

Fleshing out the body

The 'colours of the naked' in workshop practice and art theory, 1400-1600*

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In the early eighteenth century, Gerard de Lairese considered the 'Koleur der Naakten' a very complex issue. 'Having extensively and carefully studied this matter' he writes in the tenth chapter of his *Groot Schilderboek*, 'I find there is so much to say about it that it is impossible to fit in one chapter'.¹ De Lairese's hint at the vastness of the subject is not surprising. At this point in history, he looked back upon a century in which painters like Rembrandt and Rubens had taken the representation of human skin to new levels of realism, and flesh colour – its illusionistic as well as technical qualities – had long become the primary touchstone of painterly skills.

Although Lairese promises a condensed overview of the subject, his actual examination presents the reader with a curious mix of detailed practical instruction and general theoretical reflection. We read about which pigments to combine for the ruddy colour of a young man or how to scumble a bluish glaze onto female flesh parts, while in the next paragraph Lairese talks about the necessity to study the appearance of colours after nature, the ideal balance between design and colouring, or the bad habit of copying from others instead of taking nature as a master. The contrast is intriguing. Firstly, because Lairese addresses the actual process of painting more directly than in other chapters of his book, while his general considerations seem to go far beyond colouring naked bodies. And secondly, because the detailed references to practice are somehow at odds with a common idea about the character of art theory. In art history, it is widely assumed that the establishment of painting as a free art and the subsequent rise of the 'pictor doctus', meant breaking away from the workshop traditions of the anonymous medieval painter.² Regarding written sources, this emancipation is said to have become manifest in a shift from recipe and model books towards art theoretical treatises, moving away from instructive descriptions towards the exploration of general concepts. Consequently, art theory is often presented as a result of the new intellectual freedom of the artist, who did not need to be told anymore *how* to paint, but wrote himself about what and why to paint.³ Contrary to this model (which in an Aristotelian tradition ranks theory above practice and must be questioned in general) writings about the depiction of flesh colour remained closely linked to painterly practice and the 'how to' of painting. Here, it seems, medieval workshop tradition was embedded in a theoretical framework rather than discarded.

Why written sources prior to Lairesse discuss the technical aspects of painting more often than not within the context of flesh painting and why practice surfaces when flesh colour is at stake will be investigated here. The object depicted with flesh colour, the human body, has a key role in this analysis. In order to clarify how its representation compelled theory to remain in touch with practice, the first part of this paper sketches out the early history of flesh colour recipes in Dutch and some related German and French sources. The second part looks at how the nomenclatura of recipes and the knowledge of workshop techniques influenced the writings of Jean Lemaire de Belges, Lucas de Heere, Domenicus Lampsonius, and Karel van Mander.

The specific attention paid to flesh colour in art theory is not an exclusively Netherlandish phenomenon.⁴ Yet the sources discussed here suggest a particular sensitivity to painting techniques, possibly triggered by the impact of oil paint on the realistic depiction of the human body. Thus far, Netherlandish art literature has mainly been studied in relation to others texts, proposing that its main achievement was the integration of Italian models with the native Eyckian tradition.⁵ The influence of painterly practice on art theory on the other hand has only recently been investigated.⁶ The results suggest that the Eyckian tradition not only shaped Netherlandish writings through the Italianate topoi of 'mimesis' (Van Eyck's realism as described by Fazio and others) and 'invention' (Van Eyck's invention of oil paint as described by Vasari)⁷, but also through its practice. I hope to demonstrate that the tacit knowledge of workshop practice and the explicit knowledge transmitted in recipe books formed an important inspiration to the emerging art theoretical discourse in the Netherlands, and that particularly in the case of painting bodies, theoretical thinking was firmly grounded in artistic practice.

How to paint bodies. Recipes and terminology

Painting flesh is difficult for many reasons. First of all, viewers scrutinize bodies more thoroughly than other parts of a painting, because as in real life, we use the appearance of skin to obtain information about age, health or emotional state of another human being. Therefore, flaws in the representation of skin will easily be noticed. Secondly, skin is by its very nature a very complex substance. Skin colour seems monochrome, yet is actually composed of many subtle nuances, just like the texture of skin seems even, but at a close look, seamlessly joins soft and rough, wrinkled and smooth zones; skin moreover is neither opaque nor translucent, but both, which creates complex shadows and interreflections. Last but not least, skin can appear different in each individual person, depending on gender, race etc. A painter not only has to create fluent transitions between the different zones of colour and texture, trying, in the process, to keep a careful balance between blotchiness and unnatural smoothness, he also has to consider variations in skin tones and the correct relationship between the variously coloured figures to each other, their clothing and environment. The complexity of what Lairesse called the colours of the naked, therefore, has occupied artists, theoreticians and critics over centuries.⁸

Because flesh colour is not just a colour (like blue or green), but tied to the object it denotes (the body), practical instructions on how to mix flesh colour are necessarily related to matters of representation. Recipe books therefore are the earliest sources documenting the search for a convincing depiction of the body with colour. They generated a specific vocabulary to describe the transformation of paint into flesh, and document how the problem of realistic representation stimulated the development of ever more sophisticated techniques for mixing and applying flesh paint.

The importance of painting flesh already becomes evident in antique sources and recipes included in Byzantine and early medieval compilations. In antiquity, the term *andreikelon* (ἀνδρείχελον) 'human colour' was used to describe the colour of the human body.⁹ The earliest recipes appear in the anonymous *Mappae Clavicula*, a treatise probably originally compiled in the fourth century.¹⁰ Also the *Schedula* of the German monk Theophilus and a couple of centuries later the so-called painters' book of Mount Athos, a collection of Byzantine recipes compiled after 1300, devoted a considerable amount of attention to the realistic depiction of skin.¹¹ In Theophilus' handbook, the recipes 'De temperamento colorum in nudis corporis' are discussed in the very first chapter. No less than thirteen subchapters describe ten different colour mixtures (all of which have their own names, such as *membrana*, *rosa prima* or *sinopia*) to paint faces, as well as young and old, alive and dead bodies.¹² A compilation written in France around 1300 introduces a new term.¹³ In the recipe 'Quomodo componitur olchus colour seu membrana' the hue *olchus* is mixed from vermilion or red lead with lead white and a little bit of green. The green, an ingredient not used in Theophilus' mixture for *membrana*, can be traced back to the Byzantine ideal, the influence of which can still be discerned in fifteenth-century Italian underpaintings of flesh tones with green earth (*terra verde*). The greenish flesh colour *olchus* thus provides a clue about stylistic developments and realism in French miniature painting in the fourteenth century.

Already at the beginning of the fifteenth century, the varied terminology for the depiction of skin was acknowledged. To his compilation of various recipes the Frenchman Jean le Begue added a glossary of colour and pigment names. For flesh colour he sums up more synonyms than for any other tint: 'Carnatura, alia membrana, alia cedra, alia holcus vel olcus, alia lumina, alia veneda seu venedra, alia fulvus, menesch, prasis, poesch, cerusa, purpureus, folium, sinopis, ruscus, rosa, rubi, succus, menesch, exedra'.¹⁴ Most of the terms derive from Theophilus, some of them denote hues which are not flesh-coloured but used in the process of depicting faces, for example a dark colour called *venedra* used to paint in the eyes. The most interesting term is probably *menesch*. The association with the German *Mensch* (human being) is tempting and *menesch* might be interpreted as a German variation on the Greek *andreikelon* (human colour), yet other sources describe *menesch* as a bluish hue.¹⁵ However, an equivalent of such a 'human colour' was soon to appear. While *membrana* was not used after Theophilus, *carnatura* with its many variations became the main word for flesh colour used in French and Italian recipes and art theory.¹⁶ In the Netherlands and Germany another

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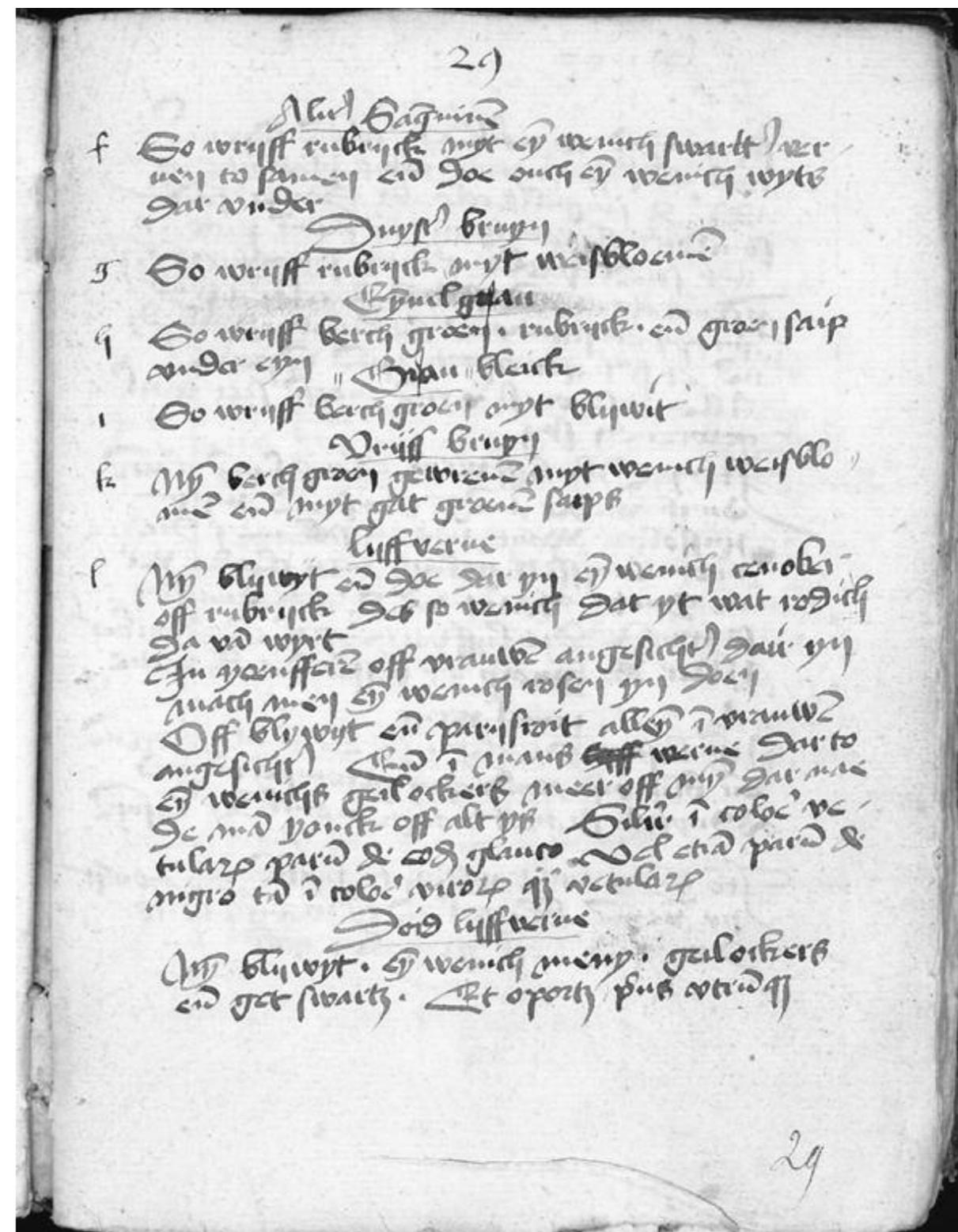
Anonymus, *A recepy for lijfverwe*, ca. 1490
Hs 1028/1959 8, fol. 29r, Stadtbibliothek Trier
(photo: Anja Runkel)

