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**Julius Garibaldi Melchers (1860–1932). A survey of his Dutch
paintings with emphasis on his religious works**

Mesman, George, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1990

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**JULIUS GARIBALDI MELCHERS (1860-1932).
A SURVEY OF HIS DUTCH PAINTINGS WITH
EMPHASIS ON HIS RELIGIOUS WORKS**

by

GEORGE MESMAN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1990

1990

GEORGE MESMAN

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Art History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Graduate School and University Center assisted me in preparing the illustrations for this study. Mr. David Dearing, a fellow graduate student in art history at The Graduate School and University Center, aided in reading and editing my manuscript.

PREFACE

The American painter Julius Garibaldi ("Gari") Melchers (1860-1932), the son of a German emigrant, achieved, as did many artists, a fame in his own lifetime which soon faded after his death. During his life he was much appreciated in Europe, where he exhibited in almost every major city, and his sound workmanship earned him numerous prizes at international expositions in Europe and the United States. He received many honorary titles, including the prestigious Officier de la Légion d'Honneur; he was sought after by American and European art institutions and societies; and he was appointed professor at the Grossherzoglichen Hochschule für Kunst in Weimar from 1909 until 1915.

As a citizen of the Netherlands, I initially became interested in Melchers because the artist, an American, chose to live and work in the tiny Dutch coastal village of Egmond for a quarter of a century, from 1884 to 1909. I also believe that his oeuvre deserves re-examination after nearly fifty years of neglect. In his Dutch genre works, Melchers captured the essence of his subjects in a way that successfully expressed his own talent and interest. Furthermore, I was intrigued by a group of religious pictures, including The Nativity, The Last Supper, and Supper at Emmaus, which Melchers painted around the turn of the century. These constitute a rather unusual choice of subject matter considering Melchers' reputation as a painter of peasant genre, his nationality, and his adopted home. The unusual nature of the choice is further indicated when one

considers the fact that neither the United States nor Holland had a strong tradition of religious art. Since no prior study of Melchers' biblical works exists, the need for further research into this subject seems most appropriate.

Heritage and Education

The introductory chapter of this study will include a biographical sketch of Melchers' father, Julius Theodore Melchers (1829-1909), covering his study in Paris, under the sculptors Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux and Antoine Etex; his supposed association with the 1848 German Revolution, which may have resulted in his reluctant emigration to the United States; and his ultimate move to Detroit in the early 1850s. There, Julius Theodore became a respected sculptor, woodcarver, and drawing master and received a number of public commissions. It was under his tutelage that the younger Melchers' talents as an artist first emerged. The chapter will continue with a review of Gari Melchers' decision to pursue his education at the Königlische Preussische Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf at the age of seventeen and the reasons behind that choice. Although the Kunstakademie was beginning to decline in the late 1870s, it was still one of Germany's finest art schools and, arguably, one of the finest in Europe. Melchers' years in Düsseldorf, where he took classes from Eduard von Gebhardt, an accomplished painter of religious themes will be discussed. A synopsis of Melchers' studies in Paris at the Académie Julian and his brief stay in Atina, Italy, where he executed several early works

will follow. It was in Paris that he attained early success at the Salon exhibition of 1882 with his painting, The Letter, a work which will be discussed in detail. An investigation of why Melchers might properly be placed within the movement of "juste-milieu" artists will be undertaken.

The Egmond Years

In Chapter II, Melchers' relationship with the American painter George Hitchcock, a fellow student at the Académie Julian, will be discussed. Hitchcock had earlier studied in Holland with the Dutch seascape painter Hendrik Mesdag, and it is believed that in 1884 he convinced Melchers to come to live in the Netherlands.

As background for the 19th-century art communities in the Netherlands at Egmond and elsewhere, this chapter also will briefly examine the contemporary art movements in Holland, including the Hague and Laren Schools. Melchers' work in Egmond will be viewed in context against the contrasting worlds of the poor, hardworking peasants and fishermen, and of the artists who used these people for inspiration.

Representative examples of each of Melchers' major categories of paintings executed during his stay in Egmond will be surveyed from a comparative viewpoint, rather than in the form of a stylistic study. In that regard, comments will be included on Dutch and German painters with whom Melchers may be closely compared. Special emphasis will be placed on Melchers' church genre works, which were among his most successful major paintings and which may have led him to attempt true

religious art. This chapter will conclude with the year 1909 when Melchers moved to Weimar to become an instructor at that city's art academy.

Melchers' Religious Paintings

In Chapter III, a brief survey of religious art in Germany during the second half of the 19th century will be presented with the emphasis on the period around the turn of this century. The concentration will be on Germany, not only because of Melchers' family and educational background, but also because he increasingly turned to that country as the place to exhibit and sell his paintings during his Egmond period. The religious art movement was particularly strong in Germany at this time, although there were similar trends elsewhere in Europe. Many German painters of the period responded to the popularity of religious art. Through reference to German religious art and contemporary commentary on such works, I will discuss the influences on Melchers which may have led him to undertake these themes. In addition, the philosophy of David Strauss, author of Das Leben Jesu (1835), and Ernest Renan, who wrote La Vie de Jésus (1863), will be briefly discussed.

An analysis and attempted interpretation of Melchers' major religious works, including The Nativity, The Last Supper, and Supper at Emmaus, will be presented with comments on the painter's motivation in creating this group of works within his oeuvre. Based on contemporary sources, the histories of these works and critical reviews of them will be included.

in that regard, the favorable commentary of American critics, most of whom were Melchers' supporters and friends, will be contrasted with the often highly negative reviews he received in the German press for these works. Comparisons will be made between Melchers' above-mentioned Biblical paintings and similar works executed by Eduard von Gebhardt and Fritz von Uhde. Given Melchers' background, it seems most appropriate to place his work in the context of the German movement and to compare him to Gebhardt, his former teacher, and to Uhde, perhaps the most noted contemporary German painter of religious scenes.

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- Fig. III-49. Gari Melchers: St. Joan of Arc, ca. 1895-1900. Indianapolis Museum of Art. Courtesy of the Indianapolis Museum.
- Fig. III-50. Gari Melchers: St. Gudule, ca. 1897. Collection of Mrs. Regina Trapp, New York.
- Fig. III-51. Gari Melchers: St. Genevieve, ca. 1901-1902. Whereabouts unknown. Formerly Collection of Mrs. Theodore G. Fletcher.
- Fig. III-52. George Hitchcock: Christ in Gethsemane, ca. 1905. Whereabouts unknown.
- Fig. III-53. Gari Melchers: Christ with Halo, not dated. The Cleveland Museum of Art. Courtesy of the Cleveland Museum.

CHAPTER I

HERITAGE AND EDUCATION

Julius Theodore Melchers (1829-1908): A Biographical Sketch

Julius Theodore Melchers was born on September 21, 1829, in Soest, a small town in the modern Federal State of Nordrhein-Westfalen, West Germany, about sixty-five kilometers northeast of Düsseldorf.¹ Very little is known about his early years. At the age of seventeen, he was apprenticed to a local Soest sculptor named Minsterman.² It is usually stated that Julius Theodore was later involved with the 1848 Revolution in Germany and, when it failed, was forced to flee his native country.³

¹ According to Melchers family records, Julius Theodore's ancestors came from East Frisia. One of them was a captain under the German general Albrecht von Wallenstein (1583-1634). The family moved to Westphalia early in the 18th century. Julius Theodore's father, Johann Wilhelm Anton, married Lisette Deyman, whose famous ancestor supposedly was the physician whom Rembrandt depicted in The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Joan Deyman (1656, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam). The couple had six children, of whom Julius Theodore was the eldest. The family later moved to Dortmund. Unless otherwise indicated, all Melchers family records, documents and correspondence cited in this thesis are in the collection of Belmont, The Gari Melchers Memorial Gallery ("Belmont"), Falmouth, Virginia.

² "Death Takes Aged Sculptor. Julius T. Melchers, Father of Distinguished Artist, Succumbs to Paralysis," Detroit Free Press, 15 January 1908, 1. Research done by the author in Dortmund and Soest did not reveal any trace as to who this woodcarver or sculptor, Minstermann, may have been. His name did not appear in any of these two cities' registers of births, marriages, and deaths, either in the alphabetic register of names or in the lists of professions.

³ "Apoplexy Takes Julius Melchers. Well-known Detroit Sculptor Died after Illness of Four Years. Exponent of Art in Detroit Was Father of Gari Melchers, Painter of International Renown," Detroit News, 15 January

Yet there is no evidence to support the claim that he took an active part in the Revolution, though he may have had certain sympathies towards the revolutionary cause. Julius Theodore later told J. H. Junkin that he left Germany in 1849.⁴ On March 11, 1850, Julius Theodore enrolled at the Ecole Nationale de Dessin in Paris⁵ and studied under Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux and Antoine Etex.⁶

On November 8, 1853, Julius Theodore was granted permission from the chief commissioner of the Paris police to go to London.⁷ From there, he and his brother Edward made the trip to America.⁸ Julius Theodore

1908, 7; Frederick Fried, Artists in Wood. American Carvers of Cigar-Store Indians, Show Figures, and Circus Wagons (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1970), 137; C. Kurt Dewhurst et al., "The Art of Julius and Gari Melchers," The Magazine Antiques 125 (April 1984): 862; and Joseph G. Dreiss, Gari Melchers. His Works in the Belmont Collection (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1984), 1.

⁴ J. H. Junkin, "The Wooden Indian Is Passing Away. Only a Few Left on the Streets of Detroit to Tell the Tale of Their Vanishing Greatness," Detroit Tribune, 23 July 1899, 17.

⁵ Student records of the Ecole Nationale de Dessin, 1850.

⁶ Fried, 137.

⁷ Police declaration issued by the chief commissioner of the police in Paris, 8 November 1853 (Melchers family records). Dewhurst, Dreiss, and Fried mentioned that, on his way to the United States, Julius Theodore participated in the decoration of the Crystal Palace in London which was built for the Universal Exposition (Dewhurst, 862; Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 1; and Fried, 137).

⁸ What made Julius Theodore decide to emigrate to America is unknown. He may well have received favorable news of America from his sister Hedwig, who was living in Toledo, Ohio. Both Julius Theodore and his brother Edward seemed to be very close to their sister. Julius Theodore later named his eldest child after her, and Edward moved from Detroit to Toledo in the 1860s (Melchers family records).

went to New York and probably stayed there

three years in various occupations which gave him a precarious livelihood. On learning that many of his countrymen and a few of his fellow revolutionists had settled in Detroit, he came to this city in 1855.⁹

In Detroit, Julius Theodore married Marie Bangetor on May 5, 1858. The couple had four children. The eldest, Hedwig, was born on March 3, 1859. A year later, on August 11, 1860, Gari was born (fig. I-1). Arthur Carl arrived on November 30, 1863, and the youngest child, Julia Irma, was born on March 28, 1871.¹⁰

Although Julius Theodore was a versatile artist who would receive many private and public commissions in Detroit, he is principally remembered for his wooden cigar store Indians. He received his first commission for one of these in the mid-1850s from Isaac S. Miller.¹¹ After this initial effort, for which Julius Theodore was paid \$55, he received many other orders, gradually became a specialist in these wooden symbols, and prospered in the craft.¹² Depending upon his customers'

⁹ George B. Catlin, "Old Detroit Artist Found Trade Dull, but Market for Wooden Indians Brisk," Detroit News, 4 January 1925, 17.

¹⁰ Melchers family records.

¹¹ Catlin, 17

¹² Of the wooden Indians that Julius Theodore made, only six are known to have survived, including Captain Jack or Chief Red Jacket (fig. I-2) from 1867 (Collection of Julius W. Stroh, Detroit) and two undated figures, Keokuk, Chief of the Sauks and Foxes (The New-York Historical Society, New York), and Princess of the Ottawas (Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond) (Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 2; Fried, 145-46; and David A. Thomas, "Detroit's Julius Melchers and his Wonderful Wooden Indians," Ohio Antique Review [May 1980]: 54-55).

needs, he carved all types of Indians, as well as other figures. He later told Junkin

Sometimes a cigar dealer wanted a classical figure instead of an Indian. We carved several of them, with slight variations to indicate the cigar business. A statue of Pomona with a handful of cigars instead of apples, or Ceres, holding a bunch of tobacco leaves, instead of wheat, was a striking sign, and indicated classical proclivities on the part of the proprietor. Sometimes a patriotic fellow wanted a Goddess of Liberty or Uncle Sam. I have made several Brother Jonathans for customers with strong Yankee sentiments.¹³

In 1856, through the intervention of Bishop Peter Paul Lefever, Julius Theodore received a commission to carve a communion rail for the Catholic Church of St. Anne in Detroit¹⁴ and subsequently received numerous public commissions. In 1871, he was asked to carve four sandstone allegorical figures, Art, Commerce, Industry, and Justice, for the newly completed Detroit City Hall. They were to be placed at the four corners of the central clock tower (fig. I-3). Four niches on the east and west fronts of the building remained empty until 1882. In that year, Bela Hubbard, one of Detroit's prominent citizens, provided money for four statues of important figures in Detroit history. Julius Theodore again was given the commission. He carved statues of Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, the founder of Detroit, Father Jacques Marquette, the missionary and explorer of the Mississippi, Father Gabriël Richard (fig. I-4), the Detroit clergyman and founder of the University of Michigan, and René-

¹³ Junkin, 17. Also quoted by Fried, 139.

¹⁴ Detroit Free Press, 27 November 1859.

Robert Cavalier Sieur de La Salle, the explorer.¹⁵ In 1884 he executed six statues for the facade of the Detroit Opera House, including Comedy, Music, and Tragedy.¹⁶

Julius Theodore played an important part in the art scene of Detroit and, as John H. Greusel pointed out, he

trained more young Detroiters in art than any other man in this city. . . . The majority of Detroit's most successful lithographers, artists, sculptors, designers, and workers in other imitative or creative arts in this city, have at one time or another been pupils of Julius Melchers.¹⁷

Among those who received training from Julius Theodore were the architects John Donaldson and Albert Kahn; the illustrators Joseph Kraemer and Albert Wenzell; and the painters Myron Barlow, Joseph Gies, and Julius Rolshoven.¹⁸ Julius Theodore liked to encourage hard-working students to whom art was a noble profession, one for which they would sacrifice everything. George B. Catlin wrote that Julius Theodore

¹⁵ Catlin, 17. When the City Hall was demolished in 1961, the statues were removed. The statues of Art, Commerce, Industry, and Justice are stored in pieces at the Fort Wayne Military Museum in Detroit and those of Cadillac, Marquette, Richard and La Salle are placed outdoors on the Wayne State University campus in Detroit (John Mills, Reference Librarian of the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library, letter to author, 31 July 1986).

¹⁶ Dewhurst, 868.

¹⁷ John H. Greusel, "Art's Sake! Sculptor Julius Melchers on Sacrifices," Detroit Tribune, 22 August 1897, 1.

¹⁸ Dewhurst, 864. Julius Rolshoven, however, later wrote that James E. Maxfield encouraged him to become a painter. The latter critiqued his work and Rolshoven posed for him (Julius Rolshoven, "Journal," typescript, ca. mid-1920s, Collection of Bruce Weber, New York, 14).

was a stern and exacting master of the old school. He kept his apprentices working at the bench nine hours a day and expected them to supplement their studio work with home study and practice during the evening hours. . . .¹⁹

Catlin commented that Julius Theodore could recognize talent and

when Gari began to show artistic ability he came under his father's strict schooling, and when he took to his work with a fine enthusiasm Julius Melchers was delighted.²⁰

Julius Garibaldi Melchers: Early Years in Detroit and Art Education in Düsseldorf and Paris

Gari Melchers was named after the Italian revolutionary leader, Giuseppe Garibaldi, whom the older Melchers greatly admired.²¹ Like most other children in his Detroit neighborhood, young Melchers attended the Barstow School. However, he spent most of his free time at his father's studio on Randolph Street and also attended Julius Theodore's drawing classes on Sunday mornings in the Arbeiter Hall.²²

¹⁹ Catlin, 17.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Garibaldi was probably Melchers' godfather. When Melchers wrote his father about his planned trip to Italy in 1882, Julius Theodore replied "You don't know him yet but what about paying a visit to your Godfather, Garibaldi, on Caprera? In the end, the old man may even let you paint or draw his portrait; this would be good advertising for the American press" (Julius Theodore Melchers, letter to Gari Melchers, 16 May 1882). The letter, written in German, was translated by an unknown volunteer at Belmont and was quoted by Dewhurst, 866 and Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 9.

²² Bruce M. Donaldson, "An Appreciation of Gari Melchers," in The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gari Melchers. A Memorial Exhibition of His Work, exhibition catalogue, essay by Bruce M. Donaldson. Richmond, January 17-February 28, 1938, 14.

In 1876, at the age of fifteen, Melchers exhibited two oil paintings, Domestic Quarrel (whereabouts unknown) and Winter Landscape (Belmont), as well as a group of crayon drawings (whereabouts unknown), at the first exhibition of the Detroit Art Association.²³ This show included more than one hundred oil paintings and a large number of watercolors, crayon drawings, and photographs. Local exhibitors included William B. Conely, James E. Maxfield, and John K. Trego, and, among the more famous American artists, Frederic Edwin Church and Robert W. Weir were represented. An art critic for the Detroit Free Press discussed the entries of such artists as Charles H. Eaton, Robert Hopkin, and Lewis T. Ives, but did not mention Melchers' works.²⁴

Louis L. Richards stated that, when Melchers reached the age of seventeen, he had to decide between a military career or the arts, and Julius Theodore considered sending his son to West Point.²⁵ Melchers did join a semi-military institution, the Pelouze Cadets of Detroit (fig. I-5).²⁶

²³ Detroit Art Association, First Exhibition. February 1876, 3-4. See also James L. Yarnall and William H. Gerds, comps., The National Museum of American Art's Index to American Art Exhibition Catalogues from the Beginning through the 1876 Centennial Year 6 vols. (Boston, G. K. Hall & Co., 1986), 4:2384.

²⁴ "The Art Exhibition. Opening of the First Exhibition of the Detroit Art Association," Detroit Free Press, 1 February 1876, 1.

²⁵ Louis L. Richards, "Tabloid Tales of an Old Reporter," Detroit News, 30 June 1931, 14.

²⁶ The Cadets were formed by Adjutant-General Louis H. Pelouze in spring of 1872. He trained his cadets in all the elementary duties of a soldier and intended to help them become gentlemen and good citizens. Under Pelouze's care, the cadets became widely known as one of the best disciplined juvenile military organizations in the United States ("Death of

In 1874 he was promoted to the rank of sergeant and, in August of that year, the Cadets spent a week at Camp Manchester on Orchard Lake, about forty kilometers northwest of Detroit. Melchers made a crayon sketch of the site, and, after he finished the work at home, it was exhibited at the jewelry store of M. S. Smith in Detroit.²⁷ In 1876 Melchers and the Cadets went to Philadelphia to visit the Centennial Exposition,²⁸ where the Cadets were invited to give an exhibition drill at the opening of the Michigan Building.²⁹

Melchers' impressions of Philadelphia have not survived, but he had every opportunity to view the Exposition. A correspondent for the Detroit Free Press reported that

Passes from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. were issued . . . to all [Cadets] . . . and the camp is now deserted for the Exposition grounds, where the Cadets are viewing with interest the many sights to be seen there.³⁰

Some impressions of the Exposition by Melchers' boyhood friend, Julius Rolshoven, are preserved.³¹ Rolshoven later wrote in his "Journal" that he

General Louis H. Pelouze," Detroit Free Press, 4 June 1878, 1).

²⁷ "Camp Manchester," Detroit Free Press, 18 August 1874, 13.

²⁸ "The Cadets' Centennial Trip," Detroit Free Press, 24 June 1876, 1.

²⁹ Dewhurst, 865.

³⁰ Detroit Free Press, 6 July 1876, 3. Melchers' only record of Philadelphia was an oil sketch: Encampment, Pelouze Cadets, 1876, Belmont.

³¹ Julius Rolshoven was a son of Friederich Rolshoven, a German emigrant, who settled in Detroit in 1850 as a silversmith. Before young Rolshoven accompanied Melchers to Düsseldorf in 1877, he studied briefly at the Cooper Union School in New York City under the German artist

was able to see at last what his father and other people had told him about art. Rolshoven, however, was disappointed with the picture galleries, which he described as

quantity shows whereby the public is supposed to further their education. On the contrary they leave the rooms . . . with symptoms of nausea. Size and color are mixed as are objects in a grab bag. The tiny pictures which would or might increase the charm of a modest log cabin seem hopelessly tame, whereas ambitious canvases intended for public buildings seem utterly uncalled for. . . . The one enfeebles the other: hot colors make neighboring ones cold as Iceland, romance is at war with realism. The result is that with the best intention in the world the artist damns and smiles, for his canvas is returned to the studio to have the selfsame obstacles at other shows.³²

Rolshoven's negative views, however, did not necessarily reflect Melchers' thoughts; the former's comments were written many years later in the 1920s and are the recollections of a mature artist.

The trip to Philadelphia may have fueled Melchers' desire to continue his formal art training, and Julius Theodore agreed that his son could enroll at the Königlische Preussische Kunstakademie zu Düsseldorf (the "Akademie"). Though it is not certain why Melchers chose Düsseldorf over Berlin or Munich, one may presume that family considerations were a factor. Julius Theodore was a Westphalian, and, although he never returned to his native country after his departure in 1852, sentiment may have influenced his choice. Pre-unification Germans of Julius Theodore's generation were attached to home villages and the region around them,

Ernst Plassman, who advised Rolshoven to go to Europe for further study (V. D. C., "Julius Rolshoven," The University Art Museum Bulletin, The University of New Mexico, 1 [Winter 1965-1966]: 6-7).

³² Rolshoven, 16.

but not to states as political entities and certainly not to the German Bund. In Julius Theodore's time, the Akademie was considered the best in Germany, if not in Europe. It had been surpassed in the 1870s by Berlin and Munich, but for Julius Theodore it probably still represented the pinnacle of artistic training.³³ In addition, Melchers' paternal grandfather, Johann Melchers, still lived in Dortmund, relatively close to Düsseldorf, while a great-uncle, Paulus Melchers, was Archbishop of nearby Cologne.³⁴ Furthermore, the Düsseldorf Adressbuch for 1877 lists the name of Mrs. Layers-Melchers at 28 Schützenstrasse, who may have been another relative.

³³ In the 1870s the Akademie in Düsseldorf was no longer thought of as the preeminent art school in Germany. Wend von Kalnein wrote that it was "fed on the spirit of [Wilhelm von] Schadow and failed as his reputation and fame waned" (Wend von Kalnein, "The Düsseldorf Academy," in Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, The Düsseldorf Academy and the Americans. An Exhibition of Drawings and Watercolors, exhibition catalogue, essays by Wend von Kalnein and Donelson F. Hoopes. Utica, New York, January 7-February 11, 1973, 18). The continuing popularity of the Akademie, however, was evidenced by heavy enrollment during the 1875-1890 period. In 1875, sixty-two new students arrived; six were from foreign countries, including Americans from St. Louis (Thomas Allen), New York (Robert C. Kluth) and San Francisco (Mary Reinhardt). The next year, fifty-five were listed as new students. Among them were one each from New York (Joseph Dwight Stickney) and Philadelphia (Fritz Vezin). In 1877, there were sixty-seven new students. In 1878, eighty-five students enrolled; among the Americans was Arthur Boos from New York, Carl Krauskopf from Washington, D.C., and James E. Maxfield from Detroit. In the decade after that, the school remained popular with students from all over Europe. During this period, the average number of new students who entered the school each year was ninety-five (Student records of the Königliche Preussische Kunstakademie zu Düsseldorf, 1875-1890. Nordrhein-Westfälischen Hauptstaatsarchiv, Düsseldorf).

³⁴ Peter W. Stroh, who is Melchers' great-nephew, wrote that he "has always been puzzled by such a prominent Catholic connection in a Protestant family" (Peter W. Stroh, letter to author, 22 March 1985).

Paris, the European city favored by American art students in the 1870s, was not considered by Melchers because of the opposition of his mother. She believed that the Parisian studios were "dens of iniquity."³⁵ Her opinion may have been based on what was known about the moral and social life of Paris during the 1870s. Lucy H. Hooper was one of numerous American correspondents who wrote about this subject.

The evil and the dissipation of Paris can hardly be estimated by one who has never dwelt for a continued length of time in that gay city. It is a vast moral whirlpool into whose vortex is drawn all the floating evil of a world. If anybody wishes to be or has been particularly bad, he or she goes to Paris. . . . [In Paris] offenses against morality are kindly condoned, or at least overlooked, and . . . are received into a society without question or demur.³⁶

Düsseldorf, on the other hand, was known as a quiet place with limited distractions. The city had few places where one could find amusement and none of the temptations of the bigger cities. The artists formed an important social class in Düsseldorf.

They are honored and respected in a manner scarcely conceivable in this utilitarian age. . . . [because] the townspeople live and thrive on the renown of the place as an art city.³⁷

On an intellectual level, it was easier for Melchers to take courses at a German school than to study at the Ecole Nationale et Spéciale des Beaux-Arts in Paris where a knowledge of French was required. Melchers

³⁵ Donaldson, in "An Appreciation of Gari Melchers (1860-1932)," Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, 1938, 14. Also noted by Dreiss in Gari Melchers, 3.

³⁶ Lucy H. Hooper, "French Society, and Parisianized Americans," Appletons' Journal 12 (26 September 1874): 395.

³⁷ David E. Cronin, The Evolution of a Life (New York: S. W. Green's Son, 1884), 115-16.

understood and read German, and Julius Theodore corresponded in that language with his son during the Düsseldorf years. Moreover, it was difficult for a foreign student to enroll at the Ecole because of the entrance examination which included a test of proficiency in French.

Julius Rolshoven's "Journal" gives details of Melchers' trip to Europe. Rolshoven wrote that Minnie Diedrich³⁸, Melchers, and he set off for Europe early in August 1877 aboard a train to New York. The morning following their arrival there, they boarded the Pommerania,³⁹ booked into second class. The voyage to Hamburg took about fourteen days. At Hamburg, Dieterich went to Leipzig, while Rolshoven and Melchers travelled to Düsseldorf where they immediately visited the Akademie.⁴⁰ Rolshoven described the school as a grey stone building with a market place around it and found Düsseldorf a very picturesque town offering

³⁸ Minnie Diedrich was probably a daughter of Auguste F. Diedrich. He and Gari's uncle, Edward Melchers, owned a liquor store in Detroit located at 3 Grand Avenue, opposite the City Hall (The Detroit City Directory and Advertising Gazetteer of Michigan [Detroit: R. F. Johnstone & Co., 1862-1863], 186).

³⁹ The Pommerania was one of twenty-five steamships owned by The Hamburg-American Packet Company. Many of these ships were named after German states, such as the Bavaria and the Westphalia, or after famous German writers, such as the Goethe and the Lessing. The Company provided information booklets for its passengers which pointed out that the distance between New York and Hamburg is 3,378 miles; the usual route from America to Germany was via Le Havre; ships departed from the docks in Hoboken every Thursday at 2 p.m.; and it took about ten or eleven days to get to France (General Information for Passengers by the Steamships on the Hamburg-American Packet Company [New York: M. W. Siebert, 1876], 3-6).

⁴⁰ Rolshoven, 26-27.

many places where a student could sketch.⁴¹

During Melchers' years of study, the Akademie faculty included the religious-history painters Andreas and Karl Müller and Ernst Deger; the sculptor August Wittig; the history painters Hermann Wislicenus, Eduard von Gebhardt, and Peter Janssen; and the history and portrait painters Heinrich Lauenstein, Julius Roeting, and Hugo Crola. Eugen Dücker taught landscape painting, while Wilhelm Sohn instructed in the painting of genre scenes. Karl Woermann was the art history teacher and Ernst Forberg was the graphic arts instructor.⁴²

Melchers enrolled at the Akademie on October 1, 1877,⁴³ and became a student of Crola and Lauenstein. In April 1878 he studied under Janssen, who encouraged him to draw from nature. In June of that year, he enrolled in the class of Karl Müller, where the emphasis was on drawing from antique casts. Finally, in the spring of 1880, he entered the combined class of Gebhardt and Roeting, where he began painting in oils.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Students records of the Düsseldorf Akademie, 1877-1881.

⁴³ The first American student to enroll at the Akademie was George Schwarze, who arrived in 1839. Among the famous American artists who studied in Düsseldorf were Albert Bierstadt, George Caleb Bingham, William Morris Hunt, Eastman Johnson, Emanuel Leutze, and Richard Caton Woodville (Barbara S. Groseclose, "Emanuel Leutze, 1816-1868: A German-American History Painter" [Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1973], 237).

⁴⁴ Melchers was registered in 1877 as Julius G. Melchers and was listed as number ten among the twenty-two students of Crola and Lauenstein. Melchers' student card records that he was to be trained as a

There are no known letters or journals by Melchers describing his student days in Düsseldorf, but it may be pertinent to read what Rolshoven wrote about his stay at the Akademie. Rolshoven had some of the same teachers as Melchers, and their experiences were probably similar. Rolshoven described Crola as a teacher who

had that air of dignity which one might expect in association with a representative of an Academy. Such characters reflect the nobility of a life devoted to the wonders of nature and art.⁴⁵

In Crola's class, Rolshoven had to execute drawings after Holbein, finished in every detail. Later he was allowed to make drawings from plaster casts. Crola demanded that his students repeat at home from memory their daily class lessons. Rolshoven also took a composition class from Janssen and, in addition, attended art history lectures and studied anatomy. Rolshoven then studied under Gebhardt, who was held in high esteem by teachers and students. Gebhardt advised him always to carry a sketchbook and to draw everything that caught his eye, which would both benefit and develop his perception of nature.⁴⁶

Apparently Melchers took Gebhardt's advice to heart. Several of Melchers' sketchbooks from his Düsseldorf period survive and one can

Figurenmahler, was a good student, had much talent, and was a diligent worker. He received outstanding comments from Janssen but less favorable ones from Karl Müller, who said that his work was still difficult to judge (Students records of the Düsseldorf Akademie, 1877).

⁴⁵ Rolshoven, 30.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 30-32.

study his early development at the Akademie.⁴⁷ In his first sketchbook (number 23), opposite a drawing of two fencing male figures in medieval costumes, Melchers sketched the head in profile of a fellow student and notated it "F.S." [Fritz Strobentz]. Above the portrait Melchers wrote "Herbst 1877. Erstes Skizzenbuch" (Autumn 1877. First sketchbook). This sketchbook was of the pocket-sized variety that Gebhardt advised his students always to carry with them. It contains many studies of local people, city scenes, and animals, as well as studies of male nudes and several finished portraits of other students, including Robert von Steiger, Max Tannert, and Fritz Vezin. In another sketchbook (number 40), Melchers executed a portrait of Julius Rolshoven, dated November 2, 1877. Two other portraits here are of Melchers himself and of Carl Lues, another student, dated November 20 and 29, 1877, respectively.

The teachers at the Akademie considered "Studentenreisen" (student trips) a requirement of art education and encouraged their pupils to supplement their studies with sketching trips around Düsseldorf, along the Rhine, and, if possible, to farther places.⁴⁸ In 1878 Melchers went to Paris, together with several classmates including Strobentz, to see the

⁴⁷ At Belmont there are forty-seven of Melchers' sketchbooks of different sizes, measuring from between 10 cm. x 15 cm. to 17.5 cm. x 22.5 cm., covering the Düsseldorf and Egmond Years. Many remained almost empty because Melchers had a habit of sketching only one or two figures in a book and then abandoning it. None of his drawings from the plaster casts survives.

⁴⁸ Cronin, 116-17.

Universal Exposition.⁴⁹ Then, in June 1879, Melchers went to Dortmund to visit his paternal grandfather, Johann Wilhelm Anton Melchers, whose portrait he executed in charcoal (fig. I-6, Belmont).

Melchers continued to exhibit his work in Detroit during his Düsseldorf years. In February 1879 he sent two works, a portrait in crayon and a study after nature in the same medium, to Angell's Art Gallery and, in October, sent the gallery four sketches in ink and three in oil.⁵⁰

On July 1, 1880, Melchers received his diploma from the Akademie, but he did not leave the school until the following year.⁵¹ Sometime between April and July of 1881, he went to Paris to complete his art education, enrolling at the Académie Julian in the fall of that year. It would appear, however, that Melchers also went to Brittany that summer, because Christian Brinton wrote that Melchers' first Salon painting, The Letter (fig. I-7, 1882, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.), was executed in this region.⁵²

⁴⁹ Leslie Lenore Gross, "Melchers' Art from Detroit and Düsseldorf," in Mary Washington College Museum, Gari Melchers (1860-1932). Selections from the Mary Washington College Collection, exhibition catalogue, essays by Leslie L. Gross et al. Fredericksburg, Virginia, April 1973, 9.

⁵⁰ "Art Brevities," Detroit Free Press, 2 February and 16 October 1879.

⁵¹ Diploma from the Düsseldorf Akademie, 1 July 1880.

⁵² Christian Brinton, Modern Artists (New York: The Baker & Taylor Company, 1908), 216. Melchers, however, completed The Letter in his studio in Paris because he signed and dated the painting in the lower right "Gari J. Melchers./Paris. 1882." While in Brittany, Melchers also conceived or painted The Vegetable Girl (fig. I-8, 1881, Collection of Mrs.

There were many reasons for Melchers to continue his studies in Paris because in Düsseldorf

conventionalism . . . [impaired] the value of the work even of some of its best artists to that degree that it has become at last a by-word to say of an artist that he painted in the Düsseldorf style. . . . [In the late 1870s] the influence of Paris has . . . become perceptible at Düsseldorf; men of perhaps no greater powers than those they supersede are now working there in a truer manner, and the results are . . . admirable.⁵³

The German painter Lovis Corinth stated that, in the early 1880s, it became a custom for his countrymen to study in Paris after they finished their education at home. According to Corinth, German students hoped to stay in Paris until they could exhibit their work at the Salon and receive at least an honorable mention.⁵⁴ The American painter Henry Bacon wrote that, although previously the American student had gone to Florence or Rome to study, Paris was now the center of art. Students arrived from all over, and each would mature and grow by contact with others.⁵⁵ Phebe D. Natt stated that in Paris there was a vast art world of masterpieces past and present which surrounded the student. The student was at the center of contemporary art and could breathe the much-discussed atmosphere of Paris; he or she could also delight in the treasures of the

Norma Kosann, New York) depicting a young woman in a Breton costume and carrying a basket of summer vegetables.

⁵³ Samuel G. W. Benjamin, Contemporary Art in Europe (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1877), 150-51.

⁵⁴ Lovis Corinth, "In der Akademie Julian," Kunst und Künstler 3 (September 1904): 19.

⁵⁵ Henry Bacon, A Parisian Year (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1882), 54.

Louvre and the Luxembourg Museum. The French government provided free education for male students, natives and foreigners alike. Natt noted that "Paris, with all its varied attractions, has been and is the paradise of artists."⁵⁶ According to Richard Whiteing, the Latin Quarter offered cheap rooms for six and one-half dollars per month and, in one of the nearby boarding houses, a student could have two meals daily for nineteen dollars a month. The Latin Quarter was not as picturesque as it had been in earlier decades, but for the American student who usually came from a "city of blocks," the area was still exotic.⁵⁷

The primary objective of most art students in Paris, native or foreign, was to attend the prestigious Ecole Nationale et Spéciale des Beaux-Arts (the "Ecole"). French applicants had to be between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five, while there were no age limits for foreigners. Each applicant had to present proof of talent and age, and a foreign student had to submit to the Minister of the Fine Arts an additional letter of recommendation from his ambassador or consul. The candidate then had to pass a series of difficult examinations, including executing anatomical and perspective drawings, a life study and, finally, an oral or written examination in general history.⁵⁸ The applicant also was examined

⁵⁶ Phebe D. Natt, "Paris Art-Schools," Lippincott's Monthly Magazine 27 (March 1881), 276.

⁵⁷ Richard Whiteing, "The American Student at the Beaux-Arts," The Century Illustrated Monthly, 23 (December 1881): 259-61.

⁵⁸ The drawings had to be finished within a certain time period, ranging between two and nine hours, and were examined by specialists (Natt, 271-72).

in his knowledge of the French language. This testing was introduced to put a stop to the alarming influx of foreign students, especially from America, because they "threatened to crowd out the embryo painters of France from the already restricted space of the National School of the Fine Arts."⁵⁹

Because it was so difficult to enter the Ecole, many private ateliers of such painters as Léon Bonnat, Alexandre Cabanel, Jean-Léon Gérôme, and others were available to students. The teaching of a master was seldom more than verbal encouragement. Sometimes he would say "Ce n'est pas mal, ce n'est pas mal du tout, mais" and then, with much patience, would correct the student's work.⁶⁰ The ateliers of these teachers were inexpensive, with fees ranging from three to eight dollars a month.⁶¹ In addition to these studios, there were also the privately-owned schools, among which the Académie Suisse and the Académie Julian were the most prominent.⁶² The Académie Julian (the "Académie") was founded in 1868 by Rodolphe Julian in the Passages des Panoramas. As many more students arrived, Julian opened other branches, including those on the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis, the Rue d'Uzès, and the Rue

⁵⁹ Lucy H. Hooper, "Art Schools in Paris," The Cosmopolitan 14 (November 1892): 59-60.

⁶⁰ Natt, 275.

⁶¹ Whiteing, 266.

⁶² Bacon, 10.

Vivienne.⁶³ Julian persuaded well-known painters from the Ecole, such as William Bouguereau, Benjamin Constant, Lucien Doucet, and Jules Lefèbvre, to act as visiting professors, which resulted in the Académie becoming, next to the Ecole, the largest and most famous of the Parisian art schools.⁶⁴ The Académie also achieved some political power in the art world due to Julian's longstanding association with a great number of artists, some of whom "became powerful in professional circles."⁶⁵ Because of these connections, he could obtain "special favors" from the Salon juries to such an extent that "the Académie Julian was accused of promoting a sort of Mafia: the teachers and some of their students would back each other in the elections to the jury of the Salon and in the distribution of prizes."⁶⁶ Corinth wrote that this was a reason why many German students studied at the Académie.⁶⁷

Melchers entered the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis branch of the Académie and received criticism from Boulanger and Lefèbvre. Both had

⁶³ Catherine Fehrer, "History of the Julian Academy," in Shepherd Gallery, The Julian Academy, Paris 1868-1939, exhibition catalogue, essay by Catherine Fehrer. New York, spring 1989, [2].

⁶⁴ William Rothenstein, Men and Memories: Recollections of William Rothenstein 1872-1900 (New York: Coward-McCann, 1931), 39.

⁶⁵ Lois Marie Fink, "Elizabeth Nourse: Painting the Motif of Humanity," in National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Elizabeth Nourse, 1859-1938. A Salon Career, exhibition catalogue, essays by Mary Alice Heekin Burke and Lois Marie Fink. Washington, D.C., January 14-April 17, 1983, 95.

⁶⁶ Jacques Lethève, The Daily Life of French Artists in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Praeger, 1972), 26. Quoted by Fink, 95.

⁶⁷ Corinth, 19.

outstanding reputations: they were Prix-de-Rome winners, Officiers de l'Ordre de la Légion d'Honneur, members of the Salon jury, and had been awarded various Salon medals. Melchers studied at the Académie from fall, 1881, until spring, 1883.

As was the case with Melchers' Düsseldorf years, no records survive describing his student days in Paris. It is, therefore, meaningful to note what his contemporaries wrote about the Académie. Edward Simmons studied at the Académie on the Passages des Panoramas from 1879 until 1881.⁶⁸ He wrote that the studio, which he described as the "dingiest place imaginable," was located on the second floor of an old, dirty building. The room was dark and poorly ventilated. A platform was placed at the end of the studio and next to it was a small area where female models could undress behind a curtain. Although the Académie did not provide much luxury, it offered "enormous inspiration for genius." Julian made only brief appearances to check on the new female models. He charged each student three hundred francs a year (equivalent to sixty dollars then). Although the amount was not much, Julian made a large profit because the models were poorly paid, the rent was low, and the visiting teachers from the Ecole gave free instruction. One of the senior students was in charge of choosing the models for the week from a crowd of poor people who lined up at the stairway every Monday

⁶⁸ Fehrer, "History of the Julian Academy," in Shepherd Gallery, New York, 1989, [228].

morning. Seats in the atelier were on a first-come, first-served basis.⁶⁹

Between 1884 and 1887, Corinth studied at the same branch as Melchers. He wrote that his instructors were Bouguereau and Robert-Fleury, under whom he studied in alternating months. Boulanger and Lefèbvre taught on a similar rotating basis in the adjoining studio. The criticism given was sometimes confusing. Bouguereau, for example, might tell a student "cherchez la caractère de la nature, monsieur, prenez des brosses petites" while he himself used broad brushes. Robert-Fleury, on the other hand, would comment "prenez des brosses larges et mettez le ton à ton" although he worked in the opposite manner.⁷⁰

Melchers' experiences at the Académie were probably similar to those described by Simmons and Corinth. During his stay at the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis branch, he may have made the acquaintance of fellow American students who also studied there during some or all of the years when he was in attendance. Among those most recognized today were Charles Harold Davis (from 1880 to 1882), Lovell Birge Harrison (1881), Willard Leroy Metcalf (from 1883 to 1889), and John Henry Twachtman (from 1883 to 1885). Arthur Wesley Dow and Robert William Vonnoh also studied there from time to time between the years 1880 and 1888.⁷¹ Of greater significance to Melchers' later career and his decision

⁶⁹ Edward Simmons, From Seven to Seventy. Memories of a Painter and a Yankee (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1922), 118 and 125-26.

⁷⁰ Corinth, 23.

⁷¹ Fehrer, "History of the Julian Academy," in Shepherd Gallery, New York, 1989, [134, 165, 169, 184, 206, 237].

to establish residence in the Dutch village of Egmond aan Zee, however, was his encounter with George Hitchcock.⁷² The latter entered the Académie in 1879 and returned there in 1882.⁷³ Melchers, on the other hand, may have influenced Hitchcock's decision to study at the Düsseldorf Akademie for several months in 1884.⁷⁴

Melchers was one of literally hundreds of American art students in Paris who strove to obtain admittance to the Ecole. Among the American painters who studied at the Ecole and later attained fame were Thomas Eakins, William McGregor Paxton, Theodore Robinson, John Singer Sargent, and Julian Alden Weir.⁷⁵ On July 4, 1881, Melchers obtained the required letter of recommendation from G. P. Pomeroy, the American chargé d'affaires, which was sent to the Director of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.⁷⁶ Melchers took the examinations in July, 1881, and, on August 9, was admitted to the painting section of the Ecole. His student record, however, is somewhat incomplete. It indicates only that in July he took the "Epreuves subies pour l'Admission," but does not specify that he

⁷² Hitchcock had visited Egmond aan Zee in 1881 and both Hitchcock and Melchers became residents of Egmond aan Zee in winter of 1884 (Annette Stott, "American Painters who Worked in the Netherlands, 1880-1914" [Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1986], 21).

⁷³ Fehrer, [187].

⁷⁴ Students' records of the Düsseldorf Akademie, 1884.

⁷⁵ H. Barbara Weinberg, "Nineteenth-Century American Painters at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts," The American Art Journal 13 (Autumn 1981): 69.

⁷⁶ G. P. Pomeroy, letter to the Director of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, 4 July 1881.

passed them for a particular section of the Ecole. It is possible that he passed the artistic part of the examination, but not the linguistic one.

It would have made little sense for Melchers to take a drawing course at the Ecole, because he had just completed similar studies in Düsseldorf. As an advanced student who had already exhibited his work, Melchers probably matriculated in the Ecole partly for the reason that its students were favored when it came to acceptance at Salon exhibitions. It seems likely that Melchers remained a student at the Académie, where his work benefitted from criticism by Boulanger and Lefèbvre, but that he did not take courses, as such, at the Ecole.⁷⁷

Around March 1882 Melchers must have written his father that his first major painting, The Letter, was accepted for the Salon because on May 16, Julius Theodore replied

Received your letter by which you informed me that you are waiting with unprecedented suspense for the varnishing day so that you then can see where and how your picture is hanging.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Melchers did not study in the ateliers of Boulanger and Lefèbvre at the Ecole either. Boulanger was not appointed professor at the Ecole until November 1, 1883, and Lefèbvre was only affiliated with the Ecole beginning February 3, 1900, when he was appointed professor for the evening classes (Weinberg, 71). Arthur Hoeber, however, wrote that Melchers attended the drawing class of Adolphe Yvon, "the famous Cours Yvon," at the Ecole for two years (Arthur Hoeber, "Gari Melchers," The International Studio 31 [March 1907]: XVI). Hoeber studied under Jean-Léon Gérôme in his atelier at the Ecole in 1881 (Weinberg, 82).

⁷⁸ Julius Theodore Melchers, letter to Gari Melchers, 16 May 1882. Melchers probably wrote his father regularly since Julius Theodore demanded in the above-mentioned letter "Write me often, this is my dictum." Only this letter, however, survives.

The Letter and Other Early Works

The acceptance of The Letter was probably the result of a successful combination of style and subject matter, and the fact that Melchers' mentors, Boulanger and Lefèbvre, were both members of the Salon jury of 1882. Melchers belonged to a group of painters labeled "juste-milieu" or "middle of the road."⁷⁹ Albert Boime has pointed out that since the objective of a constitutional government, such as those in France in the 19th century after 1830, was to satisfy a great number of people of dissimilar taste, French official art of the July Monarchy (1830-1848), Second Empire (1852-1870), and Third Republic (1871-1918) was associated with the related "juste-milieu" style of painting. This ascendancy of compromise art was most conspicuous during the latter regime. Boime wrote of

. . . the rise of a class of artists employing both independent and Academic features. . . . [Because] they no longer considered the tight, polished surface of Academicians like Gérôme . . . as the indispensable condition of acceptable works of art. . . . [they] deliberately chose the informal technique of the independents, either painting parts of the picture crudely or attenuating and blending the contours of forms into each other.⁸⁰

The Third Republic "juste-milieu" painters, including Jules Bastien-Lepage

⁷⁹ The term "juste-milieu" was first introduced in the 17th century by the French philosopher Blaise Pascal. In 1831, Louis Philippe adopted the word to justify the politics of his July Monarchy (1830-1848) which were between those of the right wing Legitimists and Bonapartists and the left wing Republicans and Socialists (Grote Nederlandse Larousse Encyclopedie, 25 vols. [The Hague: Uitgeverij Scheltens & Giltay N. V., 1973-1979, 13:345).

