.<sup>31</sup> Quality control could take different forms: by formal regulation requiring that painters be members of a guild in order to sell, and that, in order to become a member of the guild, one had to finish an apprenticeship; by keeping a register of all painters and apprentices; by controlling material; by setting up a curriculum; by testing skills via masterpieces at the end of the training period; and by providing facilities where local painters could display their work. As we have seen, in the case of Dutch painters, there were no stipulations to produce masterpieces, no curriculums, and no quality control on materials.<sup>32</sup> In the large and varied Dutch art market and in art markets in general, quality was arguably too subjective to be prescribed.

Ed Romein has used George Akerlof's economic theory on quality uncertainty to explain the tensions in the Dutch art market in around 1640.<sup>33</sup> This theory concentrates on the consequences when sellers of goods possess information that is inaccessible to buyers regarding the quality of their goods. Increased uncertainty as to the quality of products can create tensions in the market and eventually drive worthy products off the market. According to Romein, the increasing size and variety of the Dutch and Leiden art market created problems in the flow of information. He argued that the art market in Leiden stopped functioning all together because of an incongruity of information between buyers and sellers, resulting in consumer anxiety. In Romein's view, this was translated into lower prices and the emigration of local painters. Such trends, he argued, could only be reversed by the establishment of a guild-like structure in 1642.

The establishment of public retail outlets, and attempts at setting quality standards in art-theoretical texts and lectures have been interpreted as responses to the decreasing transparency of the art market.<sup>34</sup> The efforts in Leiden during this period dealt primarily with public sales, but also included attempts to define criteria about what made a good painter, as presented by Leiden painter Philips Angel in his

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Miedema, 'Over kwaliteitsvoorschriften'.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>33</sup> Romein, 'Knollen en citroenen'. Cf. De Marchi, 'The role of Dutch auctions' for a similar argument regarding the Dutch art market in the 1610s.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Prak, 'Painters', pp. 161-164; Romein, 'Knollen en citroenen'.

famous 1641 lecture 'In praise of painting'.<sup>35</sup> This lecture has been interpreted as an extended plea for the establishment of a guild of St. Luke, as well as a presentation to patrons of the arts.<sup>36</sup> At the end of the seventeenth century, painter and art theorist Gerard De Lairese gave a series of lectures about painting and drawing.

Deans of the guilds of St. Luke also became active in establishing structurally commercial public retail outlets. These so-called salesrooms (*schilder-kamers*) were first established in Antwerp and Bruges in the late fifteenth century, where they allowed both artists and potential buyers to compare prices and quality.<sup>37</sup> In the northern Netherlands the first to be established was in Utrecht in 1644 followed by The Hague in 1656, but in Amsterdam it took until the end of the century.<sup>38</sup> Generally, all guild members were required to submit one painting so that guild overseers could determine the price of the painting. Members of the guild of Amsterdam St. Luke went to the magistrates, this time asking for official recognition of a gallery they had established through which Amsterdam artists might sell, under the strict supervision of masters. Lovers of art, they urged, had a right to know the truth about what they bought, about 'what are copies and what principals'.<sup>39</sup>

#### *The development of a canon and 'ideal-type' art dealers*

During the eighteenth century, the issue of quality uncertainty raised its head once more. In the age of collecting, works by old Dutch masters increased in value. This, combined with the many imitations circulating in the art market, appears to have further increased the issues surrounding authenticity.<sup>40</sup> Copying may have been a practical business strategy, but contemporaries increasingly complained about their misuse. Texts by Jacob Campo Weyerman, Johan van Gool, and Gerard Hoet (1698-1780) shed light on the practices of art dealers and the consequences for the art market.<sup>41</sup> All three acknowledged that the sale of copies as originals was a problem, but they differed in opinion on who was to blame. Van Gool and Weyerman both criticised art dealers in selling copies as originals, arguing that they were responsible for commissioning copies, for providing painters with originals, and for taking the profits. Hoet, on the other hand, being a dealer himself, argued that painters were

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Romein and Korevaar, 'Dutch guilds', pp. 178-179; Sluijter, *De Lof der Schilderkunst*; Miedema, 'Philips Angels Lof der schilder-konst'.

<sup>36</sup> Prak, 'Painters', p. 163; Haak, *The Golden Age*, p. 62.

<sup>37</sup> Vermeylen, *Painting for the market*.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Prak, 'Painters', p. 162.

<sup>39</sup> Bille, *De tempel der kunst*, pp. 155, 176.

<sup>40</sup> Altes, *De verovering van de internationale kunstmarkt*, p. 31.

<sup>41</sup> Summaries in Aono, 'Imitation and innovation', pp. 54-57 and Altes, *De verovering van de internationale kunstmarkt*, pp. 40-42. See on Van Gool and Hoet: De Vries, *Diamante gedenkzuilen*, pp. 87-101. De Vries, 'De kunsthandel is zoo edel als eenigen'. On Weyerman: Jonckheere and Vermeylen, 'A world of deception and deceit?'.

the ones putting false signatures on the paintings.<sup>42</sup>

We are not so concerned with who did what exactly, but with the possible consequences for the performance of the art market. As Koenraad Jonckheere and Filip Vermeulen have rightly stressed, trust and accurate information were crucial in art dealing and ‘...false attributions, bogus information, and especially copies (when sold as originals) undermined the very foundations of the art market.’<sup>43</sup> In the eighteenth-century art market, in which very high prices were levied and paintings may even have been used as investments, these issues were paramount.<sup>44</sup> Weyerman distinguished between knowledgeable and trustworthy art dealers and ‘swindlers’.<sup>45</sup> Previous studies have shown that during the eighteenth century, a new breed of art dealer developed. During the seventeenth century, art dealers had functioned as merchants or facilitators and, at around the turn of the century, Dutch broker-dealers, such as Zomer, made for more transparency whilst keeping valuable information to themselves.<sup>46</sup> A few decades later and Paris dealers further modernised the auction system by increasing market transparency.<sup>47</sup> The new brand of expert auctioneers acted more as principals, adding further potential to assessing value. They employed both commercial expertise and artistic insight to translate value into price. The expansion of artistic theory and terminology and the increasingly determined establishment of artistic canons during the eighteenth century can also be interpreted as responses to the growing need for information and transparency.<sup>48</sup>

#### 11.4 Creative (re)production

Although painters who imitated and emulated are often criticised for their lack of innovation and creativity by present-day researchers and art-lovers, their works reflect logical business strategies. Aono rightly points to our contemporary bias for uniqueness and originality, as adapting motifs in high technical quality was much admired. In our introduction we have emphasised that innovation in cultural industries is more complex than in most other industries. Traditional models of innovation tend to assume (often implicitly) that innovation must be vertical – all

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<sup>42</sup> The discussion between Van Gool and Hoet took place in two pamphlets published as correspondence. The pamphlets are reprinted in De Vries, *Diamante gedenkzuilen*, pp. 219-241.

<sup>43</sup> Jonckheere and Vermeulen, ‘A world of deception and deceit?’, p. 108.

<sup>44</sup> Eighteenth-century Dutch art critic and biographer Arnold Houbraken (1660-1719), author of *Groote Schouburgh*, blamed the artistic decline on luxury and avarice and a general decline in the appreciation of art. Rather than appreciating *l’art pour l’art*, pictures, according to Houbraken, were seen merely as potential sources of profit. Houbraken, *Groote Schouburgh*.

<sup>45</sup> Jonckheere and Vermeulen, ‘A world of deception and deceit?’.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Jonckheere, ‘Supply and demand’.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. De Marchi and Van Miegroet, ‘The rise of the dealer-auctioneer in Paris’.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. De Vries, ‘The felicitous age of painting’, p. 30; Jonckheere and Vermeulen, ‘A world of deception and deceit?’.

buyers will prefer the new product to the old, at a given price, because it is inherently better than the old product. This ignores two other possibilities: horizontal innovation, which takes place when some consumers prefer the new product and others the old, even when the new is priced similar to the old; and product differentiation, which occurs when people desire both the new *and* the old.<sup>49</sup>

Clearly, innovations in early modern art were incremental, horizontal rather than vertical, and characterised by differentiation. Early modern Dutch painters had to distinguish their work from that of competitors and, as Eric Jan Sluijter put it, 'an increasingly more subtle branching out of subject, motifs, and styles took place'.<sup>50</sup> The choice of words is important, because it indicates an expansion, rather than a replacement, of the variants on offer. Inventions in painting were more about connecting with historical trends than radically departing from them. Pictorial traditions and iconographic conventions formed the frame of reference, for both artists and consumers.<sup>51</sup> Scholars have emphasised that prior to the sixteenth century, novelty and invention were not seen as 'indispensable artistic qualities'.<sup>52</sup> In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, practices prevailed that Alpers and Baxandall have called 'prevalence of repetition': subjects were rather standard and often originals were trivial reworkings of borrowed ideas and compositions.<sup>53</sup> This would not have been much different in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Republic, where most artists were no Rembrandts or Dou's. Different styles, genres, and techniques existed side by side, and in between radical innovation and outright copying, lay a whole range of creative (re)production.

Economists Neil De Marchi and Hans Van Miegroet have distinguished between invention and creative differentiation, the latter aspect including the works based on derivative production, which involve inventiveness, rather than invention itself.<sup>54</sup> They have argued that before the seventeenth century, invention was not widely recognised as an economic category. Based on increasing differentiation, on an increasing price differential, and on dealers treating originals as a capital asset, they infer that the practice of valuing invention became more widespread in the Northern and Southern Netherlands in the seventeenth century.<sup>55</sup> They estimated the price differential between Antwerp's copies and originals, confirmed by scattered evidence for the Republic, at a ratio of circa 1 to 3. However, without systematically adjusting for the size, support, and medium of the paintings in question, as well as

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<sup>49</sup> Stoneman, *Soft innovation*, p. 22.

<sup>50</sup> Sluijter, *Seductress of Sight*, p. 15.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Wackernagel, *The world of the Florentine Renaissance Artist*, p. 366; De Marchi, 'Pricing Invention', vol. 237, p. 29.

<sup>53</sup> Alpers, *Tiepolo and the pictorial intelligence*, p. 21; De Marchi, 'Pricing Invention', vol. 237, p. 50.

<sup>54</sup> De Marchi, 'Pricing Invention', vol. 237.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp. 53-57.



for buyers who commissioned the paintings, we do not know how reliable these results are.<sup>56</sup>

Moreover, the price difference between copies and originals pales in comparison to present day figures. Nowadays, the differential between an original and a copy can easily reach 1 to 1,000(s).<sup>57</sup> Sluijter has challenged De Marchi and Van Miegroet's interpretation of price differentials and has proposed an alternative explanation. In his opinion, the price difference between an original painting and a copy was based on talent and reputation, rather than an increasing valuation of creativity from the side of the buying public.<sup>58</sup> This interpretation has been confirmed by research of art historians Jaap van der Veen and Anna Tummers, who both examined the topics of quality, authorship, and authenticity in early modern painting.<sup>59</sup> Tummers demonstrated that while connoisseurs were indeed concerned with discerning the master's touch, this was to assess quality rather than originality. Whether or not the painting was entirely by the master's own hand was not a major issue.