term appeared, which was not restricted to the surface (*membrana/skin*) or substance (*carne/flesh*) of the body but literally incorporated the whole object: *lijfverf* or *Leibfarbe*. The term that may best be translated as body tint connotes the colour of the object to be depicted as well as the paint used to do so.¹⁷ Forgotten in modern art historical nomenclature, *lijfverf* was actually used in recipe books and art theory until the late eighteenth century.¹⁸ An early mention occurs in the Strasbourg manuscript, dating from around 1400. Here detailed recipes for *libvarw* (sometimes abbreviated to *libvar*) are differentiated according to age ('ein schön libvar zu jungen lüten', 'ein ander libvar zu alten lüten'), origin or class ('libvarw zu braunen lüten'). Also a mixture for the colour of dead bodies, specifically the dead Christ, is described ('Wiltu ein tödlich libvar machen zu crucifixen und erbermhertzigkeit').¹⁹ The composite *antlitbrunrot* (face brown red) denotes a darker red that is used to mark the contours in and around a face.²⁰ The process of mixing and applying the colours and how to shade with a slightly darker hue is explained in detail, but not without addressing the judgment of the painter, who is recommended to vary body tints in order to avoid repetition, and to take care that the flesh is 'not too dark and not too light', but has 'just the right colour'. This implies the awareness of an ideal flesh tone within the overall tonal arrangement of the picture as well as a comparison to nature.

The Strasbourg flesh colour recipes also shed light on the early use of the term 'naked'. The body to be represented is differentiated into 'face, hands and where the image is naked' ('antlit und hende und do das bild nakent si). Another early mention occurs in the guidelines of the painters' guild of Konstanz (1495), stipulating that a masterpiece had to include a building, a landscape and something naked and something dressed ('ain gehuis mit ainer landschaft und von nackend und von gewand').²¹ In both cases the objectified form 'the naked' is used to describe all non-clad parts of the body. This suggests that 'the naked' originated from a practical approach to the question of how to depict visible body parts with paint, rather than from a theoretical discourse on ideal beauty or proportion.²²

Recipes like the ones in the Strasbourg manuscript can be found in a number of German manuscripts from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century.²³ Very exhaustive directions are given in the *Illuminierbuch* of Valentin Boltz von Ruffach, one of the first printed instructions for painters (Basel 1549).²⁴ In the chapter *Von lybfarben* Boltz sums up mixtures for children colour, women body colour, middle-aged people colour, dark people colour, blood colour, pale people colour, old people colour, dead people colour, bone colour and flame- and smoke colour, followed by recipes for different hair colours.²⁵ This sequence, enabling the painter to populate entire scenes – like the Last Judgment – including skeletons, fire and smoke, would be repeated until the late seventeenth century in German and Netherlandish painters' manuals.²⁶

A Dutch manuscript compiled before 1500 contains one of the earliest recipes distinguishing between male and female flesh colour.²⁷ Here, *Lijfverwe* is mixed from lead white and vermilion; for women, a little rose can be added, while Parisian red and lead white make a good colour for women's faces. For male body tints, yellow ochre must be added, measured according



to age (fig. 1).²⁸ This basic terminology for mixing flesh colour was expanded as painting techniques became more refined. In a late fifteenth-century compilation for miniature painting, a recipe for faces tells the painter how to apply a finish mixed from vermillion, red lead, rose and a little saffron to let his creatures 'blush'.²⁹ The procedure is described in terms of its effect and demonstrates how the myth of the living artwork – most famously represented by Pygmalion's blushing sculpture – roots in practice. Blushing is the finishing touch of painted faces, this holds true for the rozy cheeks of miniatures or polychromed sculptures just as much as for a twentieth century animated movie. Close to the completion of SNOW WHITE (1937), Walt Disney decided its main character looked too pale and inkers and painters had to add blush to her cheeks in tens of thousands of drawings.³⁰

A similar relation between medium and representation appears in an early sixteenth-century recipe for *levende lijfverwen* (living body tints or body tint for living persons), a mixture that should result in bodies looking alive.³¹ A variation is included in the so-called *Liber Illuministarum*, a collection of miniature recipes written around 1500. Next to mixtures for poetic colours like *eselgrau* (donkey grey) and *glassfarb* (glass colour) a *lebenfarb* (life colour) is listed, mixed from ochre and black.³² Unlike the 'living body tints', this name does not denote what the colour should represent, but the effect it should have. 'Life colour' signals how the achievement hoped for in the depiction is transferred to the medium. Not only will the body appear alive with this colour; already the paint itself carries the potential to create life.³³

Flesh colour could also be separated from its principal bearer and applied to other objects. Cennino Cennini for instance gave instructions for the *incarnazione* of flesh-coloured paper.³⁴ Also recipes for flesh-coloured sealing wax, satin, woollen stockings, and cotton flowers are recorded.³⁵ In his *Musterbuch* the German miniaturist Stephan Schriber meticulously described how to paint small birds with blue, red and *libfarb* feathers and added illustrations of beautiful and indeed flesh-coloured birds.³⁶ When it lent its colour to stockings or birds, flesh colour was reduced to just a colour. But mostly, it was used to create human bodies. As such, it foreshadowed the discourse on colour as enlivener of painting and triggered a number of metaphorical and art theoretical reflections on the question of what painting (bodies) entailed.

Flesh-theory from Jean Lemaire to Karel van Mander

The imaginative potential of the vocabulary used in recipes was explored early on. An anonymous German poem from the late thirteenth century describes the face of a young girl, 'ir nase und ir wängelin von lipvarwe gepinset' (her nose and cheek brushed in with flesh colour).³⁷ There can be no doubt that the author had derived his brush and paint-metaphor from the painter's workshop.

In the Netherlands, Jean Lemaire de Belges, whose writings had a central position in the *paragone* between the visual, literary and performing arts at the court of Margaret of Austria³⁸, was one of the first to transfer flesh colour from recipe literature into art theory. In *La plainte du désiré* (1503), a

poem to commemorate the death of Lemaire's patron Louis de Luxembourg, the personification of *La Peinture* summons the famous artists of her time to depict the mourning of the Duke. Interestingly, Lemaire does not recount what these virtual artworks represent, but how they are made: *Peinture* instructs the artists to grind only black pigments (soot black and bistre) – the colours of sorrow – and to mix *paste carnation* (flesh coloured paint).³⁹ Lemaire simply lists colours, yet the virtual contrast between the dark hues and the light flesh effectively evokes pale-faced mourners clad in black robes. The mere mentioning of mixing *paste carnation* appears to be enough to conjure up the image of humans.

In his *Couronne Margaritique* (1504), a panegyric on his new patroness, Lemaire describes the training of painters as well as the contents of a workshop, including a long list of pigments.⁴⁰ Among azurite, verdigris, masticot and many others, *carnation* is the only colour mixture and Lemaire even seems to imitate the phrasing in recipes when he writes: 'flesh colour well made: ochre, masticot, verdigris, malachite, Parisian red, good lead white'. Except maybe for the greens, which might have been used in the ground layer (or to achieve a hue like *olchus*), all these pigments were indeed used to mix flesh colour; the most basic ingredients being red, ochre and lead white. Flesh colour is also the only colour of which Lemaire stresses that it needs to be properly made ('Carnation faite bien proprement'), implying that it derived its quality not only from the price and purity of pigments, but from the person who mixed it. Pigment analysis and investigation of the built-up of flesh tints in illuminated manuscript show that no other part of a representation required so many different pigments and intricate layering systems.⁴¹ Lemaire, who had probably been trained as a miniaturist, was well aware that mixing flesh colour called for expertise closely tied to the process of painting itself. In fact, in his time, contracts often stipulating that painters painted with good flesh colours ('met goeder lyfverwen') and applied them true to life ('naer tleven'), trying to ensure high quality ingredients and the naturalistic representation of faces and bodies.⁴² In tune with contemporary workshop practice, Lemaire employed the connotations of flesh colour in his poems to highlight the technical as well as illusionistic skills of painters.

Lemaire's explicit references to practice are quite exceptional. Poems on paintings, which in the Netherlands came to a full bloom in the second half of the sixteenth century, would usually concentrate on poetry's ability to let pictures 'speak', emphasizing visual illusion instead of procedures of production.⁴³ A famous example is Lucas de Heere's ode to the Ghent altarpiece. Lucas de Heere (1534 -1584), poet, painter, and teacher of Karel van Mander, wrote the text that supposedly hung next to the altarpiece in St. Bavo cathedral around 1559.⁴⁴ Conforming to the conventions of the genre, de Heere concentrates on the illusionistic qualities of the depicted figures. Mary for instance can be heard reading and the angels sing aloud. In fact, he writes, everything in the paintings looks so real that it seems to 'live, move about and rise up from the picture plane', so that the images 'are mirrors and not painted scenes'.⁴⁵ Yet, when he addresses Adam and Eve, de Heere reminds the reader that he is not looking at mirrors at all. He asks: 'How frightened

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Jan Wiericx, *Frans Floris, Pictorum aliquot celebrium Germaniae inferioris effigies* (Antwerp 1572)

(photo: author)

and lifelike Adam stands? Who ever saw more flesh-like body tints?' (Hoe verschrickelic en leuendigh Adam staet? Wie zagh oynt vleeschelicker verwe van lichame?).⁴⁶ Although Adam, like all other figures, seems alive, de Heere also points to the cause of his vivid appearance, namely very fleshy flesh colour. Significantly, his reference to the making of the altarpiece is triggered by the depiction of skin, not the equally splendid rendering of textiles, plants, water, reflection etc., and in using the recipe term *lijfverwe* (poetically enhanced to *verwe van lichame*), de Heere asks the reader to compare Adam not to life, but to other paintings, which he implies, cannot compete. Facing the superb quality of Adam's flesh tints, de Heere the poet seems to have briefly stepped aside to let de Heere the painter voice his admiration for a colleges' skill in colouring bodies.

