

# Between status and spiritual salvation: New data on the Portinari triptych and the circumstances of its commission

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Fig. 1

When Tommaso di Folco Portinari renewed the contract for the management of the branch of the Medici Bank in Bruges on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1469, he was still unmarried and almost 40 years old with many years already behind him in the service of the Medici in Flanders.<sup>1</sup> His efforts, however, to be at the forefront of the Florentine traders in Bruges and at the same time be the first representative of the Medici there was not just due to his ambitious pursuit of goals, as shown with the elimination of his competitor, Angelo Tani, or the

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<sup>1</sup>Tommaso Portinari (1428-1501) worked already at the age of 13 as assistant in the Bruges branch of the Medici bank. He was first instructed by his cousin Bernardo di Giovanni d'Adoardo, who directed the branch until 1448 and from 1455 by Angelo Tani. See A. Grunzweig, *Correspondance de la filiale de Bruges des Medici*, Brussels 1931, pp. XIII-XIV. The contract, which as a result of the death of Piero de' Medici never went into effect, was newly negotiated and finally signed up on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1470, mentions for the first time Tommaso Portinari together with the Duke of the Medici – now Lorenzo. See R. de Roover, "The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank (1397-1494)", *Harvard Studies in Business History*, 21, New York 1963, p. 342.

closeness that he reached through diplomatic skill to the powerful members in the court of Burgundy.<sup>2</sup> To a considerable extent, it was linked to Portinari's struggle for a place in Bruges society.

Since Raymond de Roover's "The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank", Portinari's personality has nevertheless been synonymous with his professional career. The name, Tommaso Portinari, seems to be closely intertwined with the expansion activities of the Medici that they pursued with their branches outside Italy – in Lyons, Bruges and London – at the close of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and which led first to their "ascent" and then to their "descent".<sup>3</sup> Shortly after he took over the management of the branch in the spring of 1465, Portinari received, through bargaining, the rights to the receipts of the duties from English wool imports which the Lucchese merchant, Giovanni Arnolfini, had previously held.<sup>4</sup> A year later he persuaded Piero de' Medici to rent the *Bladelin Palais* as the representative office of the Medici branch<sup>5</sup> and on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1468 the contract with the Burgundians followed for the monopoly of trade in alum in Flanders. Tommaso Portinari led the negotiations with the Duke of Burgundy for the privilege, transferred by Pope Paul II to the Medici, and he was also the first man in Flanders to exercise it – and not to his disadvantage.<sup>6</sup>

It is precisely these economic activities, long known to historians, that show at the same time how difficult it is to reconstruct today what was already non-transparent then; how Portinari used his position as manager of the Medici branch in society locally in order to gain advantage both for the Medici as well as for his personal ascent and his own status-oriented self-image.

Since De Roover's standard work concerning the economic history of early modern bankers, some authors have certainly undertaken a study of this "social strategy", which is due, in a particular way, to the fragility with which political events and the

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<sup>2</sup>De Roover, op. cit. (note 1), p. 339. The emotional side of the battle with Angelo Tani about competences gets obvious in the letter of 29<sup>th</sup> April 1464 to his brothers Pigello and Accerito in Milan. See Grunzweig, op. cit. (note 1), pp. 122-125, and Grunzweig, op. cit. (note 1), p. XVIII.

<sup>3</sup>De Roover, op. cit. (note 1). For Tommaso Portinari see esp. the chapter "The Decline: 1464–1494", pp. 358-67.

<sup>4</sup>On 28<sup>th</sup> May 1465 he concluded the contract with Philip the Good that granted him and the Medici the farm of toll of Graveline at a rent of 16000 francs. See De Roover, op. cit. (note 1), pp. 340-341.

<sup>5</sup>De Roover, op. cit. (note 1), p. 340.

<sup>6</sup>De Roover, op. cit. (note 1), pp. 157-158.

implementation of individual goals interact. The essay, “Apologie d’un banquier médiéval. Tommaso Portinari et l’Etat bourguignon”, by Marc Boone should be mentioned here,<sup>7</sup> or the dissertation by Richard Walsh that has only recently appeared and which actively dealt with Portinari’s specific relationship to the Burgundian court, a relationship that can neither be correctly described as a status as adviser nor as diplomat after Charles the Bold’s accession to power.<sup>8</sup> However, the extent of Portinari’s integration locally had never been previously questioned, with the result that the link between social positioning and its most significant component at that time, religious foundations, had not even been created yet.

That is certainly also due to later events, because historically it can clearly be proven that it was Portinari’s closeness to the court of Burgundy that sealed the devastating blow to his professional success serving the Medici. The accusations of mismanagement, misappropriation of the Medici’s’ money and, quite tangibly, the excessive loans to Charles the Bold, that gave Lorenzo de’Medici cause to dissolve the contract,<sup>9</sup> have left until today a very polarised, negative view of Tommaso Portinari’s personality and, equally, of his capabilities.

But what were the actual reasons for this man to hold onto Bruges as his centre of work after Charles’ death on the battlefield on 5<sup>th</sup> January 1477, a stroke of fate, which resulted in his dismissal from the service of the Medici. His trading base taken away, Portinari continued to work in Bruges for another twenty years – into old age – for his own account and suffering great financial difficulties. And that does not match the picture of the representatives of foreign nations, which Richard Walsh also paints of the Italian diplomats and merchants in the court of Charles the Bold who only stayed temporarily in Bruges and returned home after his death almost in their entirety.<sup>10</sup> Portinari continued to use the contacts that he had built up in Bruges and in the court of Burgundy so that he could use them to work as speaker of the Florentine trading nation, in the diplomatic

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<sup>7</sup>Le Moyen âge. Revue d’histoire et de philologie 105, (1999), pp. 31-54.

<sup>8</sup>R. J. Walsh, Charles the Bold and Italy (1467–1477), Politic and Personel, Ph.D. Diss. Hull 1977, ed. Cecil H. Clough, Manchester 2005. Chapter 3 focuses on Portinaris activities in regard to his role at the Burundian court. Walsh’s aim is, to correct the pure economic-historical approach of Armand Grunzweig and Raymond de Roover. See pp. 120–36.

<sup>9</sup>De Roover, op. cit. (note 1), pp. 348-51.

<sup>10</sup>Walsh, op. cit. (note 8), pp. 182-83.

mission for the Burgundian and even for the Medici again.<sup>11</sup> Ultimately, his curriculum thereby seems to concur after all with the historical idea of the “Florentine merchant in Bruges”. Shortly before his death on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1501, he returned to his hometown. He was buried in the Santa Maria Nuova hospital church in the family tomb in front of the main altar – and on the altar, the monumental altarpiece by Hugo van der Goes that had been shipped in from Flanders in the spring of 1483 to protect his memory (Fig. 1).<sup>12</sup>

Yet appearances deceive. Initially, Tommaso Portinari had a different life plan. On 16<sup>th</sup> October 1474, he founded a family chapel in the parish church of St Jacob in Bruges and designated the tomb there for himself and his wife. The deed of foundation documenting this fact<sup>13</sup> has until today not been appropriately appreciated in its historical relevance, although or precisely because it gives cause for a new view of Portinari’s curriculum which runs counter to the previous consensus from research.<sup>14</sup> This new view explains – and this is to be shown hereafter – how Portinari also uses the socio-religious life for his professional progress and how he should come to be completely integrated into the local society in the end. The fundamental consequence out of this for art history research is, that the context in which the Portinari triptych is commissioned must be re-debated.

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<sup>11</sup>Grunzweig, op. cit. (note 1), p. XXXIX. I. e., he was until 1495 as an official diplomat in the services of Emperor Maximilian I. Lorenzo de’Medici sent him to England already in 1489 together with Christofano Spini in order to negotiate a contract for wool importation. See De Roover, op. cit. (note 1), p. 357.

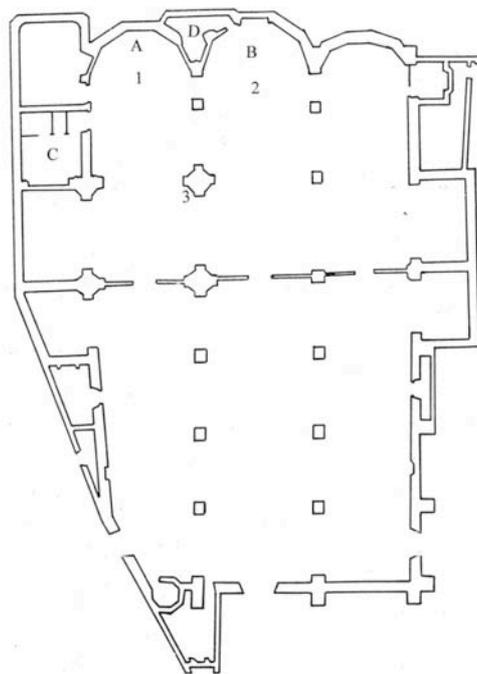
<sup>12</sup>B. Hatfield Strens, “L’Arrivo del Trittico Portinari a Firenze”, *Rivista di Critica e Storia dell’Arte* 19 (1968), pp. 315-319. See Florence, Uffizi Galleries, inv. nr. 3191, 92 and 93, central panel, 253 by 304 cm, wings 253 by 141 cm.

<sup>13</sup>Bruges, Stadsarchief (SAB), Charters Ambachten nr. 310, charter nr. 473.