In a general sense, these remarks apply to the whole period under study in this dissertation. Nonetheless, around the middle of the century, some changes took place. Jaap van der Veen observed a concentration of court cases concerning issues of authenticity in Amsterdam in the first quarter of seventeenth century and again in the 1640s and 1650s.<sup>60</sup> The first period coincided with the threat of import around 1610, which has been discussed in precious chapters. Van der Veen attributes the rise in the second period to the fact that the number of art lovers increased considerably. He also discerns tensions between workshop practices and expectations of buyers around this time.<sup>61</sup> Montias has also observed a growing interest in attributions and the autograph status of works of art in Delft in the same period.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, it can be demonstrated that a growing number of painters who had no artistic training tried their hand at painting.<sup>63</sup> The timing of these developments is no coincidence. They can be interpreted as consequences of declining transparency in a maturing and increasingly competitive market.

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<sup>56</sup> Sluijter, *Seductress of Sight*, p. 15.

<sup>57</sup> Tummers, "By his hand", p. 31.

<sup>58</sup> Sluijter, 'Determining value', pp. 17-18.

<sup>59</sup> Van der Veen, 'By his own hand', vol. 4; Tummers, "By his hand". See also the dissertation: Tummers, *The eye of the connoisseur*.

<sup>60</sup> Van der Veen, 'By his own hand', vol. 4, pp. 6-7.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>62</sup> Montias, *Artists and artisans*, pp. 218, 227, 247-258.

<sup>63</sup> Van der Veen, 'By his own hand', vol. 4, p. 7; Van der Veen, 'De Amsterdamse kunstmarkt'.

### 11.5 Occupational and social differentiation

From the 1630s, there was also change in how painters saw themselves in relation to other crafts, especially during the 1640s and 1650s. The so-called emancipation of the painter, as visible in the separation of painters from other craftspeople and the renaming of the guild, has been discussed and to some extent challenged by Hessel Miedema.<sup>64</sup> By 1640, as previously drawn up in a 1631 charter by a group of Haarlem guild members, groups of painters at the higher end of the market were trying to set up associations to differentiate themselves from fellow members of the guild of St. Luke.<sup>65</sup> Although the town magistrate did not grant the 1631 charter, its ideas echoed on in later charters and guild affairs. It therefore deserves a closer look.

When a group of Haarlem guild members tried to reform the guild, it was allegedly prompted by conflicts within the guild and complaints about the lack of a proper administration.<sup>66</sup> With the reorganisation of the guild, occupational differentiation became more compartmentalised with the most important painters at the top, then the fellow artists, such as engravers, followed by the practitioners of accessory professions, such as house painting, while in the 'inferior section' we find a group led by goldsmiths. There was a continual bias in favour of the painter and his art, and only master painters could become deans of the guild.

Although the charter was never accepted, the compartmentalisation also became evident in the establishment of independent painters' associations such as the Dordrecht *Confrerie* in 1642; the Utrecht *Schilders-Collegie* in 1644, which included the establishment of a sales room; the Hoorn and Zwolle brotherhood's of St. Luke in 1651 and 1652 respectively; and the The Hague *confrérie* in 1656. In Amsterdam the ties between the arts of poetry and painting became increasingly pronounced, as is evident in the poems on paintings, the personal relationships between poets and painters, and Amsterdam the Guild of St Luke held annual banquets and the 1653 was organised in honour of the famous writer and playwright Joost van den Vondel (1579-1697) and attended by poets, art lovers, and as many as 100 painters.<sup>67</sup> Before long, in 1654, art dealer, collector, art appraiser and former director of the Amsterdam Theatre Marten Kretzer, and former director of the Theatre Jan Meures initiated the *Brotherhood of Painting* (Broederschap der Schilderkunst) together with painters Barthelomeus van der Helst and Nicolaas de Helt-Stockade.<sup>68</sup> The establishment of societies was not unique to painting. In fact, it would become

<sup>64</sup> The following is based on: Miedema, 'Kunstschilder, gilde en academie'.

<sup>65</sup> The petitioners formulated the distinction as follows: differentiation 'uyt de konst' and 'uyt de ambachten'. Miedema, ed., *Archiefbescheiden*, vol. II, p 139.

<sup>66</sup> Taverne, 'Salomon de Bray', p. 51.

<sup>67</sup> Miedema, 'Kunstschilder, gilde en academie', pp. 12-13.

<sup>68</sup> Sluijter, 'Schilders van "cleyne, subtile ende curieuse dingen"'.

commonplace during the eighteenth century.<sup>69</sup> Still, the timing and context in which Dutch painters' societies were launched testify to specific aims.

The new societies were not established as replacements for guilds. Miedema has stressed that these developments should not be seen as a consequence of a suppression of artistic freedom by the guild, but as the result of the increasing trend of amateur painting.<sup>70</sup> After all, we have seen that even Leiden's painters were eager to achieve guild status. As in Italy, guilds and academy-like organisations existed side-by-side and served different purposes. Overall, the goal of painters was twofold: to differentiate themselves from 'lesser' crafts, and to build a rapport with art lovers. The increased importance of a select group of citizens in the art market changed the relationship between painter and consumer.<sup>71</sup> The growing importance of both reputation and valuation by art lovers was well summarised in Samuel van Hoogstraten's advice to look for patrons, since 'without the help of favourable guides and helpers who talk him up loudly, he [the artist] shall have difficulty becoming known'.<sup>72</sup> It is no coincidence that artists' biographer Johan van Gool referred to amateur paintings alongside those of professionals in his *Nieuwe Schouwburgh*.<sup>73</sup>

This is not to say that art lovers had been insignificant during the Golden Age, but in comparison they were less influential as the market had been more open and anonymous. These developments resulted in the inclusion of a ranking system for amateur painters. Painters' societies were open to amateurs, facilitating relationships between artists and clients. The increasing importance of patronage, in whatever shape or form, also had consequences for the geography of production. Masters active in smaller towns flocked to Amsterdam and The Hague, where they would be in closer proximity to the pools of potential clients and patrons.

## 11.6 Academies

The 1631 Haarlem charter also displayed ambitions to organise meetings of members through which they could practice skills and exchange knowledge with other interested laymen and other guild members. It would take until 1688 for a dedicated drawing academy to be established.<sup>74</sup> Several years earlier, a few members of the The Hague's artists' society *Pictura* had transformed the guild-like society into a drawing

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Mijnhardt, 'Het Nederlandse genootschap'.

<sup>70</sup> Miedema, 'Over kwaliteitsvoorschriften'.

<sup>71</sup> Aono, 'Imitation and innovation', p. 33.

<sup>72</sup> Cited from De Vries, 'The felicitous age of painting', p. 36.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>74</sup> Miedema, ed., *Archiefbescheiden*, vol. II, pp 310-313.

academy.<sup>75</sup> Drawing schools began to emerge across the country.<sup>76</sup> With new fashions, most notably classicist painting, came a need for additional training in the more intellectual and theoretical aspects of paintings.<sup>77</sup>

From the late seventeenth century, the balance of power in the art market had shifted to auctioneers, collectors, and gentlemen dealers. Collectors and art lovers, such as Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, were driving forces behind the academies established during the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>78</sup> In the lectures given in the Amsterdam drawing academy, established in 1765, Enlightenment ideals feature prominently.<sup>79</sup> Drawing lessons would prove a valuable asset to citizens, a boost to production by creating a better-informed demand side, and they improved the skills of Dutch craftsmen and painters.<sup>80</sup>

By the time the Amsterdam urban drawing academy was established, the art academy was a widespread phenomenon throughout Europe. The earliest academies had been established in Italy, with the first opening in Florence in 1563 and then in Rome in 1593. Almost a century later a new round took place with artists' academies opening in Paris in 1648, in Brussels in 1656, in Antwerp in 1663-1665, and in Berlin in 1696. In England it would take much longer, but in 1768 the *Royal Academie of Arts* opened its doors. Despite its name, it was still more of a private institution, more akin to the Dutch than to the French and German model. In the Dutch Republic, informal gatherings, such as those by Bloemaert and Moreelse had been organized in the first half of the seventeenth century, as has been discussed in Chapter 9.<sup>81</sup>

Though one may expect significant changes in education, early Dutch drawing schools were not much more than communal life drawings by already established artists. Urban governments facilitated some by, for example, providing low rents or free lighting but they were still private undertakings. Such schools did not replace apprenticeships, and formal academies with a clear educational purpose were not established in the Dutch Republic until the second half of the eighteenth

<sup>75</sup> Reynaerts, *De Koninklijke Akademie van Beeldende Kunsten*.

<sup>76</sup> On academies see: Knolle, 'De Amsterdamse stadstekenenacademie'; Knolle, 'Dilettanten'; Martis, 'Voor de kunst'; Miedema, 'Kunstschilder, gilde en academie'; Miedema, 'Over vakonderwijs', vol. 5-6; Martis, Miedema, and Van Uitert, eds., *Kunstonderwijs in Nederland*; Koolhaas-Grossfeld, 'The business of art'. On Southern Netherlandish academies see: De Munck, 'Le produit du talent', the forthcoming dissertation of Tim De Doncker and ongoing research by Dries Lyna.

<sup>77</sup> Miedema, 'Kunstschilder, gilde en academie', pp. 273-274.

<sup>78</sup> Knolle, 'Dilettanten'; *ibid.*; Laurentius, Niemeijer, and Amstel, *Cornelis Ploos van Amstel*.

<sup>79</sup> Amstel, *Redenvoeringen*. Over de Natuurlyke Vereischten in een Teekenaar, en over de eerste Beginzelen der Tekenkunst, op den 1 October 1766, gedaan; Over het Gebruik, de Nuttigheid, en Noodzaaklykheid der Tekenkunst in de Menschlyke Maatschappij; op den 7 juny 1769 uitgesproken; Over de Natuurlijke Beginzelen en den kunstmaatigen voortgang, der Tekenkunst, op den 21 Sept. 1779, verhandeld Over den Aart en Beoefening van de Poezy der Schilderkunst op den 30 May, 1781, voorgedragen; Over de Bevalligheid der gemeene of laagere Natuur, in myn Vertoog van den 4 May, 1785, aangewezen. Other members (e.g. Jacobus Buys, Jacob Otten Husly, Reinier Vinkeles) held lectures, but of many we only know the titles. Cf. Husly, *Redenvoering over de Lotgevallen van deeze Academie* (Amsterdam 1768).

<sup>80</sup> Knolle, 'Dilettanten'; Ploos van Amstel, *Redenvoeringen*. The same arguments can found regarding the establishment of Amsterdam society Felix Meritis. Knolle, 'Het departement der tekenkunde'.

<sup>81</sup> Bok, "'Nulla dies sine linie'"; Knolle, 'Tekenacademie'.

century.<sup>82</sup> These would hold annual contests and lectures, but it would take until the nineteenth century for urban drawing academies to develop into institutions for higher professional education.

### 11.7 Geographic distribution

The size and character of the art market of the eighteenth century, though small in relation to the Golden Age and much more dependent on commissions, changed the geography of production. At the same time, production still remained relatively dispersed. Table 11.1 presents an overview of place of birth, as well as main work location of the A&B sample of prominent Dutch painters. Amsterdam was still the largest artistic centre by far. Dordrecht comes a surprising second in terms of place of birth, but could not retain its high-quality painters. The figure of seven Dordrecht-born painters in the A&B sample is fairly high, especially considering the fact that they were not directly related by family ties. Leiden's relatively prominent position, on the other hand, is primarily due to the presence of a single dynasty (Van Mieris). The Hague still imported most of its talent. Table 11.2 shows the same criteria for the C sample. Amsterdam features prominently. The relation between place of birth and main work location is strong, with only Amsterdam functioning as an importer and Dordrecht as an exporter of talent. The virtual absence of Delft, with only six in both columns, is striking, as is the third place of Dordrecht.