In a tribute to his teacher Frans Floris (1516-1570), de Heere employed another term related to workshop practice. The sonnet written in 1565, compares Floris in a particularly witty manner to Apelles, whom he has effaced (*uitgevaagd*) and driven out (*verdreven*) with his divine knowledge of painting, so that from now on good painters should no longer be praised as Apelles anymore, but as 'Floris', while Floris carrying his own name, is adorned with the highest praise of all.⁴⁷ More interesting than his variation on the laudatory cliché, is de Heere's use of the double meaning of *uitvagen* and *verdrijven*. In the workshop, specifically the latter referred to a light, sweeping brush movement in order to smoothly join separate colour zones and soften the surface appearance of depicted objects. *Verdrijven* was applied wherever delicate transitions were needed, for example in the representation of skies, clouds and of course, human skin. The use of the term can be traced back to the late fourteenth century where it appears in a recipe describing the application of oil glazes.⁴⁸ Indeed, the technique works best with slow drying media, as the paint surface still needs to be fresh but not wet in order to achieve the characteristic, softening effect. In Floris workshop, De Heere would have had ample opportunity to see flesh in the making, for his master was especially well known for his nudes. Readers who were also acquainted with workshop practice must have noticed the pun, suggesting that Floris had literally expelled Apelles with his brush.

Viewed in the light of painting technique, also his portrait in the series *Pictorum aliquot celebrium Germaniae inferioris effigies* (Antwerp 1572) appears as an illustration of the art of *verdrijven*.⁴⁹ The engraving represents Floris holding his palette, mahlstick, a broad brush and a small panel in his left hand, while in his right he holds another broad brush, hovering just above one of the paint blobs on the palette (fig. 2). From the female nude depicted on the panel it can be deduced that the paint must be flesh coloured, only the brush seems far too coarse to paint such a delicate figure. Possibly, the designer of the series did not pay much attention to the correct display of tools. Yet the decision to depict Floris with the conspicuous utensils seems deliberate, as all other painters in the *effigies* represented at work, hold fine, pointed brushes. The accompanying poem by Lampsonius criticizes Floris for his lack of careful execution and would allow for a negative reading of the brushes.⁵⁰ However, in the context of painting *lijfverwe*, their peculiar shape makes perfect sense. The bristled brush is a predecessor of the



fan brush, developed to facilitate the scumbling in of paint and especially well suited to paint flesh. Its use can also be observed in other representations of painters painting flesh, for instance in Maarten van Heemskerck's *St. Luke* (c. 1555, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rennes), and in Hendrik Goltzius *Mercury* (d. 1611, Frans Halsmuseum, Haarlem).

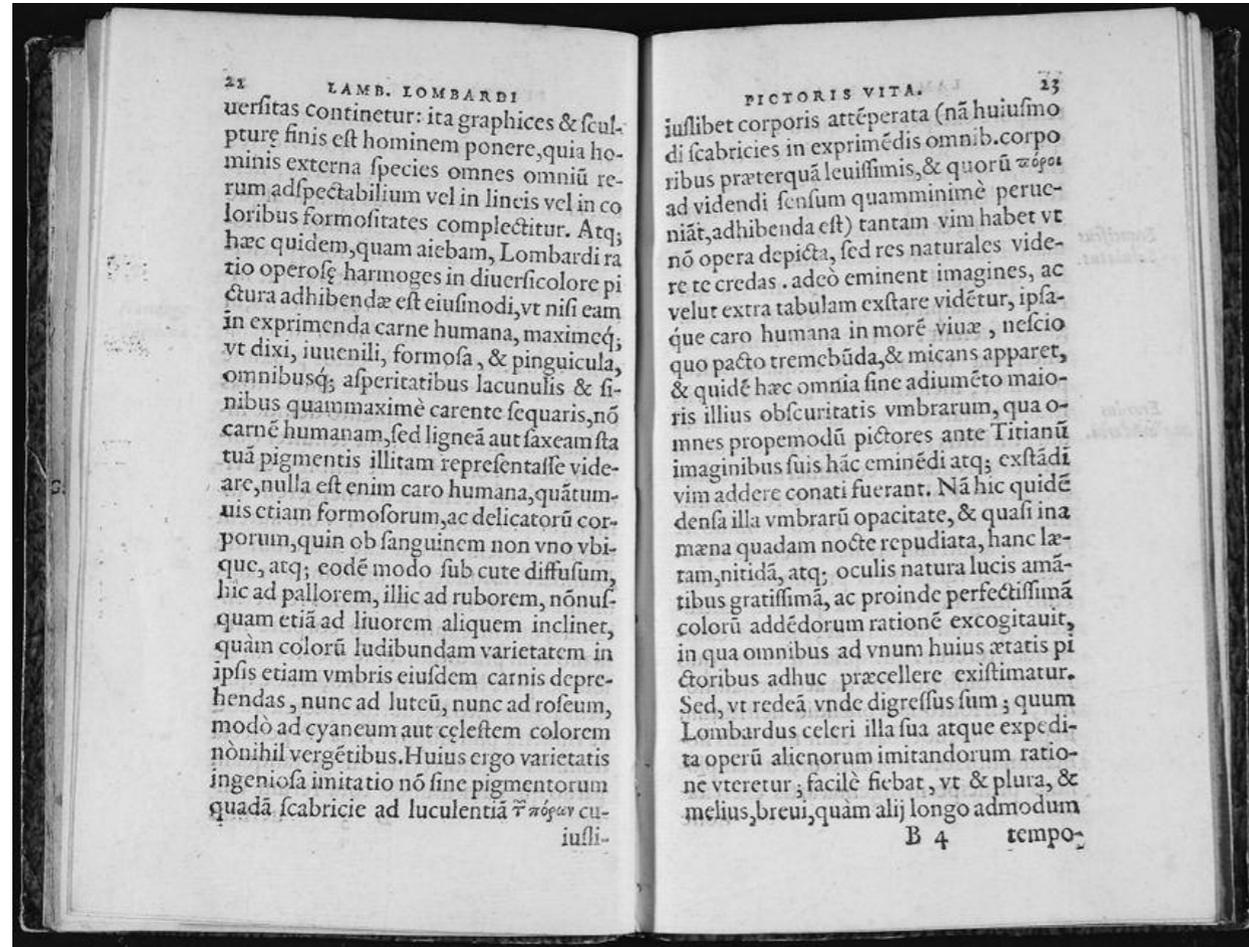
Already in an early sixteenth-century recipe 'een sacht borstelken' (a soft, dull brush) is recommended to apply thin layers of flesh paint.⁵¹ Early fanning brushes were supposedly made from the hairs of otters or sea lions, which is why Karel van Mander and Gerard de Lairese recommend a so-called *vispenseel* or *visschen* (fish brush) to paint flesh.⁵² In England, the brush was sometimes called 'sweetener' because it idealized facial and other bodily features in portraiture.⁵³ Arnold Houbraken recounts an instance of 'sweetening' in the life of Nicolaes Maes. When a lady complained about her portrait being ugly, Maes literally mollified his client by evening out the realistically rendered pockmarks in her face with his *vispenseel*.⁵⁴ Not only the effect of the fanning brush, also its movement and handling invited figurative terminology. Van Mander writes that flesh colour was best applied in a *dommelig* fashion (softly, meltingly, but also languidly) and also talks of the 'swaddrigh nedersetten des naeckten vleeschs' (set down naked flesh with a swaying movement)⁵⁵, while de Lairese advised the artist to paint flesh with a *schommelend* (swinging, waving) brush.⁵⁶ It can be concluded that *verdrijven* and the *verdrijver* figured in poems, images and anecdotes because the action and its tool suggestively connected the representation of the body to the embodied practice of the artist. With sweeping movements the painter could caress a body into being or drive another artist from the (painted) scene.

While Lemaire and de Heere played with the metaphorical connotations and double meaning of the flesh colour repertoire, a very serious and, if we believe his own words, unlikely discussion of flesh painting occurred in Domenicus Lampsonius (1532-1599) biography of his teacher Lambert Lombard (1505-1566). Lampsonius had studied in Leuven and following his services to cardinal Reginald Pole in London, had been appointed secretary to the bishop of Luik. He collected coins and prints, wrote poems and art criticism and conducted a lively correspondence with the luminaries of his time, among them Giorgio Vasari, Titian, Antonis Mor and Abraham Ortelius. His brief training in the workshop of Lombard (who had also been the teacher of Frans Floris) after his return to the Netherlands might be regarded as a hobby, rather than an apprenticeship.⁵⁷ The *Vita Lombardi* (1564) was written in Latin and entirely differently conceived than the descriptive biographies of Vasari.⁵⁸ Lampsonius does not mention a single work by Lombard, nor any details of his life, as he does not want to treat his teacher 'like an ordinary man'.⁵⁹ The biographical genre rather serves as starting point to ponder broader art theoretical issues, like paintings struggle to become a free art and the artists emancipation from craftsmanship. Consequently, Lombard is characterized as an intellectual who preferred spending time with his books and the cultivation of his mind rather than with manual labour.⁶⁰ The core of the *vita* is devoted to the *disegno-colore* debate, which Lampsonius enters in order to position Lombard at the ideal center between the opposing

principles. Because Lombard is a Northern artist, this proves to be an interesting, and sometimes contradictory exercise. Lombard is compared to Michelangelo, Raphael and Titian, whose respective supreme qualities he combines in his work.⁶¹ Lombard's native tradition, personified by his teacher Jan Gossaert (criticized for inadequate drawing, 'dry' figures and overly smooth surfaces) serves as a negative foil to the superlative style of Lampsonius' master.⁶² Although Titian is one of the model artists, Lombard is aligned with *disegno* and Lampsonius disapproves of those artists who 'paint soft, seductive flesh, intending to flatter the eye of the viewer while ignoring basic rules of design' - echoing Vasari's criticism of Titian.⁶³ In tune with this critique, the reader might expect some praise of Lombard's inventive design. However, according to Lampsonius, his teacher's greatest achievement were his human figures in which he perfected the principle of balanced colour harmony (*harmogen*), as described by Pliny.⁶⁴ The principle of *harmogen* is illustrated using the very element Lampsonius just disapproved of for its seductive qualities. And in spite of his intention to write a strictly theoretical biography and his expressed disdain for handicraft, Lampsonius launches into a surprisingly practical instruction on how to achieve convincing flesh tones, which is paraphrased here (fig. 3)⁶⁵:

Every human being has a different colour, but in painting it is important that the colour variations of the body are not too strongly accented. The younger and more beautiful a person is, the more difficult it is to paint his/her skin colour. If one paints it too uniformly, it will appear like painted wood or stone. Responsible for the different skin colours is the blood beneath the skin, which causes the skin to appear rosy, or deathly pale. The changing colour effect can also be observed in the shadows, which may appear yellow, pink, purple or blue. The exact representation of flesh colours is only possible if one uses pigments with a certain degree of graininess that corresponds to the pores of the body depicted (except for the ones where the pores are not visible) and with this the paintings will acquire such realism that one believes not to look at painted objects but at nature itself. In general, figures must appear so natural that they stand out from the surface plane, looking as if they were lively and shimmering without the viewer noticing how this effect has been achieved. Only if one gives too much dominance to shadows, as almost all painters did before Titian, is this effect lost again. He was the one who said farewell to opaqueness and blackness and painted flesh with colours that 'loved light' and offered this quality to all the painters of his time, but lets return to Lombard [...]