⁸⁰ Albert Boime, The Academy of French Painting in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Phaidon Press, 1971), 16.

and Pascal-Adolphe-Jean Dagnan-Bouveret, with their "lighter palette" and "quasi-Impressionist execution",

. . . represented to the world at large the last word in modernism, and many of the younger generation idolized their work. . . . [They] expand[ed] the aesthetic viewpoint of the French public and prepare[d] the way for even more extreme innovations. . . . [And] they showed the younger generation that it was possible to preserve the Academic tradition and still appear modern and original.⁸¹

It thus was not surprising that Melchers adopted this compromise style for his first Salon painting, and it likewise was not unusual that he chose as a subject a scene from the daily life of peasants, particularly one depicting two Breton women in local costumes. As Lois Marie Fink has pointed out, during the 1880s

the theme of the peasant in Salon art was at its zenith and was to remain popular for the next quarter-century. . . . An enormous popular interest in the European peasant was sustained during these years by a plethora of books and articles on the subject. There was a curiosity about these rural people -- how they lived, what they thought, the meaning of their customs.⁸²

The Salon catalogue of 1882 lists numerous artists who submitted paintings depicting specific Breton scenes. The titles of many of these works usually included references to Brittany, Breton, or to specific villages in the province, such as Pont-Aven.⁸³

⁸¹ Ibid., 17-18.

⁸² Fink, "Elizabeth Nourse: Painting the Motif of Humanity," in National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C., 1983, 102.

⁸³ Among the numerous artists who exhibited Breton scenes at the Salon of 1882 were the Swiss painter Edouard Brot (Côtes de Bretagne), the English artist Alfred Conquest (Décembre en Bretagne), the Norwegian Harriet Backer (Intérieur Breton), and the Frenchmen Alexandre Dubouchet (Jeune Breton sur une Plage) and Léon Duval Gozlan (Le Port de Pont-Aven) (Salon de 1882. Explication des Ouvrages de Peinture).

Michael Jacobs has recently written that Brittany attracted more 19th-century artists than any other region in France because its inhabitants seemed to live so much in the past. The area remained largely untouched by the industrial revolution and had a population which was regarded as exotic. The Bretons were of Celtic origin, who continued to speak their own language and kept their strong folklore tradition, along with a faith which incorporated aspects of the ancient Druid religion into Catholicism. Artists were fascinated by the Breton costumes which had been retained, especially since regional dress had largely disappeared elsewhere in France.⁸⁴ Jacobs noted that the Breton costume

varied according to a person's age, status, village, and in the case of a woman, whether or not she was still a virgin. The principal component of a woman's costume was the head-dress or "coiffe": this could be very short and closely fitting . . . tall and narrow, or wide and butterfly-like, and was made of lace or cotton; it was invariably white, and always concealed every strand of hair.⁸⁵

The Breton peasant, working in the fields, walking in the village streets, worshipping at church, or taking part in some festivity, provided these 19th-century artists with inspiration, and art colonies were developed all over Brittany. The most important of these were to be found in the southwestern part of the province in the region known as Finistère. The

Sculpture, Architecture, Gravure et Lithographie des Artistes Vivants [Paris: Charles de Mourgues Frères, 1882]). The whereabouts of these paintings are unknown.

⁸⁴ Michael Jacobs, The Good and Simple Life. Artist Colonies in Europe and America (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1985), 42-44.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 44.

earliest principal one was in Pont-Aven,⁸⁶ a village which was "discovered" by the American painter, Robert Wylie, who first went there in 1864. In subsequent years, more American artists joined him, including Frederick Arthur Bridgman, Earl Shinn (who later became a prominent art critic and used the name Edward Strahan), and Charles Way. Shinn counted about sixty painters from all over the world who worked in Pont-Aven in 1878 and close to one hundred in the early 1880s.⁸⁷ The best-known Americans among these later arrivals were Thomas Hovenden, William Lamb Picknell, and Julian Alden Weir. A contemporary observer, the British painter Henry Blackburn, wrote about Pont-Aven

Here the art student [from Paris] comes . . . and settles down for the summer to study undisturbed . . . his surroundings are delightful, and everything he needs is to be obtained in an easy way that will sound romantic and impossible in 1879. . . . the climate [in Pont-Aven] is . . . favorable to out-door work. . . . the Hôtel des Voyageurs, which . . . takes pensionnaires for about five francs a day . . . is principally supported by American artists. . . . It is said of Pont-Aven that it is "the only spot in Europe where Americans are content to . . . [work] all year round."⁸⁸

It is not known in which Breton village Melchers developed his concept for The Letter (fig. I-7). Most probably, however, it was in Pont-Aven⁸⁹ because of the distinctive costumes of the two peasant women

⁸⁶ Ibid., 43-45.

⁸⁷ Edward Strahan [Earl Shinn, pseud.], "Frederick A. Bridgman," Harper's New Monthly Magazine 63 (October 1881): 696-98.

⁸⁸ Henry Blackburn, Breton Folk. An Artistic Tour in Brittany (London: Sampson Low et al., 1880), 128-32.

⁸⁹ Jennifer A. Martin Bienenstock has recently suggested that The Letter was executed in Picardy. (Jennifer A. Martin Bienenstock, "Gari Melchers and the Belgian Art World 1882-1908," in Museum of Fine Arts,

portrayed in the work.⁹⁰ The figures are likely meant to represent a mother and her daughter. The latter has just received a letter which she holds in both hands and attentively reads. The slight smile on her face probably indicates good news. The older woman holds the envelope in her right hand and awaits the former's report on the contents of the letter. She stands in front of a sunlit window; the rather bare interior contains only a small wooden table on which are two small shiny ceramic bowls and one woman's knitting. On the right side of the window alcove is a framed print of a head of Christ. The juxtaposition of the two figures in The Letter might easily be read as symbolic of the traditional close family bonds of the peasants and of their sharing of important events. According to contemporary sources, a majority of the Breton peasants were illiterate. Julian Alden Weir thought they were "the most ignorant set of beings I ever met, few of them can read or write. . . ."⁹¹ Melchers, however, chose to elevate his theme by portraying a woman who could read. The knitting on the table is an example of a typical

Gari Melchers. A Retrospective Exhibition, exhibition catalogue, essays by Diane Lesko et al. St. Petersburg, Florida, March 11-May 6, 1990, 78). She provided no information, however, as to why she reached such a conclusion, and there is no evidence that Melchers ever worked in this northern province of France.

⁹⁰ Pont-Aven costumes are well-known from the later paintings of Paul Gauguin and his followers of the Pont-Aven School, including Emile Bernard.

⁹¹ Julian Alden Weir, letter to Susan Martha Bayard Weir, 26 August 1874 (Julian Alden Weir papers, microfilm roll 71, 279, Archives of American Art, New York).

woman's practical work.⁹² The prominent inclusion of the image of Christ on the wall between the two figures was Melchers' way of expressing that Breton peasants were devoutly religious, while the fine bowls suggest appreciation of beautiful objects. The sunlit window indicates that the scene is set in summer and enables Melchers to explore the effects of direct daylight in his canvas.

Melchers' idealistic portrayal of his figures in The Letter contradicted contemporary accounts of the Breton peasant women. A Breton female was usually described as having a sturdy appearance, with a face which was "a region of barren rugged skin." She was supposedly short, thick, and sinewy, and had a broad face with high cheekbones.⁹³ Melchers' idealization of these peasants foreshadowed the approach he would adopt during his Dutch expatriate years when he consistently depicted Egmond peasant women as attractive figures, even though contemporary sources documented the opposite.

The theme of The Letter was quite popular in the second half of the 19th century and was, in turn, related to 17th-century Dutch art. Women reading, receiving, or writing letters were subjects which often had been

⁹² A number of 19th-century French painters often illustrated knitting in their portrayals of peasant women, including William Adolphe Bouguereau (The Knitting Girl, ca. 1869, Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska), Jules Breton (A Peasant Girl Knitting, ca. 1880, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), and Jean-François Millet (The Knitting Lesson, 1858-60, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts).

⁹³ George M. Towle, "Life in Brittany," Harper's New Monthly Magazine 61 (November 1870): 834 and 62 (December 1870): 30-34.

explored by such Golden Age painters as Gerard ter Borch and Johannes Vermeer. These subjects had been treated by the earlier artists because

In the highly literate society of the Dutch Republic letter-writing was, geographically and socially, a widespread activity. . . . [And] In the context of Dutch genre painting, letter-writing is often associated with love.⁹⁴

The revival of interest in Vermeer's art in particular was due, in large part, to the French critic Théophile Thoré (who later adopted the pseudonyms William Bürger and Thoré-Bürger), who first saw a painting by Vermeer (View of Delft, ca. 1660-1661, Mauritshuis, The Hague) in The Hague in 1842.⁹⁵ Thoré's interest culminated in a three-part article which appeared in the Gazette des Beaux-Arts in 1866.⁹⁶

Melchers admired 17th-century Dutch genre painting and his collection at Belmont of postcard-sized reproductions included the works of such artists as ter Borch and Vermeer. He owned two prints each of Vermeer's The Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window (ca. 1657, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden) and The Love Letter (ca. 1670, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam), and one of the artist's Woman in Blue Reading a Letter (fig. I-9, ca. 1662-1664, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam).

The Letter suggests that Melchers was much indebted to Vermeer,

⁹⁴ Christopher Brown, Scenes of Everyday Life. Dutch Genre Painting of the Seventeenth Century (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), 137.

⁹⁵ A. Heppner, "Thoré-Bürger en Holland. De Ontdekker van Vermeer en Zijn Liefde voor Neerland's Kunst," Oud-Holland 55 (1938): 69-70.

⁹⁶ William Bürger, "Van der Meer de Delft," Gazette des Beaux-Arts 21 (October 1866): 297-330; (November 1866): 458-70; and (December 1866): 542-75.

adapting Vermeer's prosperous and sophisticated Dutch middle-class figures and placing them in peasant settings in Brittany. Melchers copied typical features from Vermeer's composition: the table with the still life on it in the foreground, the sunlit window, the figures enclosed in a narrow space, and the depiction of a picture within a picture.

As previously stated, Melchers' presentation of a peasant genre theme for his first Salon painting was not unusual given the widespread popularity of such works among many 19th-century European painters. In France, Jean-François Millet and his younger contemporary, Jules Breton, were the most famous exponents of the theme. Millet's fame was established with The Winnower (1847, Private Collection, U.S.A.), which was exhibited at the Salon of 1848. It proved to be a great success and was purchased by the French State. The painting was one of the earliest well-known examples in the 19th century in which a peasant was portrayed on a large scale and in a naturalistic way; the title figure dominates the work and there is little background detail. He is shown as an uncouth and sturdy man wearing ragged clothes.⁹⁷ Millet's concept was in sharp contrast to the traditional European peasant genre, which developed in the 16th and 17th centuries and typically showed peasants in group scenes. Examples of such works are Pieter Bruegel the Elder's Peasant Wedding (ca. 1565, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), Adriaen Brouwer's The Smokers (The Peasants of Moerdijk) (ca. 1627-1630, Private

⁹⁷ André Fermigier, Jean-François Millet (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1977), 41.

Collection), Louis le Nain's Peasant Family (ca. 1640, Musée du Louvre, Paris), and Adriaen van Ostade's Villagers Merrymaking at an Inn (1652, The Toledo Museum of Art). Millet's peasant figures were admired by many contemporary critics and the public because he depicted them as the audience expected them to be: hardworking (as in The Gleaners, 1857, Musée du Louvre, and Man with a Hoe, 1860-1862, Private Collection); and pious individuals who accepted their place in society (as in, for example, The Angelus, 1857-1859, Musée du Louvre).

From 1855 until the end of the 1890s, Jules Breton specialized in the portrayal of peasant women from his native Artois and from Brittany. Hollister Sturges has written

Breton's depictions of joyful labor [The Gleaners, 1854, The National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin], bountiful harvest [The Vintage at Château Lagrange, 1864, Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska], restful moments of contemplation [Daydreaming by the Seaside, 1874, The Forbes Magazine Collection, New York City], peasant celebrations [Return of the Harvesters, 1855, Private Collection], and long-practiced religious customs [The Pardon of Kergoat, 1891, Gilmour Academy, Gates Mills, Ohio] offered a vision of rustic beauty . . . always serene, harmonious, and imbued with poetic sentiment. . . .⁹⁸

He suggested that Breton's "almost utopian" view was one which best encompassed the late 19th-century concept of the ideal rustic milieu. In contrast to Millet's peasants who appear sad and weary, Breton's figures are usually cheerful.⁹⁹ Melchers chose to follow Breton more than Millet.

⁹⁸ Hollister Sturges, "Jules Breton and the French Rural Tradition," in Joslyn Art Museum, Jules Breton and the French Rural Tradition, exhibition catalogue, essays by Hollister Sturges et al. Omaha, Nebraska, November 6, 1982-January 2, 1983), 7.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

Millet, Breton, and most of their contemporaries who worked in the rural tradition, including Pascal-Adolphe-Jean Dagnan-Bouveret and Léon-Augustin Lhermitte, did not, however, depict their peasants as they were described in contemporary literature. Honoré de Balzac (Les Paysans, 1844), Victor Hugo (Les Misérables, 1862), and Emile Zola (La Terre, 1887) portrayed an unattractive group of hostile, ignorant, insular, and menacing people, in contrast to the artists' view of a simple people untouched by civilization and the industrial revolution.¹⁰⁰

Melchers submitted The Letter to the Paris Salon because he understood the importance of having a work shown where it would be seen and judged by critics, collectors, and the public. Even more important was the award of a medal by which a winner became "hors concours" and was thereafter exempt from jury consideration. A medal also provided good advertising for the artist's future career. Melchers was certainly encouraged by his father to believe such an award was important. The elder Melchers valued popular and critical esteem and emphasized a Salon showing, well aware that here one's work would be noticed and critiqued. Although Julius Theodore did not hold a high opinion of Albert Wolff, the critic of Le Figaro, he believed a mention by Wolff was significant, as he indicated in a letter to his son

Feel assured that henceforth your honest striving and laboring will be mentioned with praise in the figaro [sic] . . . [so] that you will be counted among the most forthright of the younger school of painters,

¹⁰⁰ Richard R. and Caroline B. Bretell, Painters and Peasants in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1983), 34-38, and 52.

even though the name of the critic will still be Albert Wolf [sic] (a Jew); I am sure a little beforehand private dealings will make the honorable A. Wolf [sic] quite inclined to push the bright points of a work into the most enhancing lights whereas its shortcomings will be consigned to very, very faint shadows. Business, it seems to me, is never lost sight of by this sort of people.¹⁰¹

Unfortunately, The Letter received no coverage in the Parisian press in 1882, despite Julius Theodore's hope that Wolff would write about it. Subsequently, the painting was shown in fall 1882, in Antwerp at the Salon Triennal d'Anvers, where it was described by Gustave Lagye the critic of La Fédération Artistique as a "joli intérieur breton, lumineux et fin. . . ."¹⁰² The work was then sent to America where it was shown at the 58th Annual Exhibition at the National Academy of Design in New York in spring 1883, and at the Detroit Art Loan Exhibition later that year. There were no critical reviews of The Letter in the New York newspapers, but the painting was mentioned in the Detroit Free Press, where an unnamed critic wrote

There is this to say of . . . "The Letter." It shows the artist in serious work with an honest and successful effort to present a plain, finished, picturesque idea. There is no effort to escape from possible evil result in doing the work to the end: no attempt to nip an excuse by stopping at general effects. It is a capital idea, admirably drawn and excellently painted.¹⁰³

In addition to The Letter, Melchers' entries in Detroit were Alone,

¹⁰¹ Julius Theodore Melchers, letter to Gari Melchers, 16 May 1882.

¹⁰² Gustave Lagye, "Salon d'Anvers-IV," La Fédération Artistique 9 (September 1882): 393. Quoted by Bienenstock, "Gari Melchers and the Belgian Art World 1882-1908," in Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, 1990, 79.

¹⁰³ "The Great Exhibit. Various Paintings by Detroit Artists Spoken Of," Detroit Free Press, 13 September 1883, 4.

Atina in Italy, The Gladiator, In the Monastery, The Lictor, Theresina, and Vespers.¹⁰⁴

Authors who wrote about Melchers in later years, including J. Brenchley (Mrs. George Hitchcock, pseud.), Christian Brinton, J. Nilsen Laurvik, and Paul Leroi, only referred to The Letter in passing, noting that the painting was Melchers' first picture exhibited at the Salon.¹⁰⁵ These writers were far more concerned with the artist's later works: paintings which either brought critical acclaim, such as his mother and child pictures, or won medals, as for example, The Sermon (1886, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.).¹⁰⁶

It appears that soon after the Salon exhibition closed in June 1882, Melchers left for Italy for the summer. He wrote his father about his planned trip, and Julius Theodore approved since such travel had remained one of the father's unfulfilled dreams. He wrote his son

Your travel plan . . . to Naples and surroundings and study there for three to four months I can only approve of. . . . what I longed for

¹⁰⁴ Detroit Art Loan: Catalogue of Art Works Exhibited (Detroit: Press of John F. Eby & Company, 1883), p. 47. Except for that of The Letter, the whereabouts of these entries are unknown.

¹⁰⁵ Paul Leroi, "Salon de 1886," L'Art. Revue Bi-Mensuelle Illustrée 41 (1886): 18; J. Brenchley [Mrs. George Hitchcock, pseud.], "Gari Melchers and His Work," The Magazine of Art 24 (February 1900): 146; Christian Brinton, "The Art of Gari Melchers," Harper's Monthly Magazine 114 (February 1907), 432; and J. Nilsen Laurvik, "Gari Melchers--Painter," The International Studio 48 (December 1912): XXVII.

¹⁰⁶ Brinton's general comments, however, on Melchers' work could certainly apply to The Letter. "While at the outset Mr. Melchers seemed satisfied with exactness of observation and fidelity of rendering, a certain appealing touch gradually crept into his work" (Brinton, Harper's Monthly Magazine, 437).

in my youth but which had to remain just a beautiful dream, that is what now is going to be fulfilled for you; you will see and experience sunny Italy!¹⁰⁷

Melchers travelled to Italy via Marseilles, and stayed several weeks in the Trappist monastery at Casamari,¹⁰⁸ situated about one hundred kilometers southeast of Rome. It seems that he also visited the coast of Belgium during 1882, probably after he returned from Italy. A sketch at Belmont, which shows a woman sitting in a chair knitting, is dated "Ostende, 1882."

Several writers, including Bruce M. Donaldson and Joseph G. Dreiss, have suggested that Melchers' first homecoming was in 1884 after being abroad for seven years,¹⁰⁹ but the artist in fact returned to Detroit in June 1883 and probably stayed until 1884.¹¹⁰ There were two reasons for Melchers to visit his hometown in 1883. On June 5 his eldest sister,

¹⁰⁷ Julius Theodore Melchers, letter to Gari Melchers, 16 May 1882.

¹⁰⁸ Brinton, Modern Artists, 216. During his stay at the monastery, Melchers painted a number of works, including Monk in Church Interior (Fig. I-10) and Monk Reading at Lectern (both at Belmont). From Casamari Melchers went to Atina, a tiny mountain village. There he executed Woman of Atina which, together with Pater Noster, were exhibited at the 1883 Salon. The whereabouts of these two works are unknown.

¹⁰⁹ Donaldson, "An Appreciation of Gari Melchers," in The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, 1938, 15 and Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 11.

¹¹⁰ See also Annette Stott, "Gari Melchers (1860-1932)," in The Muskegon Museum of Art, Artists of Michigan from the Nineteenth Century. A Sesquicentennial Exhibition Commemorating Michigan Statehood 1837-1987, exhibition catalogue, essays by J. Gray Sweeney et al. Muskegon, Michigan, September 17-November 1, 1987, 134.

Hedwig, married the brewer Julius Stroh,¹¹¹ and in September the Detroit Art Loan Exhibition, advertised as "the Largest and Best Art Exhibition Ever Held in the West," was held.¹¹² Melchers' paintings were favorably reviewed by the critic of the Detroit Free Press who referred to the artist as a serious worker who presented his ideas successfully. The Letter, The Gladiator, and The Lictor were judged good examples of his excellent drawing technique and harmonious use of color. Of Atina in Italy, the critic noted that it was the most pleasing work in the exhibition, and his closing comment was that Melchers showed "his honesty, his correctness and strength and his versatility."¹¹³

Melchers was productive during his 1883-1884 stay in Detroit. Among his pictures were an oil painting of a scene on the Detroit River and Belle Isle (Collection of Joseph B. Williams, Detroit), portraits of his mother (Belmont) and Helen Lotrop Prall (The Detroit Institute of Arts)¹¹⁴, and a posthumous portrait of Bernard Stroh (Collection of John

¹¹¹ "Married," Detroit Evening News, 7 June 1883, 4. Apparently Melchers arrived too late for the wedding, because the Detroit Free Press reported that he was expected home during the week of June 18 ("Local Art Brevities," Detroit Free Press, 20 June 1883, 6).

¹¹² The critic of the Detroit Free Press considered the Detroit Art Loan Exhibition "first class" because it represented all schools of modern painting as well as many works of what he called "ancient" masters ("The Inaugural of the Largest and Best Art Exhibition Ever Held in the West," Detroit Free Press, 2 September 1883, 4).

¹¹³ "The Great Exhibition. Various Paintings by Detroit Artists Spoken Of," Detroit Free Press, 13 September 1883, 4.

¹¹⁴ This work is a large, three-quarter-length portrait of the daughter of George Van Ness Lothrop, a prominent Detroit lawyer and politician, who was a member of the first board of trustees of the Detroit

W. Stroh, Detroit), the late father-in-law of his newly married sister.¹¹⁵

Melchers' return to America after six years abroad marked the end of his apprenticeship and his life as a student. In 1884 he returned to Europe and established his residence in the Dutch coastal village of Egmond aan Zee.¹¹⁶

Institute of Arts. This painting was the first commission of Melchers' career. See also Stott, "Gari Melchers," in *The Muskegon Museum of Art*, Muskegon, 1987, 134 and Joanna D. Catron, "Catalogue of the Exhibition," in *Museum of Fine Arts, Gari Melchers. A Retrospective Exhibition*, exhibition catalogue, essays by Diane Lesko et al. St. Petersburg, Florida, March 11-May 6, 1990, 173.

¹¹⁵ "Local Artists," Detroit Free Press, 27 September 1883, 8.

¹¹⁶ See also Stott, "Gari Melchers," 134.

CHAPTER II

THE EGMOND YEARS

Melchers' Arrival in the Netherlands

It is not certain when Melchers returned to Europe, but it was probably some time during the second half of 1884. Christian Brinton wrote that, after leaving Detroit, Melchers went to Paris with the intention of then revisiting Italy. Because of a cholera epidemic there, however, he changed his travel plans.¹ Melchers later commented in an interview with Charles Henry Meltzer in 1913

I was on my way to Italy, when the cholera broke out there. Not wishing to run needless risks, I came up north. At Egmond, I found friends, drawn, like myself, to the Dutch life and landscape.²

It appears, however, that Melchers' decision to go to Holland in 1884 was not accidental. He had already visited that country in 1883, and possibly even earlier, during his years at the Akademie in Düsseldorf. Many Düsseldorf painters had great admiration for 17th-century Dutch genre,³ and the cities of Holland were near enough to make short excursions relatively easy for them. The visitors' books of the Trippenhuis

¹ Christian Brinton, Modern Artists (New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1908), 217.

² Charles H. Meltzer, "Gari Melchers. A Painter of Realities," The Cosmopolitan 55 (June 1913), 5.

³ Ute Immel, "Die deutsche Genremalerei im neunzehnten Jahrhundert" (Ph.D. diss., Universität zu Heidelberg, 1967), 8, 58, and 306.

in Amsterdam reveal that hundreds of Düsseldorf artists studied the Dutch Old Masters at first hand.⁴

Melchers also had other reasons to visit Holland in 1883. From May 1 until November 1 of that year, Amsterdam hosted its first world's fair, the International Colonial and Export Trade Exhibition. A notable part of this fair was the International Exposition of the Fine Arts, at which many contemporary artists from all over Europe exhibited their works.⁵ There is no confirmation that Melchers saw the Exposition, but it is very likely that he did, as he was in Amsterdam in June 1883 and signed the visitors' book of the Trippenhuis.⁶

In any case, on December 19, 1884, Melchers entered his name in the municipal register of Egmond aan Zee and took up his residence at this North Sea coastal village located about twenty-five kilometers northeast

⁴ The art collection of the Trippenhuis later provided the nucleus for the Old Masters collection of the present Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

⁵ The International Exposition in Amsterdam included paintings only from Belgium, France, Germany, Holland, and Italy. Among the better known French artists represented were Jules Bastien-Lepage, Léon Bonnat, Jules Breton, Henri Fantin-Latour, Ernest Hébert, and Jules Lefèvre. Germany was represented by many Düsseldorf painters, who were also professors at the Akademie, such as Oswald Achenbach, Hugo Crola, and Karl Sohn. Other famous Germans included Max Liebermann and Fritz von Uhde. The Dutch section was represented by masters of the Hague School, including Jacob, Matthijs and Willem Maris, Anton Mauve, and Hendrik Mesdag (Geïllustreerde Officiële Catalogus der Afdeling Schoone Kunsten van de Internationale Tentoonstelling te Amsterdam (Amsterdam: F.G. Dumas, 1883).

⁶ Visitors' book Trippenhuis, Amsterdam, Archives Rijksmuseum, June 1883. When in Holland, Melchers also visited the Museum der Stad Haarlem (the present Frans Hals Museum. Visitors' book Frans Halsmuseum, Haarlem, Municipal Archives, June 1883.

of Amsterdam. George Hitchcock and his wife, Henriette Walker Richardson, also registered their names in the village on the same date. This was no coincidence, and, although Melchers and the Hitchcocks stated that their prior residences were Paris and Düsseldorf, respectively, they apparently travelled together to Egmond aan Zee.⁷ There was no direct transportation there in the 1880s, so it is assumed that Melchers and the Hitchcocks traveled by train to Alkmaar and then transferred to a horse-drawn omnibus which ran twice a day to Egmond aan Zee.⁸ The village was doubtless the choice of Hitchcock, as he had previously visited there on at least one occasion in 1881 and may have first discovered it when he was in The Hague around 1880. In 1886 Melchers told the art critic Paul Leroi

La Hollande m'attire entre tous les pays. Convaincu que pour bien faire une chose il faut la connaître à fond, je me suis installé à demeure, il y a quelques années, à Egmond aan Zee, avec un confrère [Hitchcock] qui partage ma passion pour ce pays.⁹

The American painter Arthur Hoeber believed that Melchers made the

⁷ Town Hall records, Egmond aan Zee, 1884. The records indicated that both Melchers and the Hitchcocks lived at house number 121A. According to G. C. Hoogeboom, the current clerk of the municipality of Egmond aan Zee, in those days, the streets were not named, but each building in the village had a number. At the present time house number 121A is in the Voorstraat (Mr. G. C. Hoogeboom, interview with author, Egmond aan Zee, summer 1986). Streetnames were introduced in 1900 (Kathinka Lannoy and Bob Denneboom, Derper-Hoeber-Binder. Over Geschiedenis and Volksleven van de Drie Egmond [The Hague: Kruseman's Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1969], 90).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 128.

⁹ Paul Leroi, "Salon de 1886," L'Art. Revue Bi-Mensuelle Illustrée 41 (1886): 18.

right decision to live in Egmond, where he

gave himself up to solitude and study; familiarizing himself with peasant life, learning their ways and manners, and making a profound study of their intimate daily existence.¹⁰

J. Nilsen Laurvik wrote that in Egmond Melchers

discovered the simple, unspoiled people which put him on the track of his own aesthetic evolution and from that moment dates his life as a productive artist.¹¹

George Hitchcock (1850-1913): A Fellow Expatriate

George Hitchcock described the Egmond dunes as "very appealing because they will always have a character quite their own, and one of the most idyllic beauty and simplicity."¹² Writing for Scribner's Magazine

¹⁰ Arthur Hoeber, "Gari Melchers," The International Studio 31 (March 1907): XVI.

¹¹ J. Nilsen Laurvik, "Gari Melchers -- Painter," The International Studio 48 (December 1912): XXVII.

¹² George Hitchcock, "The Picturesque Quality of Holland," Scribner's Magazine 2 (August 1887): 168. This article was the first of three essays about Holland which Hitchcock wrote for Scribner's Magazine. The second and third appeared in volume 5 (February 1889), and volume 10 (November 1891). Hitchcock was born in Providence, Rhode Island, and was a descendant of a family of distinguished lawyers. Initially, he also pursued a legal career. He attended both Brown and Harvard Universities and then earned his LL.B. from Yale University and practiced law for four years. In 1878 he went to Chicago and, without any previous art education, set up a studio. When his paintings did not sell, he decided to go to Europe for formal training. Sources are unclear and conflicting as to his exact whereabouts during the 1878-1884 period, but it appears he studied in several countries over a period of seven years. He first went to London in 1878 and began to draw after antiquities in the British Museum. Failing to enter the state-supported South Kensington Art School because his admission entries were considered unproficient, he took private lessons at Heatherley's Art School. He left England for Paris in 1880 and enrolled at the Académie Julian where he drew for a year. His teachers were Gustave Boulanger

in 1887, he praised the landscape, saying "it will not be possible in this space to speak of all the landscape-subjects that Holland affords; there is much yet to be said."¹³

It is not known exactly when Hitchcock initially visited Egmond aan Zee, but it probably was in the summer of 1881.¹⁴ The owner of Hotel Zeezicht, H. J. Belleman, remembered when the Hitchcocks stayed at his establishment for the first time in the early 1880s. For several summers, Hitchcock rented rooms here with a sea view at the hotel.¹⁵ At some point, around 1885, he and Melchers built a house with stepped gables and a large studio atop a dune (fig. I-1, 1887, Belmont). Melchers told Leroi "Nous avons fait construire sur les dunes un atelier où nous vivons et travaillons l'hiver comme l'été."¹⁶ On October 27, 1891 the Hitchcocks moved to Egmond-Binnen (Inner Egmond) and lived at number 334 and two years later they bought a country estate named "Schuylenburg" in

and Jules Lefèbvre. During this same period, he spent some time in The Hague and studied under Hendrik Mesdag (Lionel G. Robinson, "Mr. George Hitchcock and American Art," The Art Journal [London] 53 [October 1891]: 290-91). Hitchcock then stayed at the Akademie in Düsseldorf for two months in 1884 before ending his "Wanderjahre" to settle in Egmond aan Zee (Student records of the Düsseldorf Akademie, 1884).

¹³ Hitchcock, Scribner's Magazine (August 1887), 168.

¹⁴ Annette Stott, "American Painters who Worked in the Netherlands, 1880-1914" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1986), 121.

¹⁵ "Beeldende Kunst te Egmond aan Zee," In en Om Kennemerland 16 (1 January 1905), 1.

¹⁶ Leroi, L'Art (1886), 18.

Egmond aan de Hoef.¹⁷ (Descriptions of the three different Egmonds are discussed below under "Egmond and its Art Community.")

As it turned out, Hitchcock and Melchers not only moved to Egmond aan Zee at the same time, but also moved along parallel artistic paths. Hitchcock had strong ideas about what an artist should paint in Holland; he recommended such subjects as peasants working in the fields, North Sea fishermen, and communions and marriages in what he called "gothic" churches.¹⁸ Melchers also often depicted these themes in the years he lived in Egmond. It is not always clear who was imitating whom, but, in 1891, Hitchcock wrote about these subjects in Scribner's Magazine suggesting that he was the innovator.¹⁹ Among the numerous themes which both artists depicted were the fisherman, a Brabant bride, a christening, a vespers, the mother and child (with and without religious

¹⁷ Ronald van Vleuten is the present resident of "Schuylenburg." Hitchcock bought the house from an owner, who had previously bought this villa from Vleuten's great-great-grandfather, the mayor of Bergen and the Egmonds. During the weekend of January 12-13, 1980, the "Stichting Hart voor Egmond" (Heart of Egmond Foundation) in Egmond aan de Hoef organized an exhibition of forty-eight photographs of Melchers' paintings at the "Dorpshuis" (community center). In connection with the exhibition, the Foundation distributed an eight-page mimeographed catalogue which included the essay, "Gari Melchers in Egmond," a list of the photographs with short descriptions, and a request to visitors for information regarding Melchers' life and work in Egmond and the identities of his models. After the exhibition, Vleuten, who is the secretary of the Foundation, put together the comments and issued an eleven-page typescript, "Gari Melchers in Egmond. About the Exhibition."

¹⁸ Hitchcock, Scribner's Magazine (November 1891), 622.

¹⁹ See also Annette Stott, "The Holland Years," in Museum of Fine Arts, Gari Melchers. A Retrospective Exhibition, exhibition catalogue, essays by Diane Lesko et al. St. Petersburg, Florida, March 11-May 6, 1990, 58.

overtones), the Nativity (or the flight into Egypt in the case of Hitchcock), Christ's Passion, and female saints (each painted a St. Genevieve). Of course, these themes were not unique to Hitchcock and Melchers; they were often undertaken by late 19th-century European artists.

The Attraction of the Netherlands

In the late 19th-century, John Lothrop Motley was regarded as the American expert on Dutch history of the 16th and 17th centuries. He wrote multi-volume works which became standards: The Rise of the Dutch Republic A History in three volumes and The History of the United Netherlands: From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Years' Truce. These books were published in New York by Harper & Brothers in 1855, and were particularly popular among Americans. When William E. Griffis, a well-known 19th-century American author of travel books, visited Holland in 1869 for the first time, he acknowledged Motley's influence.

How often did we, lads and lasses, . . . talk of Motley and the glorious art and wonders of Holland, the land I was already learning to love.²⁰

Among other visitors to Holland who specifically referred to Motley was the American painter George Henry Boughton who went there on assignment for Harper's New Monthly Magazine in the summers of 1883

²⁰ William E. Griffis, The American in Holland. Sentimental Rambles in the Eleven Provinces of the Netherlands (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1899), 9.

and 1884. Boughton, in writing about Haarlem, noted "perhaps it is as well to refer the reader to Motley and not seek to surpass that admirable history [of Haarlem]."²¹ Boughton also referred his readers to "those excellent guides" of Karl Baedeker and John Murray and to books written by Edmondo de Amicis (Holland and its People, New York: Putnam's Sons, 1881), and Henry Havard (such works as La Hollande Pittoresque, Paris: E. Plon et Cie, 1878, and La Hollande à Vol d'Oiseau, Paris: G. Decaux, 1881).²²

Boughton along with other authors who wrote about Holland, including Frederic S. Bird, Junius H. Browne, Augustus J. C. Hare, Sarah O. Jewett, and the correspondent for The Cornhill Magazine, considered this country a pleasant place to visit with its old well-preserved towns, endless green pastures, canals, polders, and windmills. They noted that the visitor was often struck by the local Dutch costumes and such peculiarities as box beds, dogcarts, footstoves, and "trekschuiten" (horse-drawn freight and passenger boats). Cleanliness, honesty, and widespread charity were thought by Americans to be virtues of Holland. In contrast, these 19th-century visitors viewed as negative the moist climate, the flat and monotonous landscape, the open prostitution in almost every city, the

²¹ George H. Boughton, "Artist Strolls in Holland," Harper's New Monthly Magazine 66 (January 1883), 174. Boughton wrote seven essays on Holland for Harper's New Monthly Magazine which appeared from January until April 1883 and from August until October 1884. They were illustrated by Boughton and Edwin Austin Abbey and later published as a book with the title Sketching Rambles in Holland (London: Macmillan, 1885).

²² Boughton, Harper's New Monthly Magazine (January 1883), 169 and 178; (February 1883), 391; (March 1883), 535; and (April 1883), 690.

habitual tobacco smoking, and the odor of polluted water.²³ The general consensus of travelers was that Holland lagged behind Germany in cultural, literary, and philosophical matters, and behind France in fashion.²⁴

Nevertheless, during the 19th century, Americans identified and sympathized with the Dutch because of the mutual revolutionary histories and Protestant traditions of the two nations. Many, in fact, regarded "Brave Little Holland," as an antecedent of their own republic,²⁵ drawing attention to the traditions of freedom and tolerance in both countries. It was noted that the Netherlands had assisted America during the Revolution, and Americans tended to take a positive view of Holland and its people.²⁶

The country was a favorite destination for many travellers. Browne went because "Holland exists nowhere else. It is the only one of its

²³ Frederic S. Bird, The Land of Dykes and Windmills; or, Life in Holland (London: Sampson, Low et al., 1882), 9-10, 55, 59-60, 69, 71, 147-51, 185, and 217-18; Boughton, Harper's New Monthly Magazine (January 1883), 169-72; (February 1883), 400; (March 1883), 522, 524, 528, and 529; (April 1883), 683 and 694; and (September 1884), 531; Junius H. Browne, "Holland and the Hollanders," Harper's New Monthly Magazine 94 (January 1872): 165-68, 172-73, 176, and 179-81; and (February 1872): 353-54 and 361; Augustus J. C. Hare, "A Fortnight in Holland," Good Words for 1884 24 (1884): 373-74, 459, and 461; Sarah O. Jewett, "Afternoon in Holland," The Atlantic Monthly 50 (December 1882): 800-03; and "Impressions of Holland," The Cornhill Magazine 52 (August 1885): 259-62, 266, and 269.

²⁴ Pieter R. D. Stokvis, "Some American Views of the Netherlands during the Nineteenth Century," De Negentiende Eeuw 6 (June 1982): 71.

²⁵ Griffis, 3.

²⁶ Stott, "American Painters," 77-78.

kind."²⁷ Some, such as Hare, went to see tulips; he advised his readers to visit Haarlem, "the bulb nursery garden of the world."²⁸ The correspondent for The Cornhill Magazine wrote that his "purpose of making a trip to Holland was the prospect of seeing windmills."²⁹ And, finally, visitors also may have felt comfortable in Holland because "numbers of persons speak German, French, or English, besides their native tongue."³⁰

Artists in the Netherlands

Throughout the 19th century Holland was an important destination for European painters and particularly for artists from Düsseldorf. Hans Kraan wrote

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, it had become virtually obligatory for students at the academies in Düsseldorf, Munich, [and] Berlin . . . to visit . . . the Netherlands and young artists streamed westward.³¹

Melchers may have been encouraged to visit Holland by Düsseldorf colleagues. Many German artists went to Holland to study, to collect original works, or to obtain copies or inexpensive reproductions of the

²⁷ Browne, 165.

²⁸ Hare, 457.

²⁹ The Cornhill Magazine, 258-59.

³⁰ Bird, 213.

³¹ Hans Kraan, "The Vogue for Holland," in Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague School. Dutch Masters of the 19th Century, exhibition catalogue, essays by Ronald de Leeuw et al. The Hague, April 16-July 10, 1983, 116.

works of the 17th-century masters including Gerard ter Borch, Adriaen Brouwer, Gerard Dou, Frans van Mieris, Adriaen van Ostade, and Jan Steen. The German painters copied and imitated these artists and, above all, tried to surpass them.³² Among the noted Germans who worked in Holland were Max Liebermann and Fritz von Uhde. Liebermann, who regularly visited Holland from 1871 until 1914, was initially drawn to the art of Frans Hals whose work he copied in 1874 and 1876. Liebermann later wrote

One may rightly call Holland the land of painting par excellence, and it is no accident that Rembrandt was a Dutchman. . . . Each ambitious young artist made a pilgrimage to Holland.³³

During subsequent visits, his interests included contemporary Dutch art, especially that of Jozef Israëls whom he met in 1881.

French artists also studied the Dutch Old Masters at home and travelled to Holland to collect and study Dutch 17th-century art. Among the most significant who went there were William Bouguereau, Jules Breton, Gustave Courbet, Jean-Léon Gérôme, Edouard Manet, and Claude Monet.³⁴

George H. Boughton advised the American art student to "Go [to Holland] as soon as you get the chance" and study the Old Masters first hand. He repeatedly commented on the seemingly unchanged atmosphere

³² Immel, 58-59.

³³ See also S. Fischer, Max Liebermann. Die Phantasie in der Malerei (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1978), 77 and 83.

³⁴ Visitors' books Trippenhuys, Amsterdam, Archives Rijksmuseum, June 1883.

of the Dutch towns. In Dordrecht, Boughton visited a sexton's house and saw an old-fashioned kitchen, such that "Jan Steen or De Hooge [sic] might have sat down and painted the entire place without finding a single thing to surprise them, except, perhaps, a tiny little sewing-machine." Friesland had an "original Cuyp-like atmosphere," and it seemed to him that he was "sailing out of one big Cuyp [picture] straight into another, passing a bit of Brouwer or Teniers now and again."³⁵

George Hitchcock was fascinated with Holland. What he liked above all was its "picturesque quality," which made it especially suitable for genre and landscape painters. He recommended Holland for those he considered the "best" American figure painters who were involved with painting natives in local costumes,³⁶ since the Dutch still wore their traditional dress.³⁷

³⁵ Boughton, Harper's New Monthly Magazine (January 1883), 169, 172, and 176; (March 1883), 553; (April 1883), 684; (August 1884), 327; and (September 1884), 533. Also quoted by Stott, "American Painters," 26.

³⁶ Hitchcock, Scribner's Magazine (November 1891), 622.

³⁷ In reality, however, few remnants of the traditional Dutch costumes survived in the fishing villages along the North Sea coast. In Egmond, a so-called West-Frisian costume was worn, but, in fact, nothing of the historical dress remained except the "bazuintje" or "hul" (a simple round headdress which has a broad delicate pleated border reaching the eyebrows in the front and curled slightly upwards in the neck area) and the "oorijzer" (head brooch). The contemporary Egmond costume for young women included rather sober dresses of subdued colors, a "bazuintje" and wooden shoes. If her parents could afford it, she would wear shoes on Sundays. If the weather permitted, she went barefoot. There was a difference between the dress of a woman indoors and out. Inside, a woman dressed in a series of baize petticoats, covered by a black dress, over which she had a printed pinafore, which on Sundays was replaced by a silk apron. Her Sunday dress was made of very solid fabrics. She also wore long black wool stockings, leather slippers

The Hague School and the Laren School

Some of Melchers' Dutch paintings, especially his many depictions of a mother and child, may well have been inspired by the works of the Hague School painter Jozef Israëls and his followers of the Laren School, including Albert Neuhuys. The Hague School dominated artistic life in the Netherlands from the early 1870s up to the First World War and its fame attracted artists from all over Europe, America, Canada, and even Japan, to the coastal areas of Holland.³⁸ The style and subject matter favored by the Hague painters was much influenced by the art of their 17th-century predecessors, even though the 19th-century painters gradually developed their own style. Typical Hague School subjects were the Dutch dunes; polders (with canals and windmills); woodland landscapes or ones with animals (cows, sheep, waterbirds); beaches; and scenes from the daily

(outdoors she usually wore wooden shoes) and, on Sundays, shoes. On cold days, she put a large wool shawl over her shoulders. On weekdays, she usually wore a "bazuintje." The outfit of the woman made a somewhat sober, yet cheerful impression. For festive occasions, she wore a very elaborate headdress. The hair was kept together with a narrow band and a double skullcap, usually made of lace and black satin. Over these she wore the "oorijzer." Around the neck the woman typically wore a necklace of several strands of thick red coral beads with a gold clasp in front, often with a painted ivory insert. The outfit of an Egmond man in the late 19th century, in contrast, was very simple. He wore a dark sweater, blue pants, and a hat or cap (Valenteyn Bing and Braet von Ueberfeldt, Nederlandsche Kleederdragten en Zeden en Gebruiken [Amsterdam: Frans Buffa, 1857], 22-23; Th. Molkenboer, De Nederlandsche Nationale Kleederdrachten [Amsterdam: J. M. Meulenhoff, 1917], 96, 102, 141-43, and 155; and Constance Nieuwhoff et al., Kleederdrachten [Amsterdam: Uitgeversmaatschappij Elseviers, 1984], 66).

³⁸ Kraan, "The Vogue for Holland," in Haags Gemeentemuseum, 1983, 115 and 124.

lives of fishermen and peasants, or the interiors of their houses.³⁹

The painters of the Hague School enjoyed international popularity during the last quarter of the 19th century. Both Israëls and Hendrik Mesdag played key roles, and their extensive travels abroad brought them international contacts which benefitted both them and their younger colleagues. A study of the exhibition catalogues of the Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung, the London Royal Academy, and the Paris Salon during the period 1870 to 1900 shows that many European artists chose Dutch subjects.⁴⁰

The Laren School played an important part in the art scene in Holland from the 1880s, at the time Melchers established himself in Egmond. Israëls was the first artist who worked in Laren -- situated in 't Gooi, southeast of Amsterdam. When he arrived there in the early 1870s, Laren was a poor and isolated village inhabited mainly by sheep breeders. Israëls was followed by, among others, Hendrik Kever (1877), Anton Mauve, Albert Neuhuys, and Hendrik Valkenburg (all in 1882), Wally Moes (1884), and Tony Offermans (1886). These artists represented the first group of Laren painters who worked there for extended periods from the 1870s to the 1890s. When Mauve and Neuhuys established themselves in Laren, they were already renowned painters and their arrival in the

³⁹ Ibid., 115.

⁴⁰ Max Liebermann wrote in 1901 that, when the Hague School artists held their first group exhibition in Munich in the early 1870s, they created an enormous sensation. Thereafter, it almost became a requisite for the German painter to visit Holland and work there (Fischer, 77 and Kraan, "The Vogue for Holland," 121).

village attracted the attention of much of the art world. Israëls had a great impact on the Laren group, and particularly on Neuhuys, whose art in turn influenced the younger genre painters who arrived in the village during the late 1890s. A favorite theme among these painters were the poor farmers and their families, with an emphasis on mothers caring for their children. Their paintings gave a rather idealized view of country life. The women and children were portrayed as healthy, rosy and well fed, while in reality they were often undernourished. This idealized vision was typified by such works and titles as Neuhuys' Mother's Bliss (not dated, Singer Museum, Laren, the Netherlands).⁴¹

Egmond and its Art Community

George Hitchcock "discovered" Egmond, presumably as early as 1880-1881. He became the founder of the so-called Egmond art colony which between 1881 and 1914 was visited by several hundred students.⁴² As

⁴¹ Joke van der Pol, "De 'Larense School.' Kunst voor de Markt?" Tableau. Tijdschrift voor de Beeldende Kunst 7 (November 1984): 50 and 55-56.

