

## Masterpieces and pattern books of leaded panels: the Ulix manuscript

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In a way it is remarkable how much attention scholars have consistently paid to colourful stained glass, while clear windows have always been at least equally important. Not only did they grow out to be the standard window-filling in houses. Even in numerous grand buildings, including churches, non-painted (leaded) windows have often played a major role. Up till now, however, a thorough study of the clear window in the Low Countries has never been undertaken. Within this context, also the evolution of the glazier's profession and guild practices during the Early Modern Period is examined. This cannot be seen apart from changes in the history of glass painting, as glaziers initially made clear windows as well as stained glass.

The immediate cause for this research, was a curious manuscript, sold at auction in Brussels in December 2019. It was described as a pattern book for clear, leaded windows, probably originating from the city of Tongeren and dating from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup>, the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It contains seventy-seven drawings of repeated geometrical patterns, which, according to two handwritten entries, were drawn by a certain Severinus Ulix. Was he a glazier? And what about Lambrecht Vander Soest (?), who was, according to another inscription, the owner of the book in 1691.

A fact is that, amongst the drawings, several notes are found in the manuscript, referring to glaziers' invoices. But most interesting is that some of the designs are almost identical to the drawings in the glaziers' pattern book, kept at the city archive of Mechlin and which are probably 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>-century. Other patterns in the manuscript are analogous to drawings in the prints collection of the Musea Brugge. More specifically in this collection, two bundles, dating from the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, are kept that contain 208 drawings of guild's masterpieces and leading patterns. One particular drawing, appearing in both the Ulix and the Mechlin book, is very similar to a drawing of a Leiden masterpiece, dating from 1651. This suggests that the same patterns were used over a large region, maybe after they had been imported by travelling and/or immigrating glaziers. Or maybe they (also) circulated through publications; for example, some of the Ulix-patterns are related to or are variations of drawings that Félibien printed in his *Des principes de l'architecture, de la sculpture, de la peinture, et des autres arts qui en dependent* (1676). Also, several of them reappear in publications, such as Le Vieil's *L'art de la peinture sur verre et de la vitrerie* (1774) and the more recent *L'art de faire un vitrail* by Ottin (1892).

These publications again show that there has always been a stronger focus on the stained glass. As this imbalance is put right, the discovery of the Ulix manuscript is an important addition to a rather rare source type, allowing a further study of the masterpiece and pattern books of leaded panels in the Early Modern Period in the Low Countries. At the same time, it is the perfect occasion to dig deeper into the guilds and the origin of the masterpiece, as well as into the evolution of non-painted (leaded) glass-panels.

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