Some elements of this description were probably derived from Italian treatises, Pino for instance issued the warning against skin looking like wood and stone⁶⁶ and Vasari told painters not to use black in shaded areas.⁶⁷ Lampsonius' observations on the colours in flesh shades and his advice to take into account the graininess of pigments to mimic the pores of skin on the other hand are original.⁶⁸ Especially the latter is fascinating because the degree of



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Lampsonius on flesh colours, Domenico Lampsonius, *Lamberti Lombardi, apud Eburones pictoris celeberrimi, vita*, Brugis Fland: H. Goltzius, 1565, 22-23
(photo: Royal Library Brussels)

granulation does indeed play an important part in the viscosity of the paint surface and can, just as Lampsonius stresses, increase the mimetic effect of painted skin considerably.⁶⁹ Lampsonius does not say if he actually observed the use of coarsely grained pigments for reproducing skin pores in a particular work by Lombard, Titian, or maybe his fellow pupil Floris.⁷⁰ In any case, his sensitivity to technique had undoubtedly been triggered by his workshop experience. It is vital to the argument presented here that Lampsonius who explicitly did not want to talk about the making of paintings, completely reverses his approach when discussing the depiction of flesh colour. Suddenly, practice dominates his otherwise purely theoretical treatise all the way down to the micro-structure of pigments.

Unlike Lampsonius, Karel van Mander (1548-1606) never intended to write theoretical biographies. But also in his writings, flesh colour links theoretical reflections to practice, and to a certain extent, flesh colouring is even identified with the entire process of painting. In his instructive poem *Den grondt der edel vrij schilder-const* (1604), Van Mander explains the elements of paint-

ing in fourteen chapters. The twelfth chapter carries the title 'Van wel schilderen, oft Coloreren' [Of painting well or colouring] and is devoted to the how-to of painting.⁷¹ Although the word 'coloreren' did indeed incorporate the entire process of painting, it is interesting to note that Van Mander does not mention colour as such in the first part of this chapter.⁷² He talks about the painter's preparatory work, the relevance of preliminary drawing and discusses different techniques, such as fresco or oil painting. Only in verse 29 of the entire 43 verses, does he begin to describe the actual process of applying paint.⁷³ Immediately, the reader enters the realm of colour.

Van Mander starts out by advising vermilion instead of carmine to achieve flesh tints tones that 'glow like flesh', since carmine runs towards purple and thus appears cold.⁷⁴ Then he addresses the variations in skin colour depending on gender, age and profession, telling the painter not to save on ochre or vermilion for the representation of (sun-burned) farmers and sailors. All this is familiar from the recipes discussed above. Like Lampsonius, Van Mander warns of applying pure white or black for, respectively, heightening or shadows, recommending instead a light or toned down flesh colour. He also points towards Italy for ideal flesh tones, plumper and softer than the fish or stone-like bodies of his compatriots.⁷⁵ Van Mander alerts painters to the fact that flesh colour requires at least as many different hues as a landscape (like in miniatures, technical analyses shows that flesh colour frequently contains indeed more different pigments than other painted areas⁷⁶); smoothly applied so that the skin does not appear hard or spotty, which can best be achieved with *verdrijven*.⁷⁷ This is followed by some advice about pigments that should be avoided because they may cause discoloration, suggesting, instead of soot black, that the painter use umber, bitumen, *terra verde*, or Cologne earth for shading.⁷⁸ Yellow masticot is inclined to discolour and a warm flesh tone can be achieved much better with ochre, also red lead and orpiment should be avoided.⁷⁹

Van Mander's seemingly arbitrary stringing together of details can be rearranged into a step-by-step instruction on how to paint bodies: after carefully observing the object (variation and condition of skin colour), follows the choice of relevant pigments (material properties, chemical reactions, discoloration), and finally the application of paint (number of hues, shadings, heightening, application and manipulation of paint). Looking back again at the title of the chapter, it may be concluded that Van Mander thought the art of colouring and painting could best be learned by colouring and painting bodies. Accordingly, in Van Mander's *Lives*, a good colourist is by definition a good flesh painter. *The Death of the Virgin* by Pieter Aertsen, for example, 'was a large, distinguished and very artfull work, very glowing in the nude parts and well-coloured'.⁸⁰ Joos van Cleve is praised for being one of best colourists of his days, who 'modeled his things very delicately and painted them very flesh like, highlighting only with the flesh colour itself'; similar praise is given to Jaques de Backer.⁸¹ In fact, flesh colour is the only colour that Van Mander specifies in the biographies, in all other instances where the term colour is employed, Van Mander refers to the general colorist qualities of a painter or painting.⁸²

The ambivalence arising from Van Mander's effort to create a Netherlandish canon, which was modeled upon the Italian example yet indepen-

dent of it, become exceedingly clear in his discussions of the nude and its ideal colours. In the *Grondt*, he confronts native painters with their fish- or stonelike bodies and hails the Italian way of painting beautiful nudes. In the *Levens* on the other hand individual artists are singled out to challenge the derogatory remarks Italian critics had made about Netherlandish figure painting.⁸³ Jan van Calckar for instance could ‘silence the voice of Italy, which prides itself so highly that no Netherlander has ever surpassed nor even equaled the most important Italian artists in painting figures’.⁸⁴ And had Vasari only actually seen the works of Frans Floris, he would have thought differently of the Northern tradition.⁸⁵ On other occasions, the Italian criticism is employed to spur the local artists to higher accomplishments in figure painting.⁸⁶

The question remains why Karel van Mander and also Lampsonius, who both displayed such a sound knowledge of the practice of colouring bodies, urged native painters to look at Italy for well-painted flesh. Why was their own tradition from which they had obtained their remarkable sensitivity to the ‘colours of the naked’ and which still had revealed itself so unquestionably in Jan van Eyck’s *Adam and Eve*-panels to van Mander’s teacher Lucas de Heere not good enough? This is of course a rather complex question, entailing stylistic, cultural, historiographical, even political matters, yet when approached from the angle of workshop practice, it can in part be answered.

The relation between paint and lifelikeness was considerably intensified through the introduction of oil paint. From the van Eycks’ onwards, oil boosted the realistic surface appearance of everything, but most strikingly, of the human body. There can be no doubt that painting the human body and its skin *with oil* originated in the North, and was, in Italy perceived as a Northern invention. Vasari for instance knew that oil had been used in Italy in some ways before Van Eyck, but not for the depiction of flesh and that when put to this use, it breathed life into painted bodies.⁸⁷ Had van Mander been more aware of the fact that without oil paint, bodies, even Italian bodies, could never have looked the way they did, the historiography of flesh colour might have turned out differently. A careful reconstruction of the migration of oil painting techniques could unearth why van Mander, and with him the painters of ‘fishy’ and ‘opaque’ nudes (Lampsonius), had lost sight of the refined flesh colouring techniques developed in the Netherlands. Such a reconstruction goes far beyond the scope of this article and would entail a careful combination of technical and historical research. Its potential however can briefly be illustrated using the example of *gloeien*.

According to van Mander, Hendrik Goltzius brought the technique to let fleshtones ‘glow’ back from his trip to Italy.⁸⁸ Paul Taylor has shown that the glow, which enhanced the lifelike appearance of bodies, was achieved by applying a red paint layer under the shaded areas of flesh tints. He also pointed to the interesting fact that Italian flesh tones were not underpainted in red, and that the glow achieved in the North might have been a ‘creative misunderstanding’ as Dutch painters ‘in their attempts to capture the warmth of the Italian style went too far and created a new manner’.⁸⁹ When taking a closer look at the pre-history of the technique, it appears that they in

fact re-created an old manner. Previous to Van Mander, the Ghent city scribe Marcus van Vaernwijck had observed glowing flesh tones, yet not in the paintings of an Italian artist, but in Jan van Eyck’s *Adam*. Van Vaernewijck (1518-1569) who wrote his description of the Ghent altarpiece around the same time as Lucas de Heere, did not use the term *gloeien* but describes a very similar effect. Adam’s right arm and hand, which rest on his breast, seem to be transparent, as if illuminated from within his body (‘ende zijnen rechter aerme ende handt, die hij up zijn burst lecht, schijnt van zijnen lijve duerluchtich zijnde’).⁹⁰ Apart from just plainly meaning see-through, the term *doorluchtig* is also directly related to painting technique. Already in the fourteenth century it is documented for the description of thin, translucent glazes and associated with oil painting techniques.⁹¹ The medium was a prerequisite to achieve transparent flesh tones, but van Eyck produced *doorluchtigheid* not with red underpainting, but simply mixed in more reddish pigments in the shaded flesh areas, thereby achieving a warm, translucent effect. Some of his followers customized this method. Geertgen tot Sint Jans for example, used ample red in the shaded areas of faces (i.e. under the nose) and redrew the contours of faces and hands with reddish lines, thereby creating a glowing effect comparable to Goltzius and his contemporaries, only in a fifteenth-century fashion. In the detail of the face of St. Elizabeth the outline of the shaded left half of her face lights up in a light reddish flesh tone (fig. 4).⁹² It can be concluded that the roots for glowing flesh – or flesh colours that ‘loved light’ as Lampsonius had put it – lie in Early Netherlandish painting. From here the effect disseminated into Italy, disappeared from the artistic repertoire in the North, and was eventually re-imported by Netherlandish artists for a spectacular comeback in the late sixteenth century.

Conclusion. Paint, painting, and the body

It has been shown how recipes for flesh colour generated a rich vocabulary and how the metaphorical potential of technical terminology was picked up in art theoretical writings to explore the lifelike qualities of painted bodies. Writers who otherwise avoided practice, used the example of flesh colour to illustrate the art of painting, theorizing technical elements, like the structure of pigments, mixing of colours or application of paint. Responsible for the particular relation between painting techniques and art theory sketched in this article, is the human body. While the correct anatomical construction of bodies – essential to the composition, movement and interaction of figures – could be explained and schematized using illustrations or objects like the *leeman*, the rendering of the colour of bodies called for a more implicit knowledge about the materials and processes of painting. Only the artist capable of observing, preparing and applying flesh colour in the right way, could infuse his bodies with life. Art theory therefore, if it wanted to talk about the role of colour in bringing bodies to life, had to talk about painterly practice. The careful imitation of skin with paint and brush, and the drive to optimize painting techniques in order to achieve realistic appearance of flesh, thus seem to have instilled theory with elements of practice.

In the writings discussed here, flesh colour, or rather, *body* colour, joins



three central elements of painting: the painters' materials, the craft of painting, and the lifelike depiction of the body. One noticeable aspect of this triad is the connection between representation and the tools and materials employed to achieve it. Utensils like the *verdrijver* were associated with sensual nudes and flesh-coloured paint became 'living colour'. Painting bodies with oil certainly intensified this connection, which might also be responsible for the heightened sensitivity to technique in the Netherlands in general.