<sup>14</sup>The document has been transcribed and translated into English by Maximiliaan Martens. See M. Martens, *Artistic Patronage in Bruges Institutions, ca. 1440-1482*, 3 vols., Ph.D. Diss. University of Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara 1992, pp. 532-36. Paula Nuttall is the only one who took the document into consideration: „Tommaso Portinari perhaps envisaged living out his days in Bruges – he had a tomb in his chapel at St. James’s to which he reserved the rights, even when the chapel passed into other hands.“ See P. Nuttall, *From Flanders to Florence: The Impact of Netherlandish Painting 1400–1500*, London 2004, pp. 45, and 47-48. Other scholars assume the possibility of the ownership of the chapel without knowing anything precise about the existence of the document due to the naming of Portinari in the books of account of St Jacob. See J. W. H. Weale, *Collection des Guides Belges. Bruges et ses Environs*, Bruges 1884, p. 131, and A. Warburg, “Flandrische Kunst und florentinische Frührenaissance. Studien (1902)”, *Gesammelte Schriften: Studienausgabe*, ed. H. Bredekamp and M. Diers, vol. 1: *Die Erneuerung der heidnischen Antike. Kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Geschichte der europäischen Renaissance*, Berlin 1998, p. 378, Al. Duclos, *Bruges. Histoire et Souvenirs*, Bruges 1910, p. 481, and W. Rombauts, *Het oud archief van de kerckfabriek van Sint-Jacobs te Brugge*, Brussels 1986, vol. 1, p. 13, note 3, and p. 19.

### The foundation of the family chapel in St Jacob as a process of integration

According to the text of the deed of foundation, Tommaso Portinari resides in the community of St Jacob and over a long period of time has given alms, gifts and done other good things for the church, helping not least with its conversion, and even now continues to give on a daily basis. He receives the old chancel of the church as a chapel and this is consecrated in honour of the holy Virgin Mary. The tomb for him and his wife, in front of the altar – still present – in the former chancel of St Jacob is assured "ten eeuwighen daeghen". The contract goes on to arrange what was usual at that time when a family chapel was founded: that further family members may also be buried there and that free access to the chapel is to be guaranteed, in this case via the adjoining sacristy situated to the north. Portinari is responsible for the maintenance of the chapel. In return, he can decide himself its liturgical use and decoration (Fig. 2).<sup>15</sup>



- A, choir of the old church
- B, choir
- C, sacristy
- D, chapel room of Dones de Moor
  
- 1, principle altar, altar of the Portinari-chapel with sepulchres
- 2, new principle altar
- 3, altar of St. Mary Magdalena, St. Nicolas and St. Elisabeth

Fig. 2

<sup>15</sup>For full documentation see Martens, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 532-533.

His decision to make Bruges, once and for all, his new centre of life by founding the family chapel there, almost five years exactly to the day after Portinari was officially appointed manager of the Medici branch, is the temporary end point of a period of financial and social involvement in the community of St Jacob, which can also be seen from the accounts books of the church.<sup>16</sup> On 11<sup>th</sup> May 1470, Tommaso Portinari is mentioned for the first time in connection with an action that points to planning or financial support of the extension works of the church that had been in progress since 1457,<sup>17</sup> and in which Charles the Bold, who was resident in the community of St Jacob as the Count of Charolais,<sup>18</sup> must likewise have been involved. Tommaso initially lent Charles the Bold the sum of 100 francs who then donated this to the “*nieuwe werke*”. Through brokering by Guilbert de Ruple, who was in the service of the Duke for many years, working as *argentier* and later as treasurer, and by Jean de Gros, Charles’ *audiencier*,<sup>19</sup> the sum was then recorded as a donation by Portinari in the accounts book.<sup>20</sup> By lending the first amount that corresponded to approximately thirteen pounds of groats, which was not exactly a small amount – the value of contributions donated rarely exceeded a pound of groats (the collection normally amounted to a figure in shillings)<sup>21</sup> – and probably together with an earlier gift of two pounds of groats, Portinari also participates in the practice of making religiously-characterised donations, so commonplace in Bruges society, and which take place in the surroundings of the Burgundian court.

Even if the somewhat unusual entry in the ledger of St Jacob does not definitely allow the conclusion to be drawn that Portinari allowed himself to be motivated into making a donation because of Charles’ financial debt, reference must already be made to Portinari’s

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<sup>16</sup>Bruges, Rijksarchief (RAB), Oud Kerkarchief, inv. nr. 98: Rekeningen betreffende verbouwingen aan de kerk (1464–1478) und inv. nr. 197.

<sup>17</sup>As a result of the extensive works to remodel and enlarge the church to the south and the west, a new choir was built with chapels at the south, so that the original choir became the choir of the northern aisle. According to an entry in the ledger at the beginning of the church year 1471-72, the works would be in the 15<sup>th</sup> year, one could conclude that they started with the church remodelling Pentecost 1457. See RAB, Oud Kerkarchief, inv. nr. 98, f. 109v.

<sup>18</sup>The Count of Charolais lived in a palace in the “Moerstrate” nearby the Prinsenhof. See Duclos, op. cit. (note 14), p. 481.

<sup>19</sup>He was treasurer of the Order of the Golden Fleece and so a further prominent member of the parish, who granted permission to found a chapel in the south of the high choir in 1476. See Martens, op. cit. (note 14), p. 287.

<sup>20</sup>RAB, Oud Kerkarchief, nr. 98, f. 81v. See Appendix 1 for full documentation.

<sup>21</sup>See the entries in the ledger of the church, RAB, Oud Kerkarchief, inv. nr. 98.

special, almost friendly, relationship with the Count of Charolais<sup>22</sup> who still supported his parish church after his accession to power as Duke.<sup>23</sup> The last entry before the close of accounts of the church year in June 1471 documents how Portinari's friendly tie could then, after all, have fostered imitational behaviour. Set out in the form of a contract, the church, represented by the clergyman, Jan de Hondt, confirms having received the single sum of 120 pounds of groats, which could only be spent on work on the "nieuw choir" and which was constructed during the renovation work between 1469 and 1471. In return, Portinari receives the old chancel for his private use.<sup>24</sup> His decision to found a family chapel there and to designate his tomb is therefore the end of a process of foundations and donations that had already started at the beginning of the 1470s. Furthermore it is very likely that Portinari had come to the decision when the chapel was awarded to him in June 1471. The personal turning point in the life of Tommaso Portinari, that took place at that time, makes it finally self-evident: When he travelled to Florence to have his contract renewed as manager of the Medici branch in Bruges in October 1469, he in the end decided to marry. In June, 1470 he then had his young wife, Maria Magdalena di Baroncelli, follow him to Bruges.<sup>25</sup> A letter that Portinari wrote to Piero de' Medici after his return from Italy on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1469 is very informative as to these events. In this letter Portinari thanks the Prince for supporting his plans to marry and for encouraging him to take this step:<sup>26</sup> "Much has been said in my absence and it was even said that if I had returned without having done this (=having got married), one (a woman) from here (that is to say, from Bruges) would be given to me." (,,... di che assai è istato parlato in

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<sup>22</sup>Portinari belonged together with Guillaume Bische to the cycle of friends around the Count of Charolais in the last years of Philip the Good's reign when Charles got into bitter quarrel with his father. After the accession this cycle provided the nucleus of the new administration. See Grunzweig, op. cit. (note 1), p. XVIII, and Walsh, op. cit. (note 8), pp. 122 and 126-127.

<sup>23</sup>Until today scholars discuss controversially a participation of Charles the Bold: Duclos, op. cit. (note 14), p. 482 speaks of the donation of the rood screen, Rombauts, op. cit. (note 14), p. 11 of whole parts of the new building. Martens however underlines that he couldn't find anything in the documents. See Martens, op. cit. (note 14), p. 262.

<sup>24</sup>RAB, Oud Kerkarchief, inv. nr. 98, f. 99v. See Appendix 1 for the document. See Rombauts, op. cit. (note 14), p. 19 and note. 3, and Martens, op. cit. (note 14), p. 263, note 386. James Weale knew about the entry in the ledger. See Weale, op. cit. (note 14), p. 131.

<sup>25</sup>Concerning the wedding ceremony nothing exact is known. In June 1470 Portinari wrote Lorenzo de' Medici about the arrival of his wife in Bruges and the wedding trip. See Warburg op. cit. (note 14), p. 378.

<sup>26</sup>What Portinari couldn't know: By that time Piero de' Medici is already dead for a week. See Warburg, op. cit. (note 14), p. 378.

mia assenza et fino a dire che sse io e'tornavo senza averlo fatto che me ne darebbono una de qua ..."). Further on in the letter, one is amazed by the detailed description of the joyful reaction in Bruges to his decision to marry and about the advantages of his new status. Portinari's view that his wedding would also be of benefit to the Medici business, because it could be seen that he intended to end his days in Bruges and this would enhance "goodwill, creditworthiness and reputation", leads at the end to the self-assuring confirmation that he would finance his wife's upkeep at the company's expense.<sup>27</sup>

A further passage from the correspondence between him and the "maggiori" of the company shows how this way of reasoning is characteristic of Portinari's self-image, in which he, on the one hand, places himself in a position to advance the branch and, on the other hand, tries to maximise (his own) profits by becoming integrated into a Bruges society influenced by the court of Burgundy. As early as 29<sup>th</sup> March 1466, he defends himself to that effect in a letter by saying that, contrary to other people's opinion, he in no way lives in pomp and prestigious self-promotion. To explain how this appearance has arisen he describes that he will leave right then in order to attend a meeting between the Count of Warwick and Anton, Great Bastard of Burgundy. The connection to the society of the Burgundian court that he has achieved in finding, and to which he implicitly refers in the letter, would justify his expensive and prestigious wardrobe as it would finally benefit the business of the branch – because Portinari justifies his having to be present at the negotiations in the surroundings of the Burgundian court as there is the danger that others could get ahead of "us" ("us" being the Medici bankers): "...non sarebe bene che altri prendessi la lepre che per noi è stata levata."<sup>28</sup>

With Portinari designating his tomb in the Bruges parish church of St Jacob, his local involvement was much greater – in fact it went to the very extreme – than that of other

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<sup>27</sup> „... et quanto caschuno ne resta gioioso et contento et massime agl'amici non principali non ve lo potrei dire et siate certo come della morte che io non sia mai cosa che mi adessi ho accrescetti tanta grazia et tanta reputazione quanto questa che pare hora allaberichata che io non ci sia rinato per istare sulla lena ma si danno a intendere che io c'abbi a finire i mia gorni et non fate dubbio che gl'a'esser chagione di darci holtre alla benivolenzia, credito et reputazione assai in più d'uno modo et anche spero che holtre al passare la cosa di chostà con più honestà che alsì la spesa se n'abbi a diminuire puiosto che altrimenti per l'ordine e reghola che a'essere a chagione delle donne et quando e'fussi altrimenti e che a voi paya di non doverlo soportare vedi ch'ò ch'esser contento di soportarmelo quella parte che a voi parrà esser dovuto...” See Archivio di Stato di Firenze (ASF), Mediceo avanti il Principato (MAP), filza 17, doc. 465, c. 472r-473v. I am grateful to Veronica Vestri (Florence) for the transcription. See also Warburg, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 377-378.