⁴² Stott, "American Painters," 141. From the latter decades of the past century until the First World War, many American artists went to Holland and worked in a number of communities in addition to Egmond. There were locales like Dordrecht and Volendam where many came, and those towns in the provinces of Gelderland (Hattem and Nunspeet) and North Brabant (Heeze) which attracted only a few Americans. Artists came at regular intervals (such as Amy Cross to Laren, Carl Cutler to Egmond, and James McNeill Whistler to Dordrecht) or stayed for extended periods (Melchers and Hitchcock in Egmond). Permanent expatriates included Arthur Feudel in Katwijk and Wilhelmina Hawley in Rijsoord, near Dordrecht. Each Dutch community attracted artists who specialized in a certain type of painting. Marine painters congregated at the North Sea coast in Katwijk, Noordwijk, and Scheveningen. Artists who went to

Hitchcock's fame grew, many American art students, particularly women, came to Egmond during the summer to study with him.⁴³ Among these were Cecil Jay⁴⁴ and Corinne Lawton Mackall, both of whom arrived in 1902.⁴⁵ Mackall was a native of Savannah, Georgia, and studied art at the

Laren concentrated on figure paintings, portraits, genre works, landscapes, or animal paintings. Some American artists went to specific places because successful Dutch painters worked there. They visited Laren to see Anton Mauve, to purchase his art, and to paint the same subjects that made him famous (Stott, "American Painters," 142, 190, 235, 248, and 300). Interestingly, the arrival of Melchers and other American painters in Holland coincided with a significant increase of the number of Dutch immigrants to America. The situation in Holland in the late 1870s and 1880s was grim, a period of economic crises. There existed a great contrast between the haves and have-nots, and the largest part of the population had to work extremely hard in order to survive. Foreigners who visited Holland during the 1880s, such as the Portuguese journalist Romalho Ortigao, tended to idealize the country and did not comment upon the poverty and depressing social aspects (Romalho Ortigao, Holland 1883 [Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Jacob van Campen, n.d.]).

⁴³ Melchers also may have tutored several students, because his wife, Corinne Lawton Mackall, later wrote her mother, Mrs. Louisa ("Lulu") Lawton Mackall "Friday [I] dined with [a] mother of an Egmond pupil and Sat. [sic] lunched with another" (Corinne Melchers, letter to Lulu Mackall, 27 August [1904]). Unless otherwise indicated, the letters from Corinne Melchers, cited in Chapters II and III, were written in Egmond aan de Hoef and sent to Lulu Mackall in New York. These letters are at Belmont. Annette Stott has recently written that Melchers indeed occasionally encouraged and advised students, but had no formal teaching role. Among those whom the artist influenced were Alice Blair Ring, Letta Crapo Smith, and Florence Kate Upton (Stott, "The Holland Years," in *Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg*, 1990, 69).

⁴⁴ Cecil Jay had first studied under the German-born genre painter Hubert von Herkomer in London (James William Pattison, "The Art of George Hitchcock and Cecil Jay," Fine Arts Journal, 24 [February 1911], 83). In 1905 Hitchcock divorced his wife Henriette and married Cecil Jay, who was 33 years younger than he. According to the register of Egmond-Binnen, Hitchcock left the municipality on August 7, 1905, and went to France.

⁴⁵ Visitors' lists of the Bad-Bode, 1902.

Maryland Institute School of Art and Design in Baltimore.⁴⁶ Her period of study and the names of her instructors at the Institute are unknown, as the school records were destroyed in the Baltimore fire of April 20, 1904.⁴⁷ The Institute catalogue of 1899-1900, however, indicates that Otto Fuchs was the "Principal" and his assistants included Ephraim Keyser and Louisa Stuart, who were the teachers of modeling and oil painting, respectively.⁴⁸ In spring 1902, Corinne, along with her mother, Mrs. Louisa Lawton Mackall, and her brother, Alexander Lawton, went to Europe on a grand tour and to further her art education. During the transatlantic voyage aboard the S.S. Aller enroute to Napies, Corinne met Melchers who had just returned from a visit to America. He was attracted to Corinne because of her interest in art and, at his suggestion, she went to Egmond and became Hitchcock's student. When the season was over, she went to Paris to enroll at the Académie Julian; Melchers later followed her there and proposed to her on December 28. They were married on April 14, 1903, on the Isle of Jersey.⁴⁹ Corinne's own incipient painting career effectively ended when she married Meichers, in

⁴⁶ Joseph G. Dreiss, Gari Melchers. His Works in the Belmont Collection (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1984), 36.

⁴⁷ Maryland Institute for the Promotion of the Mechanic Arts (Baltimore: Schools of Art and Design, & Co., 1904-1905), [1].

⁴⁸ Maryland Institute [Catalogue] (Baltimore: 1895-1896), 1.

⁴⁹ Richard S. Reid, "Belmont: The Gari Melchers Memorial Gallery," in Museum of Fine Arts, Gari Melchers. A Retrospective Exhibition, exhibition catalogue, essays by Diane Lesko et al. St. Petersburg, Florida, March 11-May 6, 1990, 151.

part because she probably knew she did not have the talent to be more than marginally successful.⁵⁰

The municipal records of 1884 through 1893 indicate that Melchers resided in Egmond aan Zee,⁵¹ which was closest to the sea of the three Egmonds and a separate municipality. Egmond-Binnen and Egmond aan de Hoef were further inland and constituted a single municipality.⁵² From 1893 until 1903, Melchers stayed at various inns in both Egmond aan Zee and Egmond aan de Hoef.⁵³ After they were married in June 1903, Melchers and his wife took up residence in Egmond aan de Hoef in a house they first rented and later purchased at 8 Schoolstraat. During the first half of the 19th century, the Egmonds remained isolated because of primitive and almost impassable sandy roads. To reach one of the villages, visitors had to ride in a horse-drawn omnibus that ran twice a day from

⁵⁰ When the Melchers returned to America in 1916, Corinne again took up painting in a limited way. (Reid, "Belmont," in Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, 1990, 152). The records of The Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., from 1917 until 1955 (when Corinne died), reveal that she participated in two Biennial Exhibitions, those of 1935 and 1937. Her entries were The Pink Room and Some Things Top-lighted, respectively (The Corcoran Gallery of Art, The Fourteenth Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Oil Paintings, Washington, D.C., March 24-May 5, 1935, 79 and The Fifteenth Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Oil Paintings, Washington, D.C., March 28-May 9, 1937, 57). Both paintings are at Belmont. The latter work is known as Still Life with Coral Necklace (Joanna D. Catron, Assistant Director of Belmont, letter to author, 21 March 1990).

⁵¹ Town Hall records, Egmond aan Zee, 1884-1893.

⁵² Since July 1, 1978, the three Egmonds have belonged to one municipality.

⁵³ Visitors' lists of the Bad-Bode, 1897-1903.

Alkmaar. Public transportation would not improve until 1905 when a steam-powered streetcar was installed between Egmond aan Zee and Alkmaar. Fishing was the main livelihood in Egmond aan Zee. During the off season, fishermen supplemented their incomes with beach-combing, poaching, or collecting shells for the lime ovens. Other activities were fish smoking, raising pigs, and growing potatoes. The economics of Egmond-Binnen and Egmond aan den Hoef depended mainly on agriculture, cattle breeding, and horticulture. Late in the 19th century, the residents of the two towns also engaged in bulb growing.⁵⁴ In 1851 Egmond-Binnen, Egmond aan de Hoef, and Egmond aan Zee had approximately 310, 520, and 1,300 inhabitants, respectively.⁵⁵ Much of the population of Egmond aan Zee belonged to the Old Catholic Church,⁵⁶ while the two other Egmonds were predominantly Roman Catholic and minorities in all three towns were Dutch Reformed.⁵⁷

Melchers' Egmond Paintings

Throughout his years in Holland, Melchers primarily depicted the

⁵⁴ Lannoy and Denneboom, 82.

⁵⁵ A. J. van der Aa, Aardijkskundig Woordenboek der Nederlanden 12 vols. (Gorinchem: Jacobus Noorduy, 1843-1851), 4:85-89.

⁵⁶ The Old Catholics are a Christian denomination which grew out of a schism with the Roman Catholic Church over the dogma of papal infallibility promulgated in 1870. Germany and the Netherlands are among the principal countries where its adherents are located (The New Columbia Encyclopedia 4th ed. [New York: Columbia University Press, 1975], 1997).

⁵⁷ Lannoy and Denneboom, 109.

people of Egmond in outdoor settings or in typical village interiors of houses and churches. He incorporated into his works many of the local costumes and objects of Egmond life, including bed boxes, footstoves, and tobacco pipes, about which the 19th-century travel writers had commented so extensively. At the outset, his subjects included fishermen, at work or at leisure; young peasant women working outdoors; and peasants attending a church service. In choosing to paint these popular images, Melchers was in the mainstream of late-19th century painters. Later, he portrayed peasant mothers and children, with the first such work being Mother and Child With Orange (ca. 1892, Belmont).⁵⁸ Melchers did not confine himself to one specific theme. Rather, while working with one subject, he often returned to pursue an earlier motif. The dates of his works depicting fishermen, mothers and children, peasant women, and villagers in church overlap. During the late 1890s he gradually shifted from peasant to

⁵⁸ Melchers painted his first mother and child picture during his Italian trip in 1882. It was entitled Paternoster (whereabouts unknown) and was exhibited at the 54th Annual Exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia in 1882. It shows a barefoot peasant woman carrying her baby under one arm and balancing a large jug on her head with the other hand (Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Illustrated Catalogue 54th Annual Exhibition. Philadelphia, October 29-December 8, 1883, fig. 23). Three years later, he executed Waiting (fig. II-2, whereabouts unknown) which shows a fishwife from Egmond aan Zee sitting on the beach, holding her child on her lap. Since this work is not essentially a mother and child image, this painting will be mentioned in the context of Melchers' pictures of the sea folk of Egmond aan Zee. Belmont owns an oil sketch of Waiting which is dated 1885 (Joanna D. Catron, the Assistant Director of Belmont, letter to author, 25 May 1988). The finished work was exhibited at the National Academy of Design in New York in 1886 (Maria Naylor, The National Academy of Design Exhibition Record 1861-1900 2 vols. [New York: Kennedy Galleries, 1973], 2:621).

bourgeois genre. His models for these later works were Henriette Hitchcock and, after he married in 1903, his wife, Corinne.

Melchers' Egmond peasants were seldom shown engaged in arduous work; rather, they more often appear to be posing for the artist in an idyllic outdoors. Only in rare instances, such as in Potato Gatherers (fig. II-2, ca. 1890, Belmont), did he depict them laboring. Melchers, like most American expatriate painters, chose to represent rural settings through a somewhat idealized lens. Such a choice tied him aesthetically more closely to such painters as George Hitchcock than to contemporary Hague School artists of the peasant genre. Lois Marie Fink has written

Melchers and Hitchcock were seeking out the more picturesque aspects of Dutch life. . . . Typically, American artists abroad remained outsiders -- particularly in relation to the peasantry, who had no share in their beliefs and values -- and were quite incapable of perceiving the humble rural folk in the wholeness of their humanity.⁵⁹

In contrast, the Hague School painters, while somewhat idealizing their female peasants, showed them dressed in ordinary clothes and wearing wooden shoes working in the dunes (for example, Jozef Israëls' In the Dunes, not dated, Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague), binding sheaves in the fields (Anton Mauve's Women Binding Sheaves, not dated, Collection A. A. M. Ruygrok, Wassenaar, the Netherlands), harvesting potatoes (Mauve's Gathering Potatoes, early 1880s, Musée des Beaux-Arts de

⁵⁹ Lois Marie Fink, "Elizabeth Nourse: Painting the Motif of Humanity," in National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Elizabeth Nourse, 1859-1938: A Salon Career, exhibition catalogue, essays by Mary Alice Heekin Burke and Lois Marie Fink. Washington, D.C., January 14-April 17, 1983, 134-35.

Montréal), or tending their gardens (Mauve's In the Vegetable Garden, 1887, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam).

Contemporary American critics who wrote about Melchers' early Egmond work usually viewed it favorably, as have present day writers. Caution should be used, however, in accepting these positive judgments because many were written by Melchers' friends, including Christian Brinton, Royal Cortissoz, Arthur Hoeber, Adaline D. Piper, and Henriette Hitchcock (whose essays appeared under her pseudonym "J. Brenchley" and, after her second marriage to Charles Lewis Hind, under the name Henriette Lewis-Hind), as well as Lewis Hind himself. All agreed that Melchers' subject matter and style were a mixture of the past and present, with references to the Dutch Old Masters, in particular Pieter de Hooch and Johannes Vermeer; to the artists of the Barbizon, Hague, and Laren Schools; and to such French painters of peasants as Jules Bastien-Lepage and Jules Breton. Brinton saw an unbroken line "beginning with Rembrandt and continuing through Millet to the mystical Bastien-Lepage."⁶⁰ Joseph G. Dreiss, writing in 1984, concurred with this earlier observer. He wrote that Melchers was able to blend the Düsseldorf style with that of the contemporary Dutch and French.⁶¹ Brenchley noted that Melchers did not depict nature, but "broadened, changed, and beautified

⁶⁰ Christian Brinton, "The Art of Gari Melchers," Harper's Monthly Magazine 114 (February 1907): 434.

⁶¹ Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 35.

his views, until his pictures have become things that will endure."⁶² However, Adaline D. Piper believed that Melchers' works were part of Dutch life, including the church and countryside scenes,⁶³ while Bruce M. Donaldson quoted an unnamed Dutch critic who said that Melchers made "a just interpretation of the spirit as well as the outward aspect of the Dutch people."⁶⁴

A very different attitude towards Melchers' Egmond works prevailed in Germany. German critics initially noticed him in 1888 when he first exhibited in Munich at the Jubiläums-Ausstellung.⁶⁵ Friedrich Pecht, for example, wrote about the American artist that he was a "very talented painter, but lacks an inner spirit and, therefore, his work is cold and insipid."⁶⁶ The German writers continued to see Melchers in this light, even as his fame increased and he became a regular exhibitor at the international expositions in Berlin, Dresden, and Munich. Richard Muther may have best described this general attitude, when he wrote

⁶² J. Brenchley [Mrs. George Hitchcock, pseud.], "Gari Melchers and His Work," The Magazine of Art 24 (February 1900): 147.

⁶³ Adaline D. Piper, "Gari Melchers," The American Magazine of Art 15 (February 1924): 84.

⁶⁴ Bruce M. Donaldson, "An Appreciation of Gari Melchers (1860-1932)," in The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Gari Melchers. A Memorial Exhibition of His Work, exhibition catalogue. Richmond, January 17-February 28, 1938, 16.

⁶⁵ Melchers' entries were The Sermon (1886, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.) and The Pilots (1887, Charles and Emma Frye Art Museum, Seattle).

⁶⁶ Friedrich Pecht, "Die Münchener Ausstellungen von 1888," Die Kunst für Alle 3 (1 September 1888): 355.

Gari Melchers is, indeed, a sincere and quiet observer, and approaches nature with energy, though he looks into the world with the cold objectivity of a camera. His figures are heavy and motionless, his pictures arid. . . .⁶⁷

Melchers' success in Germany culminated in 1900, when the Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung, Germany's most prestigious "Salon," reserved an entire room for Melchers' forty entries. Nevertheless, the critics continued to be unenthusiastic. Hans Rosenhagen in Die Kunst für Alle and the critic of the Frankfurter Zeitung agreed that Melchers' art "borders on being boring"⁶⁸ because "everything is ruled by reason."⁶⁹ Rosenhagen wrote

one looks in vain in Melchers' pictures for the magical atmosphere of Holland . . . all things which make Holland so attractive in the eyes of other painters, all that is considered the most beautiful in Dutch painting since the days of Rembrandt.⁷⁰

He found a lack of poetry in Melchers' art, because the latter always depicted "the sober reality with its hard, bright colors and thin lines." Rosenhagen acknowledged that "One cannot describe the spiritual dullness, the indolence and naïveté of simple folk more truthfully than Melchers," but he regretted that the artist "paints them approximately in the sense of a photographer who takes pictures of people in their national costumes and has them pose neatly scrubbed and in their Sunday best." As a result

⁶⁷ Richard Muther, The History of Modern Painting 3 vols. (London: Henry and Co., 1896), 3: 473.

⁶⁸ Hans Rosenhagen, "Die grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung 1900," Die Kunst für Alle 15 (June 1900): 427.

⁶⁹ Frankfurter Zeitung, 28 June 1900.

⁷⁰ Rosenhagen, 427.

"[Melchers' peasants] . . . seem not truly realistic, no matter how true they appear to be."⁷¹ Although the Frankfurter Zeitung critic respected Melchers for producing "solid" and "honest" work, he commented that the artist "paints his pictures with the same calculated planning with which someone else builds machinery" and concluded that Melchers' so-called objectivity in art, which many people admired, was nothing more than a cover up for "a lack of personality."⁷² It seems, however, that the German public did not necessarily agree with the opinions of the critics because Melchers sold ten works at the Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung: Audrey, The Green Mantlepiece, Harbor, Homeward Bound, Mother and Child, The Pilots, St. Gudule, Supper at Emmaus, Winter, and Young Mother.⁷³

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Frankfurter Zeitung, 28 June 1900.

⁷³ Melchers had a typed list of the sales made at the Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung of 1900. This list indicates the name of the buyer, the buyer's city of residence, title of the work, and catalogue number, but no price. Except for The Pilots, which is in the Charles and Emma Frye Art Museum in Seattle, and St. Gudule, which today is owned by Mrs. Regina Trapp of New York, the whereabouts of the other eight paintings sold by Melchers in Berlin in 1900 are unknown at the present time. Melchers painted a second version of Audrey, which portrays the figure holding a black flowered cloak over her left arm. According to Melchers' handwritten notes at Belmont, this version was exhibited in 1898 at the Salon in Paris and was sold to Potter Palmer of Chicago. The painting is now at the Watson Gallery, Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts. The Audrey which was exhibited in Berlin in 1900 was presented there as the Goatherd, and, according to Melchers' notations, the young woman carries a "yellow jacket."

Fisherman and Peasant Genre

Some of Melchers' earliest Egmond works represented the dead (Fulfilled, ca. 1885),⁷⁴ the sick (The Sick Child, 1884),⁷⁵ and the sleeping (Candlelight, The Sleeping Girl, fig. II-3, ca. 1885).⁷⁶ All three works are

⁷⁴ Melchers painted another death-related work which was titled The Island of Death (whereabouts and date unknown). It was exhibited at the The Cleveland Museum of Art at the Third Exhibition of Watercolors and Pastels, June 11-July 11, 1926.

⁷⁵ The Sick Child at Belmont is a watercolor on cardboard and is probably a study for an oil painting also entitled The Sick Child which was exhibited in 1889 at the Detroit Museum of Art. It was loaned by Mrs. Florence Bagley Sherman (Detroit Museum of Art, Catalogue of Paintings, Watercolors, Drawings, Etchings, and Collection of Corean Antiquities, Detroit, 1889, 15).

⁷⁶ Annette Stott suggested that the first paintings which Melchers executed in Holland around June 1883 were Grandfather and Watching the Neighbor's Wife. She wrote that these two works, whose whereabouts are unknown, were intended for the 1884 summer exhibition in Amsterdam (Stott, "American Painters," 168). Presumably, Stott was referring to the Art Exhibition of Living Masters at Arti et Amicitiae, at that time the only "Salon" in that city where contemporary art was shown. The catalogue of this Exhibition, however, did not list Melchers as a participant. Hitchcock was represented by two paintings, Egmonder Pinken and Souvenir of Scheveningen, whereabouts of both unknown (Catalogus van de Tentoonstelling van Kunstwerken van Levende Meesters in de Kunstzalen der Maatschappij Arti and Amicitiae [Amsterdam: 1884]). Melchers did not exhibit in Amsterdam until 1886 when he showed The Sermon, and this painting was the only work which Melchers is believed to have exhibited in Holland. Melchers' only known work depicting a "grandfather" was the charcoal portrait of his own grandfather, Johann Wilhelm Anton Melchers, from 1879 (fig. I-6, Belmont). As cited above, Melchers did visit Haarlem and Amsterdam in June 1883, but these may have been only brief stops on his way back to America as the Detroit Free Press of June 20, 1883 announced that he was "expected home this week" ("Local Art Brevities," Detroit Free Press, 20 June 1883, 6). Thus, Melchers would have had little time to work on a painting in Holland. Stott wrote the author that she was uncertain where Grandfather and Watching the Neighbor's Wife were painted, but that Melchers may have worked with models on the spot and probably finished the works in his studio in Paris (Annette Stott, letter to author, 3 November 1989). Melchers' two other entries for the 1889 exhibition at the Detroit

at Belmont. They are renderings of dark interiors and, therefore, are in contrast to almost all of Melchers' later Egmond paintings.⁷⁷ The mood and muted colors are similar to those works of Jozef Israëls depicting sad moments in the lives of peasants. Annette Stott has recently suggested that The Sick Child, in particular, resembles Israëls' Alone in the World (ca. 1878, Rijksmuseum H. W. Mesdag, The Hague), which "attracted great admiration at the [1893] World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and was considered by many Americans to be Israëls's masterpiece."⁷⁸ One other exception is Volendam Interior (fig. II-4, 1889, Belmont), which is also quite dark, although a light source from a small window is included. Apparently the title of Volendam Interior derives from a trip which Melchers made to that town where he may have conceived the idea for the work. He also visited the Hotel Spaander, the famous artists' lodging house, and made a sketch for Leendert Spaander, the proprietor.⁷⁹

Museum of Art were Watching the Neighbors and Portrait. Both were loaned by Mr. George S. Davis (Detroit Museum of Art, 1889, 15-16). It is assumed that Watching the Neighbors is the same work as Watching the Neighbor's Wife.

⁷⁷ Other early works are Kniertje, the Dutchwoman and Poor Men of the Sea, which were exhibited at the 1885 Salon in Paris.

⁷⁸ Stott, "The Holland Years," in *Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg*, 1990, 61.

⁷⁹ In 1906 Corinne Melchers wrote her mother that she and a group of her female friends, including the painters Alice Worthington Ball and Florence Kate Upton, the critic Adaline D. Piper, and Henriette Hitchcock, had made an excursion to Volendam and visited the Hotel Spaander. Corinne wrote "Yes, we went to Spaanders, but I think it a very cheap + [sic] nasty place, full of greasy Germans. I could not find Gari's sketch there" (Corinne Melchers, letter to Lulu Mackall, 4 September [1906]).

Volendam Interior is reminiscent of works often executed by Hague School artists, such as Israëls (Pancake Day, not dated, previously in the Collection of Sir Kenneth Clark), and by members of the Laren School, including Albert Neuhuys (Laren Woman Beside Cradle, not dated, Singer Museum, Laren, the Netherlands). These artists, in turn, had adopted these subjects from their renowned predecessors of the 17th century.

Waiting (fig. II-5, 1885, whereabouts unknown) is Melchers' only known painting to represent Egmond fishwives on the beach. In the work he has incorporated a number of the typical aspects of a Dutch fishing village, including the fenced-off houses and the flat bottomed fishing boat, known as "bom" or "pink."⁸⁰ The composition includes four female figures in typical Egmond costumes looking out to sea, with the emphasis on the figure in the foreground sitting on the beach with a child on her lap. Her face shows the anxiety of a fisherman's wife awaiting the return of her husband from his hazardous work. Melchers painted the main figure holding a large woven reed shoulder basket known as a "kriel," which may be meant to hold the catch, while a pitcher by her side could contain a drink for the returning fisherman. Probably to make a picturesque composition, Melchers depicted the houses right on the beach

⁸⁰ A "bom" or "pink" was a broad-beamed working boat which was built and used in Dutch coastal villages from the 16th to the 19th centuries. It was approximately ten to fifteen meters in length and half as wide, and had a flat keel and lee boards which could be tilted up so it could be easily beached. The usual configuration was a main mast which held the main sail and up to three jibs. Sometimes there was a shorter mizzen mast at the stern (Grote Nederlandse Larousse Encyclopedie 25 vols. [The Hague: Uitgeverij Scheltens & Giltay N.V., 1972-1979], 5:435).

with a "pink" next to the fence. In reality, however, the houses at Egmond aan Zee are well back from the sea beyond the dunes.

Similarly, Melchers' figures in Waiting and those in his other Egmond paintings of peasant women did not, however, resemble accounts of the actual appearance of these people. George Hitchcock described the local women's everyday clothes as consisting of many layers of petticoats of different materials such as cotton, flannel, and wool. Sometimes a woman wore as many as thirteen layers which made her "figure unbearable and grotesque to a high degree, especially as the tight bodice makes the lower half still more large in appearance."⁸¹ Hitchcock's description matched the illustrations which Valenteyn Bing and Braet von Ueberfeldt included in their study of the costumes of the fisherpeople and their activities on the beach.⁸² Instead of "grotesque" garments, however, Melchers painted his models wearing blouse, skirt, bodice, bonnet, stockings, and wooden shoes.

The theme of women in the dunes or on the shore, sometimes with children, waiting for their men to return from the sea, was a popular subject in late 19th-century Dutch art. Melchers' Waiting was thematically close to such contemporary Dutch works as David Artz' On the Lookout (1885, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam), Jozef Israëls' Girl in the Dunes (not dated, Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague), and Jacob Maris' On the Lookout (not dated, Rijksmuseum H. W. Mesdag, The

⁸¹ Hitchcock, Scribner's Magazine (November 1891), 627.

⁸² Valenteyn Bing and Braet von Ueberfeldt, plates III, IV, and XII.

Hague).⁸³

Melchers executed several works depicting fishermen and sailors. Examples are North Sea Fisherman (fig. II-6, ca. 1884, Private Collection), Poor Men of the Sea (1885, whereabouts unknown), Three Men at a Capstan (ca. 1890, Belmont), and The Windlass (ca. 1900, Private Collection).⁸⁴ These paintings are rather unusual in Melchers' oeuvre because, contrary to his usually quiet compositions, they show fishermen facing fierce North Sea storms; they resemble Israëls' Two Men Carrying an Anchor (date and whereabouts unknown),⁸⁵ which show his subjects working under hazardous conditions. Melchers' other paintings of fishermen and sailors of the 1890s include The Pilots (fig. II-8, 1887, Charles and Emma Frye Art Museum, Seattle), Young Fishermen (ca. 1890,

⁸³ Although Jozef Israëls was considered the preeminent painter of fisherman genre, he certainly was not the innovator of this theme. Since the 1820s, Dutch artists had depicted fishwives from Scheveningen and Zandvoort. At the end of that decade, Jacobus Eeckhout chose such subjects as Waiting and The Return from the Sea (dates and whereabouts unknown). In 1856 Israëls had success with similar works and popularized this genre in the 1860s. The interest in these seashore scenes continued until the late 1880s when street and cafe themes replaced the fisherfolk as more popular images (Dieuwertje Dekkers, "De Kinderen der Zee. De Samenwerking tussen Jozef Israëls en Nicolaas Beets," Jong Holland 2 [March 1986]: 36).

⁸⁴ Exactly the same image of North Sea Fisherman appeared in George Hitchcock's November 1891 article in Scribner's Magazine (fig. II-7, whereabouts unknown). Although the reproduction in the magazine is not signed by Hitchcock, it is assumed it is his, as were all of the other illustrations in the article.

⁸⁵ Jozef Israëls' Two Men Carrying an Anchor was reproduced in Max Rooses, Het Schilderboek. Nederlandsche Schilders van de 19e Eeuw in Monographieën door Tijdgenoten 5 vols. (Amsterdam: Uitgeversmaatschappij Elseviers, 1898-1900), 1: 82.

Belmont), Shore Leave (ca. 1890, Belmont), The Ship Model (ca. 1890, Belmont), A Sailor and His Sweetheart (ca. 1890, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.), and Sailor and his Dog (ca. 1895, Belmont). Melchers frequently used ship models as props. A large model of a two-masted "bom" with sails is the main object of interest for the young men in Young Fishermen and The Ship Model, occupies a prominent place in Old and Young (ca. 1890, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Robert G. Beck, Newport News, Virginia), and also is featured in the background of The Shipbuilder (ca. 1890, Gemäldegalerie Neue Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden). The smaller model which is the focus of attention in The Pilots is of a three-masted schooner without sails.⁸⁶

The Pilots was Melchers' most successful work of this series.⁸⁷ Two preparatory watercolor studies for the painting exist: Seaman's Tavern (Study for The Pilots) (fig. II-9) and Study for the Pilots (fig. II-10). Both studies are from ca. 1887 and are at Belmont. The first shows five men sitting around a table in front of two large windows. On the table are a pair of what appear to be Dutch gin bottles and tall glasses. The man on the right holds a bottle in his right hand, while the other four

⁸⁶ It is not known if the model of the "bom" belonged to Melchers. The model of the schooner was formerly at Belmont, but was deaccessioned (Joanna D. Catron, Assistant Director of Belmont, letter to author, 26 July 1989).

⁸⁷ In 1888 The Pilots was awarded a third-class medal and was voted the best foreign painting at the Paris Salon. The following year, it won, together with The Communion, The Sermon, and Shepherdess, the Grand Prize at the Paris Universal Exposition.

men look at him. In the second study, Melchers altered his characters' activities. The figure on the right now fills his pipe with tobacco, and the man in front of the window is rigging the ship model. These changes probably were made in order to produce a less static portrayal of fishermen during their time ashore, rather than just a tavern scene. In his studies Melchers depicted two favorite pastimes of the Dutch: drinking and smoking. Junius H. Browne noted that "spiritous liquors are freely used in Holland . . . even by the peasantry."⁸⁸ Frederic S. Bird mentioned that the Dutch were addicted to tobacco; the consumption was so large that "in most of the streets the tobacconists' shops are neither few nor far between."⁸⁹ The finished painting of The Pilots is based on the second study. In The Pilot, a small daily tear-off calender fixed on the frame between the two windows reads "MAANDAG [Monday] 17 APRIL," indicating the early spring when the fishermen might not yet be regularly at sea.⁹⁰ Brenchley described the work as representing

⁸⁸ Browne, 172.

⁸⁹ Bird, 61-62.

⁹⁰ This detail is somewhat puzzling as April 17, 1887 was not a Monday. The closest Monday on that date would have been in 1882 or 1893. April 17, 1887 was on a Sunday (The World Almanac & Book of Facts 1985 [New York: Newspaper Enterprise Association, 1985], 748-49). According to Miss K. Hayashi, curator of the American Paintings Department of the Charles and Emma Frye Art Museum in Seattle, the painting is not dated (K. Hayashi, letter to author, November 1987). But, when Melchers submitted it at the Salon of 1888, he definitely signed and dated The Pilots in the lower right of the painting. The date, 1887, is clearly seen in the reproductions of the painting in Hans T. Kroeber's article about Melchers in Westermanns Monatshefte and in Gari Melchers Painter (Hans T. Kroeber, "Gari Melchers," Westermanns Monatshefte 112 [April 1912]: 195 and Gari Melchers Painter. Foreword by Henriette

weather-beaten men enjoying a well-earned leisure, smoking and rigging a toy ship in a room overlooking a red-roofed village, the sea not far off.⁹¹

Melchers worked "directly, almost brutally," and she found The Pilots a "strong" picture and "full of life."⁹² Christian Brinton considered The Pilots "as notable a performance in its way as [Wilhelm] Leibl's Village Politicians"⁹³ (fig. II-11, 1875, Stiftung Oskar Reinhart, Wintherthur, Switzerland). This latter work shows five men sitting on two adjacent wooden benches in a bare room in which a small window in the upper left corner provides a source of bright light enabling the youngest man to read a newspaper. There is no evidence, however, that Melchers was familiar with Leibl's painting, but the theme of socializing fishermen was popular among late 19th-century artists, including Max Liebermann. He used the theme of Dutch fishermen often during the 1870s-1890s in Scheveningen and Zandvoort. The Pilot's Tavern (fig. II-12, 1874, Städtische Kunsthalle, Mannheim) is one example in which he portrayed six fishermen in what was described by Liebermann as

Lewis-Hind [New York: William E. Rudge, 1928], fig. [43]). At some point, however, and for unknown reasons, the date was removed from the canvas. Such deletion of a date is not unique. When Melchers exhibited The Sermon and In Holland at the Paris Salon, they were dated 1886 and 1887, respectively. These dates have also been removed from the works which are presently in the collections of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. and Belmont.

⁹¹ Brenchley, 146.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Brinton, Modern Artists, 219.

a bare and sober interior, in which apathetic sailors . . . smoking their pipes are sitting on benches or warm themselves in front of the stove.⁹⁴

Shore Leave (fig. II-13) and A Sailor and His Sweetheart (fig. II-14) are portrayals of Egmond "sailors" with female companions. The young woman in Shore Leave may well be the sailor's "sweetheart," whereas the female figure in the second work probably is the sailor's wife as she wears a wedding band. The male figure in Shore Leave is a sailor from a large ship with his naval blouse, striped undershirt, and cap with the vessel's name (indistinguishable) on it, while the man in A Sailor and His Sweetheart wears typical Egmond fisherman's clothes. Janice C. Oresman suggested the models in Shore Leave were the same individuals who posed for the younger man and woman in The Smithy, but they are not otherwise identified.⁹⁵ Ronald van Vleuten was able to identify the models in A Sailor and His Sweetheart as Arie Stam and Marijtje de Jong.⁹⁶

Charles Henry Caffin in The International Studio in 1901 admired A Sailor and His Sweetheart as a study of human nature with "the wistfulness of the girl, and the dumb, slow-stirring passion of the man"

⁹⁴ See also Matthias Eberle, in "In der Lotsenstube," Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Max Liebermann in seiner Zeit, essay by Matthias Eberle et al. Berlin, September 6-November 4, 1979, 160.

⁹⁵ Janice C. Oresman, "Gari Melchers 1860-1932: American Painter," in Graham Gallery, Gari Melchers 1860-1932: American Painter, exhibition catalogue. New York, September 26-October 28, 1978, 22.

⁹⁶ Vleuten, 9.

illustrating "wonderful kindness of sympathy," although he wrote Melchers' Dutch works were "often garish and hard in color."⁹⁷ Caffin included a reproduction of the work in his article and in his 1907 book on American art.⁹⁸ Henriette Lewis-Hind wrote in 1928 that, when she saw A Sailor and His Sweetheart in the Freer Gallery, it gave her a "feeling of ecstasy" to see this "exquisitely painted picture."⁹⁹ She further commented

I do not think that in the whole art of the last fifty years or even longer ago than that, there is anything technically more beautiful than this picture. The way mere paint is manipulated -- the beauty of clean colour, the lovely tone of the girl's frock, the way her young unstayed bust and body show under her garments -- is something to study and remember, to say nothing of the perfect feeling of reverent, decent love given by the story that is told. Amongst all that is lovely in the Freer Museum . . . [The Sailor and His Sweetheart] is unabashed.¹⁰⁰

Old and Young (fig. II-15) was painted in Melchers' studio in Egmond aan Zee, recognizable from the projecting mantelpiece and small window on the right and shelf on the rear wall.¹⁰¹ The figures of the old man

⁹⁷ Charles H. Caffin, "The Picture Exhibition at the Pan-American Exposition," The International Studio 14 (August 1901): XX.

⁹⁸ Charles Henry Caffin, The Story of American Painting. The Evolution of Painting in America From Colonial Times to the Present (New York: Frederick Stokes Company, 1907), 354.

⁹⁹ Gari Melchers Painter, [9-10]. Henriette Lewis-Hind included a reproduction of The Sailor and His Sweetheart (fig. 27) in the book.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, [9].

¹⁰¹ Corinne Melchers described her husband's studio to Julia Sully (Julia Sully, "Painting 'Last Supper' Made Under Odd Conditions. Mrs Melchers Tells How Husband Did Greatly Admired Work," Richmond News-Leader, 14 March 1936, 9). A photograph at Belmont pictures Melchers at work on Old and Young with the model for the old man posing (fig. II-16).

and child probably were meant to illustrate the generations of a family of fishermen, with the ship model on the table as a symbol of their occupation. The painting appears to depict a grandfather consoling his grandson whose father is away at sea, while the somewhat indistinct figure in the background is watching this intimate scene.

Melchers also painted a number of full-length character studies of Egmond men posed as workers of various occupations. The Shipbuilder (ca. 1896, Gemäldegalerie Neue Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden) holds his carpenter's square¹⁰² and Man with a Cloak (ca. 1890, Galleria Nazionale, Rome) appears to be a prosperous landowner.¹⁰³ Sailor and his Dog (ca. 1895, Belmont) shows the figure standing before ships in the harbor, The Smithy (fig. II-17, ca. 1900, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.) is in his workshop, and Dutchman with Pipe (ca. 1900, Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska, Lincoln) shows a farmer or milkman holding a lit pipe with his yoke and pail on the ground at his feet.¹⁰⁴ The Ice Sweeper (fig. II-18, 1897, Collection of Mr.

¹⁰² The Shipbuilder was first exhibited at the Salon in Paris in 1896; in the following year the painting was shown at the Internationale Kunstausstellung in Dresden and was purchased by the Gemäldegalerie Neue Meister. Vleuten identified the model for The Shipbuilder as Jan Stoker, a local man, whose occupation was not that of a shipbuilder (Vleuten, 9).

¹⁰³ The model who posed for The Man with a Cloak is Andries Duinmeier (Vleuten, 7). He also later sat for Melchers' male model in The Skaters (ca. 1894, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia) and the younger pilgrim in Supper at Emmaus (1898, whereabouts unknown).

¹⁰⁴ The model for Dutchman with Pipe is Albert Wijker who later appeared in Melchers' Supper at Emmaus and The Last Supper. See also Vleuten, 6.

James A. Martens, New York) holds a broom made of willow twigs.

Of this group The Smithy is the most elaborate work, depicting two figures besides the central character, posed in a somewhat formal "family" portrait. The older man is identified as Jan Karels, who was the local blacksmith and a favorite model of Melchers,¹⁰⁵ while the younger man probably was his son of the same name, who followed his father in the trade. The model for the female figure is unidentified but may have been a daughter named Pietje.¹⁰⁶

When The Smithy was shown in New York in 1929 in a large retrospective exhibition of Melchers at the Anderson Galleries, the critic for The Arts, who thought that the artist was Dutch, compared him with the 17th-century Dutch "Little Masters." The critic described The Smithy as "a solid and harmonious picture in which the three subjects are posing for their portraits in an anything but spontaneous manner, and yet have that permanence and completeness of personality that is the virtue of the Dutch school."¹⁰⁷

The Ice Sweeper, in contrast to the other character studies, is very impressionistic. The costume and wooden shoes of the man indicate that the work is meant to be a Dutch scene, but there are no distinctive features in the background which would identify the locale as Egmond.

¹⁰⁵ Melchers also used Jan Karels as a model in Supper at Emmaus and The Last Supper.

¹⁰⁶ Vleuten, 10.

¹⁰⁷ "Exhibitions. Coming and Going," The Arts 15 (February 1929): 121.

The style of The Ice Sweeper and its winter setting are similar to other later works such as Brvant Park, First Snow (ca. 1906, Private Collection) and Feeding the Sheep (ca. 1910, Belmont), which were executed in New York and Weimar, respectively.

When The Ice Sweeper was exhibited at the Milch Gallery in New York in 1921, it particularly attracted Royal Cortissoz' attention.

There is a very human note . . . in the little sketch of a Dutch peasant, called "Ice Sweeper." It is a sincere, vitalized portrait, beautifully done. . . . He [Melchers] simply rests his eye upon a picturesque object and lets his sense of form and color have its way.¹⁰⁸

Another of Melchers' favorite subjects of the late 1880s was the young peasant woman shown in an open field, or in a dune landscape in Egmond aan Zee or near Egmond aan de Hoef. His first painting of this type was Moss and Sand (fig. II-19, 1887, Belmont), which was also known as The Tired Moss Gatherer when it was exhibited in Chicago at the Sixteenth Annual Art Exhibition at the Inter-State Industrial Exposition in 1888. The latter title better describes the picture, although the girl was gathering "ruigte" (withered beach grass to be used as fertilizer) rather than moss.¹⁰⁹ Moss and Sand shows a young woman, resting on the side of a dune after a day's work; a three-quarter waxing moon

¹⁰⁸ Royal Cortissoz, "Art Incidents of the Early Spring. New Works by Melchers, Griffin and Some Others," New York Tribune, Sunday edition, 20 March 1921, section III, 7.

¹⁰⁹ E. Konijn included a number of photographs in his Oude Ansichten van de Egmonden of Egmond peasants working in the dunes. One example depicts a peasant woman gathering "ruigte," fig. II-20 (E. Konijn, Oude Ansichten van de Egmonden [Schoorl: Uitgeverij Pirola, 1972], 95).

denotes the end of the day. An "uitgeest" (a type of rake) and a shoulder basket lie at her feet. She wears a brown dress over which is a mauve sleeveless bodice, a "bazuintje" tied around her chin, black stockings, and dark shoes with low heels. A similarly dressed local young woman, whom Vleuten identified as Maartje Wijker,¹¹⁰ also appears in what was to become Melchers' most ambitious painting of this series, In Holland (fig. II-21, Belmont, 1887). The latter painting was first exhibited at the Paris Salon of 1887 as En Hollande (fig. II-22). After the closing of the Salon, Melchers must have sent the work to America because, in September of that year, it was shown at the Inter-State Industrial Exposition's Fifteenth Annual Art Exhibition in Chicago and three months later at the American Art Association in New York. In Holland probably remained in this country for three years. In March 1888, it was included in the exhibition Paintings by Gari Melchers at the Saint Botolph Club in Boston and, in autumn, shown at Reichard and Company in New York. At the end of the decade, it was part of the one-man show, Thirty-three Paintings by Gari Melchers, at The Detroit Museum of Art and then, in early 1890, included in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts' Sixtieth Annual Exhibition in Philadelphia. Later that year In Holland was shipped back to Europe, where it was exhibited at the Salon Triennal de Brussels.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Vleuten, 8.

¹¹¹ For the complete exhibition history of In Holland see Joanna D. Catron, "Catalogue of the Exhibition," in Museum of Fine Arts, Gari Melchers. A Retrospective Exhibition, exhibition catalogue, essays by Diane Lesko et al. St. Petersburg, Florida, March 11-May 6, 1990, 179.

In Holland was favorably reviewed by the critic of The Nation in December 1887 after it was first shown in New York.

Those who have been interested in the work of Mr. J. Gary [sic] Melchers . . . will find cause for satisfaction in the excellent . . . "In Holland" The two figures of Dutch peasant girls in this picture, the one in the foreground with the rake, and the other a little beyond carrying water-pails, are strongly painted in a landscape of simple and impressive beauty. . . . the drawing is thoroughly good.¹¹²

The critic of the Detroit Free Press was also impressed with Melchers' work and commented

The poses are natural, simple, graceful and effective, and the drawing throughout the composition is faultless. . . . a composition at once daring, strong and satisfying.¹¹³

As noted, Melchers removed the date from In Holland, and at some point changed the composition of the painting, adjusting the dune slope and adding bushes, houses, and a windmill in the background. This must have been done after 1897 because an illustration of In Holland, known then in Germany as In die Dünen, appeared in the February issue of Die Kunst für Alle in that year and still shows the original composition.¹¹⁴ Melchers also altered the face of the milkmaid, her "bazuintje" and her footwear. The milkmaid in En Hollande/In die Dünen wears wooden shoes and a

¹¹² "Fine Arts. American Art Association," The Nation 45 (15 December 1887): 491. See also Jennifer A. Martin Bienenstock, "Gari Melchers and the Belgian Art World 1882-1908," in Museum of Fine Arts, Gari Melchers. A Retrospective Exhibition, exhibition catalogue, essays by Diane Lesko et al. St. Petersburg, Florida, March 11-May 6, 1990, 89.

¹¹³ "Melchers' Triumph. Gari Melchers is at Last Courted by the Detroit Museum of Art," Detroit Free Press, 10 November 1889, 23.

¹¹⁴ "Kunstiiteratur und vervielfältigende Kunst," Die Kunst für Alle, 12 (1 February 1897): 143.

curled white cap and has a round face. In In Holland in its present state, she has an elongated face¹¹⁵ (fig. II-23, not dated, Belmont) and wears an ordinary cap with loose ties and dark shoes with low heels.¹¹⁶ Melchers probably made these changes to create a more aesthetic portrayal of his model with the narrower face. In addition, the wooden shoes and curled cap were too obviously clichés.

Joseph G. Dreiss suggested that Melchers later may have brightened the color scheme of In Holland, so that "the lavender cape and bright blue pails and yoke, [would] contrast with the muted colors of the rest of the painting."¹¹⁷ Dreiss, however, apparently was not correct, because the critic of The Nation mentioned Melchers' "daring" color which he noted was dominated by "such difficult notes as lilac and blue."¹¹⁸ The writer in the Detroit Free Press also described Melchers' bright hues in detail.

The chief charm of [In Holland] . . . is its color scheme. It is a unique and beautiful study in blues . . . the blue sky . . . [and] the two pails . . . -- light outside and dark inside -- while the girl who carries them wears a lavender cape over her shoulders. The girl with the basket wears a blue sleeveless bodice over a brown bodice. Upon

¹¹⁵ This model was identified as Dieuwertje de Waard, a local young woman from Egmond aan de Hoef (Vleuten, 10).

¹¹⁶ More faithful representations of peasant women in contemporary dress were shown in Jozef Israëls' and Max Liebermann's works. Israëls presented his figures in Return from the Field (fig. II-24, not dated, whereabouts unknown) as young women walking barefoot in a dune landscape with shoulder baskets on their backs. Liebermann's figures in Women Mending Nets (1889, Hamburger Kunsthalle) matched Molkenboer's description of the Dutch peasant woman wearing a "bazuintje," dark dress, apron, black stockings, and wooden shoes.

¹¹⁷ Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 84.