Later, Jan Vos, in his monumental poem *Zeege der schilderkunst* (1654), would put the relation between paint, painting and the living body in a nutshell when he claimed art's triumph over nature, because painting could overcome the 'sharp point of death' with its 'dull brush' and its 'paint full of flesh and blood'.⁹³ Another consequence of this relation was that flesh colouring turned into a *pars pro toto* for colouring in general, as has been suggested here in the analysis of van Mander. In Philips Angel's *Lof der schilderkunst* written about 40 years later, the idea seems to have become commonplace. When Angel sums up the many qualities a good painter should possess, he mentions the actual use of paint only in passing: a good painter, Angel writes, is one 'die de Verwe vleysich onder een weet te smeuren' (who knows how to mix and apply his colours in a fleshy manner). Apparently, Angel thought that once a painter knew how to do that, he could paint everything else as well.⁹⁴ If painting flesh could indeed incorporate the whole art of painting, it is no wonder that in 1707 Lairesse found it impossible to discuss everything he knew about 'the colours of the naked' in one chapter.

4

Geertgen tot Sint Jans, *The Holy Kinship*,
1475-80,

oil on wood, 137 x 103 cm

Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, detail of St.

Elizabeth (photo: Rijksmuseum-Stichting)

Notes

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- 1 'Na veelvuldig en nauwkeurig deze stof onderzocht te hebben vind ik zo veel daar af te zeggen, dat het onmogelijk in een Hoofdstuk bevat kan werden [...]’ G. de Lairese, *Groot Schilderboek etc.*, Haarlem 1740 (reprint Doornspijk 1969), 35, transl. of the author.
- 2 See for example C. Sousloff, *The Absolute artist: The historiography of a concept*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, C.S. Wood, 'The Studio around 1500', in: M. Cole, M. Pardo (eds), *Inventions of the studio. Renaissance to Romanticism*, Chapel Hill/London 2005, 36-72.
- 3 M. Cole and M. Pardo characterize the studio of the early modern artist in the first place as an intellectual space of 'study', distinct from the everyday practice of painting, M. Cole, P. Pardo, 'Origins of the studio' in *ibid.*, 1-35.
- 4 In his *Dialogo di pittura*, Pino for example discusses colour in regard to flesh colour and puts forward the representation of living flesh as the most important argument in the paragone between painting and sculpture: through the colour of the flesh the painter lends his figures not only their form but their 'being'. S. Falabella (ed.), *Paolo Pino: Dialogo di pittura* (Venice 1548), Rome 2000, esp. 110, 123. See D. Bohde, "Le tinte delle carni". Zur Begrifflichkeit für Haut und Fleisch in italienischen Kunsttraktaten des 15. bis 17. Jahrhunderts', in D. Bohde and M. Fend, *Weder Haut noch Fleisch. Das Inkarnat in der Kunstgeschichte*, Berlin 2007, 41-63. On color as soul, see also V. Krieger, 'Die Farbe als "Seele" der Malerei. Transformationen eines Topos vom 16. Jahrhundert zur Moderne', *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 33 (2006), 91-112.
- 5 See for example J. Becker, 'Zur niederländischen Kunstliteratur des 16. Jahrhunderts: Lucas d'Heere', *Simiolus* 6 (1972/73), 113-27, *Idem*, 'Zur niederländischen Kunstliteratur des 16. Jahrhunderts: Domenicus Lampsonius', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 24 (1973), 45-61, W. S. Melion, *Shaping the Netherlandish canon. Karel van Mander's Schilder-Boeck*, Chicago 1991, R. van Son,

'Lomazzo, Lampsonius en de noordelijke kunst', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 44 (1993), 185-96, A. Stanneck, *Ganz ohne Pinsel gemalt. Studien zur Darstellung der Produktionsstrukturen niederländischer Malerei im 'Schilder-Boeck' von Karel van Mander (1604)*, Bern/Frankfurt 2003.

- 6 I.e. E. van de Wetering, *Rembrandt. The painter at work*, Amsterdam 1997, U. Heinen, *Rubens zwischen Predigt und Kunst. Der Hochaltar für die Walburgenkirche in Antwerpen*, Weimar 1996; P. Taylor, 'The glow in late sixteenth and seventeenth Dutch paintings', in: E. Hermens (ed.), *Looking through paintings: the study of painting techniques and materials in support of art historical research* (Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek XI) 1998, 159-178. *Idem*, 'Flatness in Dutch art and theory', *Oud Holland* (forthcoming), Maria-Isabel Pousão-Smith, 'Sprezzatura, nettigheid and the fallacy of "invisible brushwork" in seventeenth-century Dutch painting', in: *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 54 (2003), 259-279.
- 7 Melion *op. cit.* (n. 5), 60. For the historiography of the Eyckian invention, see P. Brinkman, *Het geheim van Van Eyck: Aantekeningen bij de uitvinding van het olieverven*, Zwolle 1993
- 8 The crucial role of flesh colour in the history of Western painting has only recently been subject to art historical research, see Bohde, Fend (eds) *op. cit.* (n. 4) with extensive bibliography. See also D. Bohde, *Haut, Fleisch und Farbe. Körperlichkeit und Materialität in den Gemälden Tizians*, Emsdetten/ Berlin 2002, G. Didi-Huberman, *La peinture incarné*, Paris 1985, U. Heinen, 'Haut und Knochen - Fleisch und Blut. Rubens' Affektmalerei', in: U. Heinen, A. Thielemann (eds), *Rubens Passioni. Kultur der Leidenschaften im Barock*, Göttingen 2001, 70-109, A. Lehmann, 'Hautfarben. Zur Maltechnik des Inkarnats und der Illusion des lebendigen Körpers in der Malerei der Neuzeit', C. Geissmar-Brandt, Irmela Hijjya-Kirschner, Sato Naoki (eds.), *Gesichter der Haut*, Frankfurt/Tokyo, 2002, 93-128, and K. de Clippel in this volume.
- 9 see W. Lepik-Kopaczyska, 'Das antike Inkarnat in der Überlieferung der mittelalterlichen Humanisten', J. Irmscher (ed.), *Renaissance und Humanismus in Mittel- und Osteuropa*, Berlin 1962, 76-83
- 10 'mache die Fleischfarbe (carnation) mit rotem Blei und Weiß, schattiere mit Zinnober und helle auf mit Bleiweiß', E.

Berger, *Quellen und Technik der Fresko-, Öl- und Temperamalerei des Mittelalters*, München 1912, S. 29, §10 Von den Mischungen. See also C.S. Smith and J.G. Hawthorne, 'Mappae clavicula: a little key to the world of medieval techniques', *Transactions of the American philosophical society* (n.s) 64 (4). On the process of compilation and the various ms relating to the Clavicula, see M. Clarke, *The art of all colours. Mediaeval recipe books for painters and illuminators*, London 2001, 9-11.

- 11 Berger, *op. cit.* (n. 10), 71-77.
- 12 J.G. Hawthorne and C.S. Smith, *Theophilus' On diverse arts*, corrected edn. New York 1979 and E. Brepohl, *Theophilus Presbyter und das mittelalterliche Kunsthandwerk*, 2 vols, Cologne 1999. On the terminology of Theophilus see B. Bischoff, S. Waetzold und H. Roosen-Runge, 'Quellengeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur 'Schedula Diversarum Artium' des Theophilus', *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 3/4 (1952/53), 145-171.
- 13 Petrus de Sancto Audemaro (?): De coloribus faciendis liber (Ms lat. 67, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris), in M. P. Merrifield, *Medieval and Renaissance Treatises on the Art of Painting*, New York 1999 (1849), 144-45 and Clarke *op. cit.* (n. 10) 18.
- 14 Merrifield *op. cit.* (n. 13), 22. Within the text, yet another derivation can be found in a Latin recipe for pink coloured water to shade figures and a French recipe for flesh colour, called *charnure* (ibid. 300-301: 'Charnure d'images se fait ainsi') On le Begue see also Clark *op. cit.* (n. 10), 22 and 101.
- 15 E. Ploss, *Studien zu den deutschen Maler- und Färberbüchern des Mittelalters. Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Altertumskunst und Wortforschung* (Typoscript), München 1952, 205-6.
- 16 Bohde *op. cit.* (n. 4). In Dutch, *inkarnaat* (in German *Inkarnat*) is used until today to describe flesh color, although it originally did not denote flesh colour, but a crimson red (see here n. 35). English painting manuals used flesh colour and carnation synonymously, see for example J. Bate, *The mysteries of nature and art*, London 1634, reprint Amsterdam/Norwood N.J. 1977, 125.
- 17 Like in English, the Dutch language differentiates between *kleur* (colour) and *verve* (paint), while in German *Farbe* means both. Because body colour is an existent term referring to gouache and body paint is associated with painting on

real bodies, *lijfverve* can best be translated as body tint.

- 18 See for example *Natürliches Zauber=buch Oder: Neu eröffneter Spiel-Platz rarer Künste*, Nürnberg 1745, 556: 'Nun kommen wir zu der Leib=Farbe oder zu denen nackichten Bildern'.
- 19 V. and R. Borradaile (eds), *Das Strassburger Manuskript. Handbuch für Maler des Mittelalters*, München 1967, 54-58.
- 20 Ploss *op. cit.* (n. 15), 92 and *Idem*, 'Die Fachsprache der deutschen Maler im Spätmittelalter', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 79 (1960), 70-83, 315-324, esp. 75. *Anlitblutrot* is also used in the *Colmarer Kunstbuch*, d. 1479, singled out as a colour, which can be mixed with oil (Ms. Helv. Hist. XII 45, Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek Bern, 146, also available via the *Datenbank mittelalterlicher und frühneuzeitlicher kunsttechnologische Rezepte und handschriftlicher Überlieferungen*, Cologne [URL: <http://db.re.fh-koeln.de>]
- 21 Cited in Ploss *op. cit.* (n. 15) 100.
- 22 The negative connotations of the term only developed after Kenneth Clark infamously presented nakedness as the non-idealized other of the nude. See K. Clark, *The nude. A study in ideal form*, Oxford 1956. For a critical reading of Clark, see L. Nead, *The female nude. Art, obscenity and sexuality*, London 1992
- 23 'wiltu schoyn lyfffarbe machen, so nym bly wiß due dar under menge und zynober' Cod.610 (1957) fol. 34v, Stadtbibliothek Trier, edited by E. Ploss, *Ein Buch von alter Farben*, Heidelberg/Berlin 1962; 'das wirt schon lyb farb zw jungen leütten', Msc.theol.225, fol. 199v, Staatliche Bibliothek Bamberg, see Ploss *op. cit.* (n. 15), 204-205; 'Item leybfarbe zu machen...', Ms. Alchemical Ms. GER 1472, fol. 66r, Jewish National and University Library, Edelstein collection, Jerusalem. A copy of the Ms. is available at the Instituut Collectie Nederland, Amsterdam.
- 24 C.J. Benzinger (ed.), *Valentinum Boltz van Ruffach, Illuminier Buch, wie man allerley farben bereite, mischen, schattieren und ufffragen soll. Allen jungen/angehenden Molern und Illuministen, nützlich und fuderlich etc.* (Basel 1549), München 1917 (reprint Nendeln 1976). On the correspondences with the Strassburg Ms see Clarke *op. cit.* (n. 10), 25pp.
- 25 'Kindlinfarb, Vrouwen lybfarb, Gstandner lüt farb, Bruner lüt farb, Pluts troppfen, Bleicher lüt farben, Altgeschaffener lüt farb, Alte lüt, Todter lüt farb,

Totenbeynfarb und Flammen- und Rauchfarb', Benzinger *op. cit.* (n. 24) 83.