<sup>28</sup> Cited from a letter, dated 29<sup>th</sup> March 1466, in ASF, MAP, filza 12, doc. 314, c. 326r-327v. See De Roover, op. cit. (note 1), p. 340.

branch managers who had a different conception of trading and finance. When managing the London branch, Angelo Tani, for example, had trouble mastering the language of the country. And it has to be considered whether this new way of acquiring clients and entering into deals locally was actually the reason for the success of the Bruges branch at a time when profits could not initially be made.<sup>29</sup>

### Supporting the Observants

It is not only Portinari's membership of the elitist, and yet, most popular confraternity of the Virgin Mary, "vanden Droghen Boome" – a brotherhood that almost all the merchants and representatives of foreign countries joined and where they found themselves among members of the court of Burgundy and influential citizens of the town – that confirms that the foundation of the family chapel by Portinari was part of his much wider involvement in the socio-religious life of Bruges and that this involvement had already begun earlier. Portinari is the confraternity's representative from at least the end of the 1460s. In the contract between the confraternity and the Franciscans of Bruges, which renews the rights of use for a chapel in the church of the Franciscan monastery at the "Braemberg", he is named along with figures who mainly emanate from the town's milieu such as Anselm Adorno, Jan van Nieuwenhove, Colaert Dhaut or the painter, Petrus Christus. Just the mention of the Lucchese merchant, Giovanni Arnolfini, who had been the main supplier of silk fabrics to the Burgundian court as early as the 1440s<sup>30</sup> and from whom Portinari had taken the rights for the use of the Graveline customs station, shows his similarly deep, social integration.<sup>31</sup>

Portinari's ambition of being incorporated into Bruges society with his foundation activities and donations already presumably existed before his professional success as

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<sup>29</sup>The London branch was first part of the Bruges: Bernardo Portinari opened in London a dependence of the Bruges branch and installed Angelo Tani as responsible. In 1446 the Londoner got their independency from the „maggiori“. Both branches however were classified as risky till the end. See De Roover, op. cit. (note 1), pp. 92 and 321-325.

<sup>30</sup>See De Roover, op. cit. (note 1), pp. 190-191.

<sup>31</sup>SAB, Gilde Drogen Boom, nr. 505, box nr. 6. For the transcription see Martens, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 492-97. For the contract see Martens, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 308-10, and R. Strohm, "Muzikaal en artistiek beschermheerschap in het Brugse ghilde vanden droghen boome", Biekorf 83, (1983), pp. 10-12.

manager of the Medici branch.<sup>32</sup> As an entry in the Bruges “Fratres Minores” necrology states, he had already played a decisive role in the founding of the Observant movement in the town at the beginning of the 1460s. While the mendicant orders were being fostered, an expression of the spirit of the times and which characterised the nature of the foundations undertaken by those in power to the north and the south of the Alps from the close of the 14<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>33</sup> Jean de Baenst, an influential courtier, founded a monastery for the reformed Franciscans in Bruges in 1461. However, due to the fact that this was not acceptable to the town’s population and that scepticism still prevailed towards the mendicant orders, the monastery was moved to a location outside the town’s walls after only a year. Aubain Heysse, who until now has evaluated the sources the most thoroughly, links Portinari’s admittance into the Bruges Franciscans’ continuing process of remembrance with this relocation.<sup>34</sup> According to the entry in the necrology, he donated the land for the monastery and the money for its construction.<sup>35</sup> It is, however, difficult to reconstruct from the documents the role that he played in the relocation and his reason for becoming involved in this prestigious foundation project. In the sources the name, Cosimo de’Medici, is also mentioned next to Portinari’s foundation work. In the necrology, he is named in the introductory text which lists the key data about monasteries and new establishments and in the ‘Registum almae Provinciae’ of the Belgian Franciscans as the

<sup>32</sup>This gets clear out of a letter which Portinari sent to his brothers on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1464: Portinari justifies the claim for the leading position of the Bruges branch with having the contacts that are necessary to do the business at the place and not Angelo Tani. See De Roover, op. cit. (note 1), p. 339.

<sup>33</sup>For the donation projects of the Burgundian Court see *Histoire de l’église en Belgique*, ed. E. de Moreau, vol. 4: “L’église aux Pays-Bas sous les ducs de Bourgogne et Charles Quint, 1378-1559”, Brussels 1949, pp. 305–35. For the important role of the mendicant orders in the piety of the north Italian and Florentine society see. D. Kent, *Cosimo de’Medici and the Florentine Renaissance. The Patron’s Oeuvre*, New Haven & London 2000, pp. 161-214, and H. Hefele, “Die Bettelorden und das religiöse Volksleben Ober- und Mittelitaliens im 13. Jahrhundert,” *Beiträge zu Kulturgeschichte des Mittelalters und der Renaissance* 9, Leipzig/Berlin 1910.

<sup>34</sup>A. Heysse, “Trois Couvents des Observants à Bruges et environs”, *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 41 (1948), pp. 217-39, and A. Heysse, “Duae bullae ineditae circa duos conventus Observantium Brugis, 1464 et 1468”, *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 36/37, (1943/44), pp. 131-34. Art historian scholars however ignore Heysse’s work until today and proceed from the assumption that Portinari participated only at the third foundation in 1468. See Martens, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 313-314, Strohm, op. cit. (note 31), p. 13, R. Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges*, Oxford 1985, pp. 72-73, Nuttall, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 45-46 and also D. Wolfthal, “Florentine Bankers, Flemish Friars, and the Patronage of the Portinari Altarpiece”, *Cultural Exchange between the Low Countries and Italy (1400-1600)*, ed. I. Alexander-Skipnes, Turnhout 2007, pp. 11-13.

<sup>35</sup>„(...) qua efferbuit, ad nostram sacram Observantiam devotionem, totum fundum nostri conventus exterioris suis sumptibus comparavit, conventumque ipsum quoad ecclesiam et alia quaedam principalia aedificia a fundamentis construxit,(...)“ see *Necrologium Conventuum Brugensium Fratrum Minorum (1247-1807)*, in: *Analecta Franciscana* 8 (1946), p. 20.

person who financed the newly-constructed monastery (“Conventus omnibus suis numeris absolutus, aedificatus est expensis, [...], domini Cosmae de Medices ...”).<sup>36</sup> The resulting contradiction vis à vis the entry in the necrology for Portinari requires an explanation. If one considers the earlier point in time when Portinari was just an employee of the Medici branch under the management of Angelo Tani, the question should therefore be asked as to the origin of the sum, which is certainly not an inconsiderable amount, and which is connected to the financing of the monastery’s construction. Had Portinari already paid for such a prestigious foundation out of his own pocket at the beginning of the 60s or could it be that his name was entered in the necrology for an order on behalf of Cosimo de’Medici and the Medici branch? If one looks at the profit division in the Bruges and London company contracts there is an indication that the foundation was a project by the Medici; in the contract that Piero de’Medici concluded in 1465 with the partners in Bruges, Angelo Tani and Tommaso Portinari, it is agreed that ten per cent of total profits be spent at first on religious foundations.<sup>37</sup> That is indeed too little to finance the building land and the construction of the monastery together with the church. It shows, however, that integration via the socio-religious level in Bruges, which Tommaso Portinari consistently pursued with his decision to establish a family chapel there, was certainly also part of the Medici company’s trading strategy.<sup>38</sup>

When the Observants were once again relocated to near the town’s walls at the “Ezelspoort” – the monks had become impoverished because the position of the monastery had been too remote and dangerous – the monastery finally became a new focus for religious and social life in Bruges from 1468. Isabella of Portugal, who was known for her distinct affinity to the reformed monastic communities and had founded

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<sup>36</sup>Heysse, “Trois Couvents”, op. cit. (note 34), pp. 221-22. Heysse questions the participation of Cosimo and the Medici because of the fact that some of the dates, which appear in the sources, are not correct. One has to take into consideration however that numbers are more easily a copy mistake than whole names. That there was a connection between Cosimo de’Medici’s support of the Observants in Florence and a Florentine patronage of the Observant Franciscans in Bruges, revealed most recently Diane Wolfthal. See Wolfthal, op. cit. (note 34), pp. 1-21, esp. pp. 13-14.

<sup>37</sup>H. Sieveking, “Die Handlungsbücher der Medici”, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Sitzungsberichte, vol. 5, Vienna 1906, p. 49.