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<sup>82</sup> Cf. SA, nr. 265, Stads Teken Academie.

Table 11.1 Place of birth and main work location, A&amp;B sample and C sample, artists active in the eighteenth century

Place of birth			Main work location		
Town	N	%	Town	N	%
Amsterdam	19	28.4	Amsterdam	26	38.8
Dordrecht	8	11.9	The Hague	10	14.9
Leiden	7	10.4	Leiden	6	9.0
Haarlem	4	6.0	Haarlem	4	6.0
The Hague	5	7.5	Rotterdam	4	6.0
Rotterdam	4	6.0	Dordrecht	3	4.5
Antwerp	3	4.5	London	2	3.0
Utrecht	3	4.5	Rome	2	3.0
Gorinchem	1	1.5	Middelburg	2	3.0
Other (=1)	13	19.4	Other (=1)	3	4.5
Various	-	-	Various	3	4.5
Unknown	-	-	Unknown	2	3.0
Total	67	100	Total	67	100

Sources: Table 7.4; Ecartico; RKD-artists database.

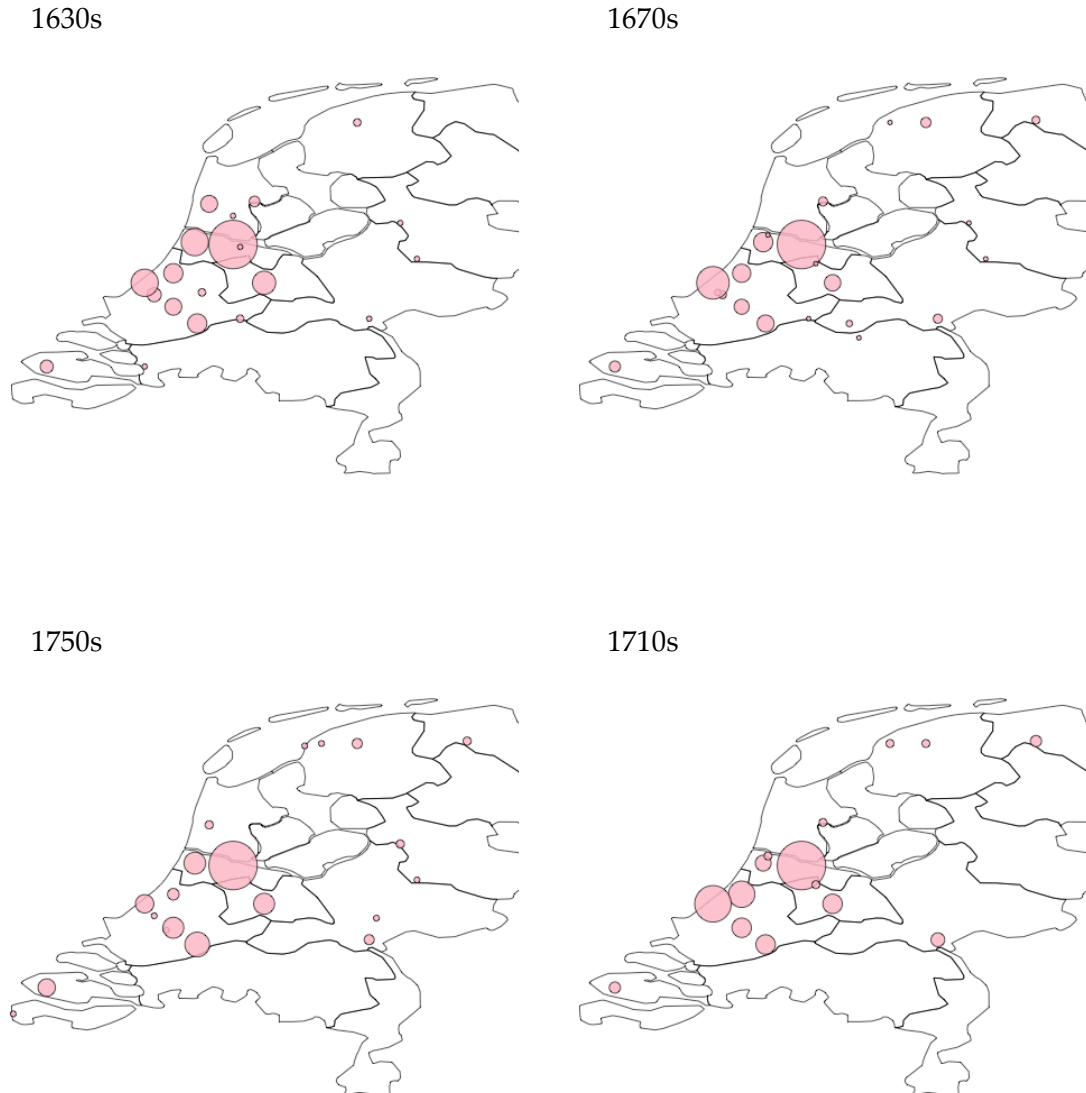
Table 11.2 Place of birth and main work location, C sample, birth cohorts 1630-1790

Place of birth			Main work location <sup>83</sup>		
Town	N	%	Town	N	%
Amsterdam	157	24.3	Amsterdam	201	30.5
The Hague	57	8.8	The Hague	62	9.4
Dordrecht	56	8.7	Dordrecht	39	5.9
Haarlem	42	6.5	Haarlem	35	5.3
Utrecht	32	5.0	Utrecht	29	4.4
Rotterdam	30	4.7	Rotterdam	30	4.6
Leiden	26	4.0	Leiden	25	3.8
Antwerp	20	3.1	Antwerp	(7)*	-
Nijmegen	12	1.9	Nijmegen	(8)*	-
Middelburg	10	1.6	Middelburg	11	1.7
Various	-	-	Various	34	5.2
Other (<10)	199	30.9	Other (<10)	120	18.2
Unknown	4	0.6	Unknown	73	11.1
Total	645	100	Total	659	100

Sources: Table 7.4; Ecartico; RKD-artists database. \* = counted in the category 'other (<10).

<sup>83</sup> An artist's main work location is defined as the town in which the artist worked most years of his or her career. When an artist spent an equal amount of time in two locations, both are included. This explains the fact that the number of main work locations exceeds the total number of artists included in the sample. When an artist spent less than half of the duration of his or her career in one place, we label the main work location as 'various'.

Figure 11.1 Distribution of prominent painters (C sample), according to main work location, birth cohorts 1630s, 1670s, 1710s, and 1750s (clockwise)



Source: Ecartico; table 7.4.

## 11.8 Conclusion

During the period of 1650-1800, Dutch painters and dealers employed a variety of strategies to deal with a shrinking domestic market. Dutch art dealers were able to use the initially adverse issue of product durability by developing and improving secondary markets. After attempts to limit public sales, specialised art auctions took off within the local guild structures and significant improvements were made to the supply of information. Guild masters took control of distribution channels and tried to increase the turnover rate and transparency in local markets through, for example, the establishment of public retail outlets and the education of the buying public. In fact, the relationship between painter and collector became increasingly important during this period. Groups of painters tried to engage with potential buyers and affiliated themselves with amateur painters, as is evidenced by the establishment of societies for art lovers and artists.

These strategies had several consequences. The development of secondary markets reinforced the already rising demand for old masters. It also facilitated collecting and promoted Dutch paintings in foreign markets. The demand for older styles, compositions, and themes may have hampered the development of contemporary art, but it also created demand for newly produced copies or adaptations of seventeenth-century originals. In the long run, the widespread distribution of copies and branding hindered transparency, increasing the need for arbitrage by art dealers and by art theorists like Van Gool. This further supported the formation of artists' canons.

These were all fair strategies, but, as had been the case during the previous period, there was a strong self-reinforcing element. The downturn in the market for new cabinet pieces was compounded by the successful development of a second-hand market, by the growing demand for imitations and emulations, and by the successful shifts to painted interior scenes and decorative painting. By widening potential demand for seventeenth-century originals, painters and art dealers limited the expansion of contemporary art production. During the growth phase, the high quantity of quality masters had made for a correspondingly high number of quality teachers who then transferred their skills to an even larger pool of quality painters. In the growing and varied art market, these painters could choose their niche and become extraordinarily skilled in certain specialisations. During the eighteenth century the reverse took place. Entry barriers increased, personal relations became more important and painters were expected to master a variety of styles. There was also less room for experimentation and, as labour-saving styles went out of fashion, painters were increasingly trained and employed in wallpaper factories. The



eighteenth century art market was not the best environment in which to unlock artistic talent as we currently value it. In the absence of new exogenous stimuli, Dutch painters were powerless to reverse the trend.

The Dutch political structure prevented the top-down development of artistic academies, and although Dutch painters and authors paid attention to activities in other countries, they did not actively pursue a fully formalised academy. Samuel van Hoogstraeten, for example, praised artistic education in France and Italy, but did not call for the establishment of a similar institution in the Republic.<sup>84</sup> In fact, he observed that many painters in the Low Countries had become celebrated without such organised art education. It is possible that previously established routines restricted the modernisation of education, thereby contributing to the loss of international competitiveness of Dutch eighteenth-century painters.

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<sup>84</sup> De Klerk, "Academy-beelden", vol. 5-6.



## 12 Conclusion

This study has traced the changing face of Dutch painting and publishing, through their emergence of at the end of the sixteenth century, into their extraordinary expansion during the first half of the seventeenth century, and then through their subsequent stagnation or decline, dependent on sector. After the establishment of the Dutch Republic, book and art production developed from being fairly modest trades to booming industries. The Republic became the book capital of the world. In a similar vein, museum visitors all over the world continue to be amazed by the quality and variety of paintings by Dutch artists of this period, while estimates of the number of pictures produced during the Golden Age are just as awe-inspiring.

Previous studies have identified a number of factors that contributed to the escalation of cultural production in Golden Age and its subsequent decline. These factors range from an emphasis on individual creativity, changing market forces, the general commercial infrastructure and unique cultural preferences, to adverse conditions in other countries. This thesis has argued that Dutch book and art producers did not simply ride the Golden Age wave and that the artistic and economic outcome was more than the sum of its parts. The local organisation of production proved to be just as conducive to creativity and innovation as the general circumstances. Creativity was organised in such a way that it generated exceptional levels of economic competitiveness throughout the cultural industries, for a century at least.

### 12.1 Summary of the research

Informed by economic geography, this study focused on the roles of industrial organisation and structure in shaping spatial and temporal patterns of growth and decline in Dutch painting and publishing. The analysis took place at to the meso-level, seeking to establish what happened in the space between individual firms and the economy at large and how it affected the development of cultural production. Spatial clustering theory suggests that interactions within geographic concentrations of producers in the same field, producers in related and supporting industries, consumers, and institutions can have considerable and long-term benefits for the

competitive nature of producers involved. These advantages influence productivity, the direction and pace of innovation, and the character and number of new start-ups. The interactions in spatial clusters can result in a self-reinforcing growth dynamic. What follows from these theories is that location can become a key competitive asset, because a complex set of historically developed and location-dependent interactions is difficult to reproduce elsewhere.