- 26 It can be found in Gerard ter Brugghen, *Verlichtery Kunst-Boeck etc.*, Amsterdam 1619; Willem Goeree, *Verligerie-Kunde, Of regt Gebruik der Water-Verwen [...]*, *Eertijds uitgegeven door den Vortreflijken Verligter Mr. Gerard ter Brugge*, Amsterdam 1697; Jacoba van Veen, *De wetenschap van de manieren om alderhande couleuren van say en sayetten te verwen etc.*, ca. 1650 (Ms. 135 K 44, Koninklijke Bibliotheek Den Haag) and Willem Beurs, *De groote waereld in 't kleen geschildert etc.*, Amsterdam 1692.
- 27 On gender and skin colour in painting, see W. Martini, 'Von der Farbe der Geschlechter', in: C. Bahr, G. Jain (eds), *Zwischen Askese und Sinnlichkeit. Festschrift für Norbert Werner zum 60. Geburtstag (Gießener Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte 10)*, Dettelbach 1997, 28-37.
- 28 'Lyffverve Nym blywyt ende doe der in ende wenich cinober/off rubrijck doch so wenig dat yt wat rodich/da van wyrt/In yaufferen off vrouwen angesichten dair yn/mach men en weinich rosen in doen/Off blywyt en parysroit alleyn in vrouwen angesichten End(e) in mans lyff verwe dar togen en wenich geilockers meer off myn darnae/de man yonck off alt ys', Anonymus Hs 1028/1959, Stadtbibliothek Trier, c. 1490, fol. 29r-29v. I would like to thank Truus van Buren for helping me with the transcription. For general information about the ms, see B. Bushey, *Die deutschen und niederländischen Handschriften der Stadtbibliothek Trier bis 1600* (Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der Handschriften der Stadtbibliothek zu Trier, Neue Serie Band 1), Wiesbaden 1996, 144-156.
- 29 'Om aensichten te nuwren. Eerst legt ouer met doot verwe, ende dan lect thaer mit haer verwe, ende dan so diep die ogen ende mont mit bitter, oft mit meny, of mit fermelion, ende dan betrecke taensicht mit bitter, ende dan so hoech tfoer hoeft ende die kaken, ende onder die ogen ende dair te doen is. Ende dan so nem fermelion, meny, rose ende luttel saffraens, ende menct te gader ende bloes [doen blozen] dair mede', W. L. Braekman, *Middelnederlands Verfrecepten voor miniaturen en "alderhande substancien"*, Brüssel 1986, text I, recipe Nr. 40 (Ms. 517 Wellcome Historical Medical Library, London).
- 30 For a short history of blushing in art, see B. Baert, 'De stuwing van het beeld', in B.

Baert, T. de Duve (eds), *Vlees, Huid, Kleur: De Bloes*, Gent 2004, 13-27. See also V. Stoichita, *The Pygmalion-effect. Towards a historical anthropology of simulacra*, Chicago 2006. On the production of SNOW WHITE, see Christopher Finch, *The art of Walt Disney. From Mickey Mouse to magic kingdom*, New York 1973.

- 31 'Van leuender lijfverwen gront maect men van wit ende weinich vermeliens tsamen gheminght. Desen gront dient tot jonghe aensichten. Den gront vanden gheluwen aensichte salmen totter voorseiden verwen een weinich okers doen minghen ende also den gront legghen [...] Den wanghen vaden leuenden met weinich roots ende roosen tsamen gheminght', Braekman *op. cit.* (n. 29), text 4, recipe nr. 13 (Hs. 2142, University Library, Ghent, fol. 90v). The ms was written by Christian van Varenbraken, a Master of Free Arts in the first half of the 16th century, probably working in the French part of Flanders.
- 32 'lebenfarb – ogergel et niger', *Liber Illuminstarum*, or Tegernsee Ms, Cod. Germ. 821, fol. 88v, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, c. 1500, see also Ploss *op. cit.* (n. 15), 100 and Berger *op. cit.* (n. 10), 178.
- 33 In this particular case the result might have been disappointing due to the simple mixture of pigments. *Lebenfarb* might also mean *Leberfarb* (liver colour), a mixture for a brownish hue (the Datenbank mittelalterlicher und frühneuzeitlicher kunsttechnologische Rezepte und handschriftlicher Überlieferungen, Cologne, lists four recipes for Leberfarb, not including this one, all mixed from different pigments [URL: <http://db.re.fh-koeln.de/ICSFH/forschung/rezepte.aspx>]. Interestingly, *merbelfarb* (marble colour) also listed in the *liber illuministarum* and mixed from vermilion, ocre, leadwhite and brown comes much closer to flesh than marble. Possibly, the author confused different mixtures.
- 34 D. Thompson Jr. (ed.), *Il libro dell'arte. The craftsman's handbook*, New York 1960, 12. On Cennini's use of *incarnazione*, see C. Kruse, 'Fleisch werden – Fleisch malen. Malerei als *incarnazione*. Mediale Verfahren des Bildwerdens im *libro dell'arte* von Cennino Cennini', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 63 (2000), 305-26. Kruse proposes that Cennini appropriated the term from theology, but it can also be found in recipes predating Cennini where it is solely used to describe technical procedures, see for example 'nota modum

- incarnandi facies et alia membra' in: F. Brunello, *De arte illuminandi e altri trattati tecnica della miniatura medievale*, Vicenza 1975, 132.
- 35 'Ein Leibfarb sigel wachs zu mache Nym 8 lot wachs 3 lot zinober 3 lot pleÿgel, vnnd i quint terpentin', *Vier puchlin von allerhand farben vnnd anndern kunsten*, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preuß. Kulturbesitz, Ms. germ. qu. 417, 1st half 16th century, ms 8, folio 69, chapt. 210. For a general dying recipe see Ploss op.cit (n. 15), 192. The Fugger Family imported body coloured satin and silk, see J. Strieder, *Die Inventur der Firma Fugger aus dem Jahre 1527*, Tübingen 1905, 76 (I would like to thank Rembrandt Duits for this reference). For dying stockings and cotton strips to make flesh colored flowers see Veen 1650 op. cit (n. 26), fol. 12 'Root Incornaet te verwen', fol. 23 'Om 24 paer [kousen] Incornaet te verwen, Om 24. paer Lijfverwe', fol. 71 'Incornaet op Linnen, Om Root Incornaet Catoene Lijwaet te verwen daer men bloemen van maect'. While *carnea* is used as synonym to *lijfverwe*, *incarnaat* denotes a darker pink, like 'carnation' or 'incarnadine' still does in English. See J. Hofenk de Graaff, 'Recycling in the 17th-century Textile Industry', *Dyes in history and archaeology* 14 (1996), 60-69, esp. 66. Also van Mander very clearly distinguishes between *carnaty* (flesh colour) and *incarnaat*, the latter is mixed from white and lake and explicitly not to be used for the body, because it is a cold hue, H. Miedema (ed.), Karel van Mander, *Den gronds der edel vrij schilder-const* (Haarlem 1604), Utrecht 1973, chapter 12, verse 29.
- 36 'ain fogel libfarb hals und buch, der hals mit blaue stumpfiert swartz lang kappet die brust rot fluegel bla, ain grunen langen swantz hubsch' Codex icon. 420, Bayerische Nationalbibliothek München., late 15th century, M. and H. Roosen-Runge, *Das spätgotische Musterbuch des*, 3 vols, Wiesbaden 1981, esp. vol. I, fol. IV and vol. 2, 28, 280.
- 37 M. Lexer, *Mittelhochdeutsches Handwörterbuch*, Leipzig 1872-1878, 3 vol., (reprint Stuttgart 1992), see vol. 1, 1934-1936.
- 38 See D. Eichberger, *Leben mit Kunst, wirken durch Kunst: Sammelwesen und Hofkunst unter Margarete von Österreich, Regentin der Niederlande*, Turnhout 2002, 349-352.
- 39 'Faictes broyer sur vos poliz porphyres Couleurs duisans à mon intention, Toutes des noir e de diverses tires, Pour exprimer les douloureux martires Que Natures a par
- griefve infection. Faictes mèsler paste carnation: Ne destrempez que de noir flambe ou bistre: C'est la couleur qui de deuil est ministre', D. Yabsley (ed.), Jean Lemaire de Belges, *La plainte du désiré*, Paris 1932, 72, verse XVII.
- 40 'Inde, Azur vert, et Azur de poulaïne, d'Acre Azur fin, qui du feu n'ha peril, Et Vermillon, dont mainte boite est pleine. D'autres couleurs y ha abondamment: Lacque, Synope, et Pourpre de haut prys: Fin Or molu, Or music, Orpueiment, Carnation faite bien proprement: Ocre de Ruth, Machicot, Vert de gris, Vert de montaigne, et Rose de Paris, Bon blanc de plomb, Flourée de garance, Vernis de glace, en deux ou trois barilz, Et Noir de lampe, estant noir à oultrance', cited in E. and D. Duverger, 'Jean Lemaire le Belges en de schilderkunst', *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* (1967) 53-55, see also L. Campbell et.al., 'The methods and materials of Northern European painting 1400-1550', *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 18 (1997), 6-55, esp. 13-14. Lists with colour names also appear in early philological compilations, for example in Franciscus Junius's *Nomenclator* (1576) who lists 'incarnatus' amongst 26 different names for red, yet this is not flesh colour, but incarnadine, see R. Verbraeken, *Termes de couleur et lexicographie artistique*, Paris 1997. *Incarnal* is also listed in *Le Blason de Couleurs en armes, livrés et devises etc., par Sicille, Hérault d'Alphonse V, Roi d'Aragon*, Paris 1582, 28-29, where it is described as an 'unnatural' colour.
- 41 For an in-depth analysis of pigments and built-up of flesh tints in a French manuscript, see N. Turner, 'The manuscript painting technique of Jean Bourdichon', in: T. Kren, M. Evans (eds), *A masterpiece reconstructed. The Hours of Louis XII*, Los Angeles 2005, 63-80. On the pigments used in flesh colour in 15th and early 16th century oil paintings, see A. Lehmann, 'Jan van Eyck und die Entdeckung der Leibfarbe', in Bohde/Fend op. cit. (n. 4), 21-40, see also the recipes cited here in n. 28, n. 31 and n. 51.
- 42 See for instance the contract with Saladijn de Stoevere to polychrome the sculptures and paint the side wings of an altarpiece for the Franciscan Church in Ghent 1434: 'Item, int eerste den God and cruse, met goeder lyfverwen, ghelijc eenen doeden, ende den douc ende deodeme vergoudt, ende tcruse ghelijc den haute'; a contract for an altarpiece for the hospital de Marvis,