<sup>38</sup>In the Middle Ages there was no contradiction that in a donation financial and economical aspects as well as spiritual salvation came together See O. G. Oexle, “Memoria und Memorialüberlieferung im frühen Mittelalter”, Frühmittelalterliche Studien 10 (1976), pp. 70-95, esp. p. 87, and O. G. Oexle, “Memoria und Memorialbild”, K. Schmid et al., Memoria. Der geschichtliche Zeugniswert des liturgischen Gedenkens im Mittelalter, München 1984, pp. 384-440, esp. p. 394.

about a dozen monasteries in Flanders and Burgundy,<sup>39</sup> now took care herself, along with further figures from around the court of Burgundy, of the relocation and building of the monastery.<sup>40</sup> Guillaume Hugonet, Charles the Bold's finance minister, bore the costs of the monastery library and the glass windows of the church chancel. The Catalan merchant, Ferdinand de Salynes, founded a chapel that was dedicated to the Holy Cross and designated it as his tomb. At the same time, his chapel served as a new, additional location where the Spanish traders could come together to worship. Previously they had used the church of the old Franciscan convent on the "Braemberg" in the town centre just like the Florentine merchants and the "Onze-Lieve-Vrouw vanden drohen Boome" guild.<sup>41</sup> As to how far Portinari, who in the meantime had become manager of the Medici branch, was also involved in this move must remain open.<sup>42</sup> It is quite possible that his foundation also served the purpose of creating an assembly place for the Florentines or even his own chapel in the monastery church of the Observants.<sup>43</sup>

It is certainly important to retain the fact, however, that Portinari has almost "equal rights" with the Duchess as regards the extent of the foundations, just followed by Guillaume Hugonet. A comparison of all the entries in the necrology makes this clear. The fact also that a detailed commemorative description is only linked with these names reinforces the significance of the following entries: "Singulari ac perpetua memoria dignus est ..." is next to a "Omni recommendatione et perpetua memoria digmissima" for Isabella of Portugal and a "dignus omni recommendatione" for Guillaume Hugonet.<sup>44</sup> In addition, Portinari is

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<sup>39</sup>C. Lemaire et al., exhib. cat. Isabelle de Portugal. Duchesse de Bourgogne, 1397–1471, Brussels, pp. 69–79, and M. Sommé, "Le testament d'Isabelle de Portugal et la Dévotion Moderne", Publications du Centre d'Etudes bourguignonnes 29 (1989), pp. 27–37.

<sup>40</sup>Heyse, "Trois Couvents", op. cit. (note 34), pp. 224–25. See also the documents in the Rijksarchief Brugge (RAB), Charters met blauw nummer, nr. 7523–7533.

<sup>41</sup>To Hugonet and De Salynes see Necrologium, op. cit. (note 35), pp. 25–26, and Martens, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 307 and 313–314.

<sup>42</sup>As in 1479 he got back a part of the land that the monks didn't cultivate, Portinari was somehow involved in the last foundation. See Heyse, "Trois Couvents", op. cit. (note 34), pp. 224 and 227. But, as in note 34 already pointed out, the sources are against Portinari as principal donator.

<sup>43</sup>There is no document that proves this – only presumptions. See H. Demarest, "De Florentijnse Loge. Akademiestraat, 1", Het Bruges Ommeland 18, (1978), pp. 193–209, Strohm, op. cit. (note 34), pp. 70–73, and Nuttall, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 45–46.

<sup>44</sup>Necrologium, op. cit. (note 35), pp. 20, 64 and 26.

described as a man with a pious disposition, who has also paid for the furnishings and equipment of the monastery time and time again.<sup>45</sup>

#### Portinari's Mass foundations in Florence in 1472 as a claim for representation

The foundation of a daily early Mass in the Santa Maria Nuova church of the hospital in Florence, managed by the extended Portinari family, and a second Mass at the Lady altar of SS. Annunziata, founded by Tommaso Portinari in 1472, in the end fit very well into this image of his presence in the new, religious centre of Bruges.<sup>46</sup> The endowment had been intended for the present memory because it was for his spiritual salvation alone and that of his "passati", i.e. his forebears. His wife and descendants, on the other hand, were not taken into consideration.<sup>47</sup> The liturgical foundation was aimed primarily at legitimisation and presence within the family and the home town of Florence, where the Portinari had occupied a place for generations in the noble upper class as bankers and merchants, and who were in the service of the Medici. Tommaso Portinari himself followed his cousin, Bernardo di Giovanni d'Adoardo, under whom he had already worked when he was young, into the position of manager of the Bruges branch. The need to consciously emulate his ancestors does not necessarily have to mean however, as Michael Rohlmann assumes, that he claims the leading role within the extended family.<sup>48</sup> The designation of the second foundation, of the Lady altar in the Santissima Annunziata Servite church, particularly points to the fact that the reason for this has been rather a continuation of his strive for status in Bruges.

The altar that was already a Florentine place of pilgrimage for wealthy strangers also at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, at which one could pay homage to the 'Annunciation of the Virgin Mary' and leave votive pictures and figures – giving protection in all kinds of

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<sup>45</sup> „(...), cum sua devota coniuge, qui ob singularem, qua efferbuit(...) et aliaque non exigua dona nobis ac aliis religiosis contulit;“ see *Necrologium*, op. cit. (note 35), p. 20.

<sup>46</sup>This donation is the only one, which scholars of art history have admitted until now. See M. L. Koster, "New Documentation for the Portinari Altar-piece", *The Burlington Magazine* 145 (2003), p. 165, and M. Rohlmann, *Auftragskunst und Sammlerbild. Altniederländische Tafelmalerei im Florenz des Quattrocento*, Weimar 1994, pp. 61-62.

<sup>47</sup> „... que per tempi sara e sia tenuto cobrighato attendere due perpetuj chappellani e quali ongni mattina per lanima sua e di suoi passati abbino a celebrare due messe che una qui nella nostra chiesa di santo egidio e una all altare di nostra donna anuziata de qui e detti Fiorini 700...“; see Koster, op. cit. (note 46), p. 179.

<sup>48</sup>Rohlmann, op. cit. (note 46), p. 61.

matters and supposedly helping against injuries from fighting as well as illness –<sup>49</sup> was the focal point of one of the Medici's' prestige foundation projects at the same time. Piero de' Medici had a marble tabernacle commissioned from Michelozzo in 1448 for the portrait of the Madonna, worshipped like a relic and of which it was said that St Luke himself had painted it, in order to further enhance the location. Piero de' Medici did this at the request of his father, Cosimo, who was particularly close to this cult. With the extension of the church in which the uppermost families in the Medici circle participated through their ownership of private chapels, religious involvement reached a political dimension and this ultimately made the cult around the Madonna of the Annunciation a Medici project.<sup>50</sup> Founding a daily Mass at this politically as well as religiously charged place in Florence was the expression of a corresponding claim – for participation.

When Tommaso Portinari arranged the liturgical foundation in the Florentine churches in 1472, he had, as the entries in the accounts book document, already received the chapel in St Jacob and thereby made the decision to stay in Bruges; he was at the peak of his professional career. There are many reasons to believe that the foundations for Mass were part of a foundation policy that was to assert his claim for representation in Florence – a claim that he made as the manager of the Medici branch in Bruges. And he also had reason to do so because he had not been considered when Cosimo created his foundation in the Badia Fiesolana.<sup>51</sup> With the new monastery building somewhat outside Florence, at least four of the eight side chapels of the monastery church, which were complete by 1466/67, were allocated to people in charge at the Medici Bank. This also enabled the foundation to represent the Medici Bank with its individual branches. In addition to Francesco Sasseti (initially the manager of the Genoese branch and, from 1459, general manager at the Medici company headquarters in Florence)<sup>52</sup>, Angelo Tani, the Martelli family – which provided directors for the branches in Rome and Venice – and Tommaso's older brother, Pigello Portinari, who had managed the branch in Venice for many years

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<sup>49</sup>Warburg, *op. cit.* (note 14), p. 204.

<sup>50</sup>Kent, *op. cit.* (note 33), pp. 202–10.

<sup>51</sup>This foundation is the last important project of Cosimo de' Medici, which has been continued after his death by his son Piero. See Rohlmann, *op. cit.* (note 46), pp. 43–45.

<sup>52</sup>De Roover, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp. 66–68.

and had built up the branch in Milan from 1468,<sup>53</sup> each received a chapel.<sup>54</sup> Tommaso is, perhaps, not included in the plans that Cosimo had already started at the beginning of the 1450s because of the self-enforced changeover of power in Bruges in spring 1464.<sup>55</sup>

#### The hand-over of the chapel in St Jacob to the guild of tanners

At this point, I would like to return to the starting point of this study, the document in the Bruges City Archive and Portinari's foundation of the family chapel in St Jacob: this is because the deed of foundation, dated 16<sup>th</sup> October 1474, is only the first part of the document kept there and this contract with the church is just a copy of the original. A further agreement follows in which Tommaso Portinari decides to hand over the donated chapel to the guild of tanners and its members. The whole, undated document was ratified by Lucas de Via, a public notary from the diocese of Tournai.<sup>56</sup>

Even the testamentary wording with which the hand-over agreement, made in the years after 1474 with the tanners, is introduced nevertheless reveals Portinari's intention when defining the provision: "..., that I, Thomas Portinari, intend, by the grace of God, to increase and strengthen the holy, divine service that serves the love of God and the blessed Virgin Mary and also for the beatification and the comfort of all souls, of mine and that of my wife, of my kin (= family) and of our earlier souls (= deceased ancestors), calling to mind that we are all mortal and that nothing is as certain as death ..."<sup>57</sup>

Portinari wants the hand-over of the chapel to be understood as deference towards God and Mary. The number of Mass ceremonies is therefore to be increased that ultimately will serve to care for his spiritual salvation, that of his wife and of his family. The hand-over of the donated chapel still remains in the sense of a "pro anima" foundation, linked to the

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<sup>53</sup>At this point one should take into consideration the very similar live plan of Pigello, who after his business success in Milan founded a family chapel in the church S. Eustorgio where he was buried. See J. Gitlin Bernstein, "A Florentine Patron in Milan: Pigello and the Portinari Chapel", ed. S. Bertelli et al., Florence and Milan: Comparisons and Relations, vol. 1: Acts of two Conferences in 1982-89, (Villa i Tatti, 11), Florence 1989, pp. 171-200.

<sup>54</sup>P. Nuttall, "The Patrons of Chapels at the Badia of Fiesole", *Studi di Storia dell'Arte*, 3, 1992, pp. 97-112, Rohlmann, op. cit. (note 46), p. 48, and V. P. Viti, *La Badia Fiesolana*, Florence 1926, pp. 63-68.