For this study the basic theory of spatial clustering was made more dynamic. The main concerns were the relative lack of attentiveness to structural differences between different types of economic activity and between different stages in the cluster existence. Innovation was not static or homogeneous. The character and importance of innovation may have differed per type of economic activity and period in the industry life cycle. This means that the determinants, including the role of organisation of production, of innovation and local industrial competitiveness may also vary accordingly. Therefore, three complementary analytical tools were called in to clarify the role of location and organization in processes of innovation: Michael Porter's diamond model, cultural industries, and the stylized industry life cycle.

The production system was presented through the diamond model developed by Michael Porter. This model highlights the consequences of the local organisation of production for industrial competitiveness and long-term spatial patterns of production. It underscores the interactions between four main sets of factors: demand conditions; factor conditions; related and supporting industries; and firm strategy and rivalry.

Secondly, the sectors of painting and publishing were presented as examples of cultural industries. Cultural industries create and transfer goods with high symbolic or aesthetic qualities, compared to other economic sectors. This basic property gives rise to a set of structural features, such as demand uncertainty or the importance of tacit knowledge transfer, that make cultural industries particularly sensitive to spatial clustering. Within the group of economic activities that qualify as cultural industries, there are also marked differences. The products of the painting and publishing industries differ considerably in the degree to which aesthetic or symbolic distinctions prevail over more functional purposes. In other words, books are used on a more 'everyday' basis than paintings. These functional variances can influence the dynamic in the diamond model, for instance: the relationship with consumers; potential appeal to foreign markets; production methods and intensity of competition; and the use of related and supporting industries. This implies that the role of industrial organisation in shaping geographic patterns and in the reproduction of competences over time can also vary between different types of

economic activity. Analysing two industries that are typically studied individually and which demonstrate comparable but different characteristics enabled a clear distinction between general and industry-specific developments and variables.

Finally, within spatial clustering theory a growing historical sensitivity has developed, which is most pronounced in the path-dependency theory and in the model of the industry life cycle. When the two are combined, the following interpretation emerges: industries follow stylised life cycles, but the speed with which industries move through the cycle is dependent on the type of industry and the competitive circumstances. Furthermore, previously acquired competitive advantages determine the available options and adaptive capacities in later stages. This is particularly interesting in the case of early modern cultural production, as the patterns in the output of book publishing and painting clearly diverged after circa 1660. Therefore, this study not only considered the period of success – the Golden Age – but also included the often-disregarded eighteenth century. Taking a long-term perspective made it possible to identify and contrast the different stages of an industry or cluster life cycle.

It was possible to choose an all-embracing quantitative and qualitative approach thanks to the numerous studies on art and book production and the access to large datasets, such as the STCN and Ecartico. This approach was influenced by two main objectives. The first objective was to map artistic and economic competitive developments in Dutch painting and publishing over the course of the period 1580-1800; answering questions such as: Which periods stood out, and in what way? The second objective was to uncover spatial patterns. And finally, the aim was explain these patterns. The findings of this research can be presented around the three primary analytical elements of the theoretical model outlined in the introduction: space, time, and industry. To begin with, the life cycles of Dutch cultural industries are outlined, followed by a discussion of their differences. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the explanatory value of cluster theory and a reflection on the general relationship between Golden Ages and the concentration of production.

## 12.2 Industrial life cycles of early modern Dutch painting and publishing

The stylised industry life cycle is composed of four main stages: emergence, growth, maturity, and decline. It is not a rigorous analytical framework, but a structure within which a wide range of observations can be organised. The main aim was to identify the relationships between the different elements of the model, per life cycle stage. On the basis of new and existing quantitative and qualitative sources, several

distinct stages could be discerned in early modern Dutch painting and publishing industries on both a general and a local level. The first step in mapping the life cycles was estimating artistic and commercial competitiveness in terms of output, quality, and international competitiveness. Secondly, continuities and discontinuities in market strategies were identified by combining a range of observations previously regarded as unrelated within a single framework. This framework was based on the afore-mentioned diamond model and it included: the spatial distribution of production; factors on the demand side; developments in related and supporting industries; institutional development; business strategies; and, the competitive structure of the industries. The aim was to identify and weigh the relationships between different elements in Porter's diamond.

### *Emergence*

The relatively sudden concentration of cultural production in the newly established Dutch Republic was explained by the combination of 'historical accident', in the form of the Dutch Revolt and the Fall of Antwerp, and a local infrastructure, in terms of advanced factor conditions and demand conditions, that was relatively favourable to immigrants and other start-ups. Prior to 1580, cultural industries in the northern provinces of the Low Countries had been relatively underdeveloped. Their size, scope, and artistic accomplishments paled in comparison to those of the Southern Netherlands, Antwerp's in particular. During the third quarter of the sixteenth century, an exogenous series of events following the Dutch Revolt shocked the system, both on the demand and the supply side. Numerous producers from the Southern Netherlands relocated to Dutch towns where they met an increasing demand for luxury products, such as paintings and books, driven, in turn, by rising economic prosperity. This period clearly counts as a phase of emergence.

Leiden, Amsterdam, and The Hague all developed concentrated levels of book production. The uneven spatial distribution of book production was determined firstly by the size of local demand, and secondly by distinct urban amenities: the university in Leiden; the presence of the court and the States General in The Hague, also briefly in Delft; and the thriving commerce of Amsterdam. These conditions affected the demand conditions, the presence of related and supporting industries and, in turn, the size and character of local book production. Within each of the local clusters, certain key entrepreneurs led the way, most notably Cornelis Claesz in Amsterdam.

In the case of painting, local demand conditions also accounted for the initial selection of certain towns where painting emerged on a significant level. However, previous reputations and the presence of acclaimed artists provided the additional

impetus. Haarlem and Utrecht took centre stage. Amsterdam also attracted exceptionally large number of painters, but underperformed when it came to measures of artistic prominence. The interrelations between book production, graphic art, science, and painting were a prominent feature of Dutch cultural production during the phase of emergence.

### *Growth*

By the 1600s, the scale and scope of production had increased significantly, but the overall size of the sectors was still relatively modest. Although potential demand was already high during the phase of emergence, it had not yet developed into mass demand for cultural products. It would take another series of innovations before the Dutch Golden Age of painting and publishing could take root. From the 1610s onwards, a new generation of entrepreneurs introduced a string of product and process innovations. Newcomers had to capture their own slice of the market, and as the pressure of competition fuelled the need for differentiation and novelty, they turned to the members of the middle classes, who could not afford sizeable, labour-intensive history paintings, or large and lavishly illustrated books. Prices of paintings and books fell and products became increasingly differentiated. Driven by increasing competitive pressure in the traditional market for cultural products and based on the groundwork of their predecessors these entrepreneurs recognized the potential of untapped market segments that were forming as a result of economic growth and they developed new genres, styles, and business models.

The conversion of potential demand into real demand initiated the growth phase. No longer primarily driven by exogenous factors, painting and publishing entered a period in which growth and innovation were also driven endogenously. Producers developed intensive personal and business collaborations and rivalries within their sectors, as well as with related and supporting industries. Local institutions, most notably guilds, were established in the majority of towns. In the case of publishing in particular, local entrenchment was unmistakable; painters were more dispersed and more mobile. Nevertheless, in painting too developed local specialisations.

A notable feature of both industries was the relative integration of the market: a large number of firms and workshops focused on the middle segments of the market. This was mirrored in the spatial distribution of production. Even though hubs could be easily identified, the geography of cultural production was polycentric, especially compared to other countries. Through local specialization and reproduction, local concentrations of painters and publishers entered positive feedback loops, reinforcing local growth and innovation over time. Simultaneously,

the polycentric urban structure and the relatively open industrial structure allowed for the diffusion of people, products, and ideas. This resulted in an intensification of the already rapid and diverse series of product variants, thereby further driving growth and innovation.

### *Maturity and decline*

The artistic and commercial expansion of Dutch painting and publishing did not last. Around the middle of the seventeenth century, domestic markets became saturated. The pressure-cooker dynamic of the growth phase had quickly drained market potential, in terms of both volume and variety. Moreover, macro-economic circumstances put the brakes on further population growth and advances in purchasing power, and the absence of radical technological innovations limited the potential for further improvements in production costs. Due to the early development of a virtually countrywide distribution network, there was little room for improvement in this area.

Nevertheless, as in the 1610s, increasing competitive pressure heralded a phase of spatial and institutional restructuring and the development of new market strategies. Firstly, producers turned to the higher and lower ends of the domestic market. In painting, a renewed focus on painting on commission and a strengthening of relationships with consumers were evident. In publishing, markets became increasingly segmented. Secondly, rather than investing in novelties, producers began to play it safe by utilising previously developed competences. In both sectors, imitation and emulation, rather than genuine innovation, became more pronounced as is visible in the use of existing repertoires in the form of derivative styles and genres. During this stage, cultural industries became increasingly concentrated, which resulted in the demise of mid-sized firms and the increasing importance of larger towns in cultural production. In all, local production systems became less accessible. People who could have been publishers in the growth phase now stuck to bookselling or other activities and many potential artists never made it beyond decorative painting.

Moreover, as producers were facing stagnating or declining domestic demand, painters and publishers increasingly focused on export markets and their attempts to limit financial risks resulted in the rationalisation of distribution and marketing. Publishers were particularly successful in creating new avenues of development. After the loss of export markets, just before the middle of the eighteenth century, Dutch painters and publishers were once again forced to adapt to market saturation and, in the case of painting, even market contraction. The restructuring of book production and trade, as well as the promoting of painting as



art, can be interpreted as responses to the situation. This resulted in changes in the organisation of production, most visible in the gradual separation of publishing, printing, and bookselling. Although the development of novelty and quality in cultural production during the long eighteenth century pales in comparison with the previous century, the market strategies chosen by cultural producers should not be dismissed. In a saturated market, resorting to cheaper and less 'creative' inputs by lowering investment in production, as well as focusing on distribution and marketing, can certainly be considered profitable strategies.

### 12.3 The properties of cultural industries

Thus far, parallels have been drawn between the stylised industry life cycle theory based on patterns in present-day manufacturing sectors and the evolution of early modern Dutch cultural industries. However, the fact that cultural industries can be distinguished from other economic sectors has significant implications for the way in which production and distribution is organised. In addition, modern theory cannot be applied indiscriminately to the early modern period.

In the introduction, the properties of cultural industries as identified by Richard Caves were discussed: demand uncertainty (nobody knows), the attitudes of artists towards their work (art for art's sake), horizontal and vertical differentiation (infinite variety), temporal coordination (time flies), durability (*ars longa*), the coordination of different inputs (motley crew), and the vertical differentiation of artists (A-list/B-list).<sup>1</sup> These properties were considered to have implications for the way in which cultural industries are organised, even if the relative importance of such features can vary per industry. While these structural properties are, in themselves, merely descriptive, their analytical contribution lies in the manner in which they (potentially) inform certain forms of industrial organisation, which in turn shape life cycles and spatial patterns.