- Tournai 1516: 'et aussy les visaiges des personnages seront estoffé de plusieurs sortes de carnation, chacun personnage selon les contenance qu'ils sont', or the contract for the parochial church in Nokere 1527: 'ende de aensichten handen, ende voeten ende al dat naect es ghestoffeert naer tleven', E. Vandamme, *De polychromie van Gotische houtsculptuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden. Materialen en technieken*, Brüssel 1982, 199-200, 206-7, 212-13. For more examples and the specific attention paid to flesh coloring in polychromed sculpture, see Lehmann op. cit. (n. 41), 30-34.
- 43 On poems being attached to particular art works, see Julius von Schlosser, *Materialien zur Quellenkunde der Kunstgeschichte*, Wien 1914, esp. 34-35; on the ekphrastic tradition in the Netherlands see Stephanie Schrader, *Jan Gossaert's Art of Imitation: Fashioning Identity at the Burgundian Court*, PhD diss., University of California Santa Barbara, 2006, Becker 1972/73 op. cit. (n. 5), J.A. Emmens, 'Ay Rembrandt, maal Cornelis stem', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 7 (1956), p. 133-165, Idem, 'Apelles en Apollo. Nederlandse gedichten op schilderijen in de 17de eeuw', *Kunsthistorische Opstellen I*, Amsterdam 1981, 5-60, Gregor Weber, *Der Lobtopos des lebenden Bildes. Jan Vos und sein 'Zeege der Schilderkunst' von 1654*, Hildesheim/Zürich/New York, 1991.
- 44 W. Waterschoot (ed.), *Lucas d'Heere: Den Hof en Boomgaard der Poësiën (1565)*, Ghent 1969, 29-32. On the positioning of the ode in the chapel, see W. Waterschoot, 'Lucas de Heere en Marcus van Vaernewijck voor het Lam Gods', *Jaarboek Koninklijke Soevereine Hoofdkamer van Retorica 'De Fonteyne' te Gent* 16 (1966), 109-18.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 'Het schijnt datter al leeft, roert, gaet ofte uitrijst: Tsjin spieghels, en gheen gheschilderde tafereelen'. Walter Melion relates de Heere's mirror metaphor to Van Eyck's representations of smooth surfaces, which Van Mander praises as *reflexy-const*, i.e. the imitation of reflective, shiny surfaces, Melion op. cit. (n. 5) 63, 80-85.
- 46 Waterschoot op. cit. (n. 44) 30, author's translation. In a curious poem on female breasts (*Van de leelicke mamme*) de Heere again refers to flesh colour, when he writes that to paint ugly breasts, he mixes yellow, black and brown-red ('Om u te schilder' ne wel en van deghen Naem ic gheluwte zwart, ende bruun rood'), *ibid.*, 48.
- 47 'Naer dien ghi deur u Goddelicke scientie Appelles name, zo hebt wtgevaegt en

- verdreuen' Datmen nu niet meer voor een ghemeen sententie, Alsmen een Schilder wilt den hoogsten titel gheuen, Hem Appelles en naemt, maer werdt veel meer verheuen, Met hem by u te ghelijcken' die voor al gaet: Wat hooger titel dan, can u self zijn toegeschreue Dan Florus? waerbi men den grootsten schilder verstaet.' in: Waterschoot op. cit. (n. 44), XIX and 39; see also Becker 1972/73 op.cit (n. 5), 124.
- 48 *Verdriiven* is used in the Strasbourg Ms in connection with oil paint, Ploss thinks that *vervloezen* used in a manuscript of 1503 is an equivalent term, Ploss op. cit. (n. 15) 102.
- 49 The effigies were engraved by Jan Wiericx, accompanied by Latin verses by Domenicus Lampsonius, see D. Puraye (ed.), *Dominique Lampson, Les effigies des peintres célèbres des Pay-Bas*, [no location] 1956.
- 50 See for such an interpretation of Bruegel's brush, Matthijs IJssink, *Bruegel*, Gent/Amsterdam 2006, 16 and Lyckle de Vries, 'With a coarse brush: Pieter Bruegel's "Brooding Artist"', *Source: notes in the history of art* 24/4 (2004) 38-48.
- 51 "Om karnajsiën te maken Soo nempt van dese voors. albast oft calck wel cleyn gevreven ende whilt ghy mans carnagie maken, soo temperst in desen calc spaens bruyn root of bolus ende een weinich fermilien daer inne ende dit als met water getempert als dunne ende mut een sacht borstelken overlayt; ende dan om het diepstel suldy nemen ommer water ende dunne geroert te wylen als nat sy; ende wildy vrouwen naeckten maken so nempt engels bruyn root ende een luttel fermillon ende valt de voors dipset te root, soo doeter swart inne, als ghy vrouwen naecten maken wilt, E. Vandamme, 'Een 16de-eeuwse Zuidnederlandse receptenboek', *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* (1974), 101-137, nr. 69b.
- 52 Miedema op. cit. (n. 35), 376, n. 186; G. de Lairese, *Het Groot Schilderboek*, Amsterdam 1707, 36. On brushes see R. Harley, *Artist's Brushes. History and Evidence from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth century*, London 1976, L. Welther, *Die Geschichte und die Herstellung des abendländischen Künstlerpinsels*, Stuttgart 1991 (unpub. thesis, Institut für Technologie der Malerei, Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Stuttgart) and K. Kleinert, 'Palette, Pinsel und Malstock', *Atelierdarstellungen in der niederländischen Genremalerei des 17. Jahrhunderts*,

- Petersberg 2006, 46-53.
- 53 P.L. Bouvier, *Handbuch der Ölmalerei für Künstler und Kunstfreunde etc.* (1875), 6 ed., Braunschweig 1882, 383.
- 54 Kleinert op. cit. (n. 52), 46.
- 55 The Life of Anthonis Blockland (H. Miedema (ed.), *Karel van Mander, The lives of the illustrious Netherlandish and German painters: From the first edition of the Schilder-boeck (1603-1604)*, 6 vol., Doornspijk 1994-1999, 25419, 116 and commentary, vol. 3, 134-135) Miedema translates *swadderigh* as passing the brush back and forth, however Paul Taylor has pointed to the arbitrariness of this translation (P. Taylor, 'Book review of H. Miedema's edition of K. van Mander, The Lives etc', *Oud Holland* 115/2, 131-154, esp. 143-44). There can be now doubt that *swadderigh* of *swaddereren* refers to a movement, according to the *Woordenboek der Nederlandse taal* it can describe the movement of water, for instance in a bucket, but also of a drunken sailor. 'Swaying' is an attempt to combine both connotations and would make sense in the context of applying paint with a loaded brush. Michael Hoyle suggested 'feathering' as it describes the subtlety of the movements in handling paint.
- 56 *Lairesse* 1740 op. cit. (n.1), 25. On occurrences of *verdriiven* in other 17th century sources, see L. de Pauw-de Veen, *De begrippen 'schilder', 'schilderij' en 'schilderen' in de 17de eeuw*, Brussel 1969, 267.
- 57 A Calvary for the High altar of St Quentin's, Hasselt, 1576, is the only surviving painting, see J. Puraye, *Dominique Lampson, humaniste, 1532-1599*, pref. by Marie Delcourt, Paris 1950.
- 58 *Lamberti Lombardi, apud Eburones pictoris celeberrimi, vita* / Dominicus Lampsonius, Brugis Fland: H. Goltzius, 1565 and the French translation by J. Hubaux and J. Puraye, 'Dominique Lampson, Lamberti Lombardi... Vita. Traduction et Notes', *Revue Belges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art*, 18 (1949), 52-77. All analyses stress the highly theoretical approach of Lampsonius, see Becker, Melion and van Son op. cit. (n. 5) and Colette Nativel, 'La tradition latine dans la pensée de l'art: la Lamberti Lombardi... Vita, 1565, de Dominique Lampson, 1532-1599', *La littérature et les arts figures de l'Antiquité a nos jours: actes du XIVe Congrès de l'Association Guillaume Bude, Limoges 25-28 aout 1998* (2001), 555-566. Van Mander reports never to have been able to lay hands on the text, which appeared in a

- small edition.
- 59 Hubaux and Puraye, 72.
- 60 *Ibid.* 77.
- 61 'ses figures étaient pleines d'une auguste grandeur et d'une majesté héroïque qu'il devait à Michel-Ange; pleine aussi de charme et de grâce qu'il devait à Michel-Ange et à Raphael; son colouris était riche et vif, il l'avait emprunté au Titien', *ibid.* 72.
- 62 'Ce dernier art [le dessin], il l'avait appris des Belges Ursus [Arnould de Beer] et Mabuse, dont on peut dire d'ailleurs qu'ils ne le connaissaient pas eux-mêmes, si on les compare aux peintres les plus accomplis qui vivaient en Italie' *ibid.* 65-66 and 'Om eût dit qu'ils exécutaient ces tableaux avec une sorte de laborieux déplaisir, jamais satisfait de soi et qu'ils avaient la superstition de la peinture léchée.' *ibid.* 67. The Latin original reads 'picturis lambendis', which Melion translates as 'licked clean' (Melion op.cit n. 5. 165, n. 17) and foreshadows the 17th century categories of the *netten manier* and the *ruwen manier*.
- 63 Hubaux and Purayes op. cit. (n. 58) 68. Lampsonius's copy of Vasari's *Vite* with his annotations has survived in the Royal Library in Brussels. The suspicion of seductive flesh colours is related to the association of *disegno* with male and *coloure* with feminine qualities, see J. Lichtenstein, 'Making up representation', *Representations* 20 (1987), 77-87, P. Reilly, 'Writing out colour in Renaissance theory', *Genders* 12 (1991), 77-99. The equation of colour and femininity intensifies in the nineteenth century when for example Charles Blanc writes that colour was the ruin of painting just like Eve had been the ruin of mankind (J. L. Shaw, 'The Figure of Venus: Rhetoric of the Ideal and the Salon of 1863', *Art history* 14 (1991), 540-70, esp. 551).
- 64 *Ibid.* 70. *harmogen* describes the smooth transition from light to shadow in order to create volume (*Historia naturalis* xxxv, 29; cf. also Melion op. cit. (n. 5) chapter 11, n. 3. Another definition of *harmogen* is given by Pierre Le Brun in the so-called Brussels Manuscript (1635): 'Besides the light and the shade, there is the half light, which is something between light and shade, and is a colour composed of a mixture of the two, and is that which separates the colours; it is called "dejettement"', and in Greek "armoge", Merrifield op. cit. (n. 13) 774. Later, Franciscus Junius calls the painters stupid who paint their shadows without light, referring back to Tertullian