<sup>55</sup>De Roover, op. cit. (note 1), p. 339.

<sup>56</sup>See Martens, op. cit. (note 14), p. 533. Martens refers the whole document to the date of the first, copied part. See p. 263, note 386.

<sup>57</sup>See Martens, op. cit. (note 14), p. 533.

spiritual salvation of its donor.<sup>58</sup> Further on in the contract it becomes clear that Portinari does not intend to completely give up the chapel because he secures further his claim to the tomb for himself and his wife, and he defines his terms exactly; the use of the chapel by the guild of tanners must exist for “teeuwighen daghen”. The guild will bear the costs for damage to the roof and for the maintenance of the chapel and in return, the guild can hold Mass and meetings of worship at the altar. It can also replace the apostles that Portinari has put up on both sides of the altar with holy statues of its own choosing. The coat of arms of his family and that of his wife that Portinari has set into the timberwork and the glass windows of the chapel must however be retained and also renewed if they become damaged over time. Portinari even goes one step further when he orders: “... that they are to bear the burden and the upkeep after my death or that of my wife or (during our) absence of my daily Mass and other services to God and of the foundations that I have in mind and still plan to arrange there and that these will also be financed and celebrated in the manner and form that I decide.”<sup>59</sup> The tanners therefore commit themselves to taking over Portinari’s grant for his daily Mass in the chapel both during times when he is absent and also after his death and that of his wife. In a kind of barter deal with the tanners, a further liturgical memorial foundation is added to the one established in 1472 in the Florentine churches. What makes this hand-over agreement with the tanners’ guild regarding the memorial plans even more interesting is the fact that the measures that Portinari undertakes to secure his spiritual salvation are not yet complete at the time of the contract, i.e. after 1474. He reserves the right to carry out further foundation projects in the chapel and would like to be certain that the guild members do not merely carry out the projects but also carry them out in the manner that he intended. The hand-over therefore does not result in Portinari giving up the chapel once and for all. Instead, it serves to protect his memory and forms an element of the foundation structure. One can only speculate here what the reasons were for the course that this foundation project took. Did the tanners’ guild hereby take on the role of a community enduring over

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<sup>58</sup>This practice is not unusual in pre-reformatory donation habit. The Christian „caritas“ that is expressed in collections for the poor and in donations for church buildings was a guarantee for salvation of the sins and the escape of the purgatory. See P. Jezler et al., exhib. cat. Himmel, Hölle, Fegefeuer. Das Jenseits im Mittelalter, Zürich 1994.

<sup>59</sup>See Martens, op. cit. (note 14), p. 533.

time, as members of a confraternity depicted it,<sup>60</sup> and which did not exist in the parish of St Jacob? Was that why Portinari believed that, with them, the care of his spiritual salvation was in good hands? The tanners had previously used an altar that stood at the southern pillar of the chapel<sup>61</sup> and were, not least because one of its members, Donaes de Moor, was an up-and-coming member of Bruges society, an influential group in the parish. The benefit from this hand-over agreement, providing them with their own room for their meetings, is obvious. It seems unlikely that the maintenance and use of the most prestigious chapel that St Jacob had to offer became too expensive for Portinari because of the worsening trading situation, which was already emerging in 1474. This is because Portinari retained the hand-over or “barter” contract that he had concluded with the tanners even shortly after the death of Charles the Bold, that is to say, at a time of great political and financial uncertainty. On 13<sup>th</sup> March 1477, he arranged, as agreed with the guild, an interest-payable credit so that payment of the candles, which were responsible for annual costs of two pounds of groats and therefore an expensive item in the upkeep and equipment of the chapel, could be permanently financed.<sup>62</sup>

Furthermore, the practice of creating foundations, of protecting one’s own memory by way of the prayers of guild members, does not constitute an isolated case in the town as the foundation of the chapel by the Hanseatic merchant, Jan Durcopp d. Ä., in St Gillis Church in Bruges shows. After he had married a “local”, he designated the chapel as his tomb and, at the same time, allowed the “rijkepijnders” to use it.<sup>63</sup> In this case it also

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<sup>60</sup>K. Schmid, “Stiftungen für das Seelenheil”, *Gedächtnis, das Gemeinschaft stiftet*, ed. K. Schmid, Freiburg 1985, pp. 51-73.

<sup>61</sup>„...omme daer inne te doen celebrererne den godlycken dienst van sambachts weghe alzo ghijlieden van ouds gheploghen hebt voor Sinte Lysbetten outaer inde zelve kerke.“ See the hand-over agreement in Martens, op. cit. (note 14), p. 533. Margarta van Damme founded the donation of the altar with four weekly masses in honour of St. Mary Magdalena in 1353. Furthermore the altar was dedicated to the Saints Nicolas and Elisabeth. See Rombauts, op. cit. (note 14), p. 28.

<sup>62</sup>RAB, inv. nr. 535, charter nr. 405. For the transcription see Rombauts, op. cit. (note 14), p. 140: „Schepenen in Brugge oorkonden dat de dekens van de ambachten der lamwerkers, grauwwerkers en viltwerkers verklaren ontvangen te hebben van Thomas Portunarij een bedrag van 36 lb. gr. om daarmede een rente te kopen van 2 lb. gr., welke rente moet worden gebruikt voor de verlichting van de kapel van O.-L.-Vrouw, welke kapel door Thomas bovengenoemd aan de bovengenoemde ambachten werd overgedragen.“ and the hand-over agreement: "Betvoort overmids dat ic, Thomaes voors., fonderen zal in vors. mine capelle twee ponden gr. Vlaemscher munten ervelicker renten tsiaers als voor twaslicht of jaerlycks gheduerende de zelve twee ponden groten bezoorghen ende betalen alzo langhe toe dat ic de voors. Twee ponden grooten zal hebben ghefondeirt ende bezet." See Martens, op. cit. (note 14), p. 534.

<sup>63</sup>R. Rössner, *Hanseatische Memoria in Flandern. Alltagsleben und Totengedenken der Osterlinge in Brügge und Antwerpen (13. bis 16. Jh.)*, Frankfurt 2001, pp. 144-45.

becomes clear that the protection of his memory by the members of the guild must have replaced that of his own family in his distant hometown.

The fact that the foundation structure in Portinari's case came as a result of the current situation locally was already clear from the previous history of the foundation of the chapel. The building and other developments of St Jacob Parish Church also had a major influence on his decision regarding this foundation. His decision in favour of a specific form of foundation was now also shown by further events. It becomes more plausible still, not least when one sees how Donaes de Moor, the member of the community already mentioned, had a similar way of working. De Moor, who, it is presumed donated the altarpiece of the high altar of St Jacob – a "Lamentation" by Hugo van der Goes –<sup>64</sup> also had a chapel room arranged for himself in the spandrel between the Portinari chapel and the high chancel of St Jacob in May 1479 (Fig. 2).<sup>65</sup> At the beginning of 1487, he handed this over to the supervisors of the table of the poor of St Jacob for them to use, and just like Portinari, instructed his guild, the tanners, to ensure that the Mass that he had founded for his spiritual salvation take place and that the chapel room be maintained.<sup>66</sup>

#### The Portinari triptych: the picture for the tomb

Along with Tommaso Portinari's foundation work in which he tries to address both his need for status and his concern for his spiritual welfare, it is obvious that the context in which Portinari's altarpiece is commissioned also needs to be reconsidered. Art history's unanimous acceptance until today that the triptych was intended for the altar of the Santa Maria Nuova hospital church in Florence has become invalid because of the document from the Bruges City Archive; recorded in the deed of foundation of 16<sup>th</sup> October 1474, Portinari's intention of being buried after his death in front of the altar of his family's chapel in the church of St Jacob in Bruges remains the central element of the contract for the hand-over of the chapel to the tanners.<sup>67</sup> The function of the monumental triptych is

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<sup>64</sup>Martens, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 266-78, and J. Rotsaert, "Het hoogaltaar in de Sint-Jacobskerk te Brugge", *Het Brugs Ommeland* 15 (1975), pp. 122-35.

<sup>65</sup>Rombauts, op. cit. (note 14), p. 22 and Martens, op. cit. (note 14), p. 265.

<sup>66</sup>Rombauts, op. cit. (note 14), p. 22, and Martens, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 265-66.

<sup>67</sup>See W. and E. Paatz, *Die Kirchen von Florenz*, 1952, vol. 4, pp. 1-64, S. N. Blum, *Early Netherlandish Triptychs. A Study in Patronage*, Berkeley/L.A. 1969, pp. 77-86, Rohlmann, op. cit. (note 46), pp. 53-66, E. Dhanens, *Hugo van der Goes*, Antwerp 1998, pp. 250-301, and Nuttall, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 45 and 47-48. This encloses the dissertation of Magaret L. Koster: *Hugo van der Goes's Portinari Altarpiece: Northern*

undoubtedly to assist in protecting his memory – the importance with which Portinari had himself portrayed as donor, with his wife and three of his children on the wings, make that clear. Their dominance alone in the structure of the composition is new for an altarpiece at this time and is reminiscent of stone epitaphs from Tournai and the Brabant region.<sup>68</sup> In almost exactly the same way, the donor family kneeling to both sides is commended by the associated saints to the “Trinity” or the “Enthroned Madonna” in these grave reliefs, whereby the holy patron saints – as in the epitaph of the family of Antoine Watier, for example – stand behind their charges with a hand on their shoulders (Fig. 3).<sup>69</sup> The time of the foundation in St Jacob concurs with the time when the triptych emerged: the three Portinari children, born by the end of 1474, appeared in the wings of the altarpiece.<sup>70</sup>



Fig. 3

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Invention and Florentine Reception, Ph.D. Diss. Columbia University 2000. (see Koster, *op. cit.* (note 46)) Even Maximiliaan Martens, the only one who evaluated the document in the Bruges City Archives until now, did not take into consideration any consequences for the commission circumstances of the famous triptych. See Martens, *op. cit.* (note 14), p. 264, note 388.