Even if modern film or music production, or even modern visual arts and publishing, cannot be directly compared to early modern cultural sectors, the seven basic features seem to apply across the board. A distinction can be made between features on the demand side, the supply side, and in terms of the products. Demand uncertainty, a potential issue in every market, is especially significant here because of the subjective qualities of cultural goods. This was, for instance, visible in the production of paintings in which, around the middle of the seventeenth century, information asymmetries were becoming a serious problem. A second feature on the

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<sup>1</sup> Caves, *Creative industries*.

demand side is related to the former, and concerns the issue of temporal coordination and the short product life cycles of certain cultural goods. The continuous improvements in distribution and marketing, especially after 1650, clearly have to do with this property. Or consider the 'motley crew' feature. Whilst the principal-agent relationship exists in cultural industries, many productions are based on more horizontal relationships, or even joint ventures. Within these relationships lies the issue of input organisation. Book production was a particularly collaborative affair, and all the inputs of contributing parties had to be available at the right cost, at the right time. Moreover, the life cycle analysis shows that the relationships between book producers, printers and booksellers, as well as paper dealers, type cutters, and authors were not static.

Caves has also identified two primary aspects of differentiation: of products and of skills. Cultural producers compete on the basis of differentiation, rather than cost-efficiency alone. In the varied and competitive market of the Dutch Republic, this saw a massive flow of marginally different product variants entering the market over a short timeframe. As a result, no genuine monopolies arose. The vast variety of books and paintings contributed to information asymmetries and an increasing differentiation between producers, especially in the case of painting. Although vertical and horizontal differentiation in cultural industries is generally labelled as 'infinite', potential variety in the early modern period turned out to be decidedly finite. Potential production differentiation was limited, if only because producers had to connect to existing traditions in order to convey meaningful content to consumers. The fifth property of creative production is the vertical differentiation of skills. Cultural producers are ranked according to their skills and talent. In cultural industries this does result not in a winner takes all structure of competition, but in a small top of stars followed by a large number of lower-ranked producers. This also took place in the early modern art market and even intensified during the period under study here.

Then there is the property of 'art for art's sake'. Caves suggests that artists take satisfaction from the work itself, and have less interest in (financial) rewards. This would separate art from craft or mere decoration, and in practice it means that many more people invest in an artistic career than could realistically expect financial rewards. The first part is, even now, difficult to maintain, but it is particularly difficult to apply this theory to the early modern open market, in which most painters and book producers were craftsmen rather than artists in the modern connotation. However, in the case of painting, amateur draughtsmen and painters became increasingly important, blurring the boundaries between the craftsman, the artist, and the consumer. This could also add to information asymmetries that

threatened market functioning. That such features could become a point of distress is clear from the organisation of painters in more exclusive societies during the phase of maturity. Furthermore, in the case of publishing, the large share of producers in the datasets whose names appear only on a handful of imprints indicates that many non-professionals were active in this cultural industry. This feature can put additional pressure on competition within the sector, and blurs the distinction between the production of texts and works of arts as an occupation, as a talent, or as a pastime.

Finally, the issue of durability was also of great importance to the development of early modern Dutch painting and publishing. Both books and paintings were durable products, the latter especially; this could limit sustained demand for new products. Paintings were meant to decorate walls, and the space on walls was limited. This became critical in around 1670, when substitute forms of wall decorations became the fashion. Combined with the unpredictability of demand, there was a particularly strong risk of overproduction. The increasing importance of second-hand markets and the distribution channel of auctions can be appreciated in this light.

Producers explored a range of solutions in order to deal with these issues, especially in times of market saturation. For example, they set out to strengthening the role of guilds, articulating notions of product quality, establishing separate painters' societies, and developing secondary market methods, such as auctions. Market outcomes of Caves' properties are also visible in the protection of investments against copying and other forms of piracy, through *privileges* in the case of publishing, and the increasing role of expert art dealers concerned with the issue of 'autograph' paintings. The outcome was that the complex interactions between producers, suppliers, and consumers, as well as the timing in the production and distribution processes, became increasingly formalised and rationalised. As such, they clearly shaped the way painting and publishing were organised.

If this set of features influenced organization of production, it may have also influenced the speed with which the early modern Dutch painting and publishing industries moved through their life cycles. Dutch producers had catered to their markets so rapidly and in such variety, that by the middle of the century there was little room for further growth and expansion. The set of features associated with the production of cultural goods may have accelerated these specific industry life cycles. The high rates of innovation and the levels of output achieved by Dutch cultural industries during the period of strong endogenous reproduction meant that the growth phases would last for just a few decades.

*Painting versus publishing*

For a large part, painting and publishing were subject to the same exogenous factors and they also displayed a comparable endogenous dynamic. At the same time, there were significant differences in spatial and diachronic trends. Publishing did not experience the same sharp downturn as painting, and it was much more geographically embedded. These differences can be, in part at least, explained by differences in the character of the two sectors.

In the case of publishing, the specific locations were related to specific urban amenities, access to labour pools, and the presence of important suppliers. In the case of painting, the presence of certain masters or untapped demand could play an important role. For painters, there were strong benefits in locating close to (potential) consumers, as well as to each other. Another difference concerns the function of the goods. Many of the books produced in the early modern period were purchased for religious or occupational reasons, reducing the significance of the issues of quality and demand uncertainty. This specific difference was strengthened when paintings lost their more utilitarian decorative function after circa 1650.

The geography of publishing was more resilient and publishers were less mobile. Most firms had capital invested in a printing establishment and in warehouses storing paper and stock. This limited their options regarding permanent or temporary relocation. When publishing firms were passed on to the next generation, the fixed capital and established distribution networks made it more difficult to justify moving elsewhere. This was different in the case of painter's workshops. Moreover, there was a significant difference between the set of skills required to become a (successful) publisher and those determining the potential for painters. The elusive yet crucial key word is talent. Not surprisingly, the feature of artists' ranking was much more pronounced in painting. First of all, publishing was generally a collaborative affair and therefore less dependent on a single person's skill-set. More importantly, though painters and publishers were both trained in master-apprentice relationships, publishing - printing in particular - demanded much less elusive skills. The form and content of books were less determined by the publishers' creativity and originality. As a result, publishers' competences could be passed on more easily to the next generation, whereas in the case of painting it remained to be seen whether apprentices, often sons, possessed the necessary talent to sustain and reproduce a workshop's reputation. Because of these factors, the painting sector's reproductive capacities were less developed.

The differences in the reproductive capabilities of skills and competences had implications for the different diachronic trends: the collapse of painting versus the sustained production of book titles. From the 1660s onwards, the trajectories of

Dutch painting and publishing started to diverge. Book production remained relatively stable in terms of output, whereas the number of painters and newly produced paintings fell dramatically. The most obvious explanation for the different paths of development is the difference in functionality. Book producers had a solid consumer base in the demand for utilitarian products and they were less threatened by alternatives. Paintings were part of a spectrum of visual arts and wall decorations, ranging from expensive tapestries to cheap prints. Moreover, the spaces on which new paintings could be hung were limited. To make matters worse, the last quarter of the seventeenth century witnessed the rise of other forms of wall decorations. And so, not only did demand for new paintings decline, cabinet paintings also went out of fashion. In publishing, there was also the issue of durability, but in contrast to paintings, books were also used as source of information and entertainment. They therefore required updates and the element of novelty.

Another explanation for the diverging trends after 1660 can be found in the fact that Dutch publishing was more successful in tapping into foreign markets. Three essentially exogenous factors were of aid here: the adverse conditions in other countries, most notably in France and England, for book production, combined with increasing demand; the Huguenot stimulus; and the development of a superior domestic paper industry. This rapid move into production and distribution for foreign markets would have been unthinkable without the firmly established and open domestic book production and trading infrastructure. The shift in focus to foreign markets is also discernible in the emigration of Dutch artists and the export of seventeenth-century originals, copies and adaptations. But in all, producers in the painting sector were not entirely successful at making such a rapid transition to foreign market demand.

It could be argued though that painters, more than publishers, required geographic proximity to their markets. As a consequence, painting, as a sector, may simply have been less conducive to foreign market production. However, producers in the Southern Netherlands had proved that it was possible to sustain successful export functions. In balance, it is also possible that Dutch painting was too restricted by specialisation to successfully diversify from the bottom up, without the assistance of determined merchants or institutions such as art academies. By the end of the growth phase, painting had become highly specialised and, as a result, painters found it more difficult to adapt to the changing market conditions. Shifting to substitutes such as wall hangings and prints, or opting for entirely new or even foreign styles and genres required a flexibility that most of them did not possess. Besides, Dutch art dealers were able to compete in foreign markets off the back of the mass of relatively affordable seventeenth-century works that were auctioned on a

large scale within the Dutch Republic. Arguably, this could have reduced the necessity to develop a full-blown export-oriented production system.

By around 1800, the end of the period under study in this dissertation, the two sectors had not yet restored their positions as internationally innovative market leaders. It is possible that they suffered from the same dynamic that had intensified expansion during the growth phase. Just as patterns of growth, innovation, and specialisation were reproduced over time, so too were the eighteenth century routines that had developed in response to market saturation, until a new shock to the system could disrupt the status quo.

#### 12.4 Spatial clustering as an explanatory framework

The geographic distribution of production was addressed in two ways: as a phenomenon needing to be explained and as a possible explanation for the Golden Age of cultural production. It was never the objective to quantitatively measure whether clustering directly affected the performance of clustered painters and publishers. This would have required a systematic comparison of the inputs and outputs of firms in clusters compared with firms outside of clusters, *ceteris paribus*. Instead, the aim was to use the theory to understand both the spatial and diachronic dynamic of painting and publishing. Hence, this study was also an exercise in establishing the analytical value of cluster theory for research of the early modern period.

In the case of early modern Dutch painting and publishing, the occurrence of co-location was relatively easy to ascertain. The geographies differed per industry, but overall cultural production was concentrated in towns covering a specific geographic area, nowadays referred to as the Randstad area, an urban grid comprising Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht, and several smaller towns. Initial causes of the industrial concentration were not hard to come by: urban amenities stimulated demand conditions; the presence of related and supporting industries; and the presence of key entrepreneurs in the industry. These attractive qualities resulted in the development of 'critical masses' of producers in a limited number of towns. Moreover, the producers were often concentrated in the relatively small geographic space of early modern downtowns. But cluster theory refers is based on more than mere co-location; it is about interactions. The literature on early modern Dutch publishers and painters offers abundance of examples of producers' relationships with other producers, in and outside guild structures, with consumers,

with local institutions such as governments, universities, and theatres, and with related and supporting industries.

Identifying the actual cluster dynamics proved much more difficult. Concepts such as agglomeration externalities, increasing returns, and positive feedback may explain why industries continue to be concentrated in specific locations, but they are difficult to measure, especially for the early modern period. However, looking at the basics of the theory offered some insights. It can be assumed that knowledge spillovers result, intentionally or unintentionally, from rivalry, collaborations and shared guild-membership, but also on a more personal level, in the form of family-ties, marriages, and friendships. Moreover, geographic proximity increases the opportunities for spillovers. There can be no doubt as to the various types and intensity of formal and informal inter-connections between firms in the Dutch publishing and painting industries. Instead of listing these interactions time and again, the analysis focused on continuities and discontinuities in the relationships between the components of Porter's diamond model were found. The accumulated expertise, the specialised infrastructure, the established inter-connections between firms in the same and related industries, as well as the associated institutional, and often locally embedded, developments that were identified all seem to suggest that painting and publishing firms benefited from externalities associated with agglomeration. Nonetheless, the structure of the relationships in the diamond model differed between painting and publishing, between different stages in the industries' life cycles, and between towns.

