

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON FLEMISH ILLUMINATION

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Jean Le Tavernier: A Reassessment of his Biography and his Work in the Light of an Unpublished Book of Hours

Dominique Vanwijnsberghe and