Iconographical connections between Antwerp landscapes, market scenes and kitchen pieces, 1500-1580*

One of the problems on which iconographical research on the market scenes and kitchen pieces by Pieter Aertsen and Joachim Beuckelaer has concentrated is the issue of the antithetical structure of these pictures. Jan Emmens in particular devoted attention to this problem, pointing out the existence of an antithesis between a broad display of earthly goods and worldly behaviour in the foreground and a religious story painted in the background in a whole series of market scenes and kitchen pieces by Aertsen and Beuckelaer dating from the third quarter of the 16th century. Although Emmens was not the first to comment on this antithesis, he was the first to regard it as a fundamental and common phenomenon in these paintings. In his analysis of paintings with an *Ecce Homo* scene in the background in particular (fig. 1), he tried to define the basis of their antithetical structure, launching a theory which, surprisingly, has been almost totally ignored until now. He explained the selling of meat, fish and poultry in a market place on the one hand and the *Ecce Homo* scene on the other as an antithesis between the *amor sui* of those who live the life of the flesh and worldly desires, and the *amor Dei*, to which the Passion scene in the background directs the attention of the beholder. He related this antithesis between *amor sui* and *amor Dei* to the concept of the two citizenships defined by St. Augustine in his *De Civitate Dei*, where the citizenship of the world – the *civitas terrena* – is opposed to the citizenship of the Kingdom of heaven – the *civitas Dei*. Those who commit themselves to earthly desires and worldly occupations belong to the *civitas terrena*; those who strive for the Kingdom of Heaven live on earth as pilgrims, detached from the world and destined for their real home, the Heavenly Jerusalem.

In Emmens' opinion this Augustinian concept forms the basis not only for the antithesis in *Ecce homo* pictures, but also for other market scenes and kitchen pieces by Aertsen and Beuckelaer which display earthly goods and worldly behaviour in the foreground and a religious story in the background, e.g. *Christ in the house of Martha and Mary, Christ and the woman taken in adultery, the Flight into Egypt* and the *Journey to Emmaus* (figs. 2-5).

Emmens did not give much evidence for this theory, but confined himself to comparing these paintings with a very closely related, but somewhat earlier *Ecce homo* picture painted by the Brunswick Monogrammist (Jan van Amstel) around 1540 (fig. 6). In this he detected a direct relation between some of the foreground motifs denoting worldly behaviour, and late medieval illustrations of the *De Civitate Dei*, namely the town building activity, which St. Augustine
associated with the sons of Cain, the representative of the *civitas terrena*. Here, Emmens's argument stopped, but it is at this very point that I would like to take it up again, for in my opinion, there is more evidence to be found for the idea that an Augustinian antithesis underlies this picture, as well as other market scenes and kitchen pieces by Aertsen and Beuckelaer. For this purpose I would like to recall some of the findings I presented in my dissertation on the iconography and function of the landscapes by Joachim Patinir. Basic to the iconography of Patinir's landscapes is a complex of related metaphors of the two paths of life, the traditions of which go back to biblical and classical sources. To this complex belonged, first of all, the biblical metaphor of the broad gate and broad way and the narrow gate and narrow way, as it is