<sup>68</sup>The separation of the donors in the wings commended by their saints in painted altarpieces is first seen in the artistic environment of his Flemish contemporaries. An example is the left wing “St. Antonius and a donor” painted by Petrus Christus, Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst, inv. nr. 113. See M. W. Ainsworth et al., exhib. cat. Petrus Christus. Renaissance Master of Bruges, New York 1994, fig. 8.

<sup>69</sup>Tournai, Musée d’Histoire et d’Archéologie, about 1425.

<sup>70</sup>Margherita was born in 1471, Antonio in 1472 and Pigello in 1474. For the dating of the altarpiece with the births of the children see Warburg, *op. cit.* (note 14), pp. 197-98 and for the correction see Hatfield Strens, *op. cit.* (note 12), pp. 315 and 17.

### The donor portraits of the Portinari family, Tommaso's foundations and his strive for status in Bruges

Did Tommaso Portinari commission a altarpiece from Hugo van der Goes in order to create a representative memory of himself in his home town, with a picture that had to replace his presence when he was still alive? Or did he do this to give expression to his strive for status in Bruges and simultaneously to safeguard the memory for his spiritual salvation after his death in his new hometown? The answer might reveal itself if one looks at the way in which the Portinari family was portrayed by Hugo van der Goes.<sup>71</sup> The association that they consciously sought with the world of the Burgundian court, expressed in their clothes in the portrait, seems to be such a clear-cut matter that it has never explicitly been made the central theme of a study by art history until now. The wide fur trimming in the triangular neck and on the hem of Maria Baroncelli's dress – just like her hairstyle with the hennin or the brooch on the black velvet bonnet of the daughter, Margaritha – cannot be excelled in their fashionableness and closeness to the fashion of the court. The subtlety with which this occurs is shown particularly clearly by the headdress, shown in profile with the brooch, worn by Portinari's young daughter (Fig. 4), that becomes fashionable at the end of the 1470s and turns out to be typical of Maria of Burgundy's portraits at this time – i.e. not until after the triptych is completed (Fig. 5).<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>An interpretation of the realism of the triptych as well as its subject, a „Nativity“, regarding a memorial function of the altarpiece presents my PhD thesis paper: „Bildraumkonstruktion und die Vermittlung von Andacht im Werk von Hugo van der Goes“ (University of Hamburg with Prof. B. Reudenbach).

<sup>72</sup>M. W. Ainsworth et al., exhib. cat. The Robert Lehman Collection: Fifteenth- to Eighteenth-Century European Paintings: France, Central Europe, The Netherlands, Spain, and Great Britain, Princeton 1998, vol. 2, pp. 39-40.



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

The appearance of the ladies in the painting corresponds to the luxurious attire that was granted to Tommaso Portinari when he appeared in public in his societal role as ducal adviser to Charles the Bold. This became most apparent when he was a member of Charles' staged entourage during the Trier negotiations with Frederick III in 1473; the Duke had carefully planned and chosen the court equipment and furnishings in every detail himself.<sup>73</sup> When Charles the Bold entered Bruges on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1468 on the occasion of his wedding to Margaret of York (Portinari had been involved in the negotiation and preparation of the wedding through his meeting with Warwick in the spring of 1466) Portinari's appearance was described by the court chronicler, Olivier de La Marche, "comme les conseillers de monseigneur le duc". His appraisal is followed by the clause: "car il estoit de son conseil".<sup>74</sup> This statement makes clear, however, that Portinari did not hold an official position in the court but was perceived to do so by the Bruges public not least because of his clothes. An English eyewitness assessed already the same situation

<sup>73</sup>A. De Schryver, "Notes pour servir à l'histoire du costume au XVe siècle dans les anciens Pays-Bas et en Bourgogne", *Annales de Bourgogne* 29 (1957), pp. 34-35, and Walsh, *op. cit.* (note 8), p. 123.

<sup>74</sup>O. de La Marche, *Mémoires*, ed. Henri Beaune, Paris 1885, vol. 3, p. 113.

quite differently and called Portinari, marching at the front of the Florentine trading nation, simply the “Maister of the Flarentynes”.<sup>75</sup>

Portinari is only recorded once as ducal adviser in written documents, at the beginning of his career in 1465, in the contract with Philip the Good for the lease of the Graveline customs station.<sup>76</sup> On the other hand Charles the Bold never entrusted him with an official court position.<sup>77</sup> As Richard Walsh discovered in his examination of the role of the Italians at the court of Charles the Bold, this corresponded with the Duke’s policy, not to award titles, land and offices inconsiderately.<sup>78</sup> Walsh describes Portinari’s relationship after Charles the Bold’s accession to power as follows: “His importance to the duke lay in the services he rendered and was not derived from any particular rank held in the Burgundian administration.”<sup>79</sup> If one considers the existing hierarchy and the ceremonial at the Burgundian court, in which it was precisely the clothes that played an important role in demonstrating to which position one belonged,<sup>80</sup> the portraits of the donor, Portinari, are no less than provocatively out of proportion with the official status of merchant.<sup>81</sup> There is, in fact, only one explanation for this depiction of Portinari and his family. Since the beginning of the 1470s at the latest, Portinari had become one of the most important men on Charles the Bold’s side because of the loans that he made available to the Duke to

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<sup>75</sup>Walsh, op. cit. (note 8), p. 127.

<sup>76</sup>L. Gilliodts-van Severen, *Cartulaire de l’ancien grand tonlieu de Bruges*, Bruges 1908, vol. 1, p. 341.

<sup>77</sup>Most obvious is this in the text of the necrology of the Bruges Franciscans: Guillaume Hugonet is designated with his official title and status at the court of Burgundy, as „cancellarius Illmi principis Karoli, ducis Bourgondiae“, Portinari in comparison as „mercator egregius“. The nobleness „Thomas de Portunare“ point to the rank of his family in Florence. See *Necrologium*, op. cit. (note 39), pp. 20 and 26.

<sup>78</sup>Walsh, op. cit. (note 8), pp. 182-83.

<sup>79</sup>Walsh, op. cit. (note 8), p. 122.

<sup>80</sup>W. Paravicini, “Soziale Schichtungen und soziale Mobilität am Hofe der Herzöge von Burgund”, *Francia. Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte* 5 (1977), pp. 127-82, esp. p. 253.

<sup>81</sup>Most of the time he is addressed as „coopman van Florentinen“ (e.g. in the contract with the church St Jacob of 1474). In none of the official documents Portinari is designated as a citizen. While he worked in the services of the Medici, this status was not necessary. After the desolation of the contract in 1478 he worked however on his own account. In the ledger of the city there is a belated entry at the end of the month January 1483, which mentions Portinari with an excessive payment of 70 pound groat for the 4<sup>th</sup> of January of the same year with the consent of the councillors of the city („by consente van der wet“). Therefore Portinari paid with the annual closing of accounts in June for his citizenship in January. In the citizen book of Bruges however his name has never been noted. I am grateful to Noël Geirnaert (Stadsarchief Brugge) for this citation. See “Brugse Poorters”, vol. 3, 1479-1794, *Opgetekend uit de Stadsrekeningen*, Zedelgen 1990, p. 21.

finance his state.<sup>82</sup> Only with the social position arising from this does the appearance in the painting become justified.<sup>83</sup>



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

The detail, not least, of the pearl monograms, “T” (for Tommaso) and “M” (for Maria) in Maria Baroncelli’s hennin was a popular form of decoration in the court, in order to display possession and the marital connection (Fig. 6). Not just shapes such as intertwined letters in the edging of prayer books, but also the carriage in which Margaret of York entered Bruges in July 1468 during the wedding celebrations, decorated with the monograms “C-M”,<sup>84</sup> are an example of this. The comparison with the portrait of

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<sup>82</sup>When and in which way exactly the 9500 lb groat, that Charles the Bold owed the Medici bank at the moment of his death (after the account of Lorenzo even 16150 lb.) came together, is not in the subject of this article. In any case Portinari acted arbitrarily despite the restrictions in the partnership contract of 1471. There e.g. the sum of 6000 lb. has been designated as limit for Charles the Bold and it is emphasized that it is not the politics of the Medici to engage with risky loans to the ruling system at the place. See Grunzweig, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp. XXIX-XXX, and De Roover, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp. 344-45, 346 and 348.

<sup>83</sup>For the epistemological value of clothes in an analysis of a social system see R. Barthes, “Histoire et sociologie du vêtement. Quelques observations méthodologiques”, *Annales. Économies, sociétés, civilisations* 12 (1957), pp. 430-441.

<sup>84</sup>Martens, *op. cit.* (note 14), p. 80.

Margaret of York in the Louvre in Paris (Fig. 7)<sup>85</sup> clearly shows how, in the end, the stately appearance of a Burgundian duchess served as the model for Maria Baroncelli's choice of clothing and jewellery: the Princess is wearing a necklace with marguerites around her neck, which is so similar to the piece of jewellery worn by Portinari's wife that one would have to deduce that it was not just the model but part of Portinari's further-reaching plan. As a sign of her marriage to Charles the Bold the letters "C" (for Charles) and "M" (for Margaret) are attached to the chain, the motifs in flowers already alluding to the name of the necklace's wearer. These are, of course, absent from the necklace of Portinari's wife. Her monogram and that of her husband are, however, embroidered with pearls in her hennin. And there is a tangible, ducal model for this also. In the double portrait of Charles the Bold and his second wife, Isabella of Bourbon – a portrait in accordance with their social position – Isabella's hennin is decorated with the letters "YC" (for Ysabella and Charles) in three rows above one another and with a gap next to each other (Fig. 8).<sup>86</sup>



Fig. 8

<sup>85</sup>Inv. nr. R.F. 38-17. Flemish School, 15<sup>th</sup> century, panel 20,5 by 12, 4 cm. See H. Adhémar, "Le Musée National du Louvre", Publications du Centre National de Recherches 'Primitifs Flamands', I: Corpus de la Peinture des Anciens Pays-Bas Méridionaux au Quinzième Siècle, 5, vol. 1, pp. 11-19.