- (adversus Hemogenem), see Heinen *op. cit.* (n. 6), 143, n. 486. On Junius definition of *harmoge* see also P. Taylor, 'The concept of *houding* in Dutch art theory', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld institutes* 55 (1992), 210-232, esp. note 29.
- 65 Hubaux and Puraye *op. cit.* (n. 58), 70-71.
- 66 Becker has identified Paolo Pino as important source, Becker *op. cit.* (n. 5).
- 67 See M. van Eikema Hommes, 'Discoloration or Chiascuro? The Interpretation of Dark Areas in Raphael's Transfiguration', *Simiolus* 28 (2000/2001), 4-43.
- 68 'Huius ergo varietatis ingeniosa imitatio no sine pigmentorum quada scabrie ad luculentia τ πορον cuiuslibet corporis atperata (na huiusmodi scabrie in exprimedis omnib. corporibus preaterqua leuissimis, & quoru ωροε[?] ad vivendi sensum quamminime perueniat, adhibenda est) tantam vim habet ut no opera depicta, sed res naturales videre te credas.' Lampsonius *op. cit.* (n. 58) 23. Hubaux and Puraye translate 'Cette ingénieuse imitation des différentes couleurs ne va pas sans donner quelque dureté aux pigments, laquelle rugosité doit être appropriée à la brillante figuration des pores de chacun des corps qu'il s'agit de représenter, sauf les plus legers (et ceux dont les pores ne sont pas perceptible), par quoi la peinture atteint un tel degré de force qu'on y croirait voir non pas des objets peints, mais la nature elle même' *op. cit.* (n. 58), 71. I know of no comparable references to the structure of pigments in Italian treatises. On coloured shadows see Karel van Mander's comments on the unusual purple and yellow in the flesh tones of the numerous nudes in Cornelis van Haarlem's *Massacre of the Innocents* (Frans Hals-Museum, Haarlem, see P.J.J. van Thiel, *Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem*, Ghent 1999, 86-88).
- 69 This is due to the chemical interaction between pigments and oil binding media that together form an actual skin-like layer and enable the painter to actually 'paint with skin'. The pigment responsible for this effect is lead white, see A. Wallert, C. Oosterhuis, *From tempera to oilpaint*, cat. exh. Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum), Amsterdam 1998, 42. I would also like to thank Arie Wallert for discussing this with me.
- 70 Lampsonius could have seen works by Titian in the collection Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle, see Puraye 1950 *op. cit.* (n. 58) 38, 106. Titian, especially in his late works, painted with noticeably coarsely grained

- pigments, but in this he did not limit himself to the representation of skin. During the restoration of Titian's *Venus and Cupid* (National Gallery of Art, Washington), Arie Wallert discovered that the painter used conspicuously coarse pigments, though applied uniformly across the entire canvas. Ernst van de Wetering points out how Rembrandt achieved a mimetic imitation of skin pores by careful manipulation of paint, E. van de Wetering *et. al.*, *A Corpus of Rembrandt paintings IV, The self-portraits*, Dordrecht 2005, 308-310.
- 71 Miedema 1973 *op. cit.* (n. 35), 252-266, chapter 12, verses 1-43.
- 72 See L. de Pauw-de Veen *op. cit.* (n. 56), 256-60. An exception is verse 17, where van Mander writes that early Netherlandish painters applied flesh coloured primings onto their underdrawings. Reconstructions have shown that underdrawings remain visible under a thin primer of leadwhite, flesh coloured primers however are rare and have to date only been found in early 16th century paintings, I would like to thank Jan Piet Filedt Kok for providing this information. Some of the results will be published by Abigail Bagley-Young, Jan Cornelisz. Vermeijen's *Cardinal Erard de la Marck and The Holy Family: A Diptych Reunited?*, *Burlington magazine* (forthcoming).
- 73 There are few other chapters (on the representation of reflections, landscape or drapery) which contain limited references to the application of paint (ch. 7, verse 22: On the colours of the rainbow; ch. 8, verses 16-17: On the manner of painting clouds and the sun, verse 33: Manner of painting small trees, verse 32: To practice painting leaves, verse 40: Painting trees; ch. 10, verses 22-23: Glazing technique and manner of painting velvet and silk). Two other chapters carry the word 'colour' in their titles: ch. 11, 'Van het sorteren en schikken van kleuren', and ch. 13, 'Van de Verwen oorsprong/natuere/cracht en werckinge'. They are dedicated to colour harmony and colour iconography. Workshop practice is considered when discussing which colour drapery suits skin colour best (ch. 11, verse 10).
- 74 '[...] nu laat je blos niet bevriezen en er niet zo koud en paarsig uitzien. Want zo'n lak-en-wit kleurig karmijnrood inkarnaat kan niet vleeskleurig blozen; vermiljoen daarentegen maakt dat het veel vleeschtiger gloeit' (ibid., ch. 10, verse 29), see also here n. 35 and n. 40.

- 75 '[...] zo zijn de Italianen heel wat meer bedacht in het schilderen dan wij zijn hoe wij ons best ook doen, hun werken zien er veel poezeliger en zachter uit dan die van ons [...] en als wij vlees menen te schilderen dan is het toch allemaal vis of stenen beelden' [...] thus the Italians are much better painters than we, for even if we do our best, their works look much plumper and softer than ours [...] and when we think we are painting flesh, it is all fish or stone figures]. Ibid, ch. 12, verse 35.
- 76 Rembrandt's flesh colours contain up to six different pigments; other areas in his paintings at maximum four, see E. van de Wetering, 'Reflections on the relation between technique and style: the use of the palette by the seventeenth-century painter', in: A. Wallert, E. Hermens. M. Peek (eds), *Historical painting techniques, materials and studio practice. Preprints of a symposium*, Leiden, 26-29 June 1995, 196-201.
- 77 Miedema 1973 *op. cit.* (n. 35) vol. 2, 604, traces this advice back to Vasari.
- 78 On discoloration through black pigments, see here note 67.
- 79 Colour analyses of flesh areas usually show simple organic pigments that can be mixed without reacting with each other.
- 80 '[...] wesende een groot heerlijk en seer constigh werck, seer gloeyende van naeckten en wel gecoloureert', Miedema 1994-99 *op. cit.* (n. 52), vol. 4, fol. 244r12-14.
- 81 '[...] was een Meester die in zijnen tijd wel den besten colouereerder was, zijn dinghen seer aerdick rondende en seer vleeschachtigh schilderende, niet hoggende dan met de carnatie selfs' *ibid.* fol. 227r6-8, 'Summa, hy [Jaques de Backer] is wel een van de beste Colouereers die Antwerpen heestghehadt, hebbende een vleeschachtighe manier van schilderen, soo niet met enckel wit, maer met carnatie verhoogende, so dat hy onder den Schilders eeuwig gherucht heeft verdient' *ibid.*, fol. 232r6-9. See also De Clippel in this volume.
- 82 Throughout the lives, van Mander uses the term colour 73 times. In 37 cases, colour remains unspecified; the other 36 cases particularize flesh colour. The count is based on H. Miedema, 'koloriet, lichtval en stofuitdrukking', in: *Idem, Kunst, kunstenaar en kunstwerk bij Karel van Mander. Een analyse van zijn levenbeschrijvingen*, Alphen aan den Rijn, 1981, 156-162.

- 83 Prior to Vasari, Francisco da Hollanda famously stated (using the powerful voice of Michelangelo) that Netherlanders were able to paint landscapes but not figures and that their paintings were only valued by women, old people and clerics, in short, sentimentalists. See A. F.G. Bell (ed. and trans.) *Francisco de Hollanda, four dialogues on painting (1538)*, Westport (Connecticut) 1979.
- 84 '[...] onder alle onse Nederlanders scheen den uytercozensten te wesen om Italianen den mondt te stoppen, van soo hooghen roem te laten hooren dat geen Nederlander haer Italiaensche Hoofschilders in de Const van wel schilderen Figureen noyt heeft niet alleen overtroffen maer oock niet gelyck is geweest', Miedema *op. cit.* (n. 35), I, 217v.
- 85 'Dan ick acht hadde desen Schrijver ghesien de aerdighe cloecke Pinceelstreken, en wercklijcke handelinghe van Frans, zijn Pen (soose niet misleydt en waer gheweest door afgunst tot de vreemde) hadde wel ander ghelyut van hem gheslaghen, en zijnen lof in hoogher ghedacht behouden', *ibid.* fol. 238v-243v, esp. 239r.
- 86 'Want de Italianen menen altijd dat wij daar goed in zijn en zij in figuren. Maar ik hoop dat wij hun deel ook ontstelen', and '[...] doe je best, opdat wij ons doel bereiken dat zij niet meer zeggen, in hun taal, dat Vlamingen geen figuren kunnen maken', Miedema *op. cit.* (n. 35), ch. 1, verses 71-72, see also Melion *op. cit.* (n. 5) 'Assimilating the Tuscan Canon' 118-125.
- 87 Elsewhere, I have argued that Jan van Eyck was one of the first to use oil to depict human skin, while painters before him had used oil as binding medium but *not* for flesh colour, see Lehmann *op. cit.* (n. 41)
- 88 Taylor *op. cit.* (n. 6), see also E.J. Sluiter, 'Goltzius, painting and flesh, or, why Goltzius began to paint in 1600', in M. van den Doel (ed.), *The learned eye: regarding art, theory, and the artist's reputation. Essays for Ernst van de Wetering*, Amsterdam 2005, 158-177.
- 89 Taylor *op. cit.* (n. 6), 169.
- 90 M. van Vaernewyck, *Van de Beroerlicke Tijden in die Nederlanden, en voornamelijk in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, ed. by F. Vanderhaegen, 4 vols, Ghent 1872-1881, I, 143. Van Mander points to a similar effect when he alerts painters to the interreflection of flesh against flesh on a naked body ('Carnaty teghen Carnaty') in his chapter on reflection in the *Grondt*, (Miedema *op. cit.* (n. 35), ch. 7, verse 51.
- 91 The German variant reads 'durchliuhtec'

- and appears in the context of *Lüsterfarbe*, Ploss *op. cit.* (n. 15) 198.
- 92 A. Wallert et al., *Geertgen tot Sint Jans. The holy kinship. A medieval masterpiece*, Amsterdam/Zwolle 2001, 19.
- 93 'Dus zag Natuur haar schepsels weeder leeven, Door verf, vol vlees en bloedt, op't vlak paneel. De scherpe Doodtschicht wijkt voor't stomp penseel', quoted from Weber *op. cit.* (n. 43) 150. 'Thus nature saw its creatures live again, on the flat panel through colour full of flesh and blood; the sharp point of death gives way to the dull brush' (trans. by the author).
- 94 Philips Angel, *Lof der schilder-konst* (facsimile edition Leiden 1642). Kunsthistorisch Instituut, Amsterdam 1972, 34. The tendency can also be witnessed in other 17th century painting treatises. Roger de Piles emphasized the essential role of flesh colour, which before all other colours embodies 'la vérité de la peinture' (cf. J. Lichtenstein, *La couleur éloquente. Rhétorique et peinture à l'âge classique*, Paris 1989). Also in other French treatises, flesh colour was used to explain the art of painting (A. Massing, 'French painting technique in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and De La Fontaine's "Académie de la peinture"' [Paris 1679], in: Hermens (ed.) *op. cit.* (n. 6) 319-390, esp. 339ff.