¹¹⁸ "Fine Arts," The Nation (1887): 491.

her head is a . . . white lace cap . . . while her large and strong but shapely hands -- one holding the rake handle and the other resting upon her left hip -- show effectively in contrast to the gray skirt she wears, to her light hair and the rosy browns, the grays and blues in her face. The girl with the two buckets wears, besides the lavender cape, a jaunty little Dutch hood, a waist and skirt of light green with a vine thereon in darker green. . . . The landscape . . . is rich in blues, greens, browns and grays. . . .¹¹⁹

Contemporary Belgian critics in 1890 confirmed Melchers' use of vivid colors in the original version of In Holland. A writer for L'Etoile belge commented upon the "relations de ses bleus, de ses jaunes et de ses vertes" and the critic of L'Indépendance belge wrote "Ce bleu criard, qui crève les yeux"¹²⁰ The whole painting thus involved a contrast of colors, both in the figures of the milkmaid and of Maartje Wijker, and in the landscape. In such a festive costume the milkmaid was overdressed for her work, but Melchers probably portrayed her in this garb in order to have an opportunity to illustrate the colorful Sunday dress of an Egmond woman¹²¹ in juxtaposition to the ordinary clothes worn by the figure

¹¹⁹ "Melchers' Triumph," Detroit Free Press, 10 November 1889, 23.

¹²⁰ "L'Exposition générale des beaux-arts," L'Etoile belge, 18 September, 1890, 1-2 and "Le Salon de Bruxelles 1890," L'Indépendance belge, 23 September, 1890, 1. See Bienenstock, "Gari Melchers," in Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, 1990, 89. The intense blue color of the inside of the pails, about which so much comment was made, was, in fact, an accurate depiction of Dutch milk pails, as it was believed this color was effective in repelling flies (Bienenstock, Ibid, 89).

¹²¹ The image of a Dutch milkmaid by an unknown artist is similar to Melchers' model for In Holland and appears on an invitation "to a private view of pictures" at the Gladwell Brothers' gallery at 14 Gracechurch Street in London on October 30-31, 1885 (fig. II-25, Belmont). It was an exhibition featuring the works of contemporary Dutch masters, including Henrik W. Mesdag, Bernardus Blommers and Lodewijk Apol; and "a Series [of works] by the American Painters J. Melchers and George Hitchcock." This image could well have been the inspiration for

with the rake. Charles Henry Meltzer commented on Melchers' reluctance to show the real world of Egmond peasants. Meltzer felt that the artist not only idealized his figures, but also tended to depict the bright side of peasant life and to that end did not hesitate to use vivid colors.

[Melchers] sets a gay blue cap on a dull peasant's head; or decks a grim old dame out in bright reds and pinks. In choosing backgrounds he avoids what Israëls loved. . . . Yet both have made the Dutch life very real; one in a sad way, and the other cheerfully.¹²²

Melchers' reasons for changing the landscape of In Holland are not clear. As indicated above, the work was very well received in America after it was completed. The critic of the Detroit Free Press wrote that In Holland is "essentially a gallery picture, and the place where it rightfully belongs is in The Detroit Museum of Art as a permanent feature."¹²³ The trustees of the Museum, however, must have thought otherwise because In Holland remained unsold. Melchers may have thought that the inclusion of the windmill in the painting's composition would make it a more typical Dutch landscape and possibly attract buyers, because it now clearly became what Americans would envision to be a typical Dutch scene.¹²⁴

Melchers' In Holland. There are a number of sketches at Belmont of the milkmaid, with and without her yoke, of the girl who is identified as Maartje Wijker, and of the two together (fig. II-26).

¹²² Meltzer, 6-7.

¹²³ Detroit Free Press, 10 November 1889, 23.

¹²⁴ Bienenstock has recently compared In Holland with the work of Jules Bastien-Lepage, whom Melchers may have personally known. She suggests that the vertical format of In Holland is "unusual" and likens the work to decorative panels which Bastien-Lepage exhibited in Paris in 1882 (Bienenstock, "Gari Melchers," in Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, 1990, 87). It has to be pointed out, however, that the vertical format is

With the exception of Audrey, the Shepherd Lass (ca. 1895, Watson Gallery, Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts) and The Blue Bonnet (ca. 1895, Private Collection), most of Melchers' other paintings of young peasant women appear not to have been developed into finished works. Audrey, the Shepherd Lass, The Blue Bonnet, The Goatherd (ca. 1895, Belmont), and Dead Rabbit (ca. 1900, Belmont) were set in rolling dune landscapes covered with low vegetation typical of Egmond aan Zee, while Green Pastures (The Milkmaid) (ca. 1890, Belmont), Potato Gatherers (ca. 1890, Belmont), and Milking (ca. 1895, Belmont) were depictions of the flat fields with trees and streams surrounding Egmond aan de Hoef. Green Pastures (The Milkmaid) (fig. II-28) and Potato Gatherers also show the Dutch Reformed Church, known as the "Slotkapel," of Egmond aan de Hoef in the background. Audrey, the Shepherd Lass (fig. II-27) is another example of a work where Melchers seems to have included a number of incongruous elements in order to make a decorative and colorful picture. The model stands in the dunes dressed in everyday working clothes,

not unusual for Melchers at all. Many of his major peasant and bourgeois genre and bridal and mother and child paintings which he executed in Holland are vertical compositions, including Audrey, the Shepherd Lass (Watson Gallery, Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts), The China Closet (Belmont), The Communicant (The Detroit Institute of Arts), The Delft Horse (Belmont), Dutch Family (Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen Preussische Kulturbesitz, Berlin), At Home (The Winged Victory) (Belmont), Marriage (The Minneapolis Institute of Arts), Mother and Child with Orange (Belmont), Penelope (The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.), The Sisters (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.), The Skaters (Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia), and Vespers (The Detroit Institute of Art). Bienenstock also commented that Melchers "picked up Bastien-Lepage's . . . generally muted tonalities" (Ibid, 88). As has been pointed out earlier, this is not the case because, on the contrary, In Holland is anything but "muted."

holding her crook; over her arm is a flower-patterned cloak. She is knitting, an activity which seems somewhat out of place; perhaps it was undertaken to occupy her while she was engaged in the otherwise boring activity of watching goats.

As opposed to the many outdoor summer scenes which Melchers executed in the Egmonds, The Skaters (fig. II-29, ca. 1893, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia)¹²⁵ depicts a young Dutch couple in a winter landscape. Andries Duinmeier posed for the young man, but the identity of the young woman is unknown.¹²⁶ The painting illustrates

¹²⁵ As The Skaters was exhibited at the Internationale Kunstausstellung in Dresden in 1893, the date of 1901, given to this work by Helen Weston Henderson, is incorrect (Helen Weston Henderson, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and Other Collections of Philadelphia [Boston: L. C. Page and Co., 1911], 140).

¹²⁶ Joseph G. Dreiss suggested that the young woman portrayed in The Skaters was the same model who posed for such works as The Bride (Belmont) and Married (Belmont) and dated these works ca. 1895 and ca. 1894, respectively (Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 107 and 109). This was not the case, however, as the latter model was Anne Dekker. Her daughter, Mrs. Cornelia M. Koning de Koning, identified her mother as the bride in The Bride (fig. II-30, ca. 1905-1908) and Married when photographs of these paintings were exhibited at the community center in Egmond aan de Hoef in 1980. Anne Dekker was born in Egmond aan Zee in 1885 and died in Hoofddorp, a small town near Leiden, in 1951 (Mrs. Cornelia M. Koning de Koning, interview with author, Hoofddorp, the Netherlands, 15 July 1988). Anne Dekker became Corinne Melchers' maid in 1903 and was Melchers' favorite female model during the 1900s. She posed for Anna and her Baby (Belmont), The Bride (National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.), The Dead Rabbit (Belmont), Easter Morning (The Toledo Museum of Art), Little Red Riding Hood (whereabouts unknown), Marriage (The Minneapolis Institute of Arts), Maternity (The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.), Mother and Child (Belmont and Art Institute of Chicago), Nude Adolescence (Belmont), Shepherdess Resting (whereabouts unknown), Two Nudes (Belmont), and Wedded (whereabouts unknown). Corinne Melchers first mentioned Anne Dekker in a letter to her mother on May 21, 1903, in which she wrote that she hoped that her maid spoke or at least understood some English (Corinne Melchers, letter

the favorite winter pastime in Holland, and the models each are carrying what are known as "Frieze doorlopers" (Frisian skates) which are strapped over the shoes with narrow leather bands. The female figure also carries a long green pole, which was held by couples when skating together.¹²⁷ The windmill and gabled houses in the background are almost identical to those which Melchers would later paint in the background of the revised version of In Holland. Christian Brinton wrote favorably about The Skaters

Striding briskly over the crusted snow a couple of "Skaters" hurry along toward the frozen canal. The whole subdued yet colorful picture of Holland is here.¹²⁸

Melchers also executed several other paintings with outdoor settings, including In The Arbor (ca. 1908, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. William J. Poplack), In My Garden (ca. 1908-1912, The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio),¹²⁹ and Unpretentious Garden (ca. 1903-1909, Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences, Savannah, Georgia). In My Garden was painted at George Hitchcock's "Schuylenburg" estate, and the two

to Lulu Mackall, 21 May 1903). The last time that Corinne mentioned Anne was in 1911 when she wrote "Poor Anna [sic] . . . has really gone stark mad. . . . The formalities of getting her in an asylum take as long, but I hope they can send her off soon" (Ibid., 25 August [1911]).

¹²⁷ Vleuten, 1.

¹²⁸ Brinton, Harper's Monthly Magazine, 437.

¹²⁹ The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio, dates In My Garden 1900, but this early date may well be inaccurate because Melchers only worked regularly at "Schuylenburg" beginning in 1908 when Henriette Hitchcock, who had remarried in 1907, left Egmond aan de Hoef and settled in London in 1908.

other works show the garden behind Melchers' own house in the Schoolstraat. House with Green Gables (ca. 1912, Horace C. Henry Collection, University of Washington, Seattle), In the Garden (ca. 1905-1909, formerly Sotheby's, New York), Little House in Egmond, Holland (ca. 1912, formerly Sotheby's, Los Angeles), and Old Houses (date and location unknown)¹³⁰ were executed in Egmond aan de Hoef in the vicinity of Melchers' residence.

The title In My Garden (fig. II-31) might infer that Melchers owned "Schuylenburg," which he did not. After Hitchcock divorced his wife Henriette in 1905, she allowed Melchers to use her ex-husband's studio at "Schuylenburg." Henriette tried to sell the house to Melchers, but he did not accept the offer and paid her rent until he returned to America in 1915.¹³¹ Melchers almost certainly never lived at "Schuylenburg" although several writers, including Janice C. Oresman, thought otherwise.¹³² Actually, he only worked in Hitchcock's studio and returned to his own house each day.¹³³ Melchers later added to the confusion by referring to

¹³⁰ A reproduction of Old Houses was exhibited in Egmond aan de Hoef in 1980. One of the houses is the present Gallery "De Kapberg," located opposite the Bult Inn at the corner of Schoolstraat (Vleuten, 10).

¹³¹ Richard S. Reid, the former Director of Belmont, letter to Ronald van Vleuten, 1 June 1979. A copy of this letter is at Belmont.

¹³² Oresman, "Gari Melchers," in Graham Gallery, New York, 1978, 32.

¹³³ Corinne Melchers also confirmed in several letters to her mother that her husband was only working at Hitchcock's former residence. She wrote her mother in 1908 "Gari . . . flew off to Schuilenburg [sic] each morning to work." Four years later she reported "Gari is still working daily at Schuilenburg [sic]" (Corinne Melchers, letters to Lulu Mackall, 19 August [1908] and 25 August 1912). Piet Rozing, a resident of Egmond aan

In My Garden as having been painted "in my place in Holland."¹³⁴ Adaline D. Piper could have been writing about the painting when she described the garden at "Schuylenburg" with its "fan-shaped chestnut trees [in front of] the low, brick house with its . . . shutters of green and white" and a pond in which was "hiding in the bosky green a vine-wreathed figure of a cupid."¹³⁵

In The Arbor (fig. II-32) is a typical genre scene depicting three Egmond women having tea at a table set outdoors in the shade of saplings. They are dressed in their Sunday best in costumes similar to those which Melchers painted in The Sermon (fig. II-36, 1886, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.), suggesting they had come from church earlier in the day. Corinne Melchers wrote her mother in September 1905

the winter winds have begun to get very frisky. . . . This has all been very sad for Gari's . . . arbor picture but he hopes of finishing it yet.¹³⁶

This suggests that Melchers may have painted the work, at least in part, outdoors. Piper remembered a scene similar to that depicted in In the

de Hoef, recollected in 1980 that, as a young man, he had served as a coachman driving Melchers to and from "Schuylenburg" (Vleuten, 3).

¹³⁴ Gari Melchers, letter to Joseph G. Butler, 7 February 1923. In that regard, Corinne Melchers' reference to In My Garden as A Dutch House and Garden is more appropriate (Corinne Melchers, letter to The Butler Institute of American Art, 10 December 1933). These letters are in the collection of The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio.

¹³⁵ Adaline D. Piper, "Artists' Gardens," Arts & Decoration 23 (June 1925): 26.

¹³⁶ Corinne Melchers, letter to Lulu Mackall, 10 September [1905].

Arbor.

A gem of garden furniture under a twisted tree, gives a distinctive note of color [It is] an old carved cheese press . . . [which] does duty as a bench and here the tea is spread. . . . [There is] a Dutch brazier with its burning coals and polished copper kettle, [and] tea takes the nature of a very real feast indeed.¹³⁷

Church Genre

Lois Marie Fink has pointed out that depictions of rural church scenes and ceremonies were very popular during the second half of the 19th century and offered the following explanation

In most . . . the devout are represented as peasants, identifiable by their costumes as the folk of . . . regions in France, or of localities in Holland, Italy, and Spain. The peasantry was believed to be more pious, closer to the unquestioning faith of an earlier time because they partook of a preindustrial way of life. Being relatively unburdened by temptations and complexities of worldly goods, they seemed more capable of attaining the virtues of goodness and purity.¹³⁸

Illustrations in important contemporary German art magazines, including Die Kunst für Alle and Die Kunst unserer Zeit, and in popular Dutch periodicals of the time, such as Elsevier's Geïllustreerd

¹³⁷ Piper, "Artists' Gardens," 25. Piper also mentioned three other paintings which Melchers had executed in his arbor.

A pansy-edged path leads to a leafy arbor where the famous painting, now owned by the Luxemburg [sic], was painted. His canvas, bought by the Metropolitan Museum, was also composed here, and a mother and child which received the place of honor wherever exhibited. . . . (Ibid).

The works to which Piper referred to were The Arbor (1908, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris), Madonna (ca. 1907, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), and Maternity (ca. 1908-1910, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.).

¹³⁸ Fink, "Elizabeth Nourse," in National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C., 1983, 126.

Maandschrift, show that German and Dutch painters often depicted church services, first communions, weddings, and baptisms. Pictures of church services were painted by such German artists as Wilhelm Leibl (Three Women in Church, 1878-82, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg) and Max Liebermann (Synagogue in Amsterdam, 1877, Collection of Mrs. Marianne Feichenfeldt, Zurich), and by Dutch painters, including Vincent van Gogh (The Church, 1882, Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, The Netherlands) and Philip Sadeé (In Church, ca. 1890).¹³⁹ First communions were executed by Gotthardt Kühn (In the Cathedral of Uberlingen) in Germany, and by Thérèse Schwartz (Communicants) in Holland.¹⁴⁰ Marriage scenes were depicted by Schwartz (The Little Bride) and Matthijs Maris (The Bride, ca. 1870, Rijksmuseum H. W. Mesdag, The Hague).¹⁴¹ The motif of the baptism was interpreted by the Germans Emil Brack (The Baptism, ca. 1892) and Hugo Vogel (After the Baptism, ca. 1895),¹⁴² and by Matthijs Maris (Baptism, 1873, Centraal Museum der Gemeente Utrecht, Utrecht, the Netherlands) in Holland. (Except as cited, the dates and whereabouts of the foregoing works are unknown.)

¹³⁹ Philip Sadeé's In Church was reproduced in Elsevier's Geïllustreerd Maandschrift 5 (January 1893): 13.

¹⁴⁰ Gotthardt Kühn's In the Cathedral of Uberlingen was reproduced in Die Kunst für Alle 21 (1 August 1906): 495 and Thérèse Schwartz's Communicants in Rooses, Het Schilderboek, II:179.

¹⁴¹ Schwartz's The Little Bride was reproduced in Rooses, III:197.

¹⁴² Hugo Vogel's After the Baptism and Emil Brack's The Baptism were both reproduced in Die Kunst für Alle. The former in volume 5 (1 December 1895), facing page 68 and the latter in volume 7 (July 1892), facing p. 288.

When American artists, such as Elizabeth Nourse (In the Church at Volendam, 1892, Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle) and Melchers himself (The Sermon, 1886, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.) painted a church service, they usually created simpler compositions than did their European contemporaries. This is not surprising given the lack of a tradition of religious art in America. The American painters emphasized a small portion of the congregation and often eliminated priest and altar or minister and pulpit from their works and thus made the paintings closer to genre than to religious works.

Except for The Sermon and The Communion (ca. 1888, College of Arts and Science, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York), both of which he had painted in the Dutch Reformed Church of Egmond-Binnen, Melchers executed all of his other church scenes in the Dutch Reformed Church of Egmond aan de Hoef known as the "Slotkapel."¹⁴³ In the 1880s he painted his best known works in this genre, including The Choirmaster (ca. 1888, Belmont), The Communion, Dutch Women in Church (ca. 1886-1890, Städelsches Kunstinstitut und Städtische Galerie, Frankfurt), The Sermon,

¹⁴³ The "Slotkapel" was built on the site of a 15th century church established by the Lords of Egmond. The second church was consecrated in 1633. In 1634, thirteen large stained glass windows were donated by North Holland cities: Alkmaar, Edam, Enkhuizen, Haarlem, Hoorn, Medemblik, Monnikendam, and Purmerend; the provinces of Holland and Friesland; and such patrons as Prince Frederik Hendrik of Orange, Lord Thomas of Egmond, and Johan van Foreest (Paul van Sonsbeeck, "Het Oude Kerkje te Egmond aan den Hoef," Wapenheraut 20 [1916]: 339).

and Vespers (ca. 1889, The Detroit Institute of Arts).¹⁴⁴ In the early 1910s, Melchers returned to this environment, painting The White Church (ca. 1910-1915, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond), The Christening (ca. 1910-1915, Belmont), Church Interior (ca. 1913, whereabouts unknown),¹⁴⁵ and Easter Sunday (1911, The Toledo Museum of Art).¹⁴⁶

Of the various categories of church genre pictures, Melchers preferred Sunday services and weddings, but he also painted first communions and baptisms. Among the latter are The Communicant (fig. II-35, ca. 1900, The Detroit Institute of Arts), The Communicants (not dated, Collection of Mr. John W. Stroh, Detroit), The Christening, and The White

¹⁴⁴ Dutch Women in Church (fig. II-33) is listed in the catalogue of the Städelsches Museum in Frankfurt as Holländerinnen in der Kirche, has been referred to as Vespers by J. Brenchley (Brenchley, 151), and cited as Figures in Church in The Index of Twentieth Century Artists 4 vols. in three [New York: Research Institute of the College Art Association, 1933-1937], I:3). Melchers painted at least four paintings which were entitled Vespers. The first work with this title (ca. 1882-1883, whereabouts unknown) was exhibited at the Detroit Art Loan exhibition in Detroit in 1883. The others with this name are The Detroit Institute of Arts painting, the Städelsches Museum work (Dutch Women in Church) and an Impressionistic painting showing four women and a man at service in the "Slotkapel" from ca. 1910 (fig. II-34, The Saint Louis Art Museum).

¹⁴⁵ Church Interior was exhibited at The Seventeenth Annual Exhibition at The Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh from April 24-June 30, 1913.

¹⁴⁶ In a 1925 letter from Melchers in the possession of the Toledo Museum of Art, he wrote that he began Easter Sunday in 1910 and completed it in 1911 in his Egmond studio.

The scene is laid in the old village church [the "Slotkapel"], which is said to be the first Protestant church ever built in north Holland. The stained glass windows in the church were presented by various cities of the province of north Holland. . . . My models, who posed for the figures representing the congregation, are all natives of the village

(Open letter [no addressee] from Melchers, 25 January 1925).

Church.

Melchers' most successful church genre work is The Sermon (fig. II-36) which he referred to for the first time on February 20, 1886. On that date, he mentioned in an open letter, datelined "Egmond Van [sic] Zee," to The Dilettant that he was working on the painting. He wrote that he had recently been in London for the opening of an exhibition in which he and George Hitchcock participated.¹⁴⁷ He noted that he did not like the climate there and left for Paris before the start of the winter exhibition season, after which

I was reluctantly forced to tear myself away from my Paris studies and return to . . . [Egmond], in order to finish my large Salon picture, 'La Prêche [sic],' the work on which had been seriously interrupted.¹⁴⁸

Melchers received many honors for The Sermon. He told Charles Henry Meltzer in 1913,

In 1886 . . . success first came to me when I exhibited 'The Sermon' at the Salon. I was just twenty-six. I received an honorable mention for the picture. But, shortly after, to my great delight, I won a first-class medal at the Munich 'Jahres Ausstellung,' and later had a similar reward in Amsterdam [at the Exhibition of Living Masters], for the same work.¹⁴⁹

The Sermon was illustrated in Gustave Ollendorff's Salon de 1886, in the

¹⁴⁷ Melchers was probably referring to the October 1885 exhibition in London.

¹⁴⁸ J. Gari Melchers, "Art in England and France," The Dilettant 1 (1 March 1886): 140.

¹⁴⁹ Meltzer, 9. Paul Leroi apparently did not think an honorable mention given by the Salon jury was such a great distinction. He considered it a "l'idiote aumône," and wrote Melchers that he hoped that the artist would not accept the honor (Paul Leroi, letter to Gari Melchers, 10 June 1886).

catalogue of the 1888 Internationalen Kunstausstellung in Munich, and was mentioned in two articles by Paul Leroi in L'Art. Revue Bi-Mensuelle Illustrée and The Magazine of Art.¹⁵⁰ A caricature of The Sermon appeared in a French magazine, which was subtitled "le Culte des Perruques, dans la Frise [sic]" (fig. II-37, 1886, Belmont).¹⁵¹ The two offertory bags at the left of the painting reminded the cartoonist of two wigs, and he drew what appears to be a court room with the judges' wigs on stands. Although this parody was not flattering, it must have been satisfying to Melchers that at least The Sermon was noticed! In later years, the painting was reproduced in Die Kunst für Alle (1893), in Richard Muther's The History of Modern Painting (1896), and in The Magazine of Art (1900).¹⁵²

Melchers told Malcolm Vaughan in 1928 how he accidentally came across the subject matter for The Sermon. According to this account, he left his studio in Egmond aan Zee for a walk on a Sunday morning when his attention was attracted by the "cheerful sound of singing" which came from a "country church." Melchers entered what was described as "a Dutch Reformed Church" which "had about it nothing of the dim cathedral

¹⁵⁰ Leroi, L'Art (1886): 16-18 and Leroi, "The American School," The Magazine of Art (London) 9 (1886): 487.

¹⁵¹ The clipping of this caricature is at Belmont. It is not dated and the publication in which it appeared is not identified.

¹⁵² Robert Koehler, "Die Entwicklung der schönen Künste in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-Amerika," Die Kunst für Alle 8 (1 May 1893): 256; Richard Muther, The History of Modern Painting 3 vols. (London: Henry and Co., 1895-1896), 3:471; and Brenchley, 150.

mystery" and sat in a chair in such a position that he had a good "profile view of the congregation." The church had bare, whitewashed walls and, because of the "clear glass" windows, "the congregation was flooded with light." Vaughan wrote

Observing the scene before him, the painter [Melchers] was so deeply stirred by the absorption of the women that he himself heard nothing. He ached to get the scene on canvas. When the sermon was over he flung himself outside and made as rapidly as possible sketches of what he had gazed on. Hastening back to his studio, he made several color sketches with more detail. The first were almost wholly from the heart. In the second the mind had somewhat rectified the over-ardent heart's impressions.¹⁵³

Several preparatory studies for The Sermon indicate that Melchers experimented with various combinations of figures before deciding to depict, in the final work, ten women and two men. A pencil sketch on lined note-paper (fig. II-38, 1885, Belmont) may have been the first preliminary study of the "profile view of the congregation" which Melchers "rapidly" sketched. It shows three rows of seated figures, with two women in the front, five in the second, and five in the last, in an otherwise unidentified locale.

A preparatory study in watercolor (fig. II-39, 1885, Belmont) was probably one of the "several color sketches with more detail." This study portrays two women in the first row of chairs, three in the second, including a "sleeping" figure who would later become the focal point of the finished painting, and one seated in the third row. The artist also included three men in a raised pew against the wall and what appears to

¹⁵³ Malcolm Vaughan, "A Painter of Modern Madonnas," New York Herald Tribune, Sunday edition, 30 December 1928, section XII, 16-18.

be a fourth male figure in a separate enclosed bench at the extreme left of this study. At the time the custom in Holland was often for men and women to sit apart in church. Melchers also drew a large "étude" of "la jeune fille endormie" (fig. II-40, 1885, Elsene-Ixelles Museum, Brussels) and of "la figure qui occupé la droite de son tableau: Le Prêche," and a small "croquis" of "le groupe de gauche" (fig II-41, 1885, formerly Sotheby's, New York).¹⁵⁴ Finally, the artist executed an oil study (fig. II-42, 1885, Belmont) which essentially shows his ultimate composition and color scheme. In this study, he deleted the middle male figure in the raised pew and the man in the other enclosed bench, but added an extra row of chairs in front of the three others.

Melchers made several adjustments in color and detail for the final work. For example, the dress of the woman seated in the second row wearing a hat -- identified by Ronald van Vleuten as Jansje Zwaan -- was initially painted blue but later was rendered in green. In the oil study, she wears what appears to be a red coral necklace with a clasp in front; in the final painting the jewelry was replaced by a navy blue and red scarf. The color of the wood of the enclosed bench is painted lighter, and an oil lamp, attached to the pillar to the left of the bench, was eliminated.

In its finished state The Sermon shows ten women dressed in their Sunday best sitting in four rows of seats, each with four chairs. Only the second row is filled. One woman sits in the first row, three in the third,

¹⁵⁴ Leroi, L'Art (1886), 16-18.

and two in the last. To their right two men sit at either end of an enclosed, raised bench. All except the two women in the third row, seem to be attentively listening to the "dominee" (minister), who presumably is in front of them but who is not shown in the painting. A young woman, sitting on the first chair of the third row is "asleep." An older woman, who occupies the seat next to her, looks at her with concern or disdain, presumably because she is sleeping in church. The Belgian critic Paul Leroi was the first to suggest that the young woman was asleep when he wrote "Le sommeil auquel s'est invinciblement abandonnée la plus jeune des fidèles, à la muette indignation d'une maigre matrone."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ Leroi, *L'Art* (1886), 244. See also Bienenstock, "Gari Melchers," in *Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg*, 1990, 83. Annette Stott has recently developed an interesting hypothesis about the "sleeping" young woman, suggesting that the figure had the "traditional attitude of despair or grief, somewhat reminiscent, for example . . . [of] the *Avignon Pieta*." Stott also wrote that, when women in Egmond mourned, they wore an unadorned gauze cap, similar to the one on the young woman, and that the empty seat on her right implied she had just lost a loved one. Stott pointed out that three other mourning women are in the church, each wearing similar caps because "many of the inhabitants [of Egmond] were related through bloodlines or marriage . . . [therefore] when a death occurred it usually touched several households." She believed that the woman on the far right may have been a close family member and, perhaps, the same model posed for the two figures (Stott, "American Painters," 125). This interpretation of the sleeping figure has recently been expanded by Bienenstock who emphasized that the "mourning caps," empty chairs, unoccupied seats in the pew, and the closed Bible dignified "departed loved ones." She also suggested *The Sermon* was meant "to portray the role played by religion . . . at moments of great personal loss" (Bienenstock, "Gari Melchers," in *Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg*, 1990, 83-84). This interpretation contradicts Melchers' own story of being inspired to depict *The Sermon* after coming upon a Sunday morning service in the Dutch Reformed Church in Egmond-Binnen (Vaughan, 18). It also should be pointed out that unadorned gauze "bazuintjes" are not necessarily part of a "mourning" costume. In fact, the women in *The Sermon* are wearing typical transparent gauze "bazuintjes" over black satin undercaps, which comprise a part of the traditional

In The Sermon the emphasis is on the figures of the women in church dressed in their colorful costumes, rather than on the significance of the religious rite. Throughout his career, Melchers would return many times to this theme of women in church with such works as Dutch Women in Church (ca. 1886-1890, Städelsches Kunstinstitut und Städtische Galerie, Frankfurt), Easter Morning (ca. 1911, The Toledo Museum of Art), and another The Sermon (ca. 1929, Belmont). In the last example, he portrayed his wife Corinne and his favorite Dutch model of the late 1920s, Miep Half, among the female congregation. Melchers used considerable artistic license in these works with his models wearing the headdresses from several different Dutch regions. The foreground figure in Dutch Women in Church was depicted with the distinctive Nunspeet

Egmond headdress. What is missing from several of the costumes is the balance of the festive headgear, which was the "oorijzer" worn over the double cap (see footnote 34). According to Ronald van Vleuten, Egmonders who saw a reproduction of The Sermon at the 1980 exhibition of Melchers' works at the community center in Egmond aan de Hoef considered it odd that most women in this painting were depicted at a church service wearing only ordinary "house caps" rather than complete headdresses (Ronald van Vleuten, letter to author, 11 January 1988). Perhaps this use of women's costumes was merely Melchers' way of illustrating the variety of contemporary local dress. Furthermore, Melchers often depicted empty chairs and open or closed Bibles in his church genre works, including The Choirmaster (Belmont), The Christening (Belmont), Dutch Women in Church (Städelsches Kunstinstitut und Städtische Galerie, Frankfurt), Easter Morn (Toledo Museum of Art), The Offertory (formerly Robert Rice Gallery, Houston), Sunday Morning (formerly Sotheby's, New York), a second version of The Sermon (Belmont), and Vespers (The Detroit Institute of Arts). It seems that such props are typical compositional devices of the artist. The Sermon was, after all, intended from the outset to be a major Salon painting; and, although Bienenstock proposed an interesting theory about the work being a scene of bereavement, perhaps the painting is simply Melchers' interpretation of an ordinary Egmond Sunday church service.

cap and in the Belmont The Sermon he painted most of his figures wearing the Brabant "poffer."¹⁵⁶

Contemporary Dutch, French, and German artists depicted numerous scenes of peasants listening to sermons long before Melchers "accidentally" came across the subject. Such works were accessible to Melchers through exhibitions, in museums, and as illustrations in art periodicals. Since he was a regular participant at the international art exhibitions in Berlin, Munich, and Paris, Melchers certainly must have seen these paintings which may have inspired and influenced The Sermon. Examples of contemporary European works depicting women of different ages and in various states of mind in church include those by the French painter Paul de la Boulaye (The Sermon, fig. II-43, 1879, whereabouts unknown),¹⁵⁷ Vincent van Gogh (The Church, 1882, Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, the Netherlands), and the German artist Wilhelm Leibl (Three Women in Church, fig. II-44, 1882, Hamburger Kunsthalle). These

¹⁵⁶ The "poffer" is the traditional headgear worn by women in the Dutch provinces of Brabant and Limburg. It is a baggy double cap, ornamented with pastel colored artificial flowers or fruit. Sometimes, it has a lace work strap under the chin (Constance Nieuwhoff et al., Klederdrachten [Amsterdam: Uitgeversmaatschappij Elsevier, 1984], 133). See also Stott, "American Painters," 152-53. Melchers travelled extensively throughout the Netherlands during the late 1880s and 1890s. He visited Katwijk, Nunspeet, and Volendam and the provinces of Brabant and Zeeland. He acquired various items from the characteristic regional costumes, which he later incorporated into his paintings (Stott, "American Painters," 176, 338 and "The Holland Years," in Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, 1990, 63-64).

¹⁵⁷ A reproduction of a drawing after Paul de la Boulaye's The Sermon appeared in Alison Mary Kolesar, "Pictures of Contemporary Religious Observance in Nineteenth Century France" (M.A. thesis, University of London, Courtauld Institute of Art, 1982), 204.

paintings all show the participants in varying states of attention, similar to the scene later depicted by Melchers in The Sermon.¹⁵⁸

Paul Leroi was complimentary about The Sermon, the informal and simple subject matter of which he found "true, living, and thoroughly felt." He commented that "the composition, the drawing, the observation, the distribution of light, the colouring itself . . . constitute the happiest ensemble," but, "the modelling" could have been "a trifle firmer in accent."¹⁵⁹ He considered Melchers a "worthy . . . historian of the brush as veracious as" the Dutch Old Masters.¹⁶⁰ In another article Leroi reproduced the two "études" and one "croquis" mentioned above.¹⁶¹

Richard Muther wrote that The Sermon

was painted in a very robust style, and seen with sincerity. . . . Gari Melchers . . . approaches nature with energy, though he looks into the world with the cold objectivity of a camera. His figures are heavy and motionless, his pictures arid and wanting in poetry; they are all flooded with the same hard Northern daylight.¹⁶²

J. Nilsen Laurvik appreciated Melchers' ability to create a "truthfully

¹⁵⁸ Bienenstock also suggested that Hubert von Herkomer's The Last Muster: Sunday at Chelsea Hospital (fig. II-45, 1875, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, England) may have been a source for Melchers' concept of The Sermon. The similarities cited are "worshipers listening to . . . an unseen preacher" and "the interaction of two centrally placed figures . . .," one of whom may be dead (Bienenstock, "Gari Melchers," in Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, 1990, 85). Herkomer's painting, however, shows a room full of old military veterans and seems quite unrelated to Melchers' country church scene.

¹⁵⁹ Leroi, The Magazine of Art (London), 487.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., L'Art (1886), 16-18.

¹⁶² Muther, The History of Modern Painting, 3:472-73.

depicted episode of contemporary Dutch life" which, although not "a profound psychological study of facial expression," nevertheless "reveals a depth and sincerity of observation that is quite unusual" for a young artist. He also mentioned the picture's "great simplicity, its good draughtsmanship and its naturalistic, unhackneyed treatment of a chapter out of the inner life of the people" as a reason for Melchers' success. Laurvik said that The Sermon definitely "was to mark a milepost" for the artist.¹⁶³ According to Arthur Hoeber, The Sermon was "thought out with great care. There were youth, middle-age and old age among the parishioners." He said that "Melchers has none of the clever tricks of the painting trade that characterized so many." Hoeber found, however, that Melchers somewhat "clumsily superimposed [his colors] on the canvas, with awkward brush," although this did not necessarily mean that the effect was not "invariably telling."¹⁶⁴

Two years after Melchers finished The Sermon, he again used the interior of the Dutch Reformed Church in Egmond-Binnen as the setting for another large Salon painting, The Communion (figs. II-46 and 47).¹⁶⁵ As was the case with The Sermon, it was quite possible that Melchers

¹⁶³ Laurvik, XXVII-XXVIII.

¹⁶⁴ Hoeber, XII and XIV.

¹⁶⁵ Melchers did not date The Communion. A preliminary oil sketch for the painting at Belmont was signed and dated in the lower right, "G. Melchers 1888." The finished work was signed in the lower right "J. Gari Melchers." In later years Melchers revised the work. The painting currently hangs in Goldwin Smith Hall, an administrative and academic building of the College of Arts and Sciences at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

had been present at a church service in Egmond-Binnen and later recreated the composition in his studio. According to George W. Sheldon, however, Melchers made the painting on the spot.

[The Communion] was painted in a little Dutch Reformed church at Egmond, where the artist had often seen the sacred ceremony performed. The clergyman in the picture is the minister of that church, and all the communicants are worshipers there. For several weeks the interior of the edifice was placed at Mr. Melchers's disposal, and he had no difficulty in persuading the pious peasants to pose for him.¹⁶⁶

George Hitchcock suggested how such a scene should be depicted in his 1891 article in Scribner's Magazine which appeared three years after Melchers painted The Communion.

The celebration of the communion according to the forms of the Dutch . . . church gives many compositions; a long table is laid with a white cloth, around which first the women, and then the men, sit and partake of the cup and bread. . . . [the] pearly-skinned women in their pale-colored gowns and lace headgear . . . listening to the solemn words of the black-robed minister . . . is a fine motive.¹⁶⁷

As Hitchcock himself never painted this theme, perhaps his commentary was inspired by Melchers' painting.

A number of preparatory sketches in oil, pencil, and watercolor, now at Belmont, show that from the outset Melchers was quite certain about the composition of The Communion. He placed the minister, wearing a long black robe, in the foreground in front of a large table, with some parishioners around him taking communion, while others watch or await their turns in the background (fig. II-48). Melchers had explored two

¹⁶⁶ George W. Sheldon, Recent Ideals of American Art (New York: Appleton and Co., [ca. 1888]), 125-26.

¹⁶⁷ Hitchcock, Scribner's Magazine (November 1891), 627.

possibilities as to where he should position the minister, either in front of the table with his back to the viewer or behind the table in profile (fig. II-49); he opted for the first design. He also experimented with the exact number of figures he would include, between seventeen and nineteen, but never as many as the twenty Theodore Child suggested.¹⁶⁸ A detailed study in pencil shows nine figures, including the minister, in the foreground and eight people in the background (fig. II-50). In the oil study, Melchers added one figure in the background to form a group of three males (fig. II-51). The original finished painting is based on the pencil sketch.

The main difference between The Sermon and The Communion is that the latter shows a complete scene of this principal rite of the Christian church with the "dominee" celebrating the Eucharist before his congregation of men and women. It was, therefore, a prerequisite that the minister be incorporated into the composition; he is the largest figure, standing slightly off-center to the left. In front of him is an open Bible with a lock. He appears to have just finished a prayer and has arisen to hold up the chalice and commence the rite. In contrast, in The Sermon the minister is not included and the emphasis is on the various female participants listening to the sermon. The Communion is much more a portrayal of a religious service with the figures in the foreground reverentially attentive to the blessing of the wine and bread. Among

¹⁶⁸ Theodore Child, "American Artists at the Paris Exhibition," Harper's New Monthly Magazine 79 (September 1889): 510.

those in the background, however, is a young woman sitting on an enclosed bench who is not paying attention and is looking outside through the stained glass window. Her inattention recalls the "sleeping" figure in The Sermon.

At some point between 1891 and 1911, Melchers repainted The Communion. When he and General Rush C. Hawkins¹⁶⁹ of New York presented the painting to Cornell University in 1911, there were nine figures in the foreground and ten in the background.¹⁷⁰ A reproduction of the original version appeared in George W. Sheldon's Recent Ideals of American Art (1890) and in Jaro Springer's article in Die Kunst für Alle (1891). In 1912, J. Nilsen Laurvik included a reproduction of the revised The Communion in his essay on Melchers in The International Studio.¹⁷¹

Melchers did not receive much critical response for The Communion,

¹⁶⁹ "Mr. Melchers's Painting. Gift of General Rush Hawkins," Cornell Alumni News (15 March 1911): 280. General Rush C. Hawkins was a colonel of the Ninth New York Infantry during the Civil War and became a brigadier-general in 1865. He was a book collector and art patron. In the early 1910s, he established the Annmary Brown Memorial Library at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, in memory of his wife. In the early 1900s, Hawkins purchased Melchers' La Brabançonne (ca. 1905) and Fairy Tales (ca. 1905-1908), and in 1908 he commissioned the artist to paint his portrait. These three paintings hang in the Annmary Brown Memorial.

¹⁷⁰ The additional figure in the background is the seated woman on the left who wears a decorative "poffer." Because Melchers only began to include the "poffer" in his repertoire of Dutch headdresses in the late 1890s, it is possible that he repainted The Communion around the turn of the century.

¹⁷¹ Sheldon, 152; Jaro Springer, "Die internationale Kunstausstellung zu Berlin," Die Kunst für Alle 6 (1 June 1891): 260; and Laurvik, XXX.

although he exhibited it extensively during the 1890s.¹⁷² When the painting was first shown at the Universal Exposition in Paris in 1889, it drew some attention from Otto Brandes and Theodore Child. Both Sheldon and Friedrich Pecht wrote about it in 1890, Springer in the following year, and Richard Muther in 1896. Brandes admired the way Melchers painted his figures and mentioned that the artist, along with Henry Mosler, John Singer Sargent, and Julius Stewart, were "prominent personalities" in the expatriate American artistic community.¹⁷³ Pecht also appreciated the figures in The Communion, describing them as "the highest perfection of naturalistic sobriety" and "very serious studies of distinctive characters."¹⁷⁴ Springer wrote only two short sentences on Melchers, but, as noted above, reproduced a large illustration of The Communion in Die Kunst für Alle. Muther wrote

[The Communion is painted] in such a staid and matter-of-fact style, one almost feels compassion for people whose religion is so entirely without any sort of mystical grace. The church itself is bald and monotonous; and dull blue, green, and grey colours of the dresses, which give the picture its peculiarly chill and arid tone, are in keeping with the church.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² In addition to the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1889, Melchers showed The Communion at the International Expositions in Munich (1889) and Berlin (1891), at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago (1893), at the World's Fair in Antwerp (1894), and, finally, in New York at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1897.

¹⁷³ Otto Brandes, "Die Ausstellung der fremden Malerschulen auf dem Marsfelde," Die Kunst für Alle 5 (1 November 1889): 41.

¹⁷⁴ Friedrich Pecht, "Die zweite Münchener Jahres-Ausstellung," Die Kunst für Alle 5 (September 1890): 357.

¹⁷⁵ Muther, The History of Modern Painting, 3:473.

Although Child praised Melchers' draftsmanship, technique, and choice of colors, he was disappointed that Melchers only painted "plain looking, cheesy-faced people gathered round the communion table," who were "positively and frankly ugly." Child suggested that Melchers paint a more elevated picture such as George Hitchcock's Annunciation Lilies (fig. II-52, ca. 1887, The Art Institute of Chicago),¹⁷⁶ which the critic had admired at the Universal Exposition in Paris.¹⁷⁷ Sheldon classified The Communion as a religious work and commented that its painter "has shown that a truly religious art is possible in this last agnostic quarter of the nineteenth century."¹⁷⁸

Child was not unique in suggesting that Melchers should depict more beautiful figures; Andrew D. White did so as well.¹⁷⁹ After White saw

¹⁷⁶ Hitchcock's The Annunciation was reproduced in Arthur Fish, "George Hitchcock: Painter," The Magazine of Art 22 (October 1898): 579.

¹⁷⁷ Child, 510.

¹⁷⁸ Sheldon, 126.

¹⁷⁹ Andrew D. White (1832-1918) was a very influential figure in America and Europe. He was a New Yorker who graduated from Yale and did post-graduate studies at several prestigious European institutions in Berlin, Paris, Rome and St. Petersburg. He was professor of English literature, lecturer on history, an art lover, classicist, connoisseur of romantic novels, and writer for The Atlantic Monthly. Later he became a New York State Senator (1863-1867) and first president of Cornell University (1867-1885). He contributed \$300,000 and, in 1887, founded the school of history and political science at Cornell which bears his name and donated to it his history library of over 40,000 volumes. In 1876 he was a commissioner of the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, and in 1878 he became the honorary U.S. commissioner for the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1889. He was Minister to Germany and Russia, Ambassador to Germany and the president of the American delegation at the Peace Conference in The Hague in 1899 (Who Was Who in America 8 vols. [Chicago: Marquis Publications, 1968-1985], 1:1332). It is not known if

Melchers' work at the Exposition, he proposed that Melchers should not just paint Dutch genre pictures, but also historical subjects and religious works. White wrote to Melchers in 1889

I cannot leave Paris without expressing to you a feeling of admiration and respect inspired by your pictures which I have seen at the Exposition, and above all the "Communion Scene in Holland." I came across it after seeing a multitude of other pictures, and it at once arrested my attention as certainly no other in the American exhibition had done. . . . But as an American I hope that you are not to confine yourself entirely to reproducing scenes in Holland, no matter how well you may do them. You can certainly illustrate historic and other scenes in our own country in a way which will add not merely to your fame but to that of our country.¹⁸⁰

White promoted The Communion in America. In the same letter he wrote

I have already spoken to several men of influence regarding the character of your pictures especially the principal one [The Communion] and I think that you would find the way somewhat prepared for you.¹⁸¹

In 1897, White wrote Melchers

our Metropolitan Gallery of Art is asking for your picture. At the same time . . . I wrote to the authorities of the Carnegie Gallery on the subject.¹⁸²

American critics, however, paid little attention to The Communion.

Melchers actually met White, but it can be assumed he did because, in his letter of 1897, White invited Melchers to his house in Berlin. From 1897 until 1903, White served there as ambassador and Melchers exhibited his work in Berlin regularly during this period.

¹⁸⁰ Andrew D. White, letter to Gari Melchers, 29 August 1889.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid., 1 May 1897. Unfortunately for Melchers, neither the Carnegie Museum of Art nor the Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired the painting. In later years, however, each institution purchased one of his works. Mother and Child and Madonna went to Pittsburgh and New York, respectively.

Henriette Lewis-Hind wrote that, in comparison with The Sermon, The Communion was

more beautiful in colour, no less full of character, and never hardening into caricature. There appears here an awakening to a sense of filtering light that persists from this point in all the painter does.¹⁸³

J. Nilsen Laurvik mentioned only that Melchers was awarded a collective Grand Prize at the 1889 Universal Exposition in Paris for The Communion, The Pilots, The Sermon, and The Shepherdess but included a reproduction of The Communion in his article in The International Studio.¹⁸⁴ Arthur Hoeber essentially repeated Child's remark about how Melchers had depicted unattractive figures and concluded, "But, then, your Dutch peasant is not primarily a thing of beauty, especially the male of the species!"¹⁸⁵ Christian Brinton, Charles Henry Meltzer, Clara MacChesney, and Adaline D. Piper did not refer to The Communion at all.

It is possible that Melchers did not bring The Communion to the attention of these critics when they interviewed him because he was disappointed that the painting did not receive the recognition which he expected. He obviously had high hopes for The Communion because he sent the picture to important expositions in America and Europe during the late 1880s and 1890s. One may assume that Melchers repainted The Communion because he was not able to sell it. As the work remained in

¹⁸³ Gari Melchers Painter, [5-6].