<sup>86</sup>See the copy of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Gent, Museum voor Schone Kunsten, inv. nr. S-99, panel 22 by 29 cm.

If one consults the portraits by Memling of the Portinari couple of 1470,<sup>87</sup> that served as the model for the portraits in the Portinari triptych, in order to compare them with the pictures of the Duke and Duchess, it becomes obvious that the whole appearance, both of the two women as well as the representation of Tommaso – note the details of the doublet, particularly the fashionable emphasis of the shoulders using padding, the collar, but also the hairstyle – is very similar to Charles’ portrait (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9

One should remember that the monograms in Maria’s hennin were already planned in the portrait by Memling, as the technological examinations have shown, but they were then painted over again.<sup>88</sup> The closeness in form of Memling’s portraits of Portinari to Burgundian portraits of the nobility with the scant detail and the dark, monochrome background, which is, above all, a characteristic of the hand of Rogier van der Weyden, has already been repeatedly recognised by research.<sup>89</sup> As a result, the only enduring

<sup>87</sup>New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. nr. 14.40.626, both panels 44,1 by 33,7 cm.

<sup>88</sup>M.W. Ainsworth et al., exhib. cat. From Van Eyck to Bruegel. Early Netherlandish painting in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 1998, p. 162.

<sup>89</sup>From Van Eyck to Bruegel, op. cit. (note 88), pp. 162-165, and P. Nuttall, “Memling und das europäische Portrait der Renaissance”, Hans Memling – Portraits, ed. T.-H. Borchert, Stuttgart 2005, p. 73.

difference, the difference in social standing, can be easily overlooked: these portraits of the Portinari couple are exactly not portraits of rulers; they are merely donor portraits that were part of a devotional triptych. The centre panel, presumably a depiction of “Mary with Child”, with the Portinari facing her with folded hands, despite the frame actually being too narrow for this genre, is lost today.<sup>90</sup>

The detail of the monograms in Maria Baroncelli’s hennin, sign of the marital connection, unites two religious pictures commissioned within a short space of time of each other. Does this mean then that the associated portraits of the donor had the same function and were intended for the same place? The conclusions that seem to confirm this suggest that there are actually three pictures even, that, although specific to their genre very different, present virtually identical portraits of the donor and which Portinari ordered in the short space of time between his wedding at the beginning of 1470 and the foundation of the family chapel in October 1474 from Hans Memling and Hugo van der Goes. Knowing about Portinari’s endeavour for status, it is very tempting to link these pictures in chronological sequence with his foundation work in Bruges: the Turin Passion panel produced by Hans Memling around 1470 already shows, still inserted inconspicuously on the edge of the composition, portraits of Portinari and his wife in Burgundian court fashion, which is only altered in the subsequent works in its detail (Fig. 10).<sup>91</sup>



Fig. 10

<sup>90</sup>From Van Eyck to Bruegel, op. cit. (note 88), p. 162.

<sup>91</sup>Turin, Galleria Sabauda, inv. nr. 8, panel, 56,7 by 92, 2 cm.

With regard to both its function as well as its destination, the relatively small panel still raises a few unsolved questions.<sup>92</sup> This first religious picture showing a number of scenes simultaneously has evidently been linked to a specific function, which justified the creation of a new type of picture.<sup>93</sup> The depiction in which the individual scenes from the Passion story of Christ are combined seems to be meant especially for the prayers and meditation of private worship aimed at the “Imitatio Christi”. At the same time, it also corresponds to yet another practice of the time: the pilgrimage to Jerusalem lends itself to being replaced very graphically with the scenes incorporated in town and countryside of Christ’s suffering. Just as they were also re-enacted at the time with “tableaux vivants” on the occasion of the ducal entrances into Bruges or with sculptures at places such as the crypt of St Bavo in Ghent.<sup>94</sup> The question regarding the function of the Turin Passion panel cannot be solved here. However, the early creation of the picture, very probably on the occasion of Portinari’s wedding,<sup>95</sup> is called to mind at this point on the one hand and, on the other, reference is made, once again, to Portinari’s special relationship to Charles the Bold, that, as the stately donor portraits of the Florentine merchant and his wife show, had led to Portinari and his wife becoming outwardly similar to Charles the Bold and Margaret of York. If one presupposes that the Turin Passion panel also emulated a previous work, one could see that this picture, with the individual scenes from the Passion shown simultaneously and in a narrative manner, is a modest equivalent to the series of Passion carpets, interwoven with gold thread, that adorned the chapel of the *Prinsenhof* during the festivities of the Duke and Duchess’s wedding in July 1468.<sup>96</sup> The Turin Passion panel would therefore imitate and, at the same time, replace the “portable

<sup>92</sup>Scholars brought this panel several times in connection with Tommaso’s chapel in Bruges. See D. DeVos, Hans Memling, Antwerp 1994, p. 46, and Rohlmann, op. cit. (note 46), p. 63. Because of its size and its iconography however the panel seems very unlikely for a representative altarpiece in a family chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary. See Martens, op. cit. (note 14), p. 264, note 388.

<sup>93</sup>For the function and the phenomenon of these pictures see E. Kluckert, *Die Erzählformen des spätmittelalterlichen Simultanbildes*, Tübingen 1974.

<sup>94</sup>Martens, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 141-143. Another example for an „imitated“ site is the Jerusalem chapel of the Adorno family in Bruges with a copy of the Holy Grave. See Martens, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 291-304.

<sup>95</sup>Dirk DeVos suggests that the panel was painted in 1470 on the occasion of the wedding. See DeVos, op. cit. (note 92), p. 46.

<sup>96</sup>Martens, op. cit. (note 14), p. 82. That the construction of space of these tapestries with the distribution of the scenes in the landscape or in architectural settings is very similar to Memlings Passion panel show still existing series of tapestries, i.e. those in the Vatican and in the Royal Museums of Brussels. See A. Rapp Buri et al., exhib. cat. *Burgundische Tapissereien*, Munich 2001, pp. 221-29, figs. 180 and 183.

grandeur” of the picture carpets in the ducal chapel using the qualities of a painting. The monastery church of the Observants, who had recorded Portinari in their Book of the Dead because of his religious gifts, would have provided a possible destination. The copies produced by the Bruges painters around 1515, however, support the conclusion that the panel must still have been located in a religious establishment locally after Portinari’s death.<sup>97</sup>

The devotional triptych that originated from about the same time, the half-figure donor portraits of which are so similar to those of the typical portraits of nobility in their representative style, could have been meant for the altar of the family chapel in St Jacob. With knowledge about Portinari’s “marketing” strategy with regards to his wedding, they seem ideal for a suitable appearance by the newly wed Portinari in public in Bruges. And there are also many reasons to believe that Portinari and his wife could use the chapel from the time when Portinari had awarded it in June 1471. Approximately half a year before, on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1470, the Bishop of Tournai consecrated the new main altar, together with three further altars, during a celebration of Mass in the newly constructed chancel.<sup>98</sup>

With the actual foundation of the family chapel in October 1474 and the following transfer to the guild of tanners, Portinari finally placed the order for a monumental altar altarpiece (Fig. 1). With Maria’s hennin, which is only modified in its monograms, his “family portrait” doubtlessly acts not only as a continuation of the portrait in the devotional triptych but is also the resumption of a representation strategy to finally secure his memory in the Bruges family chapel.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup>The Master of the Bruges Passion Scenes copied i.e. details of Memling’s composition. When the cloister was dissolved in 1517, the Observants reunited with the Franciscans and resettled to the monastery at the „Braemberg“, the panel could have found its way to Italy. Vasari mentions in the second edition of his “Vite” from 1568 a panel with passion scenes in the collection of Cosimo de’Medici. See DeVos, op. cit. (note 92), p. 46.

<sup>98</sup>RAB, inv. nr. 98, f.103.

<sup>99</sup>At this point one should consider in principle if Flemish donor(!) portraits of Italian merchants were commissioned for the memory of their families in the far homeland. To me it seems more likely that their function was to demonstrate their self-image and -evidence in Bruges society. An example that succeeds the Portinari portraits is the donor portraits of Pierantonio Bandini Baroncelli and his wife. The follower of Tommaso Portinari as branch manager had a similar society strategy and his donor portraits of about 1480 show the same similarity to Burundian fashion and appearance. See Florence, Uffizi, inv. nr. P 943 and P 944. See Warburg, op. cit. (note 14), Fig. 54 a and b. A first step is made with the article „Early Flemish Portraits, 1425-1525“ of Guy Baumann. He distinguishes between donor portraits, independent portraits and half-length devotional portraits. Published in: Metropolitan Museum of Art 43 (1986).



Fig. 1

#### About the arguments in favour of Florence

Unlike Tommaso's "visualised" attempts to gain status by using donor portraits of the family, the extended Portinari family had already belonged to the noble upper class for many generations. Against the background of existing, detailed dress codes in towns precisely like Florence it must be questioned whether the refined Florentine society would have at all rewarded the conspicuous demonstration of one's belonging to the court of Burgundy. On closer inspection, the argument that previously did not cause any doubt about the situation, always required a lot of explanation: with his portrait on the altar of the Santa Maria Nuova hospital church, Tommaso wanted to be "... in the row of portraits of his ancestors, in the centre even ..." in order to demonstrate his leadership role to which he laid claim within the family in Florence.<sup>100</sup> Whether Tommaso had ambitions of that kind, however, seems exceedingly doubtful. The hospital that had originated in 1288 from a foundation by Folco di Ricovero Portinari and was still in the ownership of the extended family in the 15<sup>th</sup> century had a regularly changing manager. In contrast to his older brothers, the post of manager was, however, never transferred to Tommaso, who genealogically in no way occupied a front position anyway.<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, there was no

<sup>100</sup>Rohlmann, op. cit. (note 46), p. 61.

