
**SPLENDOUR OF
THE BURGUNDIAN
NETHERLANDS**
Southern Netherlandish
Illuminated Manuscripts
in Dutch Collections

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Fig. II.1.7
The Book's Owner Presented by St Agnes to
the Virgin and Child

18 MINIATURE FROM
A BOOK OF HOURS
In Latin and French
Tournai, c. 1415-1425
Illumination: circle
of Robert Campin
Enschede, Rijksmuseum
Twenthe, Inv. no. 16

In the early fifteenth century Tournai was the centre of an unprecedented whirlpool of artistic activity that came to a head when one of the pioneers of the northern *ars nova*, Robert Campin, took up residence within its walls. Illuminators followed his lead and the

leaf in Enschede is a witness of prime importance to their activity.¹ In the miniature the book's owner is presented to the Virgin and Child by St Agnes (fig. II.1.7). The image is striking for its delicately warm colours, the virtuosity of its technical skill and the realism of the depiction of the figures and objects. The faces are painted with a stunning verity that makes no concessions to the woman's petulant features. The artist goes so far as to depict the head of a pin in her horned headdress. He is attentive to textures, painting the soft fur lining to the rose *houppelande* and the starched folds of the headdress with the same tactility. All this suggests that he is a panel painter who doubles as an illuminator. Indeed a triptych with a Pietà and a Carthusian in prayer has been

attributed to him.² The secondary decoration on the leaf attests to this versatile artist's activity in Tournai, because it reappears in several manuscripts illuminated by Jean Semont, an illuminator documented in the city until 1414. The content of the miniature also points to Tournai, and I have emphasized elsewhere all that it owes to the early works in the Campin group.³

The leaf comes from a book of hours that was recently traced to London sale catalogues from 1921 and 1930; it resurfaced in Hilversum twenty years later.⁴ The book was already in a fragmentary state in 1921 and contained eight miniatures. Apart from the owner's portrait, there was a *Descent from the Cross* and six full-page miniatures of apostles and saints (fig. II.1.8),⁵ as well as marks of provenance and genealogical notes added on blank folios. These new indications are essential because they allow us to define more closely the context of the manuscript's production. It once belonged to a certain 'Adriane Cauette de Lille', who died in 1563, whom we can identify as Adrienne Cauwet of Lille.⁶ If we consult her family tree, Adrienne leads us quickly to Tournai, and the upper social circles of the urban elite, because through her mother, Catherine de Vault, she was the granddaughter of Catherine Cottrel,⁷ a member of an important local family.⁸ Even more decisive is the fact that Agnes was the given name of Catherine Cottrel's mother-in-law, a Tournaisian who was the daughter of the haberdasher and *eswardeur*⁹ Jacques Desfontaine.¹⁰ At the



Fig. II.1.8

A bishop saint (St Nicholas?). Fragmentary book of hours, circle of Robert Campin, Tournai, c. 1415-1425. Present location unknown

end of the year 1420 Agnes married Louis de Chatillon, goldsmith and also an *eswardeur*, owner of several fiefs, an important local figure who, it must be emphasized, was close to Rogier de la Pasture, alias van der Weyden, the most famous student of Robert Campin.¹¹

Agnès Desfontaines would have been familiar with these well-known artists and it is natural that she would have turned to them when commissioning a prestigious manuscript. And if her patronage of the dismembered book were to be confirmed, Agnès could have acquired it shortly before her marriage. Indeed, she appears alone on the folio in Enschede, accompanied by her patron saint. DV

- ¹ Campin was himself an illuminator. See Vanwijnsberghe 2001a, pp. 277-278.
- ² Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz Museum & Foundation Corboud, Inv. no. WRM 533. See Kemperdick in Rotterdam 2012, pp. 239-241.
- ³ Vanwijnsberghe 2006; Vanwijnsberghe 2007a, pp. 274-281. See also Rotterdam 2012, pp. 242-243, no. 61.
- ⁴ Recognized by Anne Korteweg in Rosenthal [1950], p. 41, no. 111.

Subsequently by her and Peter Kidd identified in Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge [1921], p. 54, lot 474, and Sotheby 1930, p. 62, lot 604. I thank Anne Korteweg and Peter Kidd for having informed me of these catalogues.

- ⁵ *The Descent from the Cross and St Mary Magdalene* were removed after 1921 (now Princeton University, Art Museum, Ms. y1930-18a and y1930-18b, gift of Miss Ida Farnum). See Vanwijnsberghe 2006;

Vanwijnsberghe 2007a, pp. 278-280, figs. 433-435.

- ⁶ Casimir de Sars de Solmont, *Recueil de généalogies [...] des provinces du Nord*, t. 3 (Valenciennes, Bibliothèque municipale, Ms. 811), fol. 195r.
- ⁷ Du Chastel 1881, p. 580.
- ⁸ Catherine's mother, Marie Bernard, owned several manuscripts. See Vanwijnsberghe 2001a, p. 211, testament no. 238.
- ⁹ In Tournai, the *eswardeurs* formed a

college responsible for electing the provosts, jurors and aldermen for the urban magistrature.

- ¹⁰ Du Chastel 1905, col. 286. I thank Daniel Delécaut for having drawn my attention to this reference.
- ¹¹ Louis intervenes twice in aid of Rogier, first in 1426 when he sells his family home and then fifteen years later in a question of wardship. See Châtelet 1999, pp. 10, 25.