¹⁸⁴ Laurvik, XXVII.

¹⁸⁵ Hoeber, XIV.

his studio, he may have decided in 1911 to present it to Cornell University in honor of White.

Both The Choirmaster (fig. II-53) and Vespers (fig. II-54) were painted in the "Slotkapel" in Egmond aan de Hoef. The men in The Choirmaster and Vespers appear to be the same person and one of the singers in the former picture seems to be the young girl, on the right holding a small hymnal, in the latter painting, but these models are otherwise unidentified. The brackets holding kerosene lamps on each side of the lectern in The Choirmaster are still in the "Slotkapel" and are used as candle holders at the present time.¹⁸⁶ The map hanging on the rear wall clearly shows the word "Palestina" (Palestine) perhaps indicating a Sunday school class.

In addition to The Communion, Melchers painted other sacramental themes of marriages and baptisms throughout his Egmond years. His first wedding picture was The Bride (ca. 1890, whereabouts unknown). The only two baptism scenes, The Christening (Belmont) and The White Church (Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond), were painted in the early 1910s.¹⁸⁷ A third work from the same period, Church Interior (ca. 1913, whereabouts unknown) which was exhibited in 1913 at the Seventeenth

¹⁸⁶ Vleuten, 8.

¹⁸⁷ When Melchers was teaching in Weimar (1905-1915), he continued to execute a number of works during his holidays in Egmond. These included The White Church (Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond) and The Christening (ca. 1910-1915, Belmont) as well as female figures in elegant interiors, including At Home (The Winged Victory) (ca. 1910, Belmont), Interior: Mother and Child (ca. 1910-1912, Belmont), and Penelope (ca. 1909, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.).

Annual Exhibition at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh. An illustration of Church Interior in the catalogue for the Exhibition shows that Melchers depicted an almost identical interior to that of the two baptism scenes. The painting shows two women, one of whom holds a baby, but there is neither a minister present nor any indication that the baptismal rite is taking place. Melchers probably chose these themes of marriages and baptisms because they were among the most important communal events in these Dutch villages and ones in which the people turned out dressed in their best costumes. George Hitchcock described in some detail the theme of the Dutch wedding

The vast interior of one of the magnificent gothic churches of Holland, all pale gray in tone, sparsely occupied by the friends and family of the couple, who stand quite alone beneath the carved oak pulpit and listen to an address from the parson before he descends, and in a few words joins them in marriage, is a touching picture, especially if the bride be young and dressed in a charming costume . . . not the usual conventional white and lace, but perhaps a pale pink or lilac floating lace cap with antique gold ornaments ¹⁸⁸

A writer in an 1882 article about Dutch seaside villages commented that no prettier sight exists than . . . a christening Sunday, when the handsome young mother, surrounded with sympathetic friends . . . [enters the] church carrying the infant.¹⁸⁹

Melchers did not at first conceive such a complicated composition as described by Hitchcock, but painted a simple full length portrait of a bride standing in church in The Bride (fig. 55, ca. 1890, whereabouts

¹⁸⁸ Hitchcock, Scribner's Magazine (November 1891), 627-28.

¹⁸⁹ "Sketches from the Dutch Seaside," Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine 132 (November 1882): 613.

unknown).¹⁹⁰ Over the years, Melchers executed increasingly more complex works and, ultimately, The Wedding (fig. II-56, 1903, The Detroit Institute of Art).

The Bride shows a young girl standing in the "Slotkapel" in profile, facing to the left.¹⁹¹ She wears a black undercap, over which is attached a long translucent veil crowned with a wreath of tiny flowers. She is dressed in a flower-patterned skirt and holds a Bible with a lock. On the wall in front of her, at the height of her face, is a hymn board on which is marked "Psalm 19 Gezang [Song]". Part of a stained glass window can

¹⁹⁰ The identity of the model for The Bride is unknown, but may well have been Maartje Bult. Her great-nephew told the author that she posed for The Wedding (1903, The Detroit Institute of Arts), as well as for several other of Melchers' pictures of the same theme, including The Wedding (ca. 1890, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo) (Bart Bult, letter to author, 1 November 1987). Melchers executed a number of paintings using the wedding theme: three works which are titled The Bride (including the ones at Belmont and National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., both ca. 1903-1905), Marriage (ca. 1903-1905, The Minneapolis Institute of Arts), Married (ca. 1903-1905, Belmont), Wedded (ca. 1901, whereabouts unknown), The Wedding (Buffalo), and The Wedding (Detroit). Wedded was exhibited in 1901 at The Sixth Annual International Exhibition at The Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh and a reproduction of the painting appeared in the catalogue. Dreiss dated the two works at Belmont (The Bride and Married) ca. 1894-1895, but these could not have been painted during this period because as noted earlier the young woman who posed for the bride, Anne Dekker, was born in 1885 (Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 107, 109, 136, and 138).

¹⁹¹ The Wedding (fig. II-57, ca. 1892, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo) is an elaboration of The Bride with the future "husband" added standing at the woman's right. The Wedding was once known as Brittany Wedding (a misnomer, since it was painted in Egmond) and was part of the Potter Palmer collection. It was sold in 1922 through the Howard Young Galleries in New York to the Albright-Knox Art Gallery ("A Corot and a Melchers Sold from Potter Palmer Collection," American Art News 21 [28 October 1922]: 6 and Steven A. Nash et al., Albright-Knox Art Gallery. Painting and Sculpture from Antiquity to 1942 [New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1979], 321).

be seen above her.

Marriage (fig. II-58, ca. 1903-1905, The Minneapolis Institute of Arts) is described in The Handbook of Paintings in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts as a representation of

a graceful Dutch couple, evidently of modest rank, in their wedding finery. The young man, scarcely more than a boy, is somewhat ill at ease though trying to appear natural, while the girl-bride in her embarrassment scarcely betrays any feeling of happiness.¹⁹²

The models were Anne Dekker and Arie Zoon, the local postman.¹⁹³

Melchers' last picture of this theme, The Wedding (Detroit), illustrates completely the composition described by Hitchcock. Maartje Bult and Jan Schuit are portrayed as the bridal couple standing in "the vast interior" of the "Slotkapel."¹⁹⁴ Opposite them stand a group of witnesses and, above in the pulpit, a minister who blesses the couple.¹⁹⁵ Charles Henry Meltzer commented about Melchers' wedding pictures that "they appeal with far more force than most; because they go straight to

¹⁹² Handbook of Paintings in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (Minneapolis: The Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts, [1926]), 83.

¹⁹³ Vleuten, 10.

¹⁹⁴ Hitchcock, Scribner's Magazine (November 1891), 627.

¹⁹⁵ Descendants of the "witnesses" recognized the two male figures as Chris Schuit and Jochem Veenhuizen. The woman on the left, wearing a lace cap and familiar "Egmond" jacket, with her hand on her chin, is Veenhuizen's wife, and the little girl is their daughter, Harmejntje. The minister is identified as Reverend Claassen. When Melchers finished this painting, he presented photographs to several of the models, including Jan Schuit and Claassen. Schuit mounted his photograph of The Wedding on a board and on the back of it wrote (in translation) "Received photograph from Melchers for my posing. I was then 33 years old" (Vleuten, 4).

the human heart, simply and truly, without mawkish tricks."¹⁹⁶

Joseph G. Dreiss observed that the compositions of Melchers' two baptismal paintings, The Christening (fig. II-59) and The White Church (fig. II-60), and The Wedding (Detroit) are very much alike.¹⁹⁷ All three of these works depict people in church during a ceremony with a minister in his raised pulpit. Adaline D. Piper, who discussed The White Church in the February 1915 issue of Art and Progress, noted "It was a very recent work, having gone directly from the artist's studio at Weimar to this exhibition [at the Corcoran Gallery of Art]."¹⁹⁸ She described it as a work which is well-drawn and well-painted and yet is "luminous, atmospheric, decorative and expressive."¹⁹⁹ Although Melchers painted reasonably recognizable portraits of his models, Ronald van Vleuten could only identify the father in The White Church as Jan Schuit.²⁰⁰ Possibly, Melchers started the painting in Egmond and finished it in Weimar using German models.

The figures of the family in The Christening are larger and nearer to

¹⁹⁶ Meltzer, 9.

¹⁹⁷ Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 148.

¹⁹⁸ Although Adaline D. Piper mentioned that Melchers had sent this work "directly" from Germany to Washington, D.C., such was not necessarily the case. Melchers taught in Weimar until June 1915, but he spent his vacations in his house in Egmond aan de Hoef and continued to work at "Schuylenburg" (Adaline D. Piper, "The White Church, by Gari Melchers," Art and Progress 6 [February 1915]: 112).

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Vleuten, 5.

the viewer then those in The White Church, while the church officials in both paintings remained in almost the same scale. As the upper half of The Christening remained unfinished, it suggests that Melchers left the painting in Egmond where he intended to complete it after he left Germany. Charles Henry Meltzer, however, quoted Melchers in 1913

The Sermon was but one of the various pictures in which I have painted old Dutch church interiors. Here in my studio [in Egmond aan de Hoef] is the latest of them all -- a 'Dutch Christening,' which is still unfinished.²⁰¹

It is not certain why Melchers chose to execute so many church genre works throughout his career. It may be because he enjoyed great artistic, critical, and commercial success with his initial work of this theme, The Sermon. This work, along with later church genre paintings, including The Communicant, Dutch Women in Church, and Vespers, were purchased for public collections. In addition, Melchers was apparently comfortable and skilled in using church interiors as settings and in portraying Egmond women in the festive costumes worn during church services and ceremonies.

The Mother and Child Theme

George Hitchcock, Elizabeth Nourse, and Melchers were among the American expatriate artists who executed numerous mother and child pictures in Holland during the end of the 19th century and continued to

²⁰¹ Meltzer, 6.

depict such works for the rest of their careers.²⁰² Melchers painted the theme during an extended period that covered almost four decades, from Mother and Child With Orange (fig. II-61, ca. 1892, Belmont) to Zeeland Madonna (Belmont, 1930) painted two years before his death. He executed these works first in Egmond and later in Falmouth, Virginia.²⁰³ Lois Marie Fink, in discussing the popularity of the subject matter, has written that such "imagery enjoyed a tremendous vogue . . . by conveying the memory of universal origins and protective love. . . ."204

There were three principal approaches to the theme during Melchers' time. The first, as in William Sergeant Kendall's An Interlude (National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.) of 1907, shows contemporary mothers with their children in affectionate poses and nothing more. The second, including George de Forest Brush's Mother and Child (The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.) of 1902, depicts contemporary figures in poses based on Renaissance examples of the Madonna and Child. Finally, the third example, as in

²⁰² Nancy M. Mathews, "Mary Cassatt and the 'Modern Madonna' of the Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1980), 98-99, 118, 120, and 147.

²⁰³ Anne Dekker -- either with her son, Nicolaas Laurens (Anne and her Baby, 1908, Belmont), or with the children of such locals as the blacksmith Jan Karels (Mother and Child, 1905, Chicago) and Jo Bosman (Mother and Child, ca. 1905, Pittsburgh) -- posed for most of Melchers' mother and child pictures in Egmond (Vleuten, 7). In Falmouth, Melchers found his models among middle class Virginians, such as Julia Payne and her son Ivan (Mother and Child, ca. 1920, Belmont).

²⁰⁴ Fink, "Elizabeth Nourse," in National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C., 1983, 118.

George Hitchcock's Blessed Mother (Cleveland Museum of Art) of 1892, introduces religious overtones and symbolism, even though the figures are contemporary people in contemporary costumes and settings.²⁰⁵ (Hitchcock painted an aureole behind the head of an Egmond peasant woman.) Most of Melchers' mother and child paintings, in which he portrayed Dutch mothers and their children in Egmond settings, fit into the first category. Under the probable influence of George Hitchcock, however, Melchers also essayed the third motif, in such works as Fairy Tales (ca. 1890, whereabouts unknown). He used two principal themes in his mother and child paintings: nursing mothers with babies, and women holding their somewhat older children in their arms, sometimes kissing them. The first group includes Dutch Family (ca. 1895, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen Preussische Kulturbesitz, Berlin), The Mother and Child (ca. 1905, Carnegie Art Institute, Pittsburgh), and Maternity (ca. 1908-1910, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.). The second consists of Mother and Child With Orange, Motherhood (1895, Musée d'Orsay, Paris), Mother and Child (ca. 1905, The Art Institute, Chicago), and Anna and her Baby (1908, Belmont). Melchers placed his models in both indoor and outdoor settings.

The mother and child theme also fascinated many contemporary Dutch artists. A large number of paintings of mothers and children by painters, including Bernard de Hoog, Jozef Israëls, Albert Neuhuys, and Jacob Kever, appeared, with titles such as Mother's Bliss (by Neuhuys, not

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 118-20.

dated, Singer Museum, Laren) and Mother's Help (by de Hoog, not dated, Rijksmuseum Van Bilderbeek-Lamaison, Dordrecht, the Netherlands), all painted between 1865 and 1910 by Hague and Laren School artists. A critic in the Kunstkronijk pointed out that, in 1875 at the triennial exhibition in The Hague, pictures of mothers and children abounded.²⁰⁶ Israëls' The Cottage Madonna (fig. II-62, ca. 1876, The Detroit Institute of Arts) is an example of a secular work which was based upon an established sacred theme. He made an additional reference to the Madonna with his use of blue and red, the colors which traditionally signify Mary for the figure's garments. A rosary with a crucifix hangs from the mantle, a device added to make the work sufficiently ambiguous so that it could be viewed as either a religious or a secular rendition. Thus, when Melchers began his mother and child paintings, he again was following a well-established trend among his contemporaries.

It came as a surprise to J. Brenchley, however, that Melchers included mothers and children in his repertoire. Referring to his prize-winning entries at the 1889 Paris Universal Exposition, she commented that until then his pictures were

The short and simple annals of the poor . . . and are examples of his condition of mind and desire at that time -- a time when . . . [works depicting] "mother-love" was synonymous to him of cheap

²⁰⁶ J. G. [Johan Gram], "De Tentoonstelling van Schilderijen te 's Gravenhage," Kunstkronijk, 17 (1876): 35. See also Liesbeth Brandt Corstius et al., in "De Kunst van het Moederschap," Frans Hals Museum, De Kunst van het Moederschap. Leven en Werk van Nederlandse Vrouwen in de 19e Eeuw, exhibition catalogue, essays by Liesbeth Brandt Corstius et al. Haarlem, October 17, 1981-January 10, 1982, 14.

commercial pictures.²⁰⁷

Beginning with Mother and Child With Orange of the early 1890s, the artist regularly depicted the theme. Malcolm Vaughan reported in 1928 that, when Melchers was asked the question "In all the world what single thing is most beautiful?," he answered, "Motherhood," and continued

Birds and jewels and flowers rejoice the eye. Faces linger in the mind like music. But a mother with a baby in her arm is lovelier than all else. The tenderness of the mother, the wonder of the baby and the intimacy of their love -- that is the most beautiful thing in life.²⁰⁸

Dutch Family (fig. II-64) is one of Melchers' most important works using the mother and child theme. It is unusual within this group of his paintings in that it shows an entire family. Henriette Lewis-Hind wrote that The Dutch Family was

a large picture of a mother with her babe at the breast, and the father in his sailor's red undergarments with another child clutching at his leg and looking out with a child's trusting wide eyes. The father is full of the pride of authorship and possession, the blonde nursing mother happy, strong, content and wholesome in loveliness.²⁰⁹

She rated Dutch Family among Melchers' "finest pictures" and regretted that it hung in a museum in Berlin instead of in the United States.

²⁰⁷ J. Brenchley could not, therefore, understand why Melchers copied a Botticelli fresco of a mother and child at the Louvre (Brenchley, 147). The Copy of a Botticelli Fresco from the Louvre (fig. II-63) probably dates from the early 1880s and is at Belmont. Melchers included Copy of a Botticelli Fresco from the Louvre in the background of a painting entitled The Delft Horse (ca. 1900, Belmont). It portrays Henriette Hitchcock holding a small brightly colored ceramic statuette.

²⁰⁸ Vaughan, 16. Also quoted by Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 33.

²⁰⁹ Gari Melchers: Painter, [6-7].

It is a thousand pities that this great picture is owned out of America, but at the time of its painting America (although it has since recovered from the sin of ignoring its own painters) with few exceptions bought only foreign art.²¹⁰

Christian Brinton found the Dutch Family a "wholly endearing" picture because it expressed a "frank community of feeling."²¹¹ The painting was first exhibited at the Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung in 1895 and was purchased there by the Königlichen National-galerie.²¹²

The Dutch Family also is a work in which Melchers included many typical details of Dutch village life including the box bed, the footstove, and a man smoking a long-stemmed white clay Gouda pipe. The Madonna and Child image and the small holy water font on the wall are indicative of the Old Catholic faith of the Egmond aan Zee populace. The contemplative look of the man as he views his family, as well as the pensive expressions on the faces of the woman and the older child, may suggest that he is about to leave for an extended fishing voyage.²¹³

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Brinton, Harper's Monthly Magazine, 438.

²¹² Verzeichnis der Gemälde und Skulpturen in der Königlichen National-galerie zu Berlin (Berlin: E.S. Mittler und Sohn, 1908), 91.

²¹³ Melchers utilized elements of the Dutch Family in several other works. The Smoker or Man Smoking a Pipe (ca. 1895, Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, New York) depicts the father and the little girl who holds his left pant leg. A pastel of a Mother and Child (ca. 1895, Graham Gallery, New York) shows the woman in the same pose and costume (excluding the cap) with an older and different child clinging to her skirt. Maternity (fig. II-65, ca. 1895, formerly Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York) is an oil sketch of the woman, baby, and second child (from Dutch Family) in a close-up view, but in an outdoor setting with houses and a windmill in the background. In this study, Melchers added suggestions of halos around the heads of both children. The Doll

Arthur Briët's nursing mother in Mother's Joy (fig. II-67, not dated, Rijksmuseum van Bilderbeek-Lamaison, Dordrecht) is almost a mirror image of Melchers' Dutch Family. The models in both pictures are blond and wear identical clothes and undercaps; both have their right feet on footstoves and hold their babies in similar ways.

The pose of the nursing mother in Maternity (fig. II-68, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.) strongly recalls the position of the seated woman of Dutch Family. The mother in the Corcoran picture, however, is painted in an outdoor setting in front of a garden with flowering bushes and trees. Here, her attention is focused on the nursing baby. The model has her black hair pinned up and her right foot is on a footstove.

J. Brenchley associated the woman in Motherhood (fig. II-69, Musée d'Orsay, Paris) with "the primitive mother of the earth, with none of its

(ca. 1895, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.) portrays the older child from the Dutch Family posing with her doll and The Sisters (fig. II-66, ca. 1895, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.) shows her, again with her doll, in a dune landscape holding the hand of an older girl. Bienenstock has discussed The Sisters in the context of late 19th-century Dutch symbolist painting. She wrote that the goats in the background were "symbols of guilelessness" and referred to the works of Matthijs Maris (Woman with Child and Kid, mid-1860s, Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague) and Antoon Derkinderen (Paul, Bessy and Arthur Tutein Nölthenius (1894, Dordrechts Museum, Dordrecht). Her conclusion was that "the little girl was still in the paradisiacal state, innocent and reliant on the protection of her older sister, like her animal equivalents" (Bienenstock, "Gari Melchers," in *Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg*, 1990, 93). The fact that Melchers never commented upon any symbolist meaning in his works suggests, however, that The Sisters was not meant to contain such symbolism. Rather, it seems to be consistent with the artist's other colorful portrayals of local Egmond children in typical settings, although the wide-eyed little girl probably is meant to give the impression of innocence.

grime, but with its strength, and tenderness, and love, and tears, and hope." She called the work

one of the best examples of Melchers' later manner. Here is an absolute sense of sentiment as well as technique. The woman's garments are as lovely as her face. Her golden hair put back smoothly under a brodered cap; brodered flowers running riot, in yellow and turquoise, over the bronze of her cloak; the baby looking out with serious eyes of blue, nestling cozily in the mother's arms; a background of green, with houses in the distance.²¹⁴

Brinton found the figures in Motherhood "wholly endearing in their frank community of feeling" and concluded that "constant effort and discipline, both spiritual and technical were necessary in order that such results might be attained."²¹⁵ Charles Henry Meltzer noted

The joy, the ecstasy, which he has put into the face of that young mother who presses her lips to her child's head in his 'Maternity' makes its effect by sheer sincerity. There is beauty, of the same kind, in many other of his compositions dealing with motherhood. His models were, perhaps, poor, common clods. But he has touched them with his art and given them souls. The souls of some are only half awake. And that is why those mothers seem so true.²¹⁶

Emily G. Houston, in The Catholic Virginian, interpreted Melchers' depictions of mothers and children in terms of Roman Catholic doctrine, and she made a connection between the artist's figures and the "Immaculate Mother and her Divine Child." She believed that

Often, indeed, the canvas bears no title but 'Madonna,' as though to

²¹⁴ Brenchley, 147.

²¹⁵ Brinton, Harper's Monthly Magazine, 438.

²¹⁶ Meltzer, 9.

say that the Divine Maternity of Mary has sanctified all motherhood.²¹⁷

Houston may have arrived at this conclusion because, in several of Melchers' mother and child paintings, the artist added halos to his female figures and gave them such titles as Madonna (fig. II-70), The Madonna of the Rappahannock (fig. II-71, 1923, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond), and Zeeland Madonna (fig. III-1, 1930, Belmont).

Melchers imitated George Hitchcock's pictorial device of adding either "real" nimbi or oval or round objects suggesting halos to enframe the heads of his female models so that they resembled Madonnas. Having already represented an Egmond woman carrying a shoulder basket on her back to which a transparent-bottomed sieve is attached suggesting a halo in his Maternity (fig. II-72, 1889, Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums, Scotland), Hitchcock wrote how "the decorative round of a sieve" placed behind a woman's head can resemble a halo.²¹⁸ The model carries a baby, wrapped in a large cloth, while a little boy squats down on his haunches on their right and holds a small bouquet of wildflowers and a long stick in his right hand, an obvious reference to John the Baptist. Dutch Mother and Two Children (fig. II-73, ca. 1891, Belmont) is another example in which Hitchcock added what appears to be an oval-shaped serving-tray

²¹⁷ Emily G. Houston, "The Art of Gari Melchers," The Catholic Virginian 13 (February 1938), 4.

²¹⁸ Hitchcock, Scribner's Magazine (November 1891), 624. Also quoted by Stott, "American Painters," 130.

behind the seated woman.²¹⁹ The woman wears a blue dress, a color traditionally associated with Mary's cloak. Melchers obviously thought highly of this painting because he not only owned it but also made a watercolor copy of it (date unknown, Belmont).²²⁰ Furthermore, during his years in Egmond, Melchers painted a work, Fairy Tales (fig. II-74, ca. 1899, whereabouts unknown), in which he placed a large ornamental plate resembling an aureole behind the head of his female figure. This painting was exhibited as The Young Mother in 1899 at the Fourth Annual Exhibition at The Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh and the following year at the Sixty-Ninth Annual Exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia. Francis J. Ziegler, who reviewed the work in Brush and Pencil at the latter exhibition, wrote

[Melchers'] "Young Mother" . . . shows a youthful vrouw [sic], of the peasant type, who sits looking down upon her yellow-haired urchin, who leans upon her knee. A cape of figured dark reddish brown falls in straight lines from her shoulders, from beneath which peep the green cuffs of her gown. A cupboard of reddish wood forms the background, upon which a yellow plate is introduced directly behind the woman's profile, so that it has the effect of a nimbus -- a piece of trickery that has little to commend it.²²¹

²¹⁹ The picture is also known as Dutch Interior, Mother and Children (Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 18) and The Kitchen Madonna (Stott, "American Painters," 424).

²²⁰ Belmont owns a black and white photograph of the watercolor, on the back of which Corinne Melchers noted: "Photograph from watercolor/by G. Melchers after painting/by G. Hitchcock."

²²¹ Francis J. Ziegler, "Sixty-Ninth Annual Exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts," Brush and Pencil 5 (1900): 267. Melchers executed a second version of Fairy Tales (fig. II-75, Annmary Brown Memorial, Brown University, Providence) for General Rush C. Hawkins without a "halo". This painting may well have been painted in ca. 1905-1908 because Melchers' model is now Anne Dekker. The nimbus had

Bourgeois Genre

In the early 1900s, after many years of specializing in peasant images, Melchers turned to bourgeois genre. He executed a group of similarly structured paintings, including The Green Lamp (ca. 1905, Private Collection), The Morning Room (ca. 1905-1910, Belmont), The Open Door (ca. 1905-1910, Belmont), The Open Fire (ca. 1905-1910, Belmont), Interior: Mother and Child (ca. 1905-1910, Belmont), The Lady and the Poet (ca. 1905-1910, whereabouts unknown), Penelope (1910, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.), Nellie Kabel (fig. II-76, ca. 1910-1915, whereabouts unknown), and At Home (The Winged Victory) (ca. 1912, Belmont). These works portraying women, often in elegant satin dresses and sometimes engaged in needlepoint, were all painted in the drawing room at "Schuylenburg," easily recognizable by the distinctive flowered wallpaper.²²² The models were posed either in front of the fireplace or before a large sunlit window. Melchers' models included Corinne and Kierie Blok in Penelope and The Morning Room; Corinne and an unknown model in At Home (The Winged Victory); and Kierie and another servant in The Green Lamp. An unknown female model, dressed in a loose-fitting blouse and a long black-and-white skirt dotted with a floral pattern,

originally been included and was then painted out in the Hawkins picture. Melchers, however, added a small statuette of an enthroned Madonna and Child behind the female model, to make the obvious analogy similar to that in his Dutch Family. See also Stott, "The Holland Years," in *Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg*, 1990, 59.

²²² Following the departure of Henriette Hitchcock from Egmond aan de Hoef in 1908, Melchers had regular use of "Schuylenburg" until he left Holland in 1915.

posed alone in a contemplative mood in front of the fireplace in The Open Fire, with a baby in her arms for Interior: Mother and Child, and with a baby and two other models (portraying a female visitor and servant) for The Open Door. The Lady and the Poet shows another unknown model sitting opposite a standing male figure reading a book; and a local woman, Nellie Kabel,²²³ sat for Nellie Kabel.

Melchers' thematic shift from peasant to bourgeois genre was probably the result of his wish to satisfy an American audience who demanded something other than paintings of Dutch peasants.²²⁴ The vogue for peasant genre had waned significantly since the early 1880s and, by the turn of the century, became viewed as anachronistic. Moreover, Melchers now had "Schuylenburg" to use for his setting which allowed him to deal with more elegant themes. Finally, the great success in the United States of the Boston Impressionists probably inspired Melchers to emulate them. These artists, including Edmund Charles Tarbell and Philip Leslie Hale, usually portrayed young society women casually placed in elegant interiors, dressed in the latest fashion, and often shown sewing or reading. Bernice Kramer Leader noted that the Boston Impressionists made a stylistic change away from Impressionist renderings out-of-doors, and began to paint indoor scenes in the tradition of Johannes Vermeer around 1904, the year that the revival of interest in the Dutch master in

²²³ Nellie Kabel was the wife of Andries Duinmeier, who, as mentioned previously, posed several times for Melchers, including Supper at Emmaus, Man with the Cloak, and The Skaters.

²²⁴ Stott, "American Painters," 160.

America was fueled by the publication in Boston of a short monograph on Vermeer which was part of the Masters in Art series, probably authored by Hale.²²⁵ The booklet contained a number of translations of excerpts from important European articles on Vermeer, including William Bürger's of 1886, along with reproductions of many of the artist's significant paintings. At the time, the Boston group

were reevaluating their relationship with Impressionism, and [the Masters in Art study] perhaps served to reinforce their growing discontent with [the] . . . Impressionist [style] . . . casual compositions, and lack of clearly delineated contours and ideal content.²²⁶

The Vermeer-like works by the Boston Impressionists were popular among contemporary American art patrons, especially wealthy Bostonians whose conventional artistic and social ideals were similar to those of Tarbell and his friends.²²⁷ Melchers was well informed about the art scene in America; not only was he a regular participant at important American exhibitions, but he often visited this country during the Egmond years. In all likelihood, the admiration for the Boston artists did not escape Melchers' attention. By emulating them, Melchers was able to identify

²²⁵ Bernice Kramer Leader, "The Boston School and Vermeer" Arts Magazine 55 (November 1980): 174. Masters in Art was a collection of short monographs issued in serial form on Old Masters and later painters, including some contemporary artists, along with a few sculptors. The booklets were published by the Bates and Guild Company in Boston and appeared monthly during the 1900-1909 period. The study on Vermeer (vol. V, part 54, 233-52) came out in June 1904. Hale later wrote a more extensive study of Vermeer (Jan Vermeer of Delft [Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1913]).

²²⁶ Leader, 174.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 175-76.

with the group around Tarbell.

Melchers' The Green Lamp (fig. II-77) shows similarities in both composition and subject matter to Tarbell's contemporary Girl Crocheting (fig. II-78, 1905, Canajoharie Library and Art Gallery, Canajoharie, New York), which was in turn one of the most important American works inspired by Vermeer. Tarbell's composition also includes a large round table in the foreground, placed in front of a woman crocheting, with several paintings in rectangular frames on the back wall. These features suggest the influence of Vermeer on both Melchers and Tarbell. Vermeer typically placed a table or chair in the foreground, a large sunlit window on the left, and maps or paintings on a back wall, thus creating his picture-within-a-picture format. Melchers already had revealed Vermeer's influence in the early 1880s with The Letter (1882, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.), and his reintroduction of a Vermeer-like composition and theme more than two decades later was not coincidental.

Although The Green Lamp contains many devices similar to those used by Vermeer and the Boston group, Melchers' inclusion of the large sunlit window, which takes up one third of the canvas surface, underscored his distinct approach to light which was different from that of both Vermeer and the Boston Impressionists. In Vermeer's painting the light source is only suggested; this is also true of many of the works of the Boston artists. In addition, there is also a marked stylistic difference between the paintings of the Boston painters and The Green Lamp. Throughout the 1905-1918 period, their pictures of women in interiors

were painted in a rather polished academic style and in predominantly neutral tones. In contrast, The Green Lamp was executed in a loose manner using brighter pigments. In that regard, Melchers' work stood closer to the works of contemporary French artists, known as "Intimists," such as Pierre Bonnard and Edouard Vuillard, who specialized in paintings of quiet interiors flooded with sunlight and occupied by women conversing, listening to the piano, or reading.

With its more finished treatment, especially of the women's faces, Melchers' Penelope (fig. II-79) of 1910 is stylistically closer to Tarbell's Girl Crocheting.²²⁸ This is true also in the constrained light source on the right in Penelope, which illuminates most of the middle and background but leaves the entire foreground in shadows. The title of the work, with its allusion to Odysseus' faithful and patient wife, may be a tribute to Corinne who often stayed at home waiting for Melchers to return from his frequent world travels.²²⁹ Melchers placed the figures of Corinne (sitting on the right in front of a needlework standard) and Kierie Blok (standing on the left in a servant's outfit with a sewing

²²⁸ Penelope was first exhibited in 1910 at the third biennial exhibition at The Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. where it received the Second W. A. Clark Prize of \$1,500, accompanied by the Corcoran Silver Medal. The First prize (\$2,000 and a gold medal) was awarded to Edmund C. Tarbell for his Interior (1907, Private Collection), while the third prize (\$1,000 and a bronze medal) went to Childe Hassam's Springtime (ca. 1910, whereabouts unknown) and a honorable mention to Daniel Garber for April Landscape. At the closing of the exhibition, the Corcoran Gallery purchased four works from the show, including Penelope and April Landscape (James B. Townsend, "Third Corcoran Exhibit," American Art News 9 [17 December 1910]: 4).

²²⁹ Stott, "American Painters," 161.

basket)²³⁰ in a narrower space than in The Green Lamp -- hemmed in by the chair, cabinet, table, and back wall.

At Home (The Winged Victory) (fig. II-80) is Melchers' largest work of bourgeois genre and was painted in a semi-academic manner similar to Penelope. At Home (The Winged Victory) derived its sub-title from the small reproduction of the Nike of Samothrace which stands on the mantelpiece.²³¹ It depicts two women in beautiful costumes in front of a fireplace. Corinne posed for the seated model on the left. The identity of the other model remains uncertain, but she may have been "the young girl from Weimar [who] came . . . to pose for Gari."²³²

The Nike may signify Melchers' achievements as a successful artist, with his paintings purchased by European and American collectors and

²³⁰ Corinne Melchers wrote her mother "Gari is still working daily at Schuilenburg [sic] and Kierie is here also to pose. Two beautiful pictures are in progress [including] the one of Kierie + me threading the needle" (Corinne Melchers, letter to Lulu Mackall, 25 August [1909]).

²³¹ In 1919 and the early 1920s the painting was known as At Home at several exhibitions, including The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., The Seventh Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Oil Paintings (1919) and the Cincinnati Art Museum's 31st Annual Exhibition of American Art (1924). At Home was reproduced in Art and Archeology, 9 (March 1920): facing p. 131 and in The American Magazine of Art, 15 (January 1924): 80. When the picture was shown at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia at the 31st Annual Exhibition of American Art (1924), however, it was entitled Winged Victory. Joanna D. Catron, Assistant Director of Belmont, wrote the author that Richard S. Reid, Belmont's former Director, renamed Melchers' work At Home (The Winged Victory) (Catron letter to author, 26 July 1989). Joseph G. Dreiss adopted this title for the work (Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 132).

²³² Corinne Melchers, letter to Lulu Mackall, 11 August [1912].

museums and his many medals and awards.²³³ It also could be an even more general reference to Melchers' successful life, professional and private, given Corinne's role in the picture. On the other hand, given his motto "True and Clear," he was not an artist who tended to incorporate symbolic references in his works. The statuette and other props on the mantelpiece, including a bronze bust of a woman and decorative Delft blue plate, were used together or separately in a number of his other bourgeois genre paintings. All three items appear in The Open Fire; the Nike and plate are painted in The Lady and the Poet; the bronze bust and plate had appeared in Penelope; and the bronze bust also is in Nellie Kabel. These artifacts, which greatly appealed to Melchers, probably belonged to George Hitchcock, in whose house Melchers executed this group of works.

Virgil Barker reviewed At Home (The Winged Victory) when it was shown at the seventh biennial exhibition at The Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

Gari Melchers' "At Home," included among the illustrations [in Art and Archaeology], is not only great in size but great in technical achievement. But a subject somewhat prosaic in itself would have gained in interest if done on a smaller and more intimate scale. This

²³³ A few selections from Melchers' impressive list of medals, awards, and honors are sufficient to indicate his great success. In 1886 he received his first gold medal for The Sermon at the Amsterdam International Exhibition. In 1889 he was awarded the Grand Prize at the Paris Universal Exposition for his four entries, which included The Communion and The Sermon. In 1895 he became Knight of the Order of Saint Michael of Bavaria and in 1904 Officier de l'Ordre de la Légion d'Honneur in France. In 1908 he was elected to the Institute of France and in 1909 was appointed professor of art at the Weimar Academy of Fine Arts (Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 181).

observation can not, of course, take away from the triumphant technique of the picture as it is; and Mr. Melchers is too fine a painter for us to be anything else than grateful to have him on any terms.²³⁴

In two of his bourgeois genre works (Interior: Mother and Child and The Open Door), Melchers emphasized a large sunlit window and his primary formal interest in these pictures seems to be the depiction of bright sunlight on canvas. These works represent the artist's purest Impressionist works executed in Egmond.

Portraiture

Melchers painted a large number of portraits throughout his career. Most of these, however, were executed during his regular visits to America, when he worked in cities such as Detroit, New York, and Washington, D.C.²³⁵ Among his more notable subjects during the Egmond period were Christian Brinton (1910, Philadelphia Museum of Art), the Chicago industrialist Potter Palmer and his socialite wife, Bertha, (ca. 1900, whereabouts of both unknown), and President Theodore Roosevelt (1908, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.). Melchers also painted posthumous portraits of the Revolutionary War general Nathanael Greene (1908) and Oliver Hazard Perry, the hero of the battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812 (ca. 1913). The last two portraits were commissioned by the State of Rhode Island and hang in the Capitol in

²³⁴ Virgil Barker, "Contemporary Painting at the Corcoran Gallery of Art," Art and Archaeology 9 (March 1920): 137-39.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 41, 187-89.

Providence.²³⁶ In addition, he painted a number of portraits of friends, including Henriette Hitchcock and James Jebusa Shannon (Belmont), the American painter living in London; and, after 1903, numerous portraits of his wife Corinne were executed in Holland. Melchers also created several self-portraits during his expatriate years, the earliest of which dates from 1876 (Belmont). This was followed by one in 1880 (Belmont), two in 1896 (Belmont and Private Collection), and a final one completed in 1905 (The National Academy of Design, New York).

From the mid-1890s until the early 1900s, Henriette Hitchcock was Melchers' principal model. He painted five portraits of her, alone or with her maid Kierie Blok. Melchers initially depicted Henriette in simple compositions. The earliest was the Portrait of Mrs. George Hitchcock (fig. II-81, ca. 1890, Collection of Mrs. Rita Fraad, Scarsdale, New York).²³⁷ It is a three-quarter length, close-up view of her wearing a black dress, facing to the right, and holding a needlepoint work stretched on a frame in her left hand.²³⁸ The painting was first exhibited at the 1891 Paris

²³⁶ Melchers also painted replicas of the Greene and Perry portraits; these works are at Belmont. See also Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 42 and 64.

²³⁷ This painting is also known as Woman: Half Length (Portrait of Mrs. George Hitchcock) and was previously owned by Hirschl & Adler Galleries in New York.

²³⁸ Linda Ayres and Jane Myers have theorized that Henriette Hitchcock was pregnant at the time she posed for Melchers. According to them, the needlepoint was an appropriate activity for expectant mothers and they thought that Henriette was wearing a maternity dress (Linda Ayres and Jane Myers, in "G. Melchers, Portrait of Mrs. George Hitchcock, ca. 1890," Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, American Paintings, Watercolors, and Drawings from the Collection of Rita and Daniel Fraad, exhibition catalogue, introduction by Linda Ayres, catalogue

Salon (where it was entitled The Embroiderer); in 1893 it was shown at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago (listed as Portrait of Mrs. H.); and in 1895 and 1900 it was presented at the Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung (where it was again called The Embroiderer). Apparently, Melchers gave the work to Henriette and it remained in her possession until her death in 1937.

Around 1900, Melchers painted several pictures of Henriette and Kierie together at "Schuylenburg" standing in front of a mantelpiece on which are displayed two elaborate Delft plates (The Green Mantelpiece, ca. 1900, whereabouts unknown) or before a cupboard full of china (The China Closet, ca. 1900, Belmont).²³⁹ These are appropriate portrayals of Henriette as she was known to be an avid collector of Delft china and

by Ayres and Jane Myers. [Forth Worth: Texas, May 24-July 14, 1985], 26). There is no evidence that Henriette was ever pregnant. Lois Dinnerstein also suggested that Henriette Hitchcock's costume might be a maternity outfit, but wrote that the "high-fashion neckline and decorative lace" would not be part of typical "utilitarian" maternity clothes and that the costume was one devised by Melchers for the painting. Dinnerstein also confirmed that Henriette never had a child (Lois Dinnerstein, "The Industrious Housewife: Some Images of Labor in American Art," Arts Magazine 55 [April 1981]: 115). See also Bienenstock, "Gari Melchers," in Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, 1990, 101. The needlepoint probably was a decorative device and shows a typical middle class woman's pastime activity, whether or not she was pregnant. In 1909 Melchers would execute Penelope in which he portrayed his wife Corinne in similar loose-fitting clothes sitting in front of a needlework standard.

²³⁹ According to Melchers' sales records, he sold The Green Mantelpiece in Berlin in 1900. The Hirschl & Adler Galleries in New York previously owned a study for the work (fig. II-82, present whereabouts unknown). It features full-length figures of Henriette and Kierie. The mistress is depicted in three-quarter view, standing on the left in front of the maid, who is shown in profile, timidly looking to the ground. In her left hand Henriette carries a small book, while the rest of her arm rests on the mantelpiece.

antiques. Kitty Shannon, the daughter of the painter James Jebusa Shannon, later recalled that Henriette had "the collector's fever" and "her house full" of antique furniture, bric-a-brac, and china, bought "for a song" in towns such as Hoorn.²⁴⁰

After he married Corinne in 1903, she replaced Henriette as Melchers' principal model. A few years later, Henriette left Egmond following her divorce from George Hitchcock in 1905; she subsequently married Charles Lewis Hind (a well-known British art critic and writer) in New York in 1907.²⁴¹ The Lewis Hinds took up residence in London in 1908, although they visited Egmond from time to time. Melchers painted two full length portraits of Corinne: Portrait of Mrs. Melchers (1905, Detroit Athletic Club) and La Brabançonne (1905, Annmary Brown Memorial, Brown University, Providence). Portrait of Mrs. Melchers (fig. II-83) was executed a year after their marriage. It shows Corinne formally posing in an interior setting at "Schuylenburg." She commented

Gari has been making studies all the afternoon for my white satin dress portrait, and finally ended with one that is a dream! . . . I am in profile with your cherry colored crepe sash around my head --in the background a light grey door with a strip of rose -- spotted wall paper showing one side. The scheme is really lovely and the making of a gorgeous picture.²⁴²

The Portrait of Mrs. Melchers was clearly a work of a proud husband

²⁴⁰ Kitty Shannon, For My Children (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1933), 19.

²⁴¹ Janice C. Oresman, "Gari Melchers' Portraits of Mrs. George Hitchcock," Archives of American Art Journal 20 (1980): 24.

²⁴² Corinne Melchers, letter to Lulu Mackall, [1904].

portraying his new wife. Melchers posed Corinne in such a way that her emerald and diamond wedding ring is prominently displayed on her hand which she holds on her breast. Contemporary critics admired Portrait of Mrs. Melchers. Christian Brinton wrote

Notable among the painter's recent portraits of women are those of Mrs. Frederick M. Alger and of Mrs. Gari Melchers, the latter a full length in profile, exquisitely instantaneous in pose and luminously clear in tone. These are not facile or frivolous likenesses; they evince, each of them, a rounded, certain mastery and a sense of color as true as it is unconventional. No vague, unsanitary landscapes envelop these individuals, nor are they suffocated with costly hangings or imperilled by unsteady bits of pottery. All is consistent, legitimate, and refreshing.²⁴³

Wilhelm Schölermann who reviewed Melchers' entries at the 1910 exhibition in Weimar noted

the finest lady's portrait is . . . [Portrait of Mrs. Melchers] because of the profundity of its expression, and also from a purely technical treatment of the subject . . . above all the technical treatment of the dress . . . with the lace shawl . . . is terrific.²⁴⁴

Originally, La Brabançonne (fig. II-84) probably was meant to be a typical figure study of a Egmond woman in a Brabant costume, based on a sketch Melchers had executed some years earlier. When he decided to turn the sketch into a finished painting, he could not find a satisfactory model and so asked Corinne to pose for him. She wrote

[Melchers] wanted to begin one of a Dutch girl like a tiny sketch he had made years ago. So we had a couple of girls to come and try the pose but they did not look the part a bit -- not Dutch enough. Then I in trying part of the dress on was found to be the very Dutchiest thing imaginable [sic]. So your daughter is now sitting as a blond

²⁴³ Brinton, Harper's Monthly Magazine, 439.

²⁴⁴ Wilhelm Schölermann, "Weimar. Im grossherzoglichen Museum am Karlsplatz," Kunstchronik 21 (11 March 1910): 316.

peasant . . . with a white cap tied light [sic] under the chin.²⁴⁵

The crucifix around Corinne's neck is consistent with the Brabant costume as the people of this Dutch province are Roman Catholics.

The distinctive Brabant garb obviously appealed to Melchers, because in the late 1920s he depicted Miep Half in such a costume (The Brabant Bride, fig. II-86, ca. 1928, Belmont), as well as often including one or more women wearing the "poffer" in his various church genre works.

Melchers' Minor Themes: Flowers, Nudes, and Landscapes

Arranging the Tulips (fig. II-87, ca. 1890, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.) is the only work known to exist by Melchers in which he featured tulips. It shows a young woman standing in front of a multicolored tiled wall. She is dressed in her Sunday best, complete with lace "bazuintje" and "oorijzer," and is placing three tulips in a vase. In front of her is a chair with other tulips on the seat.

In contrast, George Hitchcock's favorite theme was attractive women standing in the middle of fields of tulips. He wrote about the subject in Scribner's Magazine in 1887 and painted a series of very decorative works which are typical of his oeuvre. According to Hitchcock, the reason he painted the flower beds was that they allowed him to depict a "variety

²⁴⁵ Corinne Melchers, letter to Lulu Mackall, [summer 1905]. There is a contemporary photograph at Belmont of Corinne Melchers wearing this costume (fig. II-85).

and opulence of primaries."²⁴⁶ His Tulip Culture (fig. II-88, 1887, Collection of W. H. Taiter, New York) was awarded an honorable mention in Paris and reproduced in Gustave Ollendorff's Salon de 1887. A figure of a woman standing in a flower garden or portrayed with flowers was often used in late 19th-century art to symbolize beauty and the harmony of humanity and nature. It seems that Hitchcock tried to interest Melchers in painting the bulb fields and to convince him that it might be very lucrative. Corinne Melchers wrote her mother

You ought to see the tulips and hyacinths all in bloom. There are beds of them all about, but especially at Uitgeest. . . . George [Hitchcock] is furiously busy painting them. He calculated for Melchers's benefit the other day and announced that, making two sketches a day as he could do, at the end of a year his income would be \$180,000. . . . So the consequence is that he [Melchers] spends a couple of afternoons a week driving in his cart and alighting for two or three hours to make a 'charming little thing'. . . . I hope he will paint it big.²⁴⁷

The whereabouts of this "charming little thing" or any similar painting is unknown. Melchers did not execute any pure floral still lifes during his Dutch expatriate years, but he later essayed the theme in the 1920s after his return to the United States.²⁴⁸

Although Melchers painted many nudes, they did not play as significant a role in his career as paintings from the other genres in

²⁴⁶ Hitchcock, Scribner's Magazine (August 1887), 167.

²⁴⁷ Corinne Melchers, letter to Lulu Mackall, 17 April [1903].