<sup>101</sup>For the reconstruction of the family story see the „Genealogia Portinari“, Ms 2009 in the Biblioteca Riccardiana. See G. Pampaloni, *Il Palazzo Portinari-Salviati*, Florence 1960. There existed children of the

reason for an altarpiece to be commissioned. The planning arrangements for the décor of the family chapel had recently taken place after the church had been rebuilt during the course of the extension works to the hospital. The payments in the hospital's accounts book to Lorenzo Monaco from the years 1420 to 1422 document that he produced a altarpiece shortly after the altar was consecrated by Pope Martin V.<sup>102</sup> The gradual painting of the chapel chancel with frescoes showing scenes from the Life of the Virgin Mary, that was completed by the mid-1460s and to which terracotta reliefs were added in the entrance area, was attributed to three renowned Florentine painters, Domenico Veneziano, Andrea del Castagno and Alesso Baldovinetti. This makes the thesis that the Flemish triptych would complete the picture works in the chapel seem unlikely.<sup>103</sup>



Fig. 11

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elder brother of his father. Tommaso himself had two elder brothers: Pigello took 1459, Accerito 1472 the post of manager of the hospital. See A. Mariani, *Notizie della nobile famiglia Portinari*, Florence 1897, p. 15.

<sup>102</sup>O. Sirén, *Don Lorenzo Monaco*, Strasbourg 1905, pp. 183-84 and 110-11. Presumably the commissioned altarpiece is the „Adoration of the Magi“ which is located today in the Uffizi Galleries. See A. Tartuferi et al., exhib. cat. *Lorenzo Monaco. A Bridge from Giotto's Heritage to the Renaissance*, Milan (Galleria dell'Accademia) 2006, pp. 224–226.

<sup>103</sup>B. Walsh, *The Fresco Paintings of Bicci di Lorenzo*, Ph.D. Diss. Indiana University 1979, pp. 21–45 and 116-19, and Paatz, op. cit. (note 67), p. 16. For the thesis, the Portinari triptych was part of the decoration system of the chancel of Santa Maria Nuova, see Rohlmann, op. cit. (note 46), pp. 53-56.

The competitive behaviour of the two managers of the Bruges branch, Angelo Tani and Tommaso Portinari, which had already become almost legendary, was the reason why research on the part of art history finally also believed the destination of Portinari's triptych to be the chancel of Santa Maria Nuova. The altarpiece that Portinari ordered from Hugo van der Goes was said to be his response to the "Last Judgement"<sup>104</sup> that Angelo Tani had commissioned a few years previously from Hans Memling for his chapel in the Badia Fiesolana and with which he reportedly wished to demonstrate his professional career in Flanders.<sup>105</sup> But Tani's donor portraits precisely do not indicate that Tani belongs to the Burgundian court. Without doubt, his wife appears as a rich, noble lady, but in contrast to Maria Baroncelli, without any stately claim. The association with Margaret of York, which became all too clear with the necklace and the hennin, is in contrast to an equally luxurious pearl necklace and a fine headpiece with the edge adorned with pearls and gold thread that Catarina Tanagli has laid over her head (Fig. 11).

This veil's detail, conventional for Florentine society, makes it clear that the two orders cannot be compared to one another.<sup>106</sup> They must be seen as the result of differing social contexts and interactions, as they were shown here with the comments on Portinari's foundation activities and donations and the related question of status within a society. At the time when the contract was awarded to Hans Memling, which presumably took place during a business trip for the Medici to London in 1469,<sup>107</sup> Angelo Tani had made Florence his main home again because he had been displaced from his position as manager of the Bruges branch by Portinari in spring 1464.<sup>108</sup> The Flemish altarpiece that was intended for a chapel in the Medici Badia Fiesolana foundation was already evidence then of Tani's previous professional position.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>104</sup>Gdansk, National Museum, inv. nr. SD/413/M, central panel, 241 by 180,8 cm and wings, 242 by 90 cm.

<sup>105</sup>Rohlmann, op. cit. (note 46), pp. 62-63, and Nuttall, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 60-61.

<sup>106</sup>Paula Nuttall believes, that the veil, which is characteristic for the fashion in Florence but not fitting to the Burgundian is due to the absence of Catarina, so that Hans Memling was forced to study her portrait from a drawing. This includes not imperatively the headdress. The veil was rather intended by the commissioner. See Nuttall, op. cit. (note 54), p. 99.

<sup>107</sup>Rohlmann, op. cit. (note 46), pp. 42-43.

<sup>108</sup>De Roover, op. cit. (note 1), p. 339. Since then Angelo Tani continued his career in the motherhouse in Florence and was sent as an envoy to the London branch to solve problems. See De Roover, op. cit. (note 1), pp. 331-34.

<sup>109</sup>Nuttall, op. cit. (note 54), pp. 97-99, and Rohlmann, op. cit. (note 46), pp. 41-52.

Even if the sources until now have not been able to provide any information as to what finally induced Portinari to give up his tomb in St Jacob and to transfer the altarpiece to Florence, what *is* certain is that he was in great financial difficulty in May 1483, at the time of the shipment of the altarpiece. He had had to sell the jewellery – perhaps that with which his wife and daughter had been painted in the portraits – a few months earlier in Rome.<sup>110</sup> The money to transport the triptych was lent to him by a colleague from Bruges who was paid off by the hospital in Florence.<sup>111</sup> At the time when he commissioned his altarpiece in October 1474, Tommaso Portinari, on the other hand, did not plan to return to Florence and endeavoured to demonstrate and consolidate his position in Bruges society with the foundation of the family chapel and – it is asserted here – with an “image” of himself.

Photo © Berlin, Susanne Franke: 2; IRPA/KIK, Brussels: 3,7,8,10; Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi: 1; Gdansk National Museum, Ryszard Petrajtis: 11; Repro from: Dhanens, op. cit. (note 67), p. 259, 291: 4,6; Repro from: From Van Eyck to Bruegel, op. cit. (note 88), p. 164-165: 9; Repro from: The Robert Lehman Collection, op. cit. (note 72), p. 39: 5.

## Appendix 1

RAB, inv. nr. 98, f. 81v (transcribed by Laetitia Cnockaert and Thomas Woelki):

[...] Ontf(angt) up den XIsten dach in meye anno LXX bi der hand von Sire Thomaes Portunary de welke Thomaes verleyde eene somme van hondert francken omme de kerke de welke myn geduchte here gaf, den nieuwen werke curts naer paesschen anno LXX. Ende Thomaes voors(eyde) ontfynk per h(eer) Jan d’Hond daquyt van porchip(ape) ende kercmeesters over de kerke omme Guillem Riple (Guilbert de Ruple) argentier vande voors(eyde) minen gheduchten (gheduchtich) here gheteekent by meester Jan de Gros audientier etc. Omme te halene zyn warant anden zwlven Riple (Ruple) met welken acquitte de zelve Sire Thomas wel te vreden was. Ende was gheimpetreit omme de kerke per prochip (ape) kercmeesters ende h(ere) Jan d’Hond anden voors (eyde) minen gheduchten here, die god altyts beware amen. Dus hier of ontf(angt) hondert vrancken valent XIII l(ibri) VI s(olidi) VIII d(enarii) g(root) [...]

RAB, inv. nr. 98, f. 99v (transcribed by Laetitia Cnockaert and Thomas Woelki):

[...] Item boven desen voorscreve ontfanghe de welke h(eer) Jan de Hond over de kerke ontf(aen) heist. So heist Sire Thomaes Portunary ghegheven der voors(eyde) kerke te hulpe ende secourse vanden nieuwen choore aldaer de somme van hondert ende twintisch ponden groot. Ende dit ter causen van det hem prochipape ende kercmeesters

<sup>110</sup>P. Nuttall, *Early Netherlandish Painting in Florence: acquisition, ownership and influence, c. 1435-1500*, Ph.D. Diss. Courtauld Institute, London 1990, p. 374.

<sup>111</sup>Hatfield Strens, op. cit. (note 12), pp. 315-19.

consenteirden te ghebrukene den ouden choor omme te wordene zine capelle. De welke somme Syre Thomaes vors (eyde) begheerde gheappliquiert ende gheleyt te hebbene an twerc vande voors(eyde) nieuwen chore omme tselve weerc te eer up te bringhene. Ende aldus omme de penninghen daer of te heffene, so gaf Sire Thomaes last Colaert Dhaut al doe kercmeester, dat Colaert de selve somme van C ende XX L. (pound) g(root) betalen soude, van Sire Thomaes weghe ende scrivense up huerlieder beeder rekeninghe als ontfaen hebbende van Sire Thomaes te kerken behouf. Ende dsitribueren de selve gheheele somme diverschen persone die de stoffe ten selven werke vanden chore leveren soude. Also verte als de somme lipe dwelke last de voors(eyde) Colaert an nam. Alsoot hier naer bliken sal ter cause vander ghifte van Sire Thomaes inder namne voorscreven gheheel.

Hondert twintech ponden groot.

Nota t' verclaers vander betalinghe ghedaen per Colaert Dhaut van dessen ghelde over de kerke. Also sou overghegeven es diverschen personen die der selve kerke leveringhen ghedaen hebben van stoffen, die vollegt hier naer inde betalinghen van dese rekeninghe van dese voors(eyde) jare.

Somma sommarum van alden gheheelen ontfanghe die ic Jan de Hond priester ontfaen hebbe midsgad(ens) den C XX L(ibri) g(root) die Colaert Dhaut onf(angen) heist. Voren uclaerst commen tsamen.

II c (hoch) XLVIL(ibri) VI s(oldi) XI d(enarii) g(root).

*URL: <http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/artdok/volltexte/2008/445>*