Moreover, this dissertation argues that the self-reinforcing mechanism in the growth stage was further strengthened by the broader economic, social, and political context in which Dutch publishing and painting developed. Compared to other countries, both painting and publishing in the Dutch Republic displayed a distinct polycentric production structure, and an even more dispersed distribution network. This brings to mind the concepts of local buzz and global pipelines.<sup>2</sup> Clustered producers could have the best of both worlds by being firmly embedded in specific local industrial atmospheres (buzz) and profiting from the ensuing externalities, while also maintaining many inter-local and foreign network ties (pipelines) that provided the local production systems with continuous flows of external knowledge. The theory suggests that this makes clusters able to adapt to exogenous shocks as it reduces risks of 'lock-in' and enhances their adaptive qualities.

Admittedly, the claim that such external openness guarantees adaptive capabilities is difficult to test, not least because cluster studies have persistently neglected to show examples of failed cluster formation and sustainment.

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<sup>2</sup> Bathelt, Malmberg, and Maskell, 'Clusters and knowledge'.

Nevertheless, this study suggests that the success of Dutch cultural industries was due to more than just local dynamics, but also to interactions between towns within the Randstad. Dutch towns were well integrated through an efficient infrastructure, and local entry barriers were low. Although Dutch cultural industries benefited from clustering, local production systems were at the same time remarkably open. As such, the distinct urban structure of the Dutch Republic made for a second complementary competitive advantage.<sup>3</sup> It can therefore be argued that within the Dutch Republic, the urban grid of a select number of towns constituted a cluster in its own right. Therefore, the story of the early modern painting and publishing industries seems to suggest a unique combination of urban openness and entrenchment in local industrial production systems. Even if this could not guarantee sustained growth, it may have contributed to accelerated advancement during the growth phase. The downside of this cluster dynamic was that markets were soon exhausted.

In this study, early modern painting and publishing were selected as case studies of cultural industries. However, similar features and forms of organisation can be identified in other sectors of the economy, albeit to a lesser extent. The implication is that the explanatory framework of spatial clustering may also be applied to studies of other early modern Dutch sectors. This would also be particularly beneficial to the development of a more historically- and industry-sensitive analytic framework of spatial clustering. A typology of industries and stages in product-, cluster-, or industry life cycles could be a logical follow-up on the outline presented in this dissertation.

Obviously, the concentration of artistic and economic achievements in the Dutch Republic, or Amsterdam in particular, is not unique either. What is more, the trajectories of urban industries are closely related to the performance of the towns in which they are located. The questions and results of this study are reminiscent of the following meta-questions: 'Why does the creative flame should burn so especially, so uniquely, in cities and not the countryside and what makes a particular city, at a particular time, suddenly become immensely creative, exceptionally innovative?' (Peter Hall) or 'Why do recognized and celebrated achievements, across several fields of endeavour, tend to cluster within cities over relatively short periods of time?' (posed by Patrick O'Brien and attributed to Gerry Martin).<sup>4</sup> The findings of this dissertation correspond well to O' Brien's discussion of structural conditions that help explain early modern Golden Ages in Europe. It is worthwhile to recapitulate the main points in his analysis, because it is basically cluster theory without the analytical framework.

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<sup>3</sup> The appropriateness of the city as opposed to urban networks as spatial unit of analysis is also discussed in O' Brien, 'Reflections and mediations', p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Hall, *Cities in civilization*, p. 3; O' Brien, 'Reflections and mediations', p. 5.



Firstly, a set of conditions predisposed certain towns to economic and artistic boom: a favourable position in regional, national, and international trade; well-functioning markets and transport infrastructure; human capital accumulation; and experienced civic urban governments that enjoyed some degree of autonomy. Secondly, a process of ‘cultural reordering’ should take place, possibly via political, socio-economic or cultural restructuring.<sup>5</sup> Immigration, relative tolerance and the capacity to absorb external influences in local structures characterise the growth landscape as do the variegation and the expansion of local demand. Hereafter, success lies in the fabric of the city: ‘familiar range of connections to an economic base’, ‘Cities acted as arenas for competition, emulation and the diffusion of commercial intelligence’, ‘Easy and productive connections could be formed across domains of expertise and among neighbours [...]’.<sup>6</sup> These interactions or connections shaped urban culture, which in turn generated new achievements. Parallels in the decline of urban Golden Ages between the three case studies, Antwerp, Amsterdam and London, were virtually absent in this analysis.

The contribution of this dissertation does not lie in ousting existing analyses of cultural production in the Dutch Golden Age, but rather in adding a firm but flexible theoretical framework to both the recognised histories of individual industries and also to the study of Golden Ages. Furthermore, an additional factor in explaining spatial and temporal patterns of growth and innovation has been exposed: the organisation and structure of cultural industries.

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. O’ Brien, ‘Reflections and mediations’, p. 17 who dubbed a comparable process ‘cultural reordering’.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.



## Summary in Dutch

Dit proefschrift onderzoekt de opkomst, bloei en verval van culturele productie in de Republiek aan de hand van twee case studies - uitgeverij en schilderkunst - waarbij drie doelstellingen centraal staan. Het eerste doel is het in kaart brengen van de creatieve en commerciële ontwikkeling van beide sectoren in de vroegmoderne periode. In grote lijnen zijn deze reeds bekend. Na de vereniging van de noordelijke provinciën in de Republiek in het laatste kwart van de zestiende eeuw, brak een periode aan van ongekennde bloei: de Gouden Eeuw. Daarna stokte de algemene groeitendens; de kunstmarkt zakte in en de boekhandel stagneerde. In dit proefschrift wordt voor het eerst een lange-termijn en comparatief perspectief aangebracht, alsmede kwantitatieve onderbouwing verschaft voor de ontwikkelingen in deze sectoren.

Het tweede doel is het blootleggen van geografische patronen. Dit gedeelte van het onderzoek is geïnspireerd door de relatie tussen stedelijke omgevingen en creativiteit, zoals dat centraal staat in het werk van bijvoorbeeld Peter Hall. In dit proefschrift is het belang van stedelijke concentratie van productie onderzocht. Het derde doel was namelijk het verklaren van geobserveerde geografische en chronologische ontwikkelingen. Bestaande analyses van vroegmoderne culturele productie laten een complex samenspel van factoren zien. Dit onderzoek neemt deze verklaringen als vertrekpunt en behandelt een tot nog toe onderbelicht aspect in de bestudering van vroegmoderne culturele productie: de rol van lokale industriële organisatie en structuur in het reilen en zeilen van economische sectoren.

### *Analytisch kader: clustertheorie en culturele industrie*

Concentratie van productie is een bekend fenomeen, waarvan Hollywood en Silicon Valley hedendaagse voorbeelden zijn. Volgens de zogenaamde clustertheorie versterkt de bundeling van productie in bepaalde steden – en daarbinnen in bepaalde buurten – de concurrentiekracht en het innovatief vermogen van lokale economische sectoren. Producenten in zulke clusters profiteren van agglomeratievoordelen en van de inbedding in het stedelijke milieu. Door concentratie van beschikbare kennis en ervaring in dezelfde en aanverwante sectoren, intensieve concurrentie en samenwerking, de ontwikkelingen van gespecialiseerde instituties en door de aanwezigheid van een ontwikkelde vraagzijde, worden producenten bovengemiddeld innovatief en/of competitief.

Deze clustertheorie heeft een duidelijk historische dimensie. Hij is gericht op de ontwikkeling van de concurrentiepositie op de lange termijn. Het ontstaan van en de wisselwerking binnen stedelijke economische clusters is een lokaal-historisch proces, met concurrentiekracht als resultaat. Deze is uniek en moeilijk te imiteren, maar kan verloren gaan wanneer partijen binnen het cluster er, door verregaande specialisatie of institutionele inbedding, niet in slagen om zich aan te passen aan veranderende omstandigheden. Om het historische proces in te kaderen, wordt in de theorie gebruik gemaakt van het begrip *padafhankelijkheid*. In algemene zin betekent dit, via de mechanismen van toenemende meeropbrengsten (*increasing returns*) en afgrendeling van ontwikkelingspaden (*lock-in*), dat de loop van lokale of industriële ontwikkeling sterk worden bepaald door in het verleden ontwikkelde routines.

Hoewel de clustertheorie is ontstaan in een twintigste-eeuwse beleidsomgeving en daarin een *hot topic* is, kan hij ook toegepast worden in onderzoek naar de vroegmoderne tijd. Ten eerste waren er ook toen duidelijke concentraties van productie, met name in landen die werden gekenmerkt door een relatief polycentrische stedelijke structuur, zoals de Republiek. Ten tweede zijn kennisintensieve en creatieve sectoren, zoals uitgeverij en schilderkunst, bijzonder gevoelig voor de voordelen en nadelen van clustering. In deze sectoren zijn veel kleine en middelgrote bedrijven actief die te maken hebben met een relatief onzekere vraagzijde. Kennisoverdracht vindt doorgaans niet geformaliseerd plaats, maar op basis van persoonlijk contact. Ook deze kenmerken zijn goed terug te zien in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw.

De clustertheorie kent ook tekortkomingen. Er is weinig aandacht voor structurele verschillen tussen diverse soorten economische activiteiten en bovendien is de theorie niet toereikend om de ontwikkelingsfasen die clusters doorlopen te verklaren. Dit heeft geresulteerd in zeer theoretische beschouwingen of zeer casus-specifieke, empirische studies. Het bewijzen van cluster-dynamiek blijkt problematisch. Voor een overtuigend bewijs zouden *spillovers*, *externalities*, en toenemende meeropbrengsten op het niveau van bedrijfsprestatie gemeten moeten worden. Dit vereist uitgebreide datasets waarin de in- en output van individuele ondernemingen in een cluster afgezet moeten worden tegen die van ondernemingen buiten een cluster, *ceteris paribus*. Dit is nagenoeg onmogelijk voor boekhandelaren en schilders in de vroegmoderne tijd.

In dit proefschrift wordt de clustertheorie op een meer kwalitatieve manier gebruikt om te onderzoeken hoe, in de Republiek, succesvolle culturele productie ontstond, werd gereproduceerd, in stand werd gehouden en uiteindelijk teloor ging. Om de onderontwikkelde elementen van de theorie te ondervangen, zijn de

volgende theoretische hulpmiddelen samengevoegd: Michael Porters 'diamant-model' van concurrentiepositie, het begrip culturele industrie en het schema van de industriële levenscyclus.

Co-locatie is niet het enige element van de clustertheorie; het gaat juist om het samenspel tussen verschillende actoren in het cluster. Het 'diamant-model', zo genoemd vanwege zijn vorm, onderscheidt voor de analyse van de concurrentiepositie van bedrijfstakken de volgende vier factoren: de omvang en het karakter van de vraagzijde; de algemene lokale of regionale productiefactoren, zoals infrastructuur, kapitaalmarkten en arbeidsmarkten; de aanwezigheid en het vermogen van aanverwante en ondersteunende sectoren; en de intensiteit van concurrentie, via strategie, structuur en rivaliteit van bedrijven. Dit model wordt in het proefschrift als leidraad gebruikt voor het onderzoek naar lokale productiesystemen.

De concurrentiekracht van westerse, stedelijke economieën wordt in toenemende mate bepaald door bedrijven die innovatieve producten of diensten vervaardigen. De culturele of creatieve economie mag zich, evenals als de kenniseconomie, verheugen op een grote belangstelling vanuit de politiek en de wetenschap. Culturele industrieën worden in literatuur over de culturele economie en creatieve steden onderscheiden van andere sectoren. Hoewel bestaande definities en typologieën uiteenlopen, is men het er wel over eens dat creativiteit in deze sectoren een belangrijke factor is en dat culturele industrieën een esthetische of symbolische waarde toevoegen. Richard Caves geeft zeven eigenschappen die kenmerkend zijn voor creatieve producten. In dit onderzoek worden deze eigenschappen vertaald als condities die het functioneren van markten en de organisatie van productie kunnen beïnvloeden en daarmee ook de concurrentiepositie van culturele industrieën.

Als laatste hulpmiddel is het schema van de industriële levenscyclus toegevoegd. De theorie over levenscycli is gebaseerd op onderzoek naar industriële producten in de moderne tijd en wordt vooral ingezet voor marketingonderzoek en het bepalen van bedrijfsstrategieën, maar is ook gebruikt door historici om lange termijntrends te verklaren. Dit is een schema dat laat zien in welke fase van het bestaan een innovatie, een product, een cluster of zelfs een hele industrie zich bevindt. De economische literatuur onderscheidt er grofweg vier: introductie, groei, volwassenheid en neergang/verzadiging. Deze stadia zijn gelijk voor elke industrie, hoewel de duur en intensiteit van elke fase per industrie kan verschillen.

Door de bovengenoemde drie theoretische instrumenten te combineren, ontstaat een dynamisch model van de clustertheorie. Daarmee wordt het mogelijk om de dynamiek in de rol van lokale productieorganisaties in de vroegmoderne

periode in beeld te krijgen. Dan wordt zichtbaar dat de rol van lokale organisatie van productie in vroegmoderne Nederlandse culturele sectoren niet statisch of uniform is, maar wisselend per levensfase en per type industrie. In lijn met de structuur van het onderzoek bestaat dit proefschrift uit twee delen: boekhandel en schilderkunst. Hierbinnen zijn de hoofdstukken geordend naar fase in de levenscyclus van de respectievelijke sectoren, waarbij wordt teruggegrepen op de elementen uit het 'diamant -model'.

#### *De levenscycli van de vroegmoderne Nederlandse boekhandel en kunstmarkt*

Als eerste stap in het onderzoek zijn de ontwikkelingspaden van de twee bedrijfstakken in kaart gebracht op basis van kwantitatieve en kwalitatieve bronnen. Er is gebruik gemaakt van de datasets van Ecartico en RKDartists voor de schilderkunst en de Short Title Catalogue Netherlands (STCN) en Thesaurus voor de boekhandel. Deze maakten het mogelijk om zowel de geografische distributie, als veranderingen in de omvang van de sectoren in de onderzochte periode te identificeren. De eerste indicator van de ontwikkeling van de bedrijfstakken was het aantal producten of producenten per jaar, per plaats. Hiernaast werden kwalitatieve uitkomsten gemeten aan de hand van indicatoren als de aanwezigheid van prominente producenten en innovatieve activiteiten. Het diamant-model maakt het mogelijk dat ontwikkelingen in de verschillende factoren met elkaar in verband konden worden gebracht, waar die voorheen als niet gerelateerd werden beschouwd.

Op basis van deze indicatoren ontstaat het volgende schema: 1580-1610 opkomst, 1610-1660 groei, gevolgd door de volwassen fase, in het geval van boekhandel tot 1800 en in het geval van schilderkunst slechts tot het eind van de zeventiende eeuw, toen een periode van verval aanbrak. Per fase in de levenscyclus veranderde ook het relatieve belang van de verschillende factoren in het diamant-model, alsmede de relaties tussen deze factoren. In de eerste fase speelden externe omstandigheden een grote rol. De Opstand en de val van Antwerpen fungeerden als externe schokken die de grote bloei van de tot dan toe relatief onderontwikkelde boekhandel en kunstmarkt inluiden. Onder invloed van economische groei, bevolkingsgroei en veranderende consumptiepatronen nam de vraag naar luxegoederen toe. De productiezijde kreeg een krachtige stimulans door de instroom van Vlaamse en Brabantse ondernemers. Echter, in deze periode moet de groei – kwantitatief en kwalitatief – met name worden gezien als een inhaalslag. De eigenlijke prestaties lieten nog op zich wachten.

Tussen 1610 en 1620 vonden in beide sectoren belangrijke product- en procesinnovaties plaats. Deze zorgden ervoor dat het grote potentieel in de lokale markten kon worden omgezet in daadwerkelijke consumptie. De belangrijkste

gevolgen waren dat prijzen van de producten daalden en dat er productdifferentiatie kon plaatsvinden. Artistieke en commerciële vernieuwingen gingen hand in hand en leidden de groeifase in. De verklaring voor timing en locatie van innovatie is gelegen in de toenemende concurrentie-intensiteit. In dezelfde periode werden meer verbindingen met andere sectoren gelegd en ontwikkelden zich gespecialiseerde instituties. De verspreiding en reproductie, lokaal en interlokaal, van vernieuwingen, door imitatie, emulatie, specialisatie en differentiatie, had een cumulatief versterkend effect waardoor de kwantiteit, kwaliteit en variëteit van culturele productie razendsnel toenamen.

Dezelfde dynamiek resulteerde in een relatief spoedige verzadiging van lokale markten, rond het midden van de zeventiende eeuw. Dit viel samen met het afzwakken van de economische groei in de Republiek. De concurrentie-intensiteit nam weer toe en dit resulteerde in een nieuwe ronde van product- en procesinnovaties en institutionele verankering. Culturele producenten reageerden op de nieuwe situatie door zich te richten op internationale markten, de tweedehandsmarkt, risicospreiding en de verbetering van distributie en marketing. Boekhandelaren waren hier bijzonder succesvol in. Het verval in de kunstmarkt, kwalitatief en kwantitatief, bleek minder sterk dan wordt aangenomen. Vanuit een breder perspectief bezien, bleek de kunstmarkt in staat om met succes nieuwe economische strategieën te introduceren.

#### *Kenmerken van culturele industrieën*

De specifieke kenmerken van creatieve productie als geïdentificeerd in de hedendaagse literatuur zijn ook van toepassing op vroegmoderne culturele industrieën. Zij hebben duidelijk hun stempel gedrukt op de manier waarop de kunstmarkt en de boekhandel werden georganiseerd. De zeven kenmerken en de bijbehorende complicaties zullen kort worden besproken.

Twee kenmerken hebben te maken met de vraagzijde van de markt: onvoorspelbaarheid van de vraag en de modegevoeligheid van creatieve producten. Het eerste, een fundamenteel probleem in elke markt, weegt in culturele industrieën zwaarder vanwege de subjectieve kwaliteiten van culturele goederen. Dit is bijvoorbeeld zichtbaar in de kunstsector. Rond het midden van de zeventiende eeuw werd transparantie in de markt een steeds groter probleem. De modegevoeligheid van culturele producten maakt efficiënte distributie en marketing van buitengewoon belang en de pogingen van vroegmoderne Nederlandse kunst- en boekhandelaren deze processen te verbeteren moeten dan ook in dit licht worden gezien.

Niet alle producten waren echter vergankelijk van aard. Sterker nog, boeken en schilderijen hebben een lange levensduur. Deze levensduur beperkte op den duur

de vraag naar nieuwe producten. Schilderijen waren bedoeld om muren te versieren en de ruimte op de muren was beperkt. Dit werd met name een probleem rond 1670, toen andere vormen van wanddecoraties in de mode raakten. Door de onvoorspelbaarheid van de vraag en het feit dat producten lang mee gingen, was in deze sectoren het risico van overproductie relatief groot. Het toenemende belang van tweedehandsmarkten en veilingen in de Nederlandse boeken- en kunstmarkten was een direct gevolg van de bestendigheid van de producten.

Een vierde kenmerk, tevens aan de aanbodzijde van de markt, is de complexe interactie in het productieproces. De productie van boeken vraagt bij uitstek om samenwerking: alle materialen en hulpmiddelen moeten beschikbaar komen tegen de juiste prijs, op het juiste moment. De analyse van de diamant toonde aan dat de relaties tussen boekproducenten, drukkers en verkopers, maar ook papierhandelaren, type-snijders en -auteurs niet statisch waren. Deze relaties beïnvloedden de vestigingspatronen en de artistieke prestaties in de uitgeverij.

Een ander kenmerk suggereert dat kunstenaars voldoening halen uit het werk zelf en dat ze daardoor minder interesse hebben in (financiële) beloningen. Dit onderscheidt kunst van ambacht of louter versiering, wat in de praktijk betekent dat veel meer mensen investeren in een artistieke carrière dan er realistisch financiële beloning kunnen verwachten. Het kenmerk van artistieke voldoening is ook tegenwoordig moeilijk te onderbouwen en het is bijzonder lastig om deze redenering toe te passen op de vroegmoderne, open markt, waarin de meeste boekhandelaren en kunstenaars ambachtslieden waren. Toch gaat ook dit kenmerk tot op zekere hoogte op. In het geval van de schilderkunst zien we dat amateurtekenaars en -schilders steeds belangrijker werden en dat de grenzen tussen de ambachtsman, de kunstenaar en de consument vervaagden. Uit de vereniging van kunstschilders in meer exclusieve broederschappen tijdens de fase van volwassenheid, blijkt dat een dergelijke ontwikkeling gevoelig lag. In het geval van de uitgeverij suggereert het grote aandeel van zeer kort werkzame producenten dat veel niet-professionals actief waren in deze culturele industrie. Er is niet altijd een duidelijk onderscheid te maken tussen beroeps- en bedrijfsmatig geproduceerde culturele goederen en producten die op de markt werden gebracht door niet-professionals. De concurrentie die culturele ondernemers van niet-professionals ondervonden, creëerde spanningen in de markt.

Als laatste kunnen eindeloze differentiatiemogelijkheden en een sterk onderscheid tussen de top en de rest van de producenten worden genoemd. In de gevarieerde en concurrerende markt kwam in een relatief korte termijn een enorme stroom van marginaal verschillende productvarianten op de markt. De grote verscheidenheid aan boeken en schilderijen in de Republiek droeg bij aan afnemende transparantie in de markt en een toenemend onderscheid tussen verschillende



soorten producenten, met name in het geval van de schilderkunst. De mogelijke variatie in de vroegmoderne tijd bleek bovendien beslist niet oneindig. Producenten moesten hun werk koppelen aan bestaande tradities om betekenisvolle inhoud over te brengen aan de consument. Ook de competenties van producenten waren verticaal gedifferentieerd. Met name in de kunstmarkt bestond een smalle top die erg succesvol was, gevolgd door een aanzienlijk grotere 'B-lijst'.

Producenten ontwikkelden een veelheid aan oplossingen om deze problemen, welke vooral knelden ten tijde van de overgang naar een nieuwe fase in de levenscyclus, het hoofd te bieden. Zij richtten zich bijvoorbeeld op de versterking van de rol van de gilden, het articuleren van noties van kwaliteit, het oprichten van broedersschappen, het versnellen van distributie en het ontwikkelen van secundaire markten via veilingen. Het resultaat was dat de complexe interacties tussen producenten, leveranciers en consumenten steeds verder werden geformaliseerd en gerationaliseerd.

De besproken eigenschappen hebben invloed gehad op de snelheid waarmee de bedrijfstakken schilderkunst en uitgeverij hun respectievelijke levenscycli doorliepen. De Nederlandse producenten hadden hun markten zo voortvarend bediend en met zulk een verscheidenheid, dat er rond het midden van de zeventiende eeuw nog weinig ruimte was voor verdere expansie. De snelle opeenvolging van innovatie en de grootschalige en gevarieerde productie gedurende de periode van sterke endogene reproductie, zorgde ervoor dat de groeifase in deze twee culturele industrieën slechts een paar decennia kon duren.

#### *Schilders versus uitgevers*

Voor een groot deel waren de bedrijfstakken schilderkunst en uitgeverij onderworpen aan dezelfde exogene factoren en toonden ze ook een vergelijkbare endogene dynamiek. Er waren evenwel significante verschillen in ruimtelijke en chronologische patronen. Uitgeverij was gedurende de gehele periode sterker lokaal ingebed en liet geen sterke terugval zien na 1660. Dit kan, althans gedeeltelijk, worden verklaard door verschillen in het karakter van de twee sectoren. In het geval van de uitgeverij, waren specifieke stedelijke voorzieningen cruciaal voor het ontwikkelen van routines en concurrentievoordelen, zoals toegang tot arbeidsmarkten en de aanwezigheid van belangrijke leveranciers. Enkele individuele ondernemers waren in de eerste fase van de levenscyclus bepalend voor de ontwikkeling van de sector als geheel. In het geval van schilderkunst speelde de aanwezigheid van bepaalde meesters of onbenutte vraag een belangrijke rol. Schilders hadden relatief meer baat bij vestiging in elkaars nabijheid en dicht bij klanten. De kenmerken kwaliteit- en vraagonzekerheid waren sterker aanwezig in

deze sector. Veel boeken werden in de vroegmoderne tijd aangekocht om religieuze of beroepsmatige redenen en dit verkleinde de problematiek van onzekerheid over kwaliteit en vraag. Dit specifieke verschil werd versterkt toen schilderijen hun meer utilitaire, decoratieve functie verloren na circa 1650.

De vestigingsplaats van de uitgeverij was bestendiger, want boekproducenten waren minder mobiel. De meeste bedrijven hadden kapitaal geïnvesteerd in een drukkerij en papier en voorraad opgeslagen in magazijnen. Dit beperkte de mogelijkheden ten aanzien van permanente of tijdelijke verhuizing. Bij de uitgeverijen werden vaste activa en gevestigde distributienetwerken doorgegeven aan de volgende generatie. Dit was anders in het geval van ateliers van schilders. Bovendien bestond er een aanzienlijk verschil tussen de vaardigheden die nodig waren om een (succesvolle) uitgever of schilder te worden. Het ongrijpbare maar cruciale sleutelwoord is creatief talent. Uitgeverij - drukkerij in het bijzonder - eiste andere vaardigheden. Uitgevers konden competenties gemakkelijker overdragen aan de volgende generatie, terwijl het in de schilderkunst maar de vraag was of leerlingen het talent hadden om het atelier in stand te houden.

De verschillen in de reproductieve mogelijkheden van vaardigheden en competenties hebben gevolgen gehad voor de verschillende chronologische trends. Vanaf de jaren 1660 liepen de trajecten van de Nederlandse schilderkunst en uitgeverij uiteen. Boekproductie bleef relatief stabiel, maar het aantal kunstschilders en nieuw geproduceerde schilderijen nam sterk af. De meest duidelijke verklaring voor de verschillende ontwikkelingspaden is het verschil in functionaliteit. Boekproducenten bezaten zoals gezegd een stevige basis in de vraag naar gebruiksboeken en ze werden minder bedreigd door alternatieven. Schilderijen maakten deel uit van een spectrum van beeldende kunst en wanddecoratie, variërend van dure tapijten tot goedkope prints. Bovendien was de ruimte waarin nieuwe schilderijen konden worden opgehangen beperkt en werden aan het eind van de zeventiende eeuw opnieuw alternatieve vormen van wanddecoratie populair.

Een andere verklaring voor de verschillen in de ontwikkeling na 1660 is te vinden in het feit dat de Nederlandse uitgeverij succesvoller was in het aanboren van buitenlandse markten. De ongunstige omstandigheden in andere landen, met name in Frankrijk en Engeland, voor de productie van boeken, in combinatie met de toenemende vraag in deze markten, de komst van Hugenoten en de ontwikkeling van een superieure binnenlandse papierindustrie, hielpen sterk. Maar de snelle overstap naar de productie en distributie voor de buitenlandse markt zou ondenkbaar zijn geweest zonder de ingebedde en tegelijkertijd open binnenlandse productie en handel in boeken. De verschuiving van de focus naar buitenlandse markten is ook waarneembaar in de emigratie van Nederlandse kunstenaars en de

export van zeventiende-eeuwse originelen en achttiende-eeuwse imitaties en emulaties, hoewel schilders niet onverdeeld succesvol waren in het maken van een snelle overgang naar buitenlandse markten.

Schilders vereisten, meer dan uitgevers, geografische nabijheid van hun markten. Bijgevolg kan schilderkunst gezien worden als een sector die eenvoudigweg minder geschikt was voor productie van exportartikelen. Hier kan tegen worden ingebracht dat schilders en kunsthandelaren in de zuidelijke Nederlanden hebben bewezen dat het wel degelijk mogelijk was succesvolle exportfuncties te ontwikkelen. Het is denkbaar dat de Nederlandse schilderkunst werd beperkt door specialisatie en was aanpassing aan de nieuwe omstandigheden moeilijk zonder de tussenkomst van grote commerciële kunsthandelaren of instellingen, zoals kunstacademies. Rond 1800, het einde van de onderzochte periode in dit proefschrift, hadden beide sectoren hun positie als internationaal innovatieve marktleiders verloren.

#### *Het mysterie van de Gouden Eeuw: clustering als een verklarend kader*

Deze studie beoogt ook de analytische waarde van de clustertheorie voor het onderzoek van bedrijfstakken in de vroegmoderne tijd vast te stellen. In het geval van de vroegmoderne, Nederlandse schilderkunst en uitgeverij, waren vestigingspatronen relatief eenvoudig in kaart te brengen. Over het algemeen was culturele productie geconcentreerd in een stedelijk netwerk bestaande uit Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Den Haag, Utrecht en een aantal kleinere steden. Leiden was bijvoorbeeld het centrum van de wetenschappelijke uitgeverij en Amsterdam van de cartografische. In de schilderkunst zijn specialisaties zelfs expliciet verbonden aan steden met de aanduiding 'lokale schilderscholen'. Daarnaast zijn binnen deze steden ook duidelijke locatiepatronen waar te nemen. In Amsterdam vond men een concentratie van boek-, prent- en kaartverkopers en –uitgevers aan het huidige Damrak, Rokin en de Kalverstraat. Op een steenworp afstand woonden en werkten talloze graveurs, papierhandelaren en andere ondernemers in aanverwante beroepen. In de Sint Antoniesbreestraat hadden veel kunstschilders hun ateliers. In Leiden zaten boekverkopers in de buurt van de universiteit en in Den Haag in de buurt van het politieke centrum, het Binnenhof.

De oorzaken van de industriële concentratie waren niet moeilijk te vinden: stedelijke voorzieningen, gerichte vraag, de aanwezigheid van aanverwante en ondersteunende sectoren en de aanwezigheid van de belangrijkste ondernemers in de industrie. Deze kwaliteiten resulteerden in de ontwikkeling van een 'kritische massa' van producenten in een beperkt aantal steden. De clustertheorie baseert zich niet alleen op concentratie van vestigingsplaats, maar vooral op interacties binnen de

concentratie. De literatuur over vroegmoderne Nederlandse uitgevers en schilders biedt een overvloed aan voorbeelden van relaties met andere producenten, binnen en buiten de gilden, met consumenten, met lokale instellingen zoals overheden, universiteiten en theaters, evenals met aanverwante en ondersteunende sectoren.

Het hard maken van cluster-dynamiek die zou ontstaan na het bereiken van een 'kritische massa' is gecompliceerder. Aangenomen mag worden dat de kennis *spillovers*, bedoeld of onbedoeld, het resultaat zijn van rivaliteit, samenwerking en gildebanden, maar ook van contacten op een meer persoonlijk niveau, in de vorm van familiebanden, huwelijken en vriendschappen. Geografische nabijheid vergroot de kans op *spillovers*. Er kan dus geen twijfel bestaan over de verschillende soorten en de intensiteit van formele en informele onderlinge verbindingen tussen bedrijven in de Nederlandse uitgeverij en schilderkunst. In plaats van een opsomming van deze interacties te geven, is continuïteit en discontinuïteit in de relaties tussen de componenten van Porters diamant-model geanalyseerd. De opgebouwde expertise, de gespecialiseerde infrastructuur, de gevestigde onderlinge verbindingen tussen bedrijven uit dezelfde industrie en aanverwante sectoren, evenals de bijbehorende institutionele en vaak lokaal ingebedde ontwikkelingen die werden geïdentificeerd, suggereren allemaal dat schilderkunst en uitgeverij hebben geprofiteerd van agglomeratievoordelen. De structuur van de 'diamant' verschilde per industrie, per fase in de levenscyclus en per stad.

In dit onderzoek is tevens aangetoond dat het zichzelf versterkende mechanisme in de groeifase werd verhevigd door de bredere economische, sociale en politieke context waarin de Nederlandse uitgeverij en schilderkunst zich ontwikkelden. In vergelijking met andere landen bezaten de Nederlandse boekhandel en schilderkunst een duidelijk polycentrische productiestructuur en een uitgebreid distributienetwerk. Nederlandse steden waren goed geïntegreerd door middel van een efficiënte infrastructuur en de lokale toetredingsdrempels waren laag. Het verhaal van de vroegmoderne schilderkunst en uitgeverij duidt op stedelijke toegankelijkheid, gecombineerd met inbedding in lokale industriële productiesystemen. De stedelijke structuren in de Republiek zorgden voor een tweede concurrentievoordeel.

Dit onderzoek is geïnspireerd door vraagstukken met betrekking tot de relatie tussen steden en creativiteit. De bevindingen van dit proefschrift komen goed overeen met Patrick O'Briens discussie van de structurele voorwaarden voor het fenomeen van Gouden Eeuwen in vroegmodern Europa. In deze studie werden de vroegmoderne schilderkunst en uitgeverij geselecteerd als voorbeelden van culturele industrieën. Echter, soortgelijke eigenschappen en organisatievormen kunnen ook worden geïdentificeerd, zij het in mindere mate, in andere sectoren van de economie.

De implicatie is dat het verklarende kader van ruimtelijke clustering ook kan worden toegepast op studies van andere vroegmoderne Nederlandse sectoren. Dit zou ook bijzonder gunstig zijn voor de ontwikkeling van een meer historisch- en industriegevoelig analytisch kader van ruimtelijke clustering. Een typologie van industrieën en stadia in levenscycli zou een logisch vervolg kunnen zijn op de hoofdlijnen die in dit proefschrift werden uiteengezet.

De bijdrage van dit proefschrift ligt niet in het weerleggen van bestaande analyses van culturele productie, maar in het toevoegen van een stevig maar flexibel theoretisch kader aan de studie van zowel de afzonderlijke bedrijfstakken, als die van de Gouden Eeuw in het algemeen. Het legt tot nog toe onderbelichte factoren in het verklaren van ruimtelijke en chronologische patronen van groei en innovatie bloot: zelf-versterkende mechanismen in industriële organisatie en structuur.



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