²⁴⁸ Among the flower still lifes which Melchers executed during the last decade of his life are Blue Flowers in a Yellow Pot, Flowers in a Blue Jar, Flowers in a Blue Vase, and Flowers in a Pink Pot. These works are all at Belmont.

which he excelled. He probably began to paint the female nude during the mid-1890s with works such as Judith (ca. 1895, Belmont). He executed a great number of these in many poses: reclining (Reclining Nude), sitting (Young Woman at Her Toilet, fig. II-89), sleeping (Nude Sleeping), and standing (Two Nudes, fig. II-90). These three paintings are from the 1905-1912 period, and probably were executed in Egmond aan de Hoef or Weimar; they are now at Belmont. Melchers sometimes posed his models in imitation of other works of art. The young woman in Nude: Adolescence (ca. 1905, Belmont), for example, is in a stance similar to that of a statuette of Eve which is in the collection at Belmont. In Nude Study (Pink Background) (ca. 1915, Belmont), the model took the pose of Praxiteles' Aphrodite of Cnidus.²⁴⁹ Of these paintings, only Nude: Adolescence and Two Nudes were definitely executed in Egmond. It was difficult, if not impossible, to find young peasant women who were willing to pose naked. Two Nudes is a stylized work showing young women holding hands. The blond figure stands on the left looking at the viewer; her dark-haired companion averts her gaze to the ground. The latter model was identified by her daughter, Mrs. Cornelia M. Koning de Koning, as Anne Dekker. She also posed for Nude: Adolescence.

Only one painting of a male nude by Melchers is known, an academy figure, The Model (Male Nude) (ca. 1877-1881, Belmont), dating from his Düsseldorf years, although he made a number of drawings in sketch books from that time. It is not known when he began to paint the female nude,

²⁴⁹ Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 161.

but it may well have been at the Académie Julian. A photograph, which is at Belmont, shows Melchers and fellow students around a figure, probably an instructor, who seems to be critiquing a study of a male nude by one of the students. There are two nude models in the room; a man stands with his hands behind his back and a woman sits on a platform behind the instructor.

Melchers painted a few landscapes when he was in Egmond, including Old Houses, Egmond (ca. 1903, Belmont) and Egmond by the Sea (fig. II-91, ca. 1890, Belmont). The latter may have been painted from a panoramic photograph rather than from life, since a photograph of the same view is at Belmont. When the two are closely compared, it is apparent that the oil is a stylized rendition with fewer buildings and the addition of a horse-drawn cart led by a small figure on a dune road in the foreground. Perhaps Egmond by the Sea was a memento for Melchers of his years in Holland.

Murals

Melchers received commissions for several large murals during his career. Of these, two sets were made during his expatriate years but not at Egmond. The first were executed for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition and were two large scale lunettes entitled The Arts of Peace and The Arts of War.²⁵⁰ All the preparatory work for these murals was

²⁵⁰ At the present time these murals are in the Main Library of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

done in Chicago, and they were finished on the site.²⁵¹ Two years later in 1895, Melchers painted two murals, Peace and War, for the new Library of Congress building in Washington, D.C., which are more elaborate versions of the Chicago works. Both the Columbian Exposition and the Library of Congress murals are, in fact, oil paintings on canvas. It is not known where the Washington works were executed; but they were later mounted on the walls of the second floor "Northwest Gallery" of the Library.²⁵² They are Melchers' only large scale works using a number of nudes and partially draped figures based on allegorical or literary themes.²⁵³

²⁵¹ Joanna D. Catron, Assistant Director of Belmont, letter to author, 17 October 1989.

²⁵² See also Joseph G. Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 27.

²⁵³ In the early 1920s, Melchers also received a commission from the Detroit Public Library to depict scenes from the city's early history (The Landing of Cadillac's Wife and The Conspiracy of Pontiac) and an allegorical center piece (The Spirit of the Northwest) which were completed in 1922. These murals were described by the critic for American Art News as "brilliant in color and very decorative" ("Melchers' Murals in Detroit Library," American Art News 20 [25 February 1922]: 3). In the same year, Melchers was commissioned by the State of Missouri to paint four well-known Missouri natives for the governor's reception room in the Capitol: Susan Blow, who introduced kindergarten to the United States; Eugene Field, the poet; Major S. S. Rollins, the founder of Missouri State University; and Mark Twain, the humorist and author. It was reported that Melchers received \$20,000 for these panels ("Gari Melchers to Decorate Four Panels in Missouri State Capitol," American Art News 20 [4 March 1922]: 2). Because Melchers suffered from phlebitis, he asked the Baltimore artist Robert McGill Mackall, who was Corinne Melchers' first cousin, to assist him on the Detroit and Jefferson City projects (Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 53).

CHAPTER III

MELCHERS' RELIGIOUS PAINTINGS

As discussed in Chapter II, Melchers spent the Egmond years painting traditional genre scenes, some of which had religious overtones. At the same time, however, he also created a small number of strictly religious works, some of which constitute his most ambitious pictures. His three most elaborate scriptural themes were two versions of The Nativity (ca. 1890 and ca. 1891), three of Supper at Emmaus (1898, ca. 1902-1903, and 1912), and two of The Last Supper (ca. 1904-1905 and ca. 1906). The whereabouts of the first version of The Nativity is unknown; the other is at Belmont. The first version of The Last Supper is in the Second Presbyterian Church in Richmond, Virginia, and the second is at Belmont. The present location of the first version of Supper at Emmaus is unknown, while the second and third versions are at Belmont. Melchers also painted Ecce Homo (ca. 1905, whereabouts unknown), Christ with Halo (ca. 1905, The Cleveland Museum of Art), and at least three images of female saints: St. Gudule (ca. 1897, Collection of Mrs. Regina Trapp, New York), St. Genevieve (ca. 1901-1902, whereabouts unknown), and St. Joan of Arc (ca. 1895-1900, Indianapolis Museum of Art). Of Melchers' religious works, only Christ with Halo is known to have been painted on commission (for the American Arts Company in Cleveland), while the others were initiated by the artist himself.

It seems most appropriate to examine these works by Melchers in the context of late 19th-century German religious art, given the artist's heritage and formal training. At the Düsseldorf Akademie, two of his instructors, Heinrich Lauenstein and Karl Müller, were noted artists of the Late Nazarene tradition in Germany, while another teacher, Eduard von Gebhardt, was considered the premier German religious painter of his time. In addition, when Melchers began to essay his biblical subjects, much of his exhibition activity was shifting from France to Germany. One of the contemporary critics who most closely followed Melchers' career, Christian Brinton, saw Germanic influences in the painter's work and associated him with noted contemporary German artists. Brinton wrote

Any attempt to localize him [Melchers] as an American, a Frenchman, or a Hollander must necessarily prove inadequate. He has resided by turns in each country, and from each has taken something, yet the basis of his aesthetic being is Teutonic. . . . It is in Germany that he is most esteemed, and it is beside such masters as Liebermann, von Uhde, Leibl, von Bartels . . . that he takes rank. In the last analysis he stands as a modified Teuton.¹

It is fitting, therefore, to investigate German religious art of the late 19th century and determine if Melchers' works should best be compared with those of his German contemporaries.

German Religious Art in the 19th Century

There was a revival in German religious art in the early 19th century which began with a small group of students at the Königliche Akademie

¹ Christian Brinton, Modern Artists (New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1908), 214.

der bildende Künste in Vienna headed by Friedrich Overbeck and Franz Pferr, who were among the group later known as the "Nazarenes." In 1809 they formed the Lukasbrüder (Brotherhood of St. Luke) and in 1810 moved to Rome and settled in the abandoned monastery of Sant' Isidoro. It was there that they were given the name "I Nazareni" by the Romans because of the nature of their dress and long hair, which aligned them with traditional images of Christ, and their monastic lifestyle. Their movement was based on personal religious beliefs, however, rather than any official involvement with the Church. The Nazarenes were joined in Rome by Julius Schnorr von Carosfeld, Peter Cornelius, Wilhelm Schadow, and Philipp Veit. They painted in the styles of Quattrocento Italian and German Gothic art. These artists exerted great influence in Germany when, with the exceptions of Overbeck, who remained an expatriate, and Pferr, who died in 1812, they returned to Germany around 1820 and later taught at various German art academies (Cornelius in Düsseldorf, Munich, and Berlin; Schadow in Düsseldorf; Schnorr in Dresden; and Veit in Frankfurt).² Their followers, referred to as the Late Nazarenes, continued this artistic tradition, which remained popular in both Catholic and conservative Protestant ecclesiastical circles and at the German art academies until the end of the 19th century.

Beginning in the mid-19th century, a more widespread revival of religious art took place in Germany. Following the restoration of order

² Keith Andrews, The Nazarenes. A Brotherhood of German Painters in Rome (Oxford: University Press, 1964), 19-23, 55-64.

after the Revolution of 1848, the Lutheran Church believed it had the responsibility of bringing back the educated middle class and proletariat who had drawn away from organized religion during the period of political ferment. At "Special Conferences," including those at Elberfeld in 1851 and Brandenburg in 1863, the role of religious art became a principal topic of discussion. The Church believed that art should be used as a "holy weapon for Christianity" and that it should be easy to recognize and educational in content. Images of Christ were to be idealized and only "the beautiful" was to be depicted. The Church commissioned artists to create such works and undertook to distribute reproductions to the people.³ Hundreds of German artists responded to this revival and produced religious works from 1850 until the end of the First World War.⁴

In addition to the political changes in Europe which affected the churches, conflict had arisen between the natural sciences and religion as a result of studies and discoveries which seemed to contradict traditional teachings. The science of geology, for example, was in conflict with the biblical concept that the world was only six thousand years old, and Charles Darwin's The Origin of Species in 1859 called into question the

³ Bettina Brand, Fritz von Uhde. Das religiöse Werk zwischen künstlerischer Intention und Öffentlichkeit (Heidelberg: Richard Hamann-Mac Lean, 1983), 46-50, and 55.

⁴ Reinhold Hartmann, "Erneuerungsversuche der christlich-religiösen Malerei im 19. Jahrhundert, insbesondere der Bestrebungen auf naturalistischer Basis in der zweiten Jahrhunderthälfte" (Ph.D. diss., Universität zu Tübingen, 1954), 102.

story of creation in Genesis. Two books which especially influenced religious thought and interpretation, and attempted to reconcile Christian history with the newly accepted scientific theories, were Das Leben Jesu. Kritisch bearbeitet written in 1835 by the German theologian and philosopher, David Friedrich Strauss, and La Vie de Jésus published in 1863 by the French historian and philosopher, Ernest Renan.⁵ Strauss was one of the first to use scientific methodology to interpret the Gospels. He did not believe in miracles and felt that those reported in the Bible were merely the interpretation of unusual occurrences by superstitious people. Renan also accepted the Gospels only after he stripped the supernatural from them. For Renan, Jesus was a reformer with precise ethical standards; he believed that a few peasants welcomed Jesus as the Messiah, and, for those followers who expected him to work wonders, he fabricated "miracles" to keep their support. Renan was better known than Strauss, despite the fact that Renan had accepted most of Strauss' conclusions and incorporated them in La Vie de Jésus.⁶ Renan's ideas were

⁵ Herbert Butterfield, "Christianity in History," in Dictionary of the History of Ideas. Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas 4 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 1:405.

⁶ Renan's work soon became one of the most widely published books in Europe and America with sales reaching more than one hundred thousand copies in France during the year of its publication and translations into Dutch, German, English, and Italian the following year (Horatio Alger, "Renan and his Book," Harper's New Monthly Magazine 28 [February 1864]: 398). Renan's greater fame, as compared with Strauss, was probably due to the fact that Strauss' Das leben Jesu. Kritisch bearbeitet was written for theologians rather than the laity. In 1864, after the success of Renan's book, Strauss published Das leben Jesu für das Volk bearbeitet, which was written for the general reader.

to become popular among more liberal theologians, especially in the later decades of the 19th century, when Jesus was seen as the "democratic Führer."⁷ This humanization of Christ, putting him in solidarity with the common people, was a way in which social democratic ideals could be reconciled with religious thought by these liberal churchmen.

From the mid-1870s, a number of Protestant painters such as Fritz von Uhde, with whom Melchers was later to become acquainted and whom he appears to have emulated, incorporated such contemporary ideas about social reform into their religious works. Wolfgang Kirchbach noted

A large movement within Protestantism emphasized that Christianity was the Gospel for the poor; when one examines Uhde's religious works, one notices that he was influenced by this trend.⁸

In 1888 Albert Fuhrmans, in his discussion of the religious paintings at the Internationale Kunstausstellung in Munich, classified the painters of these works into two broad categories: the moderate and extreme Realists. The painters of the first group

⁷ Brand, 62.

⁸ Wolfgang Kirchbach, "Religiöse Kunst," Die Kunst unserer Zeit 9 (1898): 125. (Translation is by the present author, as are all subsequent translations from the German and Dutch.) In contrast, to the Protestants, the Roman Catholic Church was "determined to concede nothing to the developments of modern science and historical criticism" (W. Owen Chadwick, "Religion and Science in the Nineteenth Century," in Dictionary of the History of Ideas, 4:107). As a result of the proclamations by Pope Pius IX of several dogmas of the Roman Catholic church, including those of the Sacred Heart of the Madonna and Christ and the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin (1854), a series of new iconographic representations appeared in the fine arts as is seen in the paintings of these German artists.

did not concern themselves with tradition and give their subjectivity free rein. They depicted their subjects as accurately as possible on canvas and avoided the ugly and repulsive.

The second group included Uhde, about whom Fuhrmans wrote

There is, of course, not a trace to be found of the ideal in Uhde's work, nor does he hold to the well-established traditions. Uhde, like all the other extremists has intentionally rejected all this, with consciousness, because he wants to follow a new road and he thus simply goes into the streets and looks for 19th-century proletarian workers to represent the characters of the Holy Bible.⁹

In 1911 Paul Weber also divided contemporary German religious painters into those who used "new ways for old objectives" and those who turned to "new ways for new objectives."¹⁰ The first group included Eduard von Gebhardt, a teacher of Melchers at Düsseldorf, and Uhde. Weber found Gebhardt's approach modern, because he used contemporary German burghers and peasants for his biblical figures. He felt, however, that the artist only went part of the way toward what he called "Germanization and democratization of the biblical history," because Gebhardt continued to depict his figures in costumes of the time of the Reformation. Weber wrote that Uhde's work was more modern than that of Gebhardt because Uhde depicted his biblical figures in contemporary costumes and settings. Thus, Weber's painters who chose "new ways for

⁹ Albert Fuhrmans, "Die religiöse Malerei auf der internationalen Kunstausstellung in München," Zeitschrift für christliche Kunst 1 (1888): 389 and 392.

¹⁰ A painter who practiced "new ways for new objectives" was someone who "deliberately departed from the historical depiction of biblical accounts and strived to blend the moral quality of religious thought, free of historical association, with modern ideas" (Paul Weber, Kunst und Religion [Heilbron: Verlag von Eugen Galzer, 1911], 75-79).

old objectives" correspond to those artists in the second category described by Fuhrmans, while Weber ignored the more traditional painters whom Fuhrmans had classified as moderate Realists. Melchers, as will be seen, was a painter who also chose "new ways for old objectives" and, according to Fuhrmans' classification, seems to fall somewhere in between the moderate and extreme Realists.

Reproductions of contemporary religious paintings in such periodicals as Die Kunst für Alle and Die Kunst unserer Zeit in the period 1885-1905 and Franz Hanfstaengl's catalogue of reproductions of contemporary religious paintings, Religiöse Bilder,¹¹ show that the most popular scenes depicted by late 19th-century German artists were the Nativity, boyhood scenes from the life of Christ, Jesus performing miracles, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection. Melchers surely was aware of the widespread popularity of this genre.¹²

¹¹ Religiöse Bilder is a catalogue published by Franz Hanfstaengl in Munich in 1914. It contains reproductions of religious works, including more than eighty by Old Masters and over four hundred by contemporary artists, of which 95% were Germans. Prints of these works were sold in various formats (copperplate engravings, photographs, and tinted reproductions on both paper and canvas) and ranging in sizes from 10 cm. x 13 cm. to 65 cm. x 88 cm. Hanfstaengl established his firm in Munich in 1831, and began the printing and selling of art reproductions to the general public. The firm later opened branches in London and New York (See also Peter-Klaus Schuster, "Religiöses bei Hanfstaengl," in Haus der Kunst, 'München leuchtete.' Karl Caspar und die Erneuerung christlicher Kunst in München um 1900, exhibition catalogue, essays by Thomas Mann et al. Munich, June 8-July 22, 1984, 91-92).

¹² Unless otherwise specified, the German religious paintings cited in the chapter with present locations unknown were exhibited at the various Jahres-Ausstellungen and Jubiläums-Ausstellungen in Berlin and at the Jahres-Ausstellungen and Internationale Kunstausstellungen in Munich and were reproduced in Die Kunst für Alle and Die Kunst unserer Zeit.

Contemporary Religious Art and Thought: Influences on Melchers

At first it seems peculiar that Melchers turned to religious themes around 1891 when he painted The Nativity, not only because his previous pictures were realistic scenes of Egmond villagers, but also because he is known to have disdained paintings of angels, madonnas, and saints. J. Brenchley noted that Melchers initially viewed such pictures made in large quantities for the popular market as insignificant works.¹³ Perhaps this initial reaction was a result of being exposed to the plethora of religious art depicted by many German and other European painters throughout the 19th century. From the time that Melchers enrolled at the Akademie in Düsseldorf in 1877, he must have seen such paintings which were frequently exhibited in major cities (Berlin, Dresden, Munich, and Stuttgart), and reproduced extensively in art books and magazines. Melchers visited and exhibited in Berlin, Dresden, and Munich during this period.¹⁴

These periodicals did not mention the dates or whereabouts of the works at the time. Likewise, Franz Hanfstaengl did not provide such information about the paintings reproduced in Religiöse Bilder. Because of the majority of these are considered less important works today, with few exceptions, it is extremely difficult to locate them.

¹³ J. Brenchley [Mrs. George Hitchcock, pseud.], "Gari Melchers and his Work," The Magazine of Art 24 (February 1900): 147.

¹⁴ In contrast to the extensive development of religious art in Germany in the second half of the 19th century, this genre was scarce in Holland because traditionally there was never a large demand for sacred art in this predominantly Protestant country. Rembrandt was one among the very few who painted numerous biblical works. Only a small number of Melchers' Dutch contemporaries, such as Jan Toorop and Thorn Prikker, painted biblical themes.

Melchers' first exposure to contemporary religious art occurred in Düsseldorf, where several of the instructors worked in the Late Nazarene tradition. The Nazarene principles were introduced at the Akademie by Peter Cornelius and Wilhelm Schadow; Cornelius and Schadow were each director of the Akademie during the periods 1821-1824 and 1826-1859, respectively. The Nazarene style was maintained until the 1890s by several of Schadow's students, including Ernst Deger, Franz Ittenbach, Heinrich Lauenstein, and the brothers, Andreas and Karl Müller, all of whom later joined the faculty of the Akademie. Melchers studied with Lauenstein and Karl Müller. In addition, Melchers was certainly aware of the great reputation for religious art of his other teacher, Eduard von Gebhardt, whose The Last Supper (1870, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin) was highly regarded.¹⁵ This painting

¹⁵ Melchers also may have been aware of the art of the artist-monks of the School of Beuron, named after the Benedictine abbey of the same name in the southern German Federal State of Baden-Württemberg. Their art was formulated by the sculptor Father Desiderius Lenz in about 1870 and later adopted by Fathers Lucas Steiner, Willibrord Verkade, and Gabriël Wüger. These monks specialized in monumental decorations for church interiors (including the St. Maurus chapel in Beuron, 1870) painted in a style which borrowed from ancient Assyrian, Egyptian, Early Greek, Early Christian, and Gothic arts (See Harald Siebenmorgen, Die Anfänge der "Beuroner Kunstschule." Peter Lenz und Jakob Wüger 1850-1875 [Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1983], 74-89 and 131-43). The Beuron style did not influence Melchers during his years in Egmond, but may have done so later. Sarah Schroth saw a link between Melchers' Zeeland Madonna (fig. III-1, 1930, Belmont) and the art of Lenz. She thought that Melchers may have learnt of Lenz' ideas from the French painter Paul Sérusier, who attended the Académie Julian at the same time as Melchers (Sarah Schroth, "The Zeeland Madonna," in Mary Washington College Museum, Gari Melchers (1860-1932). Selections from the Mary Washington College Collection, exhibition catalogue, essays by Leslie Lenore Gross et al. Fredericksburg, Virginia, April 1973, 51).

made Gebhardt "instantly famous and the undisputed principal religious painter . . . in entire Germany."¹⁶ In 1872 the work was purchased by the Nationalgalerie and in 1873 was admired at the World Exposition in Vienna.¹⁷

The most celebrated contemporary German painter of religious subjects was Fritz von Uhde. In the years 1885-1888, Uhde painted The Supper at Emmaus (1885, Städelsches Kunstinstitut und Städtische Galerie, Frankfurt), The Last Supper (1886, formerly in the Collection of Eduard Arnold, Berlin), and a triptych of the Nativity, Holy Night (1888-1889, Gemäldegalerie Neue Meister, Dresden). Melchers painted these same subjects during the 1891-1905 period. His initial acquaintance with Uhde's work was probably in 1885, when Uhde's Suffer the Little Children to Come Unto Me (1884, Museum der bildende Kunst, Leipzig) was exhibited at the Salon in Paris.¹⁸ Three years later, both artists were represented at the Munich Internationale Kunstausstellung of 1888, where Melchers showed The Pilots and The Sermon and Uhde exhibited Holy Night. Suffer the Little Children represented an important milestone in Uhde's career; for the first time he depicted Christ, and he chose to show him in a

¹⁶ Friedrich Schaarschmidt, "Eduard von Gebhardt," Die Kunst für Alle 13 (1 June 1998), 261.

¹⁷ Friedrich Gross, Jesus, Luther und der Papst im Bilderkampf 1871 bis 1918. Zur Malereigeschichte der Kaiserzeit (Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 1989), 199.

¹⁸ Melchers entries at the Paris Salon of 1885 were Poor Men of the Sea and Kniertje, the Dutchwoman. The whereabouts of both paintings are unknown.

contemporary setting.¹⁹ After he finished Suffer the Little Children, which enjoyed great popularity and recognition following its initial exhibition, Uhde continued to depict Christ in contemporary scenes among the ordinary people until the turn of the century. Critics of the time, such as Richard Graul and the correspondent of the Bayrischer Kurier, saw a connection between Ernest Renan's La Vie de Jésus and Uhde's religious paintings,²⁰ while others discussed them

in terms of their emphasis on proletarian content. . . . Uhde's Christ became the poor man's Christ, his identity with the oppressed classes unmistakable to many observers. . . . The term *Armeleutemalerei* was attached to . . . [Uhde's] works in the later 1880s and early 1890s by those supporters of the opposing conservative religious factions who objected to the naturalist premise on which his paintings were based.²¹

Although numerous contemporary German writers, such as the critics for the Kölnische Zeitung, Leipziger Zeitung, and Weser-Zeitung, compared Melchers' religious paintings with similar works by Uhde, none of them actually put Melchers' work in the context of Renan's La Vie de Jésus. (The first critic discussed The Nativity, the second Supper at

¹⁹ The specific inspiration for Uhde may have been an incident when he saw children at a Bavarian village school approaching a pastor to receive a blessing. Uhde's friend, the painter Bruno Piglhein, apparently saw Suffer the Little Children to Come Unto Me in progress and suggested that the figure of Christ should be substituted for the image of the clergyman (G. M., "Ein Maler des Lichtes: Aus dem Leben Fritz von Uhdes," Velhagen und Klasings Monatshefte 21 [September 1907]: 82). See also Anne Mochon, "Fritz von Uhde and Plein-Air Painting in Munich, 1880-1900" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1973), 139-140.

²⁰ Richard Graul, "Fritz von Uhde," Die graphischen Künste, 15 (1892): 113 and Bayrischer Kurier, 12 September 1893. See also Brand, 63.

²¹ Mochon, 165.

Emmaus, and the third The Last Supper.)²² Melchers' library at Belmont included an 1892 edition of La Vie de Jésus, and it is even possible that Melchers met Renan through the French painter, Puvis de Chavannes, who "was Melchers' closest associate among the French artists."²³ Christian Brinton wrote

Between Puvis de Chavannes and Melchers the most cordial relations were always maintained, the younger man often visiting . . . his studio in the place Pigalle. It was Puvis's custom to receive a few chosen intimates. . . . [Melchers can never] fail to recall with genuine emotion the day he was named a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour when Puvis affectionately gave him his own cross, with its bit of faded ribbon, which he himself received years before from the hand of Napoleon III.²⁴

Puvis and Renan knew each other well; the painter was an admirer of the philosopher and Renan's son, Ary, was Puvis' student.²⁵

Not only was Melchers familiar with the contemporary schools of German religious art, but his training in Europe had certainly included

²² Kölnische Zeitung, 10 May 1891; Leipziger Zeitung, 13 June 1898; and Weser-Zeitung, 3 May 1912. These and other comments cited later are from the numerous French and German exhibition reviews at Belmont which were sent to Melchers from European clipping services, such as Argus de la Presse (Paris) and Adolf Schustermann's Zeitungs- und Zeitungsnachrichten Bureau (Berlin). These reviews reported on many of Melchers' important works from the mid-1880s to early-1900s, including The Nativity, Suppers at Emmaus and The Last Suppers. Unfortunately, in most cases, the sources were not fully documented, titles were often omitted, and the articles were sometimes incomplete. Original copies of the publications cannot be located in the United States.

²³ Joseph G. Dreiss, Gari Melchers. His Works in the Belmont Collection (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1984), 22.

²⁴ Brinton, 222.

²⁵ Aimée B. Price, "Puvis de Chavannes: A Study of the Easel Paintings and a Catalogue of the Painted Works" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1972), 52.

the study of Old Master paintings. In addition, the last quarter of the 19th century saw the publication of many illustrated books on the depiction of Christ in art.²⁶ Contemporary periodicals included numerous essays on religious art of the time, along with reviews of such paintings from exhibitions in Berlin, Düsseldorf, Munich, and Stuttgart.²⁷

Besides his awareness of the contemporary popularity of religious art, as reflected in exhibitions and commentary, Melchers may have been influenced by specific comments of Theodore Child. The latter criticized Melchers' entries at the Paris Universal Exposition of 1889 because his subject matter consisted mostly of Dutch peasants. Child suggested that Melchers paint subjects of an elevated nature similar to George Hitchcock's Annunciation (1877, Collection of G. McCulloch, London) which the critic had admired at the Exposition.

There certainly was also a commercial reason for Melchers' investigation of religious themes. He was aware of the opportunity to sell such paintings to his German audience, having recently begun to exhibit

²⁶ In the 1860s and 1870s, a number of such works had been published, including Anna B. Jameson's The History of Our Lord as Exemplified in Works of Art 2 vols. (London: Longman et al., 1864); Christoph E. Luthardt's Die modernen Darstellungen des Leben Jesu (Leipzig: Colani und Keim, 1864); and Edward Eggleston's Christ in Art (New York: J. B. Ford and Co., 1875).

²⁷ In the period between 1886 and 1891, there appeared more than twenty studies about religious art in Christliches Kunstblatt, Die Grenzboten, Die Kunst für Alle, Die Nation, Westermanns illustrierte deutsche Monatshefte, and Zeitschrift für christliche Kunst by such critics as Otto Brandes, Albert Fuhrmans, Cornelius Gurlitt, Hermann Helferich, Hermann Lübke, Friedrich Pecht, Adolf Rosenberg, and Robert Schwann.

his works in Germany.²⁸ Andrew D. White, one of Melchers' American supporters, had suggested in 1889 that the artist should pursue these themes. After White had seen Melchers' work at the Universal Exposition, he wrote the artist proposing that he not restrict himself to Dutch themes, but to "general religious subjects" as well.²⁹ Melchers may have taken White's suggestion to heart because he believed that White had influence in recommending paintings for America's public collections.³⁰

There is no evidence, however, of any strong personal religious commitment behind Melchers' decision to depict biblical scenes. The passport of his father, Julius Theodore, now at Belmont, reveals he was a Catholic. Apparently, Julius Theodore later converted to Protestantism, and Melchers and his siblings were raised as Lutherans. There is no documentation in the archives at Belmont of any religious affiliation for

²⁸ Melchers' records indicate that, from 1888 until the early 1910s, more than one hundred of his paintings were exhibited in German cities, including Berlin (sixty-five), Dresden (ten), Munich (eleven), and Weimar (twenty). At the Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung of 1900, for example, he exhibited forty paintings, of which he sold ten, including Supper at Emmaus and St. Gudule. In contrast, during the period of 1888-1908, Melchers exhibited only eighteen paintings at the Paris Salon. He did not submit works to the 1897, 1900, 1901, 1903, 1904, and 1907 Salons (Gross, "Paris Years," in Mary Washington College Museum, Fredericksburg, 1973, 18).

²⁹ Andrew D. White, letter to Gari Melchers, 29 August 1889.

³⁰ A letter from White to Melchers some years later stated that White had written the Carnegie Gallery of Art in Pittsburgh and the Metropolitan Gallery of Art in New York about Melchers' The Communion and was happy to report that if "the Carnegie Gallery at Pittsburg [sic] . . . does not take it [The Communion] the other [the Metropolitan Gallery of Art] may do so. I would like to see the picture where others could obtain from it the enjoyment which I myself had at Paris" (Andrew D. White, letter to Gari Melchers, 1 May 1897).

Melchers, and it has been suggested that he became an agnostic in later life. Corinne Melchers, was an Episcopalian, but she did not attend church services regularly.³¹

The Nativity in German Art

Since much contemporary literature dealt with the Nativity of Christ, it is not surprising that Melchers chose it for his first religious theme.³² Henry Van Dyke wrote in 1885 that, after its prominence in European art during the 13th to 16th centuries, the Nativity as a subject was largely ignored. In the 19th century, however, there was a revival of the theme in Germany. Among the painters investigating it were Friedrich Overbeck, as well as such Late Nazarene painters as Karl Müller, under whom Melchers studied. Van Dyke regretted that American painters were not successful in depicting Nativity scenes. He noted that in 1883 Harper and Brothers organized a prize competition on the theme of Christmas. Although six hundred entries were submitted, the jury could not find

³¹ According to Mrs. S. Taylor Scott, a family friend of the Melchers in Falmouth, Virginia, Melchers believed in God but did not follow any particular faith. A memorial service held for Melchers at Belmont in 1932 two days after his death was secular in nature (Joanna D. Catron, Assistant Director of Belmont, letter to author, 26 July 1989).

³² Contemporary authors who wrote about the Nativity in art include Henry Van Dyke, "The Nativity in Art" in Harper's New Monthly Magazine 72 (December 1885): 3-24; Friedrich Pecht, "Wereschagins Heilige Familie" in Die Kunst für Alle 1 (15 April 1886): 201; Lew Wallace, "The Boyhood of Christ" in Harper's New Monthly Magazine 74 (December 1886): 3-18; Max Schmid, Die Geburt Christi in der bildende Kunst (Stuttgart: 1890); and "Die Geburt Christi in der bildende Kunst" in Christliches Kunstblatt 33 (1891): 122-25 by an unnamed critic.

a single one of the designs above the level of sheer mediocrity [and the collection of drawings was] an indescribable farrago of absurdities . . . and [included] everything . . . but the Nativity.³³

Van Dyke encouraged American artists to paint worthy images of the Nativity, because

a great and glad welcome [was] waiting for the artist who shall . . . make us sharers in the joy of the Holy Night.³⁴

Melchers, who was not among the participants in Harper's competition, may have accepted Van Dyke's challenge and undertook to paint a convincing Nativity scene.

An examination of Franz Hanfstaengl's Religiöse Bilder shows the extent to which the Nativity theme was utilized by German artists of Melchers' time.³⁵ The American was very likely aware of this popularity of the Nativity and was inspired to create his own version of the subject.

The Nativity scenes by 19th-century German artists fall into three stylistic categories. The works of such Late Nazarene artists as Heinrich Lauenstein and Johann von Schraudolph were painted in an academic

³³ Van Dyke, 33.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Hanfstaengl reproduced such scenes by Ferdinand Brütt (Christmas Eve), Franz von Defregger (Adoration of the Shepherds), Martin Feuerstein (Holy Night), Walter Firlé (Adoration of the Magi and Faith), Luma von Flesch-Brunningen, Heinrich Hofmann (Holy Night), Heinrich Lauenstein (A Cradle Song), Georg Friedrich Papperitz (Adoration), August Roeseler (Adoration of the Shepherds), Johann von Schraudolph (The Nativity), Wilhelm Süss (The Nativity), Fritz von Uhde (Adoration of the Magi), and Alexander Zick (The Nativity) in Religiöse Bilder (Hanfstaengl, Religiöse Bilder, figs. 23, 29, 38, 41-43, 67, 97, 122, 134, 144, 158, 165, and 172). The book did not mention dates and whereabouts of these paintings, and they are unknown today.

manner and their figures, costumes, and poses were based on Renaissance prototypes. Moderate Realist painters like Franz von Defregger and August Roeseler used contemporary peasants as models. These artists, however, idealized their figures rather than depicting them realistically. The extreme Realist artists, including Uhde and Ernst Zimmermann (Adoration of the Shepherds, 1883, Neue Pinakothek, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich), also painted their figures as contemporary people wearing 19th-century costumes, but depicted them as homely, ordinary individuals.

Among those many paintings by contemporary German artists who depicted the Nativity theme, perhaps Uhde's Holy Night can best be compared to Melchers' The Nativity. As noted above, Holy Night was exhibited at the Internationale Kunstausstellung in Munich, in which Melchers participated. The Uhde work was discussed by Richard Muther in the Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst in 1888, prior to 1891 when Melchers painted The Nativity. In his review, Muther wrote that "since Rembrandt no religious painting of the same intimate charm has been painted."³⁶

When comparing Melchers' The Nativity (fig. III-2) with the central panel of Uhde's Holy Night (fig. III-3), it seems obvious that Melchers was greatly influenced by this German artist. Like Uhde, he did not idealize the Holy Family and painted his version in a loose, non-academic manner which contrasted to the more conservative approach of many late

³⁶ Richard Muther, "Die internationalen Kunstausstellung in München," Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst 23 (1888): 284-92.

19th-century Germans. Melchers appears to have chosen Uhde's Holy Night as a model, despite the fact that the work was the most controversial religious picture the latter ever painted. A typical example of the negative reaction to Uhde's painting is the statement of the German critic known only as "Sägmüller" who wrote "In a so-called Holy Night, Uhde has reached . . . the deepest pit of triviality."³⁷

Although Uhde's contemporaries recognized that Holy Night was based on Rembrandt's The Adoration of the Shepherds (1646, Alte Pinakothek, Munich), it drew vehement protests from Catholic and Protestant critics. The main objection of the Roman Catholic reviewers was that Uhde presented Mary as a proletarian farm maid in an extremely naturalistic way. Such a depiction was not in accordance with the beliefs of the Catholic cult of the Madonna which, since the 1854 proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, had become very strong in Bavaria. The Protestant critics also initially rejected Holy Night because of Uhde's new and unusual way of depicting Mary, which was in sharp contrast with the contemporary representation of her by the Late Nazarene and moderate Realist painters. Under the pressure of scathing criticism, Uhde repainted Holy Night twice (1888-1889).³⁸

Melchers' choice of emulating Uhde almost certainly would not have

³⁷ Sägmüller, "Eindrücke von der Münchener Kunstausstellung," Archive für christliche Kunst 6 (1886): 105. See also Brand, 255.

³⁸ Friedrich Gross, in "Wahrheit und Wirklichkeit," Hamburger Kunsthalle, Luther und die Folgen für die Kunst, exhibition catalogue, essays by Werner Hofmann et al. Hamburg, November 11, 1983-January 8, 1984, 556.

pleased such American writers as Theodore Child, who suggested that Melchers not depict "the rendering of commonplace features and ordinary characteristics" but rather "a beautiful invention."³⁹ Child's thoughts on the nature of contemporary figural art were shared by two other American critics, Arthur Fish and Lionel G. Robinson. The latter believed that a painter should eliminate "ugliness" from his work "without any sacrifice of sentiment or violation of nature," and depict them in picturesque costumes.⁴⁰ Fish compared George Hitchcock's idealized figures of Mary with Uhde's representation of the Virgin and implied that he found Hitchcock's Mary acceptable but not that of Uhde.

[The Virgin in Hitchcock's The Annunciation] is a Dutch peasant girl, clothed in the picturesque national costume of the Low Country, standing amidst surroundings such as may be seen any day in the neighborhood of Egmond. . . . His Mary is not that of . . . Uhde. [Hitchcock] does not portray his model; he infuses the features with a sentiment at once inspired and refined . . . [which] lends emphasis to the idea that Mary is not a Jewish maiden but the "Mother of God" for all times.⁴¹

Although Child, Fish, and Robinson rejected the interpretation of Mary found in Uhde's Holy Night, Melchers nevertheless decided to emulate the German painter.

It is possible that Melchers and Uhde became acquainted as early as 1885 in Paris or in Munich in 1888. In any case, in April of 1892, the

³⁹ Theodore Child, "American Artists at the Paris Exhibition," Harper's New Monthly Magazine 79 (September 1889): 510.

⁴⁰ Lionel G. Robinson, "Mr. George Hitchcock and American Art," The Art Journal (London) 53 (October 1891): 295.

⁴¹ Arthur Fish, "George Hitchcock: Painter," The Magazine of Art 22 (October 1898): 579.

German invited Melchers to become a correspondent-member of the newly founded Munich Secession.⁴² Perhaps Melchers also was encouraged by more progressive critics, such as the correspondent for The Art Journal known only as J. B., who endorsed the "new movement" in art, which he said was represented by Uhde's biblical works, and who condemned art which was "lifeless" and "untruthful," such as Mihaly von Munkacsy's Christ Before Pilate (1880-1881, National Gallery, Budapest).⁴³

Melchers' The Nativity: Analysis and Comment

Melchers painted at least two large finished versions of The Nativity and two studies in oil of the subject. Except for certain details and some aspects in the interpretations of the figures, the two finished works and the studies are all quite similar in composition. One of the large paintings, now at Belmont (fig. III-2, ca. 1891), is probably the second of the two finished versions; the other was known to be in the possession of a Dr. Arendt in 1928 (fig. III-5, ca. 1890).⁴⁴ Both studies are in private

⁴² Uhde informed Melchers that he and several other Munich artists, including Paul Hoecker and Gotthard K hl, had withdrawn from the Society of Artists of Munich and had founded the Munich Secession. Melchers was asked to join this new association as a correspondent-member (Fritz von Uhde et al., letter to Gari Melchers, 17 April 1892) but it is not known if he formally accepted this "invitation." According to Joseph G. Dreiss, the artist became a member of the Munich Secession in 1911 (Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 181).

⁴³ J. B., "Mary at the House of Elizabeth. From the Picture by George Hitchcock," The Art Journal (London) 57 (July 1895): 221.

⁴⁴ The exact date of Dr. Arendt's purchase of The Nativity is unknown, although the sale probably took place after 1896; when queried that year by Sheridan Ford if he had sold his painting, Melchers replied

collections; the first is owned by Mrs. Rose Karam of Newport News, Virginia (fig. III-6, ca. 1890) and the other by Dr. Robert Coles of Concord, Massachusetts (fig. III-7, ca. 1890).⁴⁵ In addition, there are several sketches at Belmont of the Nativity figures including a watercolor of a model of Mary (fig. III-8, ca. 1890).

On September 17, 1933, the Detroit Free Press announced that The Nativity was in Detroit.

This canvas by the world-famous Detroit artist is attributed to the middle period and was painted in Germany [sic]. The painting is called "The Nativity," and may be seen at the Thomson Galleries in the David Whitney Building. The work, which is likely to remain in Detroit permanently, was brought to the United States only several months ago, according to gallery officials.⁴⁶

The newspaper included a reproduction of the work, which matches the published illustration of the Arendt version. It is assumed that Dr. Arendt

he had not (Sheridan Ford, "The Learned Longshoreman," Detroit Tribune, 15 March 1896). The Arendt The Nativity was reproduced in Gari Melchers, Painter. Foreword by Henriette Lewis-Hind (New York: William E. Rudge, 1928), fig. [44].

⁴⁵ Melchers did not date any of the studies or the final versions of The Nativity which has caused disagreement among present-day scholars trying to identify them. The Belmont version was dated 1889 by Bruce M. Donaldson (Bruce M. Donaldson, "An Appreciation of Gari Melchers [1860-1932], in The Virginia Museum of Arts, Gari Melchers. A Memorial Exhibition of His Work, exhibition catalogue. Richmond, 1938, 30). Joseph G. Dreiss believed that it was executed in ca. 1891 (Dreiss, 94). The catalogue of Graham Galleries indicates that the Karam study dates from ca. 1900-1905 (Janice C. Oresman, "Gari Melchers, 1860-1932. American Painter," in Graham Gallery. Gari Melchers, 1860-1932. American Painter, exhibition catalogue. New York, September 26-October 28, 1978, 23). A date of ca. 1890 seems more likely for the Karam work as it appears to be a preliminary study for the finished versions of The Nativity.

⁴⁶ "Gari Melchers Painting on Exhibition," Detroit Free Press, Sunday edition, 17 September 1933, section III, 14.

or his estate consigned the picture to the Detroit gallery.⁴⁷

In the study of The Nativity owned by Mrs. Karam, the members of the Holy Family are placed in the near foreground of the composition in an undefined interior with Joseph looking at Mary. They were painted in a traditional manner, wearing long robes. She and the Christ-Child are painted with halos while Joseph is not. A large copper water jug and wash tub, which appear to be late 19th-century Dutch artifacts, are placed at Mary's left.

In the study of The Nativity owned by Dr. Robert Coles, Melchers not only altered the position of Joseph's head, but also gave him a halo. He now looks away from Mary and stares at the Infant Christ, a compositional change which helps to make the child the focus of the painting. In addition, the figures are now in a specific interior; a half-opened door is visible in the background. Outside, it appears to be night. These details suggest that the Coles study is later than the Karam version, because the former is closer to the two finished paintings.

Melchers added a number of other pictorial details to the Arendt/Thomson version which were not present in the Coles study, including a ladder against the wall opposite Joseph, a short beam protruding from the wall (replacing what seems to be a hayloft in the

⁴⁷ The correct date for the Arendt/Thomson version may be 1890 or earlier. It was exhibited at the Salon of 1891, and most contemporary comments on The Nativity appeared between May and July 1891 in response to Melchers' Salon entry. It may well be the case that Melchers began The Nativity following both Uhde's exhibition in Munich of Holy Night in the summer of 1888 and Theodore Child's discussion of Melchers' art in September 1889 in Harper's New Monthly Magazine.

Coles study), and four stone steps leading to an open door. In addition to being decorative devices, these reinforce the setting as the stable of the traditional Nativity, while the open door invites visitors to pay homage to the newborn Saviour. Because Melchers excluded such standard devices as angels, shepherds, and farm animals, his interpretation of the Nativity had a less traditional, more modern look. Through the open door, two typical white plastered Egmond houses with red roofs are visible, further setting the scene in the 19th century.⁴⁸ Also, it now being daytime, an additional light source is provided and helps to clarify the contemporary setting.

Although it is difficult to properly compare the Belmont and the Arendt/Thomson versions of The Nativity, because the latter work is only known from reproductions, several compositional and stylistic differences are conspicuous. The ladder is omitted and several objects, such as the lantern and manger, were either painted on a much smaller scale or shown in different locations in the Belmont version, probably to simplify the composition and focus on the figures. Only the Christ-Child was painted with a halo in both finished works.

When comparing Melchers' The Nativity with Uhde's Holy Night, it can be seen that the American artist adopted several of Uhde's ideas: the almost barren interior, the daylight setting, Mary as an ordinary-looking

⁴⁸ Such houses can be seen in a contemporary photograph (fig. III-9) in E. Konijn's collection of late 19th-century postcards of Egmond (E. Konijn, Oude Ansichten van de Egmonden [Schoorl: Uitgeverij Pirola, 1972], 56). The white houses with their bright red roofs, typical of Egmond aan Zee, obviously appealed to both George Hitchcock and Melchers. Around 1890, Melchers painted Egmond by the Sea (Belmont) and George Hitchcock created Red Roofs (date and whereabouts unknown).

woman, and Joseph in a contemplative mood. Melchers also borrowed the burning lantern, the light source in the background, and the ladder placed on the left side of the composition.

Melchers first worked on the concept of The Nativity in France, but he probably painted both final versions of it in Egmond aan Zee. The setting of the work may have been the workshop of the local blacksmith Jan Karels,⁴⁹ and the two wheels behind the figure of the Virgin may derive from a hand or dog cart left for repairs by one of Karels' customers. Melchers became acquainted with the blacksmith in 1887 when he asked Karels to pose for one of his studies for The Pilots. Karels later posed for The Smithy, Young and Old, The Last Supper, and The Supper at Emmaus. The physiognomy of the man who posed for Joseph resembles that of Jacob Prins, a local man who later sat for one of the apostles in Melchers' The Last Supper.

Melchers appears to have referred to the works of the Italian Old Masters for his concept of both versions of The Nativity. He owned post cards of Last Suppers by Taddeo Gaddi, Domenico Ghirlandaio, Paolo Veronese, and Leonardo da Vinci showing figures wearing garments similar to Melchers' Joseph. Two other post cards which Melchers owned, one of a Bedouin mother and baby (fig. III-10) and the other of an etching by Rembrandt depicting the Virgin holding the Infant Christ in her arms (fig.

⁴⁹ On the back of a watercolor study for The Nativity, Melchers wrote "sketch for 'nativity'/done in France."

III-11), were the likely origins for Mary's attire.⁵⁰

Contemporary French critics were mostly favorable in their reviews of the Arendt/Thomson version of The Nativity which, together with The Choirmaster, and Embroiderer, were Melchers' Salon entries for 1891. The earliest of these reviews were written in May 1891. G. Javel wrote in La Petite Presse that Melchers had "peint une nativité admirable;" the correspondent for Gil Blas, known only as Maizewy, reviewed the painting as "tout à fait moderne;" and the critic for the Revue des Beaux-Arts, E. Lefebvre, found "La nativité . . . une oeuvre profondément émue et originale."⁵¹ Paul Mantz discussed The Nativity in the context of Dutch 17th-century art. Mantz believed that the idea of transferring biblical figures to a contemporary surrounding was a 17th-century Dutch concept which had been popularized by Rembrandt and that Melchers was indebted to the art of Rembrandt and of Gerard van Honthorst (a Dutch follower of Caravaggio, who had introduced the chiaroscuro technique to Rembrandt). Mantz appreciated the elimination of angels in The Nativity as part of Melchers' "réalisme que ne vient compromettre aucun idéal."⁵² The only known negative review of The Nativity came from the critic of

⁵⁰ These post cards are at Belmont.

⁵¹ G. Javel, La Petite Presse, 12 May 1891; Maizewy, "Les Etrangers," Gil Blas, 16 May 1891; and E. Lefebvre, Revue des Beaux-Arts, 11 July 1891. The reviews and sources, as well as similar references which follow, were provided by the clipping services to which Melchers subscribed, and titles of articles and further documentation are not available. See footnote 22.

⁵² Paul Mantz, Le Temps, 28 June 1891.

Le Soleil who wrote "M. Melchers nous a produit une Nativité qui n'est rien . . . qu'une vulgaire scene toute moderne."⁵³

In 1896, an American reviewer, Sheridan Ford also admired The Nativity upon seeing it at the Paris Salon. He complimented Melchers for omitting nimbi and adoring angels and shepherds because "the effect is more touching in their absence." He wrote that Melchers achieved a "unity of impression, and as the treatment is refined and reticent, the result is distinguished and pleasing." Ford suggested that one of Detroit's affluent citizens should buy The Nativity and donate it to the Institute of Arts because it "would be an acquisition of importance and do honor to the donor."⁵⁴

Neither the French critics nor Ford, however, put The Nativity in the context of contemporary religious art or mentioned the connection between this painting and Uhde's work. The correspondent for the Kölnische Zeitung did detect Uhde's impact on Melchers and used the term "painter of the poor" to designate The Nativity.⁵⁵ Yet, in comparing Uhde's Holy Night with Melchers' The Nativity, Melchers demonstrates that he was not an extreme Realist. Uhde depicted Mary in Holy Night in such an unidealistic way that the critic of the Feuilleton der Wiener

⁵³ Le Soleil, 26 May 1891.

⁵⁴ Sheridan Ford, "The Learned Longshoremen," Detroit Tribune, 15 March 1896.

⁵⁵ Kölnische Zeitung, 10 May 1891.

compared her with a "factory worker" or "prostitute."⁵⁶ Rather, Melchers was more a moderate Realist, similar to Walter Firlé. In Faith (fig. III-12, 1894, Museum der bildende Kunst, Leipzig), Firlé placed the Madonna and Child, adored by poor villagers, in a late 19th-century barn. He did not fully idealize his figures, but he also did not depict them as realistically as Uhde. Melchers portrayed Joseph and Mary as late 19th-century peasants, even less idealized than those of Firlé, but his Mary was not quite -- to use Albert Fuhrmans' words -- as "repulsive" or "ugly" as Uhde's Mary.⁵⁷ Melchers was more "modern" than Firlé in that his figures were more realistically rendered, but not quite "toute moderne" as the critic for Le Soleil suggested.⁵⁸ Melchers remained a "juste-milieu" painter, avoiding controversy by tempering Uhde's radical approach and portraying his Madonna as a pretty, if not idealized, woman.

Compared to similar works by such contemporary German painters as Wilhelm von Diez (Adoration of the Shepherds, 1883, Collection S. Schön, Worms), Heinrich Hofmann (Holy Night),⁵⁹ and Ernst Zimmermann (Adoration of the Shepherds, 1883, Neue Pinakothek, Munich), Melchers' The Nativity is compositionally less elaborate with fewer figures. The compositions of these German artists showed considerable depth of space,

⁵⁶ Feuilleton der Wiener, 18 April 1889. See also Brand, 108.

⁵⁷ Fuhrmans, 391.

⁵⁸ Le Soleil, 26 May 1891.

⁵⁹ Heinrich Hofmann's Holy Night is reproduced in Franz Hanfstaengl's Religiöse Bilder, p. 67.

were painted on a larger scale, and include a large number of figures of different ages in many poses.⁶⁰ Melchers, on the other hand, painted only three figures and placed them in the foreground. In contrast to these and other German painters of religious scenes, including Otto Seitz (The First Kiss, ca. 1891, location and whereabouts unknown),⁶¹ Melchers omitted most of the conventional religious imagery (e.g., the angels and putti) in The Nativity, retaining only a halo for his Christ-Child.

The Supper at Emmaus in Art

In 1956 Lucien Rudrauf located more than two hundred seventy examples of paintings of the Supper at Emmaus from all countries and all periods. The earliest depiction appeared in a sixth-century German manuscript and the latest example was a Futuristic work from 1950 by the French painter Alfred Manessier.⁶² Most of these depict Jesus with

⁶⁰ Several German painters of the period, including Walter Firlé (Faith, 1894, Museum der bildende Kunst, Leipzig), Luma von Flesch-Brunningen, and Georg Friedrich Papperitz (both painted an Adoration), as well as Fritz von Uhde, painted triptychs depicting a Nativity scene in the center and adoring angels or shepherds on the two side wings. Flesch-Brunningen's and Papperitz' versions were reproduced in Religiöse Bilder, pp. 41 and 122.

⁶¹ An illustration of Otto Seitz The First Kiss appeared in Die Kunst für Alle, 6 (15 September 1891): facing page 368. It shows a seated Mary holding the Infant-Christ in her arms and kissing Him, while Joseph stands behind her in the background in what appears to be a stable. Four cherubim are included in the scene.

⁶² Lucien Rudrauf, Le Repas d'Emmaüs. Etude d'un Thème Plastique et de ses Variations en Peinture et en Sculpture 2 vols. (Paris: Nouvelle Editions Latines, 1955), 2:figs. 1 and 83.

the two pilgrims mentioned in St. Luke.⁶³ Christ most often appears in the center behind a long table facing the viewer, flanked by the two pilgrims. In other canvases, He is depicted in profile, sitting at one end of a table, usually on the right, facing his two companions. In both formats, a servant is often included as well. Christ is usually shown holding bread, broken or about to be broken, or presenting a piece to one of the pilgrims. In many of the works, the two pilgrims appear awestruck upon recognizing Jesus after the blessing and breaking of the bread, while other versions depict the men quietly listening to their still unrecognized guest. In most, Christ is identified as a supernatural figure in a traditional white robe and with either a halo or with diffused light behind His head to suggest his divine nature. Most artists contrasted the two pilgrims as an old and a young man, although there was no biblical basis for these choices.

Among the German artists listed by Rudrauf were Rudolf Eichstädt, Gebhardt Fugel, Karl Müller, and Fritz von Uhde.⁶⁴ Rudrauf did not include the dates and locations of these artists' works and, except for Uhde's painting, they are unknown. Frederic W. Farrar wrote in 1894, four years before Melchers painted his first Supper at Emmaus, that "No scene in the Gospels records of the Risen Christ has been more popular

⁶³ St. Luke 24:29-31.

⁶⁴ Rudrauf, 2:figs. 257, 264, 110-111, and 237.

in Art than the supper with the two disciples at Emmaus."⁶⁵ The popularity of Supper at Emmaus among painters was due to its illustration of one of the most important events in Christian theology, the institution of the Eucharist by the Resurrected Christ among ordinary people, shortly before his Ascension. It is, therefore, not surprising that Melchers chose to paint it.

Melchers' Emmaus Paintings: Description and Criticism

Melchers painted three versions of the Supper at Emmaus. According to records at Belmont, he exhibited his first Supper at Emmaus (fig. III-17) in Paris at the Salon of 1898 and then in Berlin at the Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung of 1900. This painting was sold during the Kunstausstellung, together with St. Gudule, to Baroness Margaretha von Ende Krupp. It was known in Germany as Christus und die Pilger von Emmaus and hereinafter will be referred to as the Krupp Emmaus.⁶⁶ Melchers may have begun the second version in late 1902, because he wrote his future wife Corinne that he had just started another painting

⁶⁵ Frederic W. Farrar, The Life of Christ as Represented in Art (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1894), 448.

⁶⁶ The Krupp Emmaus and St. Gudule were given in 1906 to Baroness Magaretha's eldest daughter, Bertha Krupp von Bohlen von Halbach, and in 1965 became part of the Gesellschaft Kruppsche Gemäldesammlung in Essen. When the Gesellschaft was liquidated in 1980, the Krupp Emmaus was sold through the auction firm of August Bödiger of Bonn and its present location is unknown. St. Gudule was given to Baroness Bertha Krupp's grandniece, Mrs. Regina Trapp of New York (Jürgen Brasche, the former curator of the Gesellschaft Kruppsche Gemäldesammlung, letter to author, 8 June 1985).

of the Supper at Emmaus (fig. III-18, ca. 1902-1903, Belmont).

You asked what else I was painting: here enclosed is a suggestion of the new picture just begun [fig. III-19]. I had to make a new study of . . . Christ for . . . this "Supper at Emmaus" . . . the famous No. 2 in composition.⁶⁷

Melchers must have painted his final version of this subject a decade later because the German critic Hans T. Kroeber wrote in 1912 that the artist had just commenced a third Emmaus painting (fig. III-20, ca. 1912, Belmont).⁶⁸

In the Krupp Emmaus, Christ is painted in profile seated at the right end of a table, opposite an old pilgrim and his young companion, and Melchers portrays the very moment when Christ breaks the bread. In the two later Emmaus paintings, Christ is seated in the center behind a table, flanked by two younger pilgrims and the moment depicted is shortly after the breaking of the bread.

Two small preliminary studies in oil and tempera on canvas, now at Belmont, show Melchers' basic composition for the Krupp Emmaus. In both instances he depicted Christ in a long white robe, with his head painted without recognizable facial features. In the first study, Melchers depicted one of the pilgrims, who sits directly across from Jesus, in what seems to

⁶⁷ Gari Melchers, letter to Corinne Lawton Mackall, [ca. 1903]. This letter is not dated, but the context indicates that it was written prior to their marriage in April 1903. Melchers had proposed to Corinne in December of 1902, and, in this letter, he discusses a house he had rented for them to occupy following their impending marriage.

⁶⁸ Hans T. Kroeber, "Gari Melchers," Westermanns Monatshefte 112 (April 1912): 195. Except for the figure of Christ and the addition of a low chest with a large vase on it at the left of the composition, the third version is almost an exact replica of the second work.

be a 19th-century fisherman's costume with elbow-length sleeves and knee breeches (fig. III-21, Belmont, ca. 1898). The other pilgrim appears to wear a robe similar to that of Christ and sits behind the table, left of center. A servant stands behind his left shoulder. All three figures look at Christ. The light source, next to what appears to be a projecting mantelpiece, is behind Christ. Melchers probably executed this study in his studio in Egmond aan Zee because his wife, Corinne, later described the room to Julia Sully.⁶⁹

Melchers seems to have used different models for the pilgrims in the second study (fig. III-22, ca. 1898, Belmont). The figure who sits opposite Christ is a young man, who is now wearing a long grayish robe. The other pilgrim is an old and bald man, who is identified as Jan Karels,⁷⁰ the local blacksmith, who was one of Melchers favorite male models in the period 1888-1905. The servant wears a white Egmond house cap and stands behind Karels and in front of a cupboard with bottles and other utensils on top. The models who posed for the pilgrims in both studies were big, strongly built men. The model who posed for the younger

⁶⁹ Julia Sully, "Painting 'Last Supper' Made Under Odd Conditions. Mrs. Melchers Tells How Husband Did Greatly Admired Work," Richmond News-Leader, 14 March 1936, 9.

⁷⁰ Ronald van Vleuten, "Gari Melchers in Egmond. About the Exhibition," typescript, 1980, 9. This eleven-page report was written by Vleuten following the exhibition of forty-eight photographs of Melchers' paintings at the community center in Egmond aan de Hoef during the weekend of January 12-13, 1980.

pilgrim in the Krupp Emmaus is yet another, slimmer model,⁷¹ and has been identified as Andries Duinmeier, a local man from Egmond aan de Hoef.⁷² It is not known who posed for the figure of Christ in the Krupp Emmaus. Patricia Marshall and Sylvia Payne, however, noted that Melchers' friend, the painter James Jebusa Shannon, executed Melchers' portrait in profile in 1898 (fig. III-23, ca. 1898, Belmont). They believed that this rendition with the addition of longer hair may be the basis for Melchers' head of Christ.⁷³

The earliest sketch for Melchers' second Supper at Emmaus is a study in ink showing three men around an oval-shaped table (fig. III-24, ca. 1902-1903, Belmont) with the pilgrim on the left kneeling in front of

⁷¹ The models for the pilgrims were probably fishermen who posed for Melchers during winter, off-season when work at sea was limited. This livelihood explains their muscular physiques and the fact that Melchers was not able to work consistently with the same models. It also suggests that Melchers must have made the first, if not both, of the studies in winter of 1897-1898. By the time that he was ready to paint the final work, probably in spring (he exhibited the Krupp Emmaus at the Salon in May 1898), the men were not available because the new fishing season had begun. Melchers, therefore, had to find other models. Such was also the case when Melchers was painting his Last Suppers. Corinne Melchers wrote her mother that Melchers could not continue because his models were working at sea "Well, last week Melchers's models all went off fishing so he had to stop the big picture [The Last Supper]" (Corinne Melchers, letter to Lulu Mackall, [ca. 1905]).

⁷² Vleuten, 9.

⁷³ Sylvia Payne and Patricia Marshall, "Melchers' 'Last Supper' Series," in Mary Washington College Museum, Gari Melchers (1860-1932). Selections from the Mary Washington College Collection, exhibition catalogue, essays by Leslie L. Gross et al. Fredericksburg, Virginia, 1973, 22. On the back of James Jebusa Shannon's portrait of Melchers the latter annotated "Head of Gari Melchers/by J.J. Shannon-/study for Supper at Emmaus-/owned by Krupp in Essen-/G.M."

Christ. Melchers also made an ink drawing of the head of Christ after an unknown source. The "suggestion of the new picture just begun," which Melchers had sketched in his letter to Corinne was more detailed and probably was based on a final study (whereabouts unknown). Only the identity of the semi-bald pilgrim who sits on the right is known; he is identified as Albert Wijker.⁷⁴

The Krupp Emmaus is the most detailed and finished of the three versions. In it Melchers included many small objects, including two ceramic bottles, a decorative plate, and a candlestick with a half-burned candle on top of a cupboard in the background; a jacket and a lantern hanging on a large hook behind the younger pilgrim (Duinmeier); fruit, small white plates, a spoon, a vase, and a jug on the undraped table; and a traveler's hat and knapsack at the pilgrim's feet, which identify him as such. These many props apparently were included to give a more visually enlivened quality to the work, and their introduction is consistent with Melchers' style in many of his earlier Egmond peasant subjects. They appear to be contemporary artifacts, probably belonging to the artist. The figure of Christ is idealized and depicted in a traditional white garment, while a nail wound is clearly visible on his left hand. The two pilgrims wear old, frayed costumes, which appear to be typical 19th-century garb,

⁷⁴ Vleuten, 5. Albert Wijker was one of Melchers' favorite male models of the late 1890s-early 1900s. Wijker posed for Dutchman with a Pipe, Peasant with a Bowl, and for "Judas" in The Last Supper.

and the servant wears contemporary Egmond indoor clothes.⁷⁵ This juxtaposition of costumes helps to underscore Jesus' divinity and the fact that he has returned to the contemporary world from beyond the grave.

In the two later Supper at Emmaus works, only a few objects remain on the small dinner table -- a plate in front of Christ, a jug and two half-filled glasses, and a small loaf of bread, which Christ holds in his right hand -- and the figures are placed against an almost bare background. Consistent with the more impressionistic style of these versions, many of the details which have no direct bearing on the narrative are thus removed so that the focus of the composition is more clearly Jesus and his companions. The servant also is more involved in the event. In the Krupp Emmaus, she merely looks back without really comprehending what is happening. In both later versions, however, she shares in the amazement at the discovery of Christ's presence in the room, perhaps as a result of seeing one of the pilgrims reverently kneeling before Jesus. Again, Christ is dressed in a traditional robe, while the other figures wear 19th-century Egmond costumes.

Because the other two versions were not widely exhibited, almost all known commentaries on Melchers' Emmaus series concern the Krupp Emmaus. Most are exhibition reviews, written in response to the 1898 and

⁷⁵ Melchers must have painted the Krupp Emmaus in the studio which he shared with Hitchcock atop the dune in Egmond aan Zee. The upper left of the composition shows the corner of a mantelpiece and a window which correspond with details depicted in Melchers' Last Supper pictures. Through the correspondence of Melchers and his wife, it is known that these later works were painted in that studio.

1900 showings in Paris and Berlin, respectively. The French evaluations of 1898 were mostly negative, while the German critics of 1900 were more responsive. Subsequent reports were mainly written in the context of Melchers' oeuvre by a group of American writers which included his friends and supporters, and their comments were generous.

The French critics compared the Krupp Emmaus with Rembrandt's 1648 Louvre work and Pascal-Adolphe-Jean Dagnan-Bouveret's Supper at Emmaus (1898, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh), which also was exhibited at the Salon of 1898. These writers discussed the way Melchers painted the figures and criticized the artist's use of color. The critic for the Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme, J. P., for example, wrote

Le sujet des Pèlerins d'Emmaüs que Rembrandt a immortalisé ont tenté deux artistes de grande valeur; M. Dagnan-Bouveret, un Français, et M. Melchers, un Américain. Les pèlerins de ce dernier resteront sans doute en France, mais ceux de Dagnan passeront sûrement en Amérique où ils atteindront des prix fabuleux. On parle déjà d'une offre de 200,000 francs.⁷⁶

And the critic of the Nouvelle Revue Parisienne, noted

[Le Krupp Emmaus est] une scène plus simple; mais puisque son Christ n'a pas de pouvoir éclairant -- et c'est heureux, car le visage manque de majesté -- son tableau aurait gagné à être un peu moins clair, et surtout, moins bariolé. Il y a trop de couleurs.⁷⁷

The correspondent for the Petit Bleu, on the other hand, admired Melchers' figure of Christ whom he described as "d'un très beau sentiment," but rejected the depictions of the two pilgrims because they

⁷⁶ Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme, 30 April 1898.

⁷⁷ Nouvelle Revue Parisienne, 28 May 1898.

"sont mélodramatiques et déplaisants."⁷⁸

From 1888, when he was awarded a gold medal for The Sermon in Munich at the Internationale Kunstausstellung, Melchers became a regular at the annual exhibitions in Berlin and Munich during the last decade of the 19th century, which further enhanced his reputation in Germany. In 1900 he was honored with a "Sonderausstellung" (special exhibition) within the overall Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung and included the Krupp Emmaus in this show. As Paul Warncke explained, a "Sonderausstellung" had been granted only to one other foreign artist, the Belgian painter Emile Wauters.⁷⁹

As they had with The Nativity in 1891, German critics, such as Viktor von Kohlenegg, Karl Manzel, and Ludwig Wütsch, compared the Krupp Emmaus with Uhde's biblical paintings.⁸⁰ They did not, however, develop a comparison between the Krupp Emmaus and specific Uhde works. Some of these reviewers found Melchers too calculated, a shortcoming that was cited especially with regard to his colors. The critic of the Frankfurter Zeitung wrote that, in the Krupp Emmaus,

Melchers first put a bright green mug on the table, then placed a yellow orange next to it, and then clothed his models in colors so

⁷⁸ Petit Bleu, 3 May 1898.

⁷⁹ Paul Warncke, "Die grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung. I. Die Sonderausstellungen," Kunstchronik 11 (24 May 1900): 403.

⁸⁰ Viktor von Kohlenegg, "Die grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung," [1900], (source unknown); Karl Manzel, "Aus der Berliner Kunstausstellung 1900," Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten, 12 June 1900; and Ludwig Wütsch, "Die grosse Kunstausstellung," Vossische Zeitung, May 1900.

that everything would harmonize and look effective.⁸¹

Hans Rosenhagen was one of several German writers who were critical of Melchers' paintings. He wrote that Melchers' art lacked the "unutterable something" which causes the viewer to react with empathy. He regarded the presumed amazement of the two pilgrims in recognizing their Saviour in the Krupp Emmaus as superficial, and noted that "one need only to think of Uhde to realize Melchers' lack of feeling."⁸²

Warncke and Wütsch were among the more receptive critics. The former wrote that "Melchers' works reveal a strong personality," the figure of Christ was painted "marvelously, touching, and simple with a sublime expression of his divine face," and "the pilgrims [are] delicately differentiated and the expressions on their faces arresting."⁸³ A critic for the Dutch Algemeen Handelsblad, identified only as "N.," also was favorable and wrote that "Melchers was the most admired Dutch [sic] painter in the Berlin exhibition."⁸⁴ He commented that most of Melchers' works at the show "were pleasant and delightful due to the extraordinary bright, almost translucent colors." He found the Krupp Emmaus "excellent"

⁸¹ Frankfurter Zeitung, 28 June 1900.

⁸² Hans Rosenhagen, "Die grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung 1900," Die Kunst für Alle, 18 (15 June 1900), 427.

⁸³ Warncke, 403.

⁸⁴ Several writers, including Karl Scheffler and the critic who wrote for the Frankfurter Zeitung, referred to Melchers as a Dutch painter (Karl Scheffler, "Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung," Vossische Zeitung, 21 May 1912 and Frankfurter Zeitung, 28 June 1900). Perhaps this was because of Melchers' name, which could have been mistaken for Dutch, and because he was identified as a resident of Egmond for so many years.

and described the "ideal, ethereal figure of Christ as veiled with an aura of delicate mysteriousness, distinguishing him from a common man," while the two pilgrims were "two simple souls aptly rendered with such a truth that one can almost follow their thoughts."⁸⁵

Through 1912 German critics continued to mention the Krupp Emmaus in the context of Uhde's work, and Melchers' painting continued to receive mixed criticism. One negative comment came from Karl Scheffler in Vossische Zeitung that year

One has to imagine Melchers' paintings next to those of Manet, Leibl, Trübner, or Liebermann in order to realize that this man who can do everything is basically a fake.⁸⁶

The comments on the Krupp Emmaus made by the American critics were quite different. Emma Bullet, the critic for the Brooklyn Daily Eagle wrote

[Melchers' Emmaus is] a picture which inspires you with the desire to bow yourself to worship the transfigured Christ. . . . He is the Christ of the Bible before He was made effulgent with the artificial splendor which the church of the Middle Ages and Renaissance saw fit to envelop Him.⁸⁷

J. Brenchley found the figure of Christ

severely treated, [and] of a tender, attenuated type, [who] contrasts strongly with the two disciples, -- one tall and muscular, the other stout and gross, -- brilliantly painted with much impasto. . . .

She wrote that the colors in the painting were "brilliant, intensified by

⁸⁵ N., "Uit Duitschland," Algemeen Handelsblad, 9 June 1900.

⁸⁶ Scheffler, Vossische Zeitung, 21 May 1912.

⁸⁷ Emma Bullet, "At the Champ de Mars. Interesting Pictures in the Salon this Year," Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 29 May 1898, 18.

vivid spots of green and orange."⁸⁸ Brinton noted

It was not that Gari Melchers in any sense followed . . . [Uhde]; he merely formed part of a sympathetic movement which both glorified the workman and endeavored to restate Scriptural truths in the most unaffected of modern terms.⁸⁹

He ranked Melchers among the finest religious painters of all time, which included Rembrandt and Jean-François Millet. He wrote about the Krupp Emmaus that

It would indeed be difficult to point to anything . . . more devout, more natural in its outward setting or more reverent in its evocation, than his 'Supper at Emmaus,' where for a moment the Master seats Himself in the midst of these humble folk and breaks bread at their rude board.⁹⁰

Arthur Hoeber believed that Melchers painted the Krupp Emmaus because he wanted

to progress, to extend his horizon, and from the sobriety and solemnity of [Melchers' painting entitled] the Sermon, he directed his attention to the Supper at Emmaus.⁹¹

Charles Lewis Hind only mentioned that the Krupp Emmaus was one of Melchers "notable pictures,"⁹² although he later wrote that each of Melchers' three Emmaus versions "enthalls" and that "Ecstasy, that sign

⁸⁸ Brenchley, 148.

⁸⁹ Christian Brinton, "The Art of Gari Melchers," Harper's Monthly Magazine 114 (February 1907): 434.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Arthur Hoeber, "Gari Melchers," The International Studio 31 (March 1907): XVI.

⁹² C. Lewis Hind, "Artists Who Matter. VIII. Gari Melchers," The International Interpreter 1 (3 June 1922): 276.

of all great art, found [Melchers] when he felt this subject."⁹³ Henriette Lewis-Hind considered the Krupp Emmaus "a picture full of reverence, awe and wonder, beautifully drawn and painted."⁹⁴ It should be pointed out that none of Melchers' advocates, except Christizæ Brinton, made the link between the American artist and contemporary German painters of religious themes. While the direct relation of Melchers' art to that of Uhde seemed obvious to the German critics, his apologists seem to have missed this connection.⁹⁵

During Melchers' lifetime, the Krupp Emmaus was reproduced at least four times: in 1900 in the catalogue of the Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung and in J. Brenchley's article in The Magazine of Art; in 1912 in Hans T. Kroeber's essay in Westermanns Monatshefte; and in 1928 in Gari Melchers. Painter.⁹⁶

The third version of Supper at Emmaus was briefly mentioned in 1913 in the Academy Notes of the Buffalo Fine Arts Academy where the painting was described as a "large and impressive work . . . treated . . .

⁹³ C. Lewis Hind, "G. Melchers. A Great American Painter Who's Received More Recognition Abroad Than at Home," World's Work 9 (April 1908), 10105

⁹⁴ Gari Melchers Painter, [7].

⁹⁵ Melchers' Supper at Emmaus paintings were discussed in later years by Emily G. Houston, in "The Art of Gari Melchers," The Catholic Virginian 13 (February 1938), 25; Patricia Marshall and Sylvia Payne, in "Melchers' 'Last Supper' Series," Mary Washington College Museum, Fredericksburg, 1973, 21-24; and Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 118-19.

⁹⁶ Brenchley, 144; Kroeber, 185-86; and Gari Melchers. Painter, plate [11].

with utmost reverence and delicacy." The author of the article wrote that Melchers had used "modern garb" for his figures of the disciples "to show that the Christ is everywhere and at all times present."⁹⁷

Royal Cortissoz gave less favorable comments when he discussed Melchers' third treatment of the theme when it was exhibited in New York at the Milch Gallery in 1921. He complimented Melchers for choosing the theme and wrote that "an artist of to-day should have undertaken to compose it," but criticized the technical aspects of the work including the lack of pictorial unity among Christ, the two pilgrims, and the servant.

His figures seem doggedly built up where one wants them to fall easily into a felicitous group. We want to grasp the painting as a unit, but we find its merits only in the workmanlike treatment of each figure by itself. The realism which so distinguishes this artist cannot quite carry the tremendous burden put upon it.⁹⁸

An unknown writer for The International Studio in the same year seemed to agree, at least in part, with Cortissoz when he commented "Try to forget the Christ." This critic was, however, impressed by the figures of the pilgrims and servant.

⁹⁷ The third version of Supper at Emmaus was briefly mentioned in Academy Notes of the Buffalo Fine Arts Academy in 1913 where the painting was described as a "large and impressive work . . . treated . . . with utmost reverence and delicacy." The author of the article suggested that Melchers depicted the figures of the disciples in "modern garb" because the artist wanted to "show that the Christ is everywhere and at all time present" ("The Eighth Annual Exhibition of Selected Paintings by American Artists at the Albright Art Gallery," Academy Notes 8 (July 1913): 117.

⁹⁸ Royal Cortissoz, "Art Incidents of the Early Spring. New Works by Melchers, Griffin and Some Others," New York Tribune, Sunday edition, 10 March 1921, section III, 7.

But Christ is there in the faces of the apostles [sic], of the maid. It is right that it should be so. The real man is seen not in his own person, . . . but in those who are around him.⁹⁹

The Supper at Emmaus: Influences on Melchers

Critics such as Paul Mantz and the unnamed correspondent for the Allgemeine Zeitung made the connection between Melchers' Krupp Emmaus and Rembrandt's depictions of the subject, specifically the 1648 Musée du Louvre version. During the late 19th century these works became the standard by which most contemporary paintings of the theme were measured.¹⁰⁰ Estelle M. Hurll wrote that

the simplest and most impressive picture of the Supper at Emmaus is [the 1648 Louvre version] by Rembrandt. . . . He is the simple, homely peasant we have again and again seen on Rembrandt's canvases, but never before so appealing and lovable.¹⁰¹

Rembrandt depicted Christ and the Disciples of Emmaus four times: the first version (1630) is in Paris at Musée Jacquemart-André (fig. III-13), the second and third representations (both painted in 1648) are in the Louvre (fig. III-14) and at the Royal Art Gallery in Copenhagen, respectively, and the final work (ca. 1661) is also in the Louvre. When comparing Melchers' Supper at Emmaus paintings with Rembrandt's works, particularly the Musée Jacquemart-André and the 1648 Louvre versions, it is evident that Melchers' Emmaus works were, to some extent, pastiches

⁹⁹ "Her Vagaries," The International Studio 72 (May 1921): LXXIII-LXXIV.

¹⁰⁰ Mantz, Le Temps, 28 June 1898 and Allgemeine Zeitung, 8 June 1900.

¹⁰¹ Estelle M. Hurll, The Life of Our Lord in Art (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1900), 334.

of these two Rembrandts. Melchers' first version of the painting borrows the composition of the Musée Jacquemart-André work, including the placement of Christ at the right, an awestruck older disciple behind the table, along with objects hanging on a hook on the rear wall (what appear to be a knapsack in the Rembrandt and a cloak and lantern in Melchers' painting). Melchers' second and third Supper at Emmaus paintings derive their composition from the 1648 Louvre Rembrandt with Christ centered behind the table and a servant standing nearby. Melchers also included in these a kneeling figure which is based on the Musée Jacquemart-André work. There was, however, another work of Rembrandt which Melchers may have known and emulated, an etching of the Supper at Emmaus (fig. III-15, 1634, whereabouts unknown).¹⁰² Melchers adopted Rembrandt's composition from this etching for the Krupp Emmaus, including the figure of an old pilgrim, and the staff and knapsack found in the left foreground in front of the younger pilgrim's feet.¹⁰³ In fact, even the physiognomy of this old pilgrim resembles Melchers' model, Jan Karel.

The influence of Rembrandt's paintings and etching on Melchers is obvious; in addition, as was the case seven years earlier when Melchers emulated Uhde's Holy Night, he turned to his German colleague's Supper

¹⁰² This etching of Rembrandt's Supper at Emmaus is reproduced in Rudrauf's Le Repas d'Emmaüs, 2:fig. 229.

¹⁰³ An oil study is at Belmont. It depicts a hat, staff, crook, and what appears to be a knapsack which Melchers later adapted and used in his paintings of the theme.

at Emmaus (fig. III-16, 1885, Städelsches Kunstinstitut und Städtische Galerie, Frankfurt) for his Krupp Emmaus. Melchers must have been aware of Uhde's great success with Supper at Emmaus; the painting was often discussed, exhibited, reproduced, and reviewed in the years prior to Melchers' execution of the same subject.¹⁰⁴

In addition to the similarities between Uhde's and Melchers' Supper at Emmaus paintings, Melchers appears to have borrowed Uhde's figure of Jesus from the study for Suffer the Little Children which was reproduced in the Gazette des Beaux-Arts in 1885 and again in 1892 in Die graphischen Künste.¹⁰⁵ Both Uhde and Melchers depicted Christ in profile facing to the left, sitting in a chair with a long back. In both, he has long hair, a short beard and mustache, and wears a long garment with wide sleeves; a bare foot is visible under his robe. Melchers painted his Christ in a light robe, however, rather than the dark one worn in Uhde's work. Here Melchers adopted the more traditional image of Christ in a white garment after his resurrection. As with Uhde, Melchers introduced diffused but bright light behind Christ's head which suggests his Divinity; this in turn was based on Rembrandt's work in the Musée Jacquemart-

¹⁰⁴ Fritz von Uhde's Supper at Emmaus was discussed in Friedrich Pecht's "Über die deutsche Malerei der Gegenwart," Die Kunst für Alle 1 (1 October 1885): 5; Hermann Lücke's "Fritz von Uhde," Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst 22 (1887): 356; Graul, 116; and Franz H. Meissner, "Fritz von Uhde," Westermanns illustrierte deutsche Monats-Hefte 38 (October 1893): 31-32. A reproduction of the painting appeared in Die Kunst für Alle (Die Kunst für Alle [October 1885], between the pages 8 and 9).

¹⁰⁵ André Michel, "Salon de 1885," Gazette des Beaux-Arts 31 (1 June 1885): 477 and Graul, 115.

André.

Contemporary German critics, such as Hermann Lücke and Richard Graul, were aware that Uhde was much indebted to Rembrandt's religious paintings. They noted that Uhde's use of contemporary proletarian workers as models for his biblical figures was based on Rembrandt's approach.¹⁰⁶ Uhde greatly admired the Dutch Master, of whom he wrote

[Rembrandt] was the greatest of all painters. . . . He had something that transcended beyond painting and possessed pure ingenuity. He was probably the only artist who could truly paint Christ.¹⁰⁷

The Last Supper as Interpreted by Gebhardt and Uhde

Many German artists of the late 19th century chose to depict the Last Supper, including Eduard von Gebhardt and Fritz von Uhde, each of whom painted The Last Supper twice. The former painted the theme in 1870 (fig. III-26, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin) and again around 1905 (fig. III-27, Friedenskirche, Düsseldorf, destroyed during the Second World War).¹⁰⁸ Uhde created his

¹⁰⁶ Hermann Lücke, "Fritz von Uhde," Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst 22 (1887): 356 and Richard Graul, "Fritz von Uhde," Die graphischen Künste 15 (1892): 118.

¹⁰⁷ G. M., "Ein Maler des Lichtes; aus dem Leben Fritz von Uhde," Velhagen und Klasings Monatshefte 21 (September 1907): 87. See also Mochon, 185-86.

¹⁰⁸ After the completion of the Friedenskirche in 1899, Gebhardt was commissioned to paint fourteen murals depicting scenes from the Old and New Testaments, which he completed in June 1907 (Karl Bone, "Prof. Dr. Eduard von Gebhardt und seine Gemälde in der Friedenskirche zu Düsseldorf," Die christliche Kunst 4 [1 June 1908]: 206). Friedrich Gross wrote that Gebhardt executed a large finished study of The Last Supper (Hannover, Niedersächsischen Landesgalerie) in 1905 and finished the

first version in 1886 (fig. III-28, formerly in the Collection of Eduard Arnhold, Berlin) and a second in 1898 (fig. III-29, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart). These works were created prior to the period in which Melchers executed his two Last Suppers, with the exception of the second Gebhardt The Last Supper which was approximately contemporaneous with the Melchers paintings.

Gebhardt and Uhde were both very successful with their renditions of the Last Supper. These works received critical acclaim from contemporary German critics and, except for Gebhardt's version of 1905, were purchased by either a museum or a private collector.¹⁰⁹ Among the contemporary German critics who admired Gebhardt's first version of The Last Supper were Pauline Lange, Adolf Rosenberg, and Friedrich Schaarschmidt¹¹⁰

mural of The Last Supper around 1905-1906 (Friedrich Gross. Jesus, Luther und der Papst im Bilderkampf 1871 bis 1918. Zur Malereigeschichte der Kaiserzeit [Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 1989], 199).

¹⁰⁹ These writers either discussed Gebhardt's and Uhde's works within the context of their oeuvre or in response to their exhibits in Berlin, Munich, Stuttgart, and Vienna. Only those reviews which were published before 1906, the year that Melchers finished his second and last version of The Last Supper are mentioned.

¹¹⁰ Friedrich Schaarschmidt, "Eduard von Gebhardt," Die Kunst fur Alle 13 (1 June 1898), 257-63; Schaarschmidt, "Eduard von Gebhardt," Die Kunst unserer Zeit 10 (1899): 91-114; Adolf Rosenberg, E. von Gebhardt (Leipzig: Verlag von Velhagen & Klasing, 1899); and Pauline Lange, "Eduard von Gebhardt. Ein religiöser Maler der Gegenwart," Westermanns illustrierte Deutsche Monats-Hefte 94 (April 1903): 19-42. Gebhardt's The Last Supper from 1870 was also favorably discussed by such contemporary American critics as Samuel G.W. Benjamin and Estelle M. Hurl. Benjamin wrote "We do not remember a representation of the Last Supper which shows a more powerful realization of the vast and conflicting emotions which shook the souls of those who met together in that memorable hour in the history of the human race" (Samuel G.W. Benjamin, Contemporary Art in Europe [New York: Harper and Brothers, 1877], 158). Hurl

The painting was produced in Lange's and Schaarschmidt's (1899) articles and in Rosenberg's monograph on the artist. Uhde's first version of The Last Supper was mentioned by a larger number of German contemporary writers, including Albert Fuhrmans, Richard Graul, Dr. Hasenclever, Hermann Lücke, Franz H. Meissner, Johannes Merz, and Robert Schwann.¹¹¹ Merz also wrote an article about Uhde's second version in 1899. Most of these critics viewed Uhde's work favorably. Lücke wrote that Uhde's representations of the disciples were the artist's "most successful character figures" and described them as very Rembrandtesque.¹¹² Only a few critics, including Hasenclever and Schwann, faulted Uhde's work. Hasenclever wrote that Uhde depicted his disciples "as if they belonged in a penitentiary," and Schwann was indignant that Uhde transposed the historical event into a contemporary setting without idealizing his figures as had, for example, Leonardo da Vinci.¹¹³ In 1887 Uhde wrote the art dealer Cornelius Gurlitt regarding

discussed both Gebhardt's and Uhde's renditions of The Last Supper and reproduced Uhde's version in The Life of Our Lord in Art (Hurlit, 245-46).

¹¹¹ Robert Schwann, "Die religiöse Kunst in der Berliner Jubiläums-Kunstaussstellung. I. Von Uhde," Christliches Kunstblatt 28 (1 November 1886): 161-69; Lücke, 349-58; Fuhrmans, 387-98; Johannes Merz, "Uhdes neueste Darstellung des letzten Abendmahls," Christliches Kunstblatt 31 (February 1889): 17-21; Graul, 105-25; Meissner, 19-42; and Dr. Hasenclever, "Moderne religiöse Malerei," Monatschrift für Gottesdienst und kirchliche Kunst 1 (August 1896): 133-39. Graul and Meissner reproduced a study of Uhde's 1886 The Last Supper (Graul, 117 and Meissner, 36).

¹¹² Lücke, 356.

¹¹³ Hasenclever, 138 and Schwann, 164. See also Brand, 254.

the popularity of his painting and noted that more than three thousand people had already come to see The Last Supper in just five days, which for Munich "where the public is very indifferent" was exceptional. Uhde then inquired if Gurlitt could perhaps sell the painting to an American industrialist "who would make a spectacle out of the work in the United States."¹¹⁴ Uhde's letter suggests that he believed there was a market in America for contemporary religious paintings among wealthy collectors.¹¹⁵ If this were the case, no doubt Melchers also knew this, which might have given him a reason to paint the subject. In any event, Melchers must have been aware of the great success of these two artists' paintings, especially Uhde's version.

Because Gebhardt's 1870 The Last Supper had been in the collection of the Nationalgalerie since 1872, Melchers was probably less familiar with that painting. Nevertheless, he most likely knew the work from exhibitions in Berlin and Paris or from reproductions. Melchers' "grieving" disciple (fig. III-30), who sits in front of the table on the right in the final study for his first version of The Last Supper, is almost an exact copy of the same figure in Gebhardt's work of 1870.¹¹⁶ For his second version, Melchers copied Gebhardt's tile floor, the garlands in the

¹¹⁴ Fritz von Uhde, letter to Cornelius Gurlitt, 8 March 1887. Fritz von Uhde, "Briefe an . . .," Meister der Farbe 11 (1914): 51-56. See also Brand, 98-99.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹¹⁶ Melchers deleted the "grieving" figure from the final Lamplight version, however, when he repainted it in 1905.

background, and the empty stool in the foreground. Gebhardt's first Last Supper, in contrast to the accounts in the Gospels, was depicted in bright daylight. His second version featured an evening scene and included a chandelier with candles illuminating the interior. It would also appear to be more than a coincidence that Melchers also executed the same subject in both day and evening versions.

Melchers also was probably familiar with the earlier Uhde Last Supper. That work was exhibited in Berlin in 1886; in Munich, at the Salon in Paris, and in Brussels (all in the following year); again in Berlin in 1888; and at the Paris Universal Exposition in 1889. Melchers was also an exhibitor at the 1887 Salon and the Universal Exposition. Uhde's work was reviewed and a study for the painting was reproduced in the Gazette des Beaux-Arts (1887).¹¹⁷ Uhde and Melchers each depicted one figure of an old, bald apostle in their paintings of The Last Supper. Melchers may have borrowed this figure for his two compositions from Uhde's picture (fig. III-31). In Melchers' paintings, however, this figure was placed at the right end of the table rather than the left.

Estelle M. Hurll wrote that, in early renditions of the Last Supper, such as that of Giotto (ca. 1305-1306, Scrovegni Chapel, Padua), the disciples were placed on both sides of a table and, as a result, several figures were presented from the back. Subsequently, this problem was solved when artists such as Leonardo da Vinci (1497, Santa Maria delle

¹¹⁷ Maurice Hamel, "Le Salon de 1887," Gazette des Beaux-Arts 35 (1 June 1887): 497 and 502-03.

Grazie, Milan) depicted all the apostles behind an elongated table. A variation of this composition was painted by artists such as Cosimo Rosselli (ca. 1480, Sistine Chapel, Vatican) and shows figures at the ends of the table and one in front. In Northern Europe, in contrast, such 15th-century Flemish painters as Dirk Bouts (ca. 1464-1467, Collegiate Church of St. Pierre, Louvain, Belgium) and such German artists of the 15th and 16th centuries as Albrecht Dürer (ca. 1523, whereabouts unknown)¹¹⁸ and Hans Holbein the Younger (ca. 1519-1520, Kunstmuseum, Basel) depicted the disciples around a table. The two most popular moments in the event painted by the European artists were "the Passover meal proper, and . . . the institution of the Lord's Supper."¹¹⁹

In analyzing the compositions of Gebhardt's and Ünde's Last Suppers, or those by Martin Feuerstein (The Last Supper), Rudolf von Rey (The Last Supper), and Ernst Zimmermann (One of You Shall Betray Me) reproduced in Franz Hanfstaengl's Religiöse Bilder,¹²⁰ it can be observed that these painters followed the earliest compositional format, with several disciples turned away from the viewer. Thus, the late 19th-century German artists continued the older German concept of the Last Supper, and Melchers followed in their footsteps.

¹¹⁸ The Last Supper by Dürer was reproduced in Frederik Adama van Scheltema, Über die Entwicklung der Abendmahlsdarstellung von der byzantinischen Mosaikkunst bis zur niederländischen Malerei der 17. Jahrhundert, (Leipzig: Verlag von Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1912), plate XIV.

¹¹⁹ Hurl, 240-41.

¹²⁰ See Hanfstaengl, figs. 37, 133, and 177. The whereabouts and locations are not given and are unknown.

Melchers' The Last Supper Paintings: Background

Melchers' The Last Supper would become his most ambitious enterprise. The two versions which he eventually painted were his largest pictures, the first measuring 2.10 m. x 2.85 m. and the second 2.60 m. x 3.80 m. The first painting is known as The Last Supper. Lamplight. (fig. III-32, ca. 1904-1905, Second Presbyterian Church, Richmond),¹²¹ and the second is designated as The Last Supper. Daylight (figs. III-33 and 34, ca. 1906, Belmont). There are some clues as to the impetus behind Melchers' decision to undertake two major paintings of the Last Supper theme. In his 1889 letter to Melchers, Andrew D. White suggested the artist illustrate "religious subjects" and advocated emulating Gebhardt in depicting the Last Supper theme.

The picture of the first celebration of the Lord's Supper, in which you should give the faces truth not only ideal but real, as Gebhardt's picture in the National Museum at Berlin shows the attempt to do with some success.¹²²

Another incident also may have led Melchers to paint his own version of the subject. According to Julia Sully, Mrs. John H. Gassaway of Rockville, Maryland, invited Melchers and Charles Henry Hart, a well-known Philadelphia art critic, to examine a Last Supper she owned. Gassaway believed that the work was painted in 1722 by the Swedish

¹²¹ The Last Supper. Lamplight was bequeathed to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond in 1956 by Corinne Melchers. In 1974 the museum loaned the painting on a long-term basis to the Second Presbyterian Church in Richmond. The work hangs on the northwest wall of a chapel behind the main sanctuary of the Church. It is not framed, is in need of cleaning and has been damaged in the upper left corner.

¹²² Andrew D. White, letter to Gari Melchers, 29 August, 1889.

émigré Gustavus Hesselius for the altar of the church of St. Barnabas in Queen Anne Parish, Maryland.¹²³ Sully wrote that both Melchers and Hart, after a thorough examination of Gassaway's painting, advised the owner that her work was by Hesselius.¹²⁴

¹²³ Unfortunately Julia Sully did not mention when the men were consulted by Mrs. Gassaway, but she suggested that this may have been soon after the publication of Charles Henry Hart's article in Harper's New Monthly Magazine in March 1898 (Julia Sully, "Our Art Heritage," The Commonwealth 5 [January 1938]: 15). It is known that Melchers visited America around this time because he painted a portrait of the Chicago banker and art patron Ernest A. Hamill (ca. 1900, Belmont). Hart was interested in Hesselius' altarpiece because he believed that it was the first Last Supper ever painted in America and the first recorded commission for a work of art for a public building in this country. One of Hart's objectives in writing his article was to discover the whereabouts of the altarpiece which had been missing since 1773 (Charles H. Hart, "The Earliest Painter in America. Recently Discovered Records of Gustavus Hesselius, and of Our First Public Art Commission," Harper's New Monthly Magazine 96 [March 1898]: 568). According to Roland E. Fleischer, the Hesselius Last Supper was not the earliest commissioned religious work, as the same artist earlier in 1715 had been asked to paint an altarpiece for the Lutheran Church of Gloria Dei in Wicaco (South Philadelphia) (Roland E. Fleischer, "The History Paintings," in New Jersey State Museum, Gustavus Hesselius, Face Painter to the Middle Colonies, exhibition catalogue. Trenton, New Jersey, February 13-April 24, 1988, 45). A different version of the story of Hart's involvement with this purported The Last Supper by Hesselius was given by Christian Brinton in his essay for the Hesselius exhibition held in 1938 in Philadelphia. Brinton did not mention Melchers' participation in the examination of the painting and wrote that Hart, in fact, only saw the work some sixteen years after Mrs. Gassaway wrote him in response to his 1898 article in Harper's New Monthly Magazine (Philadelphia Museum of Art, Gustavus Hesselius 1682-1755, exhibition catalogue, essay by Christian Brinton. Philadelphia, 1938, 19-21).

¹²⁴ This work was included in an exhibition of Hesselius' paintings at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1938. It is now in the Collection of Mrs. Rose N. Henderson, Fredericksburg, Virginia, and is on loan to that museum. Scholars are not certain, however, that the painting is by Hesselius and an article appeared in 1938 questioning its authenticity. (See for example H. E. Keyes, "Doubts Regarding Hesselius," The Magazine Antiques 34 [September 1938]: 144-46.) Among other art historians who have questioned the attribution of this Last Supper to Hesselius are E. P.

Mr. Hart inspected the picture, and, after a careful comparison with the data he had been able to gather regarding it, pronounced it genuine, an opinion that . . . was confirmed by Gari Melchers.¹²⁵

Although it is not recorded what Hart and Melchers discussed during their examination of Mrs. Gassaway's painting, or the nature of their research, this investigation may have led Melchers to consider executing the theme himself. The composition of the purported Hesselius work was based on the variation used by Rosselli and was similar to the composition which Melchers would use when he executed a Last Supper several years later.

George Hitchcock, too, may have played a part in Melchers' decision to paint The Last Supper. Corinne Melchers wrote her mother that Hitchcock suggested

to Gari the other day that he exhibit the Last Supper at the Egmond kermis [an annual fair in Holland] -- 10 cents admissions. . . . He was sure Gari would "coin money."¹²⁶

This proposal was made by Hitchcock before Melchers completed his first Last Supper, and he continued to advise Melchers about what might gain him recognition and remuneration.

Although The Last Supper was mentioned in various letters during the

Richardson and Roland E. Fleischer (E. P. Richardson, "Gustavus Hesselius," Art Quarterly 12 [1949]: 220-26; and Roland E. Fleischer, "Gustavus Hesselius" [Ph.D. diss., The John Hopkins University, 1964], 157 and "The History Paintings," in New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, 1988, 49 and 52).

¹²⁵ Sully, The Commonwealth, 15.

¹²⁶ Corinne Melchers, letter to Lulu Mackall, 17 April [1904].

period between December 1903 and August 1906, there is little additional documentation as to influences on Melchers or his motives in executing it. The earliest mention of The Last Supper was in May 1903, when Corinne Melchers wrote to her younger brother, Alexander Mackall

I stopped my letter to walk down to Gari's studio [in Egmond aan Zee] and spent three hours and a half looking at the big picture [the Last Supper, Davlight] which is progressing famously.¹²⁷

A few months later Corinne reported to her mother that Melchers had to stop working for a time on "the big picture" because "last week Gari's models all went off fishing."¹²⁸

A letter from Melchers to his mother-in-law is the first record that, in fact, there were two versions of The Last Supper. He wrote Lulu Mackall in December 1903 that he was about to finish his second rendition, which he thought was superior to his initial work.

I have been getting on pretty well of late with my work and the second "Last Supper" is nearly finished and [is] so much better than the first one it seems to me but of course it was a long pull to go the uphill work of painting it all over a second time.¹²⁹

It may be that Melchers began Lamplight as early as 1901 and finished it in early 1902, after which he probably began Davlight. Melchers wrote Corinne's mother

The truth is I very often get on much better in winter with my work than I do in summer and perhaps the reason is that the days are so short and I have not got the time to get tired and undo the work of

¹²⁷ Ibid., letter to Alexander Lawton Mackall, 21 May 1903.

¹²⁸ Ibid., letter to Lulu Mackall, summer 1903.

¹²⁹ Gari Melchers, letter to Lulu Mackall, 14 December 1903.

morning in the evening.¹³⁰

He may have begun Daylight during the winter of 1902-1903 when he would have had his models at hand. Julia Sully, who described Lamplight in the Richmond News-Leader in 1936, mentioned that Corinne Melchers wrote her that "The beautiful and solemn 'Last Supper' was painted by my husband over a period of several years -- the first years of the century."¹³¹ In any case, when Melchers finished Daylight in winter of 1904, he had second thoughts about both versions. Corinne Melchers wrote to Lulu Mackall in March 1904

Gari . . . is not going to Paris after all. The picture 2nd Last Supper didn't suit his taste at the last minute and so it is leaned against the wall now out of sight. Its companion 1st L.S. [sic] is now uncovered and gone at with a vengeance [sic]. So that in two hours he quite changed the composition.¹³²

Corinne's letter implied that Melchers probably had intended Daylight for the Paris Saion of 1904, but decided at the last moment not to submit it because of frustration over the inability to depict the scene as he wished. He abandoned Daylight and again began to concentrate on Lamplight, which he apparently revised significantly. Eventually he was satisfied with Lamplight, as he exhibited it at the Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte della Città di Venezia which opened in February 1905. It was illustrated

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Sully, Richmond News-Leader, 9.

¹³² Corinne Melchers, letter to Lulu Mackail, 27 March [1904].

in the catalogue under the title L'Ultima Cena,¹³³ and was also reproduced, but not discussed, in an extensive review of the Esposizione in L'Art Décoratif, Revue Mensuelle d'Art Contemporain.¹³⁴ In an undated letter to her mother, Corinne wrote "The Lamplight 'Last Supper' is in Venice and has been there since April. The other [second version] looks splendid and is about finished."¹³⁵ Both Corinne and Melchers then went to Venice to attend the Esposizione. She wrote Lulu Mackall on September 10, 1905, that "we are off to Venice!" and eighteen days later reported "Garis [sic] picture looks splendidly and is much admired. He was presented to the King and Queen."¹³⁶

Although Corinne wrote her mother that Daylight was almost finished in the summer of 1905, it took Melchers another year to complete the work.

Gari is very busy -- No he has not started any new pictures, but, on

¹³³ VI. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte della Città di Venezia 1905. Catalogo Illustrato (Venezia: Premiato Stabilimento Carlo, Ferrari, 1905), 83. Melchers entries at the Esposizione were The Man with the Cloak, La Brabançonne, as well as The Last Supper. Arthur Sinclair Covey in The International Studio in August of that year credited Melchers with bringing together the American artists who exhibited in Venice and mentioned The Last Supper and the artist's other two entries. Among the American painters at the Esposizione were Frederic Frieseke, Walter McEwen, James Jebusa Shannon, and James McNeill Whistler (Arthur Sinclair Covey, "The Venice Exhibition," The International Studio 26 [August 1905]: 103-05).

¹³⁴ Gustave Soulier, "La Sixième Exposition Internationale d'Art à Venise," L'Art Décoratif, Revue Mensuelle d'Art Contemporain 7 (September 1905): 105.

¹³⁵ Corinne Melchers, letter to Lulu Mackall, [summer 1905].

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 10 and 28-29 September [1905].

the contrary, is working hard to finish . . . [Daylight] at Egmond [aan] Zee, for, can you believe it: they are going to tear down his house! The land having been sold to some building company. He is to have it [his studio] only about a month longer, but that it seems is all he needs for the Last Supper has now gotten itself about finished.¹³⁷

The correspondence of both Corinne and Melchers reveals his determination, almost an obsession, to make the perfect image of the Last Supper; their optimism when each Last Supper was nearing completion; and, finally, Melchers' disappointment when he ultimately failed to produce what he really wanted. At about this time Eduard von Gebhardt was completing his own lamplit version of the theme for the Düsseldorf Friedenskirche. Melchers may have been aware that his former mentor, from whom he had borrowed concepts for Daylight, was now executing a nighttime scene and this inspired Melchers to rework and finish Lamplight. After finishing Lamplight, Melchers then went back to Daylight and completed the latter work in 1906.

Before Julia Sully wrote her article in March 1936 for the Richmond News-Leader, she apparently first contacted Corinne Melchers and asked the latter for details about the genesis of Lamplight. Corinne wrote Sully that Melchers became inspired when a number of Egmond fishermen were visiting him in his studio in Egmond aan Zee.

Groups of the men would be in his studio from time to time, and my husband was often struck by the primitive cut of their garments and the unconscious intentness of their expressions as they clustered about the table. Christ's disciples were fishermen -- and here were men of their elemental characteristics. . . . These men spent long days there [in Melchers' studio] around the table while the picture

¹³⁷ Ibid, August [1906].

was in progress "posing" but unconsciously.¹³⁸

Corinne's letter suggests that Melchers may have been inspired to paint The Last Supper because of his identification of the apostles of old with the fishermen of his own time and surroundings. Her account, however, was given more than three decades after her husband conceived the idea of Lamplight in 1901-1902 and it appears somewhat romanticized. In addition, from a practical viewpoint, it seems unlikely that groups of fishermen would have been in Melchers' studio, except when he retained them to pose for him.

The Last Supper. Lamplight and The Last Supper. Daylight: Description and Comment

Melchers executed more preliminary studies for Lamplight than for any other work in his oeuvre.¹³⁹ His first two compositional drawings in ink (fig. III-35) were rudimentary sketches after Leonardo da Vinci's The Last Supper (fig. III-36, 1497, Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan) and Giovanni Battista Tiepolo's version of the theme (fig. III-37, ca. 1750, Musée du Louvre). It seems that from the outset Melchers was indecisive about whether he would adopt Leonardo's example of showing Christ and

¹³⁸ Sully, News-Leader, 9.

¹³⁹ Because none of Melchers' preliminary work is dated, it is difficult to distinguish which drawings were made for each of his Last Supper versions. It may well have been the case that Melchers made most of them in the early 1900s for Lamplight, because they were all to be found in one sketchbook, listed by Belmont as number 17. Melchers used different materials for his studies, including chalk, charcoal, crayon, oil paint, pastel, pencil, tempera, and watercolor. He executed them on canvas, paper, and pasteboard.

the Apostles behind an elongated table or follow Tiepolo, who depicted the disciples on all sides of the table. Melchers third compositional drawing in pencil (fig. III-38) was of his own invention and shows that he eventually decided on a design reminiscent of Tiepolo's work. As noted above, the 15th-century Flemish and the 15th- and 16th-century German Old Masters had often used the composition later adopted by Tiepolo, and during the late 19th century it was favored by many of Melchers' German contemporaries, including Eduard von Gebhardt and Fritz von Uhde. Melchers' ultimate selection of this composition was therefore to be expected.

In his third drawing, then, Melchers depicted Christ centered behind a table with the disciples seated around it. Of the two apostles who are depicted in front of the table, one is standing on the left and the other is sitting on a bench on the right. After Melchers completed this sketch, he created one in watercolor (over what appears to be an unrelated sketch of a nude figure) showing Christ with a halo; John is on his right, two other disciples, one standing and the other sitting, are on his left, and three additional disciples are behind the table (fig. III-39). Melchers probably then made a finished study in oil of Christ and John, with another disciple seated opposite them (fig. III-40). He also executed a large number of figure sketches for Lamplight, including, as mentioned earlier, one of the models seen from the back in lost profile, expressing grief, which is derived from a Gebhardt prototype; a number of the

blacksmith, Jan Karels (fig. III-41);¹⁴⁰ and several portrait studies of Albert Wijker (fig. III-42), whom he later would place in the final versions of both Lamplight and Daylight in profile at the right and left end of the table, respectively. For Lamplight, he also used Wijker for the disciple seated immediately at Christ's left. It seems that, additionally, Wijker posed for the standing disciple in front of the table on the left, with what appears to be a purse hanging on his right hip (fig. III-43).¹⁴¹ For Lamplight Melchers drew additional sketches of figures standing and sitting from the back or in profile. He executed several more sketches which he used for Daylight. Two are of a standing figure (fig. III-44), while the other shows a seated figure (fig. III-45). The latter was eventually incorporated into the final revised version of Daylight.

Melchers painted three studies in oil for Lamplight; except for minor details, the first two are very similar. The first shows Christ with a halo sitting in the center behind a long table covered with a white cloth (fig. III-46). Nine of the disciples are seated around the table (four in back flanking Jesus, one at the left end of the table, two more at the opposite end, and three placed in front of the table with their backs to the viewer). One disciple stands at the left front, also with his back toward

¹⁴⁰ A watercolor sketch also exists of a more idealized figure in the same position, but Melchers chose to use the homely example of Jan Karels.

¹⁴¹ Thus, Melchers probably included a triple portrait of Albert Wijker in Lamplight, as well as what appears to be a double portrait of another model who posed for the figures seated in front of the table at the right of the painting and behind it to the far left.

the viewer, and the other two stand in the right rear of the composition.

At this early stage, one already recognizes Jan Karels and Albert Wijker as two of Melchers' models. The disciple on the left end of the table, with his chin on his hand, is based on Wijker, and the bald apostle, who sits on the other end, is modeled after Karels. There are two natural light sources and one artificial in this composition. Light pours in from the upper right corner of the interior and from the center background through what appear to be partially opened curtains. The third light source is provided by a lamp above Christ's head.

Melchers invented the background light source because, according to Corinne's description of his studio in Egmond aan Zee, none existed.

. . . the setting is just the old plastered wall of the studio with the tiny window (right) which looked over the North sea [sic] -- hidden behind the projecting mantel shelf.¹⁴²

The second study differs from the first in that the scene, now set according to the Gospel of St. John, shows John the Apostle resting his head on Christ's hand (fig. III-47). The second disciple on Jesus' right has been moved and is now seated behind the "Albert Wijker" disciple at the left end of the table. Christ is painted without a halo.

The third study is the most detailed (fig. III-48). It suggests that Melchers was still not satisfied with the composition. Changes included moving one of the foreground figures behind the table at Jesus' left, thereby filling a space which was empty in the second study. Again this disciple is modeled after Wijker. Melchers then transformed the other

¹⁴² Sully, News-Leader, 9.

seated foreground figure into the "grieving" man derived from Gebhardt. Jesus is depicted with a circle of bright light behind his head and holds a shiny chalice. Melchers painted numerous props: a jug, a carafe, a glass, plates with food and fruit on the table; a shelf with a small bowl, candlestick, and square bottle on the wall to the left; two pails on the back wall; and decorative earthenware on the mantelpiece at the right. These various objects, as in other of Melchers' paintings, apparently were added to enliven the composition and, again, they appear to be contemporary artifacts which belonged to the artist.

Melchers painted three light sources in his final study: Jesus' halo, the bright light from the lamp above Christ's head, and the natural light from the window next to the mantelpiece. This third study is important because it gives an idea of how Lamplight appeared before Melchers revised it. In this final study (and presumably the completed, unrevised Lamplight), the disciples' attention, except for that of the "grieving" figure, is focused on Jesus. At first, Melchers appears to have decided to depict the moment when Jesus, according to the Gospel of St. John, spoke the words "I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."¹⁴³ The artist then changed his mind and chose a later moment during the Last Supper when several of the disciples realized that Judas was the traitor. In Melchers revised composition (the painting as it now exists), half of the apostles are now looking at Judas, who is standing on the left with his hands behind his back. In revising Lamplight, Melchers also changed

¹⁴³ St. John 13:21.

the three figures sitting at the left end of the table. In place of the old man behind Wijker is the bearded figure, who was originally at the table in front of the old man. This new figure holds a staff in his left hand and looks at Judas. Melchers adapted this bearded figure from Daylight. A new model with a fringe beard is now seated at Wijker's left. Melchers also changed the "grieving" disciple into a more alert figure in profile looking at Judas.

The identities of several models, who posed for The Last Suppers in addition to Jan Karels and Albert Wijker, are known. They were recognized by their relatives from a large reproduction of Daylight which was shown in the 1980 Egmond aan de Hoef exhibition of photographs after Melchers' works. They were Hendrik and Jacob Prins, Jacob Stam, Jan and Leendert Visser, and Arie Zoon.¹⁴⁴

Melchers had difficulty in selecting satisfactory models for his biblical figures. He originally chose Wijker to be Jesus, but the model rejected the idea stating that he was too wicked for the honor and asked to pose for Judas instead. Evidently, Melchers had earlier approached Jacob Stam to be Judas; but, when Stam heard that his fee was only seven "stuivers" (nickels), he refused, saying he would not betray Christ for that amount of money. Melchers, therefore, "promoted" him to be

¹⁴⁴ Ronald van Vleuten, however, was only certain about the correct identities of five of them. Jacob Stam posed for Peter, Albert Wijker was Judas, and Arie Zoon sat for John. Nobody knew, however, whom Jan Karels and Jacob Prins were supposed to represent. Three individuals were named who posed for Jesus: Jacob Prins, Jan Visser, and an unknown Frenchman (Vleuten, 5-6).

Peter.¹⁴⁵

It seems that in both of his Last Suppers Melchers combined two scenes from the Gospel according to St. John: the moment when John, the Apostle seated on Jesus' right, asked, "Lord, who is it?" and the scene following the giving of a purse to Judas by Christ. Judas, with his hands behind his back, is depicted in front of the table on the left, wearing the purse on his right hip and ready to leave the company. According to the Gospel

Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew what he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast.¹⁴⁶

It is not difficult to trace Melchers' source for his composition. Gebhardt had already depicted such a scene in 1870. In that work, however, instead of standing in front of the table to listen to what John asked, Judas has already reached the door through which he would shortly depart. In Gebhardt's painting, John was also placed on Jesus' right, and his depiction of the scene was in the tradition of Dürer and Hans Holbein the Younger.¹⁴⁷ Gebhardt did not, however, adopt the traditional positions of Jesus, John, Judas, and Peter, because according to Estelle M. Hurl

Our Lord's position is usually in the center of the rear, facing out. .

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ St. John 13:27-29.

¹⁴⁷ Dürer's and Hans Holbein the Younger's versions of The Last Supper were reproduced in Adama van Scheltema, figs. XIV and XV.

. . . The place of John is of course fixed beside the Saviour, usually at the left, leaning on his bosom or on the table directly in front. . . . Peter's proper place is on the Lord's right. . . . Judas, distinguished by the bag, is variously disposed of. Sometimes he sits at the end, sometimes alone on the front side of the table, seen partly in rear.¹⁴⁸

Instead, Gebhardt placed John and Nathanael at Jesus' right and left, respectively, Matthew in front of the table on the right, Peter at the left end, and Thomas at the opposite end.¹⁴⁹ In Melchers' work, only the positions of two disciples, John on Jesus' right and Judas standing in front of the table, are identified.

Melchers did not exhibit Lamplight extensively during his expatriate years. It was shown at the exhibitions in Venice in 1905, in Weimar at the Grand-Ducal Museum for Arts and Crafts in 1910, and in Berlin at the Grosse Berliner Kunstaustellung in 1912, where it was offered for sale. The painting was never sold, however, and remained in Melchers' studio until 1956, when it was bequeathed by his wife to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond.

Daylight is the more finished and decorative version of Melchers' two Last Suppers and includes many more accessories. The scene is set in full natural light, and the lamp above Jesus' head is deleted. The composition of Daylight was based on Melchers' earliest oil study, including the figure of Christ with the halo, the curtain behind Jesus, and the two disciples who share the bench in the right foreground. The figure of Jesus is

¹⁴⁸ Hurl, 241.

¹⁴⁹ Rosenberg, 40.

traditional and rigidly stylized, with long hair and a defined halo, in the finished work. Daylight also incorporates details borrowed from Gebhardt's The Last Supper of 1870, such as the tile floor, the decorative garland, two disciples seen from the back, and an empty wooden stool in the lower left foreground. In Melchers' work, the garland frames the curtains, whereas, in Gebhardt's painting, it is attached to the wall in the background. Melchers copied the lower left detail of a pilgrim's bag, hat, and staff from his Emmaus series. The props on the wall shelf, as well as the mantelpiece and the pail, all included in Lamplight, were also used in Daylight.

Most of the reviews of Melchers' The Last Suppers were written by German critics after Lamplight was exhibited in Weimar in 1910 and both Lamplight and Daylight were shown at the Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung in 1912 -- this was the only time Daylight is known to have been exhibited in Germany -- and most were negative. During the exhibition of Lamplight in Weimar, Wilhelm Schölermann briefly discussed the painting, mentioning Melchers' three light sources and noting that his composition and the facial expressions of his figures were "artistically highly remarkable."¹⁵⁰ The critic from Der Tag was not impressed with Melchers' The Last Suppers at the Kunstausstellung.

[Already in 1904 in the Glaspalast in Munich, Melchers] presented a biblical painting "The Disciples at Emmaus" which had to be called a failure because it concentrated purely and externally on the idea of coloration. Now Melchers shows us two huge versions of "The Last

¹⁵⁰ Wilhelm Schölermann, "Weimar. Im grossherzoglichen Museum am Karlsplatz," Kunstchronik 21 (11 March 1910): 316.

Supper" which are in every sense even more superficial. . . . [and they show] that the painter is . . . incapable of such tasks.¹⁵¹

A number of critics commented upon Melchers' coloring, although none was as scathing in his comments as the reviewer in Der Tag, who wrote that Melchers is "unbearable with his deliberately bright and garish colors which never harmonize."¹⁵² The critic for the Breslauer Zeitung found that Melchers has made his Daylight into a "medieval multi-colored scene,"¹⁵³ and the reviewer for the Frankfurter Zeitung wrote that Melchers used

quite bright colors . . . grenadine red, which he applied in excessive amounts, rather unexpectedly between chrome yellow, apple green, ultramarine, ochre and who knows what other colors.¹⁵⁴

The critic for the New Yorker Staatszeitung did not appreciate Melchers' "flat uninspiring modernism" and wrote that his approach was comparable to showing the Apollo Belvedere in "evening dress." In dismissing Lamplight, he made a final comment that he would rather "switch off the lamp immediately and then turn the canvas to the wall."¹⁵⁵ As was the case with Melchers' previous two religious themes, his Last Suppers were

¹⁵¹ Der Tag, 30 May 1912.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Breslauer Zeitung, 11 May 1912.

¹⁵⁴ Frankfurter Zeitung, 14 May 1912.

¹⁵⁵ "Grosse Berliner Kunstausstellung," New Yorker Staatszeitung, 27 May 1912.

compared with Uhde's versions.¹⁵⁶

The correspondent of the Düsseldorfer Zeitung, on the other hand, compared Melchers' The Last Suppers with Ludwig Bartning's triptych of The Last Supper (date and whereabouts unknown), which also was exhibited at the Kunstaussstellung of 1912. The critic wrote that although "Melchers had put much effort in his composition, in the end he did not achieve more than a group of carefully posed models."¹⁵⁷ Hans T. Kroeber did not share the negative views of most of his countrymen. In the essay about Melchers in Westermanns illustrierte Deutsche Monatshefte, Kroeber wrote that Melchers' two paintings must probably be considered "a high point in his entire oeuvre."¹⁵⁸

In comparison to the commendatory reviews of the Krupp Emmaus, Melchers' supportive American critics largely ignored his Last Suppers. Lamplight is reproduced in Gari Melchers. Painter but is not mentioned in the accompanying essay by Henriette Lewis-Hind. Arthur Hoeber and Charles Lewis Hind were among the few who discussed the works. Hoeber wrote that it was agreed that Melchers' depiction of the The Last Supper was perfect from a compositional and pictorial standpoint, although Hoeber thought that the artist failed in his interpretation of the "God-

¹⁵⁶ See, for example, the comments of the critic for Das kleine Journal, 6 May 1912.

¹⁵⁷ Düsseldorfer Zeitung, 12 May 1912.

¹⁵⁸ Kroeber, 196.

man Christ."¹⁵⁹ Hind noted that Melchers made two versions, Lamplight and Daylight, and that it was a feat in itself to portray thirteen large figures in one painting, but to do it twice "would seem to most men a task of super erogation [sic]"¹⁶⁰

When Lamplight was exhibited among fifty-five of Melchers' canvases at The Buffalo Fine Arts Academy, Albright Art Gallery in 1930, the critic for the Buffalo Evening News wrote that fishermen and peasants posed for the artist's figures "with a dignity and reverence about them."¹⁶¹ Shortly after Melchers' death in 1932, a number of retrospective exhibitions of his works were organized, including those by the American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York in 1932-1933, The Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. in 1933, and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond in 1938.¹⁶² Of the The Last Suppers, the shows included only Lamplight, and the painting was mentioned by Royal Cortissoz, E. C. Sherburne, and the critic for the

¹⁵⁹ Hoeber, XVI-XVII.

¹⁶⁰ C. Lewis Hind, World's Work, 10105.

¹⁶¹ "Albright Gallery to Exhibit Paintings of Gari Melchers. Fifty-Five Canvases by Distinguished American Artist Will Go on Display Sunday," Buffaio Evening News, 31 January 1930.

¹⁶² After a hiatus of more than a half century the Museum of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg, Florida organized Gari Melchers. A Retrospective Exhibition which opened on March 11, 1990, and which will travel to the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences, Savannah, Georgia, the National Academy of Design, New York, The Detroit Institute of Arts, and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia.

Savannah Evening Press.¹⁶³ Cortissoz wrote that Lamplight had an "unmistakable poignancy," and that, in this work, Melchers "lifts his realistic habit to a higher power."¹⁶⁴ Sherburne stated that Melchers' compositional powers were very remarkable, and the critic compared the artist with a skilled stage manager, who avoided

all self-consciousness in the faces of his models. He knows how expressive of mental traits physical postures may be, and graphic is this presentation of the disciples in the guise of their several callings and variations of character.¹⁶⁵

The critic for the Savannah Evening Press reported that there was nothing in Lamplight which one could regard as a "dry convention." He used laudatory phrases like "tenderness," "emotional intensity," "distinctly realistic conception," and "perfect distribution of the figures" to describe the painting.¹⁶⁶ Emily G. Houston, in The Catholic Virginian, was very taken with the painting and praised Melchers' "masterly composition" and the scene's "unearthly beauty." She thought, however, that some viewers

¹⁶³ American Academy of Arts and Letters. A Catalogue of an Exhibition of Paintings by Gari Melchers at the American Academy of Arts and Letters, exhibition catalogue, essay by Royal Cortissoz. New York, November 10, 1932-May 1, 1933, 2; E. C. Sherburne, "Paintings by Gari Melchers," The Christian Science Monitor, 12 November 1932, 12; and "Gari Melchers. In Retrospective Exhibition of Life's Work," Savannah Evening Press, 26 November 1932. These critics did not specify which version they were discussing, but the exhibition catalogues of the Academy of Arts and Letters, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts indicate that only Lamplight was included in these retrospective exhibitions.

¹⁶⁴ Royal Cortissoz, "Gari Melchers," in American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, 1932-1933, 15.

¹⁶⁵ Sherburne, The Christian Science Monitor, 12 November 1932, 12.

¹⁶⁶ Savannah Evening Press, 26 November 1932.

would not appreciate the way Melchers had portrayed Jesus because, instead of depicting him as traditionally androgynous "with long locks, ineffectual or feminine features and voluminous draperies," Melchers painted Jesus as a manly individual with strong features.

Why should representations of our Lord be restricted to one type? He was a Jew . . . but surely the Word made Flesh was above and apart from all nationality and time and locality, and it seems fitting that the Christian artist should represent Him according to the highest ideal which is the inspiration of his genius.¹⁶⁷

Female Saints and Christ with Halo

Around the turn of the century, Melchers painted at least three depictions of female saints, St. Joan of Arc (ca. 1895-1900, Indianapolis Museum of Art), St. Gudule (a Flemish saint and the patron of Brussels) (ca. 1897, Collection of Mrs. Regina Trapp, New York), and St. Genevieve (ca. 1901-1902, whereabouts unknown), the patron saint of Paris.¹⁶⁸ Within the artist's group of religious paintings, these were less ambitious works and, consequently, remained largely unnoticed by contemporary

¹⁶⁷ Emily G. Houston, "The Art of Gari Melchers," The Catholic Virginian 13 (February 1938): 25.

¹⁶⁸ In 1928, Paul Marchand wrote that St. Genevieve was sold for \$6,000 by the Gordon Galleries to a collector in Detroit (Paul Marchand, "The Picture Market," Creative Art 3 [September 1928]: XXXVIII. A handwritten notation by Melchers in a copy at Belmont of the catalogue for his 1927 retrospective exhibition in Detroit indicated that this collector was a "Mrs. Fletcher" [Mrs. Theodore G. Fletcher] (The Detroit Institute of Arts, Retrospective Exhibition of Paintings by Gari Melchers, exhibition catalogue, essay by Clyde H. Burroughs. Detroit, October, 1927, 1). St. Genevieve was still owned by Mrs. Fletcher in 1934 when she loaned it for the Melchers memorial exhibition in Pittsburgh (Department of Fine Arts, Carnegie Institute, Gari Melchers Memorial Exhibition. Pittsburgh, January 11-February 8, 1934, [7]).

critics.¹⁶⁹ The figures in these works appear to be young Egmond peasant women. They resemble models in a number of Melchers' other portrayals of such Dutch females, but with the addition of halos and saintly titles.

The figure representing St. Joan of Arc (fig. III-49) stands in the foreground of an open, dune landscape with sheep in the background. She holds a staff or crook, is dressed in a flowered skirt with a bodice of the same material, and has a cloak over her left arm. A transparent halo indicates her future role as a saint. This scene is reminiscent of Audrey, the Shepherd Lass (see fig. II-27), although the latter is tending goats.

It is not known when Melchers painted St. Gudule (fig. III-50). It may have been around 1897, because Brenchley wrote in the February 1900 issue of The Magazine of Art that the artist "dwelt upon it for years" before he finished the work.¹⁷⁰ Melchers first exhibited St. Gudule in 1897 at the Internationale Kunstausstellung in Munich,¹⁷¹ and two years later at the Ghent Salon Triennial. St. Gudule received mixed reviews from the Belgian press. The critic for La Chronique, known only by his initial H., regarded St. Gudule as "un peintre biblique," but his colleague who wrote for L'Indépendant de Gand found that the

¹⁶⁹ The catalogue for the January 1-26, 1929, exhibition Paintings and Drawings by Gari Melchers, at the Anderson Galleries in New York also listed works entitled St. Claire, St. Dominica, and St. Lucia (dates and whereabouts unknown).

¹⁷⁰ Brenchley, 148.

¹⁷¹ Karl Voll, in reviewing the exhibition in Die Kunst für Alle, virtually ignored the American exhibitors and did not mention Melchers (Karl Voll, "Die VII. Internationale Kunstausstellung in München. IV Das Ausland," Die Kunst für Alle 23 [1 September 1897]: 377).

representation of the saint was "très réussi comme figure géométrique . . .
. . . mais rien donne le caractère de sainteté."¹⁷²

Brenchley described St. Gudule as

a serious-faced, pearly-skinned girl, sitting in prim attitude and attire, against a grey toned wall. . . . The figure looks straight on, gazing and fine in colour, painted with much love and care . . . the expression of youth, and stubborn unquestioning faith sought and found; not a saint to everybody, only to those who having eyes see, and a heart feel for themselves.¹⁷³

St. Gudule was one of forty paintings which Melchers exhibited in his "Sonderausstellung" at the Grosse Berliner Kunstaustellung in 1900 and was sold, together with the Krupp Emmaus, to Baroness Margarethe von Ende Krupp.¹⁷⁴ The critic for the Algemeen Handelsblad was among the very few who reviewed St. Gudule in Berlin

"St. Gudule," is the Saint in the guise of a Flemish country girl holding a prayerbook between her hands, contemplative, serious, quietly staring, her soul bowed to God's Throne.¹⁷⁵

The pose of the model for St. Gudule is identical to that in The Communicant (see fig. II-34), but in the former an elaborate halo has replaced the "poffer" worn by The Communicant.

¹⁷² H., "Le Salon de Gand-II," La Chronique, 26 August, 1899, 2 and "Le Salon de Gand-I," L'Indépendant de Gand, 25 August, 1899, 1-2. See Bienenstock, in Museum of Fine Arts, "Gari Melchers," St. Petersburg, 1990, 96 and 109.

¹⁷³ Brenchley, 148.

¹⁷⁴ As cited earlier, in 1980 Mrs. Regina Trapp of New York, a grandniece of the Baroness' daughter, was given St. Gudule. Melchers may have painted a second version of St. Gudule. In 1919, one of his forty-one entries at the exhibition at The Boston Art Club was entitled St. Gudule and was lent by Charles M. Swift.

¹⁷⁵ N., "Uit Duitschland," Algemeen Handelsblad, 7 June 1900.

Melchers probably executed St. Genevieve (fig. III-51) in 1901-1902. This painting is not mentioned prior to its exhibition in Chicago at the Art Institute in 1902. Viewing the painting when Melchers exhibited it in Weimar in 1910, Wilhelm Schölermann described it as a "quiet, contemplative, and spiritual" work.¹⁷⁶ Karl Lürtzing mentioned only the title of the painting in his review in the Erfurter Allgemeiner Anzeiger,¹⁷⁷ as did the critic for the Chemnitzer Tageblatt when Melchers exhibited the work in Berlin in 1912.¹⁷⁸ St. Genevieve is the least elaborate of the three depictions of female saints and appears to be a portrait of a simple young peasant woman with the suggestion of a halo.

It is difficult to discern Melchers' inspiration for his series of female saints. He may again have taken his lead from Hitchcock,¹ who also executed several of these subjects, including the patron saint of music, St. Cecilia (ca. 1898, whereabouts unknown); St. Genevieve, Patron Saint of Paris (date and whereabouts unknown); and Ste. Jeanne d'Arc (mid-1890s, whereabouts unknown), described by Richard Muther as "a shepherdess . . . lost in thought beside her flock."¹⁷⁹ Melchers additionally may have been directed to these subjects by the works of

¹⁷⁶ Schölermann, 316.

¹⁷⁷ Karl Lürtzing, Erfurter Allgemeiner Anzeiger, 11 February 1910.

¹⁷⁸ Chemnitzer Tageblatt, 21 May 1912.

¹⁷⁹ Richard Muther, The History of Modern Painting 3 vols. (London: Henry and Co., 1895-96), 3:474.

many German painters who depicted images of female saints at the turn of the century.¹⁸⁰

In the April 1906 issue of Brush and Pencil, Samuel Swift wrote that more than a year earlier, the American Arts Company in Cleveland had commissioned ten American artists, including Frank Vincent DuMond, John LaFarge, Hitchcock, and Melchers to make life-sized pictures of Christ.¹⁸¹ The company planned to exhibit these paintings in a number of American cities under the title "New Conceptions of Art." Swift reviewed the show when it arrived in New York at the Harmonie Building, 43 West Forty-Second Street.

¹⁸⁰ The most famous depiction of Joan of Arc was painted in 1879 by the French painter Jules Bastien-Lepage. This painting was exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1880, purchased by the American art patron Erwin Davis the following year, and bequeathed in 1889 to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (William H. Gerds, American Impressionism [New York: Abbeville Press, 1984], 27). During the late 1870s, Joan of Arc was a popular subject among French artists, because she was "regarded as the personification of national spirit . . . [which] was] of particular importance following the loss of Joan's native province of Lorraine in 1871, after the Franco-Prussian war. . . ." In addition, she was promoted as a popular symbol by the Catholic Church, which began an effort in the mid-19th century to canonize her. Hence Joan of Arc "embodied both patriotic and Catholic ideals" (Patricia G. Berman, "Unholy Ghosts in Jules Bastien-Lepage's Joan of Arc Listening to the Voices," Marsyas 21 [1981-1982]: 52). In 1898, Monseigneur Le Nordez, the Bishop of Arca, published Jeanne d'Arc: Racontée par l'Image, d'après les Sculpteurs, les Graveurs, et les Peintres in which he retold the story of her life and illustrated it with more than three hundred works in all media by artists of all times who had used her as a subject. Thus, Melchers probably was utilizing a popular theme in opting to entitle his work Joan of Arc. While the focus of the present study is the influence of German painters on Melchers' religious subjects, it is acknowledged that the relationship between Jules Bastien-Lepage's Joan of Arc and similarly titled paintings awaits further investigation.

¹⁸¹ Samuel Swift, "New Conceptions of Jesus," Brush and Pencil 17 (April 1906): 148.

Hitchcock painted Christ in Gethsemane (fig. III-52, whereabouts unknown) and Melchers executed Ecce Homo (whereabouts unknown).¹⁸² They may have painted these works in close collaboration in 1905 in Egmond aan de Hoef, in all likelihood before August when Hitchcock deserted his wife and left Holland to marry Cecil Jay. Hitchcock painted an almost full-length Christ in an ideal landscape with trees and spring flowers such as hyacinths and narcissi. Little is known about Ecce Homo, but another critic for Brush and Pencil, known only by his initials R. N. C., quoted Melchers.

I have painted an Ecce Homo in the medieval, romantic spirit. The face is upturned and agonizing, the coloring being in a blue and somber minor key, but, instead of the crown of thorns, a golden halo encircles the head, symbolizing the divine hope of the Resurrection, not an abiding sorrow.¹⁸³

Swift admired Ecce Homo and discussed it more than any other painting.

In the 'Conceptions of Christ' exhibition not one of the pictures, unless it be that of Gari Melchers, suggest a spontaneous and personal expression of the artist.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² At the exhibition of "Conceptions" in Detroit in November 1906 Melchers' Ecce Homo was presented as The Man of Sorrows (Exhibition of Conceptions of Christ by Ten Great American Painters [Detroit: 1906]).

¹⁸³ R. N. C., Brush and Pencil 17 (April 1906), 154. At some point, Melchers either must have repainted Ecce Homo or painted a second version of the subject. Mrs. Henry A. Everett of Cleveland owned a painting by Melchers which, except for one detail, corresponded with Melchers' description of Ecce Homo in Brush and Pencil. The painting owned by Mrs. Everett, which is titled Christ With Halo (not dated), is a bust portrait of Christ (fig. III-53). His left hand is placed on his chest similar to Hitchcock's Christ in Gethsemane. After the death of Mrs. Everett in 1937, Christ With Halo was donated to The Cleveland Museum of Art.

¹⁸⁴ Swift, 152.

The critic admitted that, in comparison with all the other nine works, LaFarge's was superior in the pictorial sense, but "despite its elevation and spirituality of type, the face of the Saviour wants forcefulness and convictions." Swift then described Ecce Homo.

Mr. Melchers shows a weary and stricken Christ, dark-haired and clad in a coarse robe like a German or Russian peasant. . . . [He] has painted the head and shoulders of his subject with breadth and simplicity. His work carries a definable idea.¹⁸⁵

Within this group of ten works, Ecce Homo was the least elaborate and most impressionistic painting. Most of the other artists painted Christ as a full length figure, included other biblical figures in their works, or placed Jesus in a landscape or detailed background.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ Swift, 153.

¹⁸⁶ All ten paintings were reproduced in Homer Saint-Gaudens' "Ten American Paintings of Christ," Putnam's Monthly 1 (December 1906): 257-72.

EPILOGUE

On March 11, 1909, Wilhelm Ernst, the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, appointed Melchers professor of painting at the Grossherzogliche Sächsische Hochschule für bildende Kunst in Weimar.¹ Melchers continued in this post until he returned to the United States in the summer of 1915. The first time that Corinne Melchers mentioned Weimar was in a letter to her mother in July 1908, when she wrote Lulu Mackall that Melchers "has taken a little trip into Germany on some business matters. He had to go to Weimar."² On October 14, 1909, Corinne wrote, "The art school opens tomorrow but we go on Monday to Weimar."³

Joseph G. Dreiss noted that Melchers executed only a few paintings during his Weimar years and suggested that this was due to Melchers' teaching duties and to his travels to the United States. The artist's paintings which Dreiss listed from the artist's Weimar period include In the Studio, Hugo Reisinger and Gari Melchers (1912, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) and a number of landscapes such as The Wartburg, Winter in Weimar, and Feeding the Sheep (all ca. 1910-1912 and at Belmont). In addition, Melchers was commissioned to paint portraits of clients in Berlin, Leipzig, and other German cities, in Cannes, and in

¹ Decree by Wilhelm Ernst, the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach. Weimar, 11 March, 1909.

² Corinne Melchers, letter to Lulu Mackall, 16 July [1908].

³ *Ibid.*, 14 October [1909].

Providence, Rhode Island.⁴

Melchers, however, also continued to work in Egmond during the vacation periods away from Weimar.⁵ He produced a considerable number of paintings in Egmond during the 1909-1915 period, including At Home (The Winged Victory), Penelope, and the series of female images (Interior: Mother and Child, The Open Door, and The Open Fire). In each of these paintings the distinctive wallpaper of Schuylenburg with its large flowers is evident.

Because of the outbreak of the First World War, Melchers apparently decided to give up his post at Weimar in late 1914, but it is not certain exactly when he departed.⁶ In any case he was gone from Weimar by mid-1915, because he wrote on July 6, 1915, from Egmond to one of his patrons, General Rush C. Hawkins

We arrived in Holland a week ago . . . [because] Americans are no longer liked in Germany. . . . [The Germans] look upon us as enemies

⁴ Dreiss, Gari Melchers, 44.

⁵ Corinne Melchers' letters to her mother show that she and Melchers were in Egmond during summer, winter, and spring vacations from 1910 until they left Weimar in 1915.

⁶ A letter of December 8, 1914, from the Director of the Groszherzogliche Sächsische Hochschule für bildende Kunst to Melchers indicates that the latter intended to leave Weimar that month (The Director of the Groszherzogliche Sächsische Hochschule für bildende Kunst in Weimar, letter to Gari Melchers, 8 December 1914). The State Minister of Weimar wrote on December 22, however, asking Melchers to consider staying until at least April 1, 1916 (The Minister of State of Weimar, letter to Gari Melchers, 22 December 1914). Apparently, at some point Melchers did consider staying for some longer period because the Minister wrote him again on July 5, 1915 that he was pleased that Melchers had reconsidered his departure (The Minister of State of Weimar, letter to Gari Melchers, 5 July 1915).

. . . and I believe they hate us almost as much as they do the English. Personally we had no cause for complaint as our old friends continued to treat us with the same courtesy as of old.⁷

On August 3, 1915, Melchers wrote Hawkins "We are both enjoying the quiet of this village . . . we hope to remain until the first days of September when we sail for America."⁸ Upon their arrival in America, the Melchers lived for a short while with Corinne's mother in New York on Riverside Drive. In 1916, they moved to Falmouth, Virginia, and bought the estate known as Belmont.⁹ Melchers worked and lived here for sixteen years until his death on November 30, 1932, of a heart ailment.

During his Virginia years Melchers broadened his subject matter

⁷ Gari Melchers, letter to General Rush C. Hawkins, 6 July 1915. This letter and others from Melchers to Hawkins are in the collection of the Annmary Brown Library, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.

⁸ Ibid., 3 August 1915. The Melchers did not leave Egmond permanently in 1915. They were back in the summer of 1922 to sell their house. It was purchased by the Dutch painter, Lodewijk Apol, for 9,000 guilders. Melchers then subsequently returned to work in Holland in 1926, 1930, and 1932. His last Dutch painting was executed in 1932 when he painted The Lace Cap (Belmont) in Egmond during his stay at the inn owned by his old friend, Maartje Bult. The model who posed for the The Lace Cap was identified as Miep Halff (1913-1988) by her daughter, Mrs. Mieke Veldman van Gelderen from Vlissingen, the Netherlands (Letter from Mrs. Mieke Veldman van Gelderen to the author, 1 February 1988).

⁹ Belmont is an estate in Falmouth, Virginia with a 23-room mansion dating from the mid-18th century. In 1942 Corinne Melchers, as a memorial to her husband, handed over the estate, the furnishings, \$115,000 for the maintenance of Belmont, and fifty of Melchers' paintings as a permanent collection to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond. After Corinne died in 1955, the Trustees of the Virginia Museum thought that Belmont would be better administered by the Mary Washington College in nearby Fredericksburg, Virginia, and in 1960 Belmont was formally transferred to the College (Carrol H. Quenzel, Belmont [Fredericksburg: Mary Washington College of the University of Virginia, 1969], 1-7).

beyond those of religion and Dutch peasants. He now began to depict the inhabitants of rural Falmouth (in works such as Hunters, ca. 1920, Private Collection) and downtown Fredericksburg (such as in Commerce Street, ca. 1920, Belmont). Melchers continued, however, to use poor workers, as well as middle class models, as subjects. Examples include Native of Virginia and Young Woman Sewing (both ca. 1923-1925 and at Belmont). He also continued to depict the mother and child theme, either with or without religious overtones (including Madonna of the Rappahannock, 1923, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond and The Caress. Patrician Mother, 1923, Belmont). He produced more landscapes (including Early Spring Landscape, In Old Virginia, and Stafford Heights, all ca. 1918-1920 and at Belmont) and many more female nudes than he had in Egmond. New subjects in Melchers' post-Holland years included still-life paintings of fish, flowers, and fruit (such as Red Snapper, Flowers in a Blue Jar, and Watermelon, all ca. 1925 and at Belmont). He worked in two styles simultaneously, using both an increasingly freer Impressionistic technique (especially for his outdoor works) and a more academic approach (for his formal full length portraits, such as Portrait of Mrs. John W. Garrett in Spanish Costume, 1926, Belmont).¹⁰

When Melchers came back to America, he no longer executed paintings with biblical subjects, which have been the major focus of this dissertation. He turned away from such themes probably because there

¹⁰ Mrs. John W. Garrett, a resident of Baltimore, was an affluent patron of the arts and theater (Dreiss, 170).

was little interest in religious art in the United States and because of the negative critical response to his most ambitious examples from the group along with his failure to attract buyers for them. Nonetheless, in the context of Melchers' oeuvre, from both the Egmond period and his mature American years, his religious paintings, especially The Nativity, The Last Supper, and Supper at Emmaus, stand out as a phenomenon. These works represented the artist's efforts to break away from peasant and bourgeois genre and to achieve a new dimension in his art.

ILLUSTRATIONS

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225-378, Figures I-1 thru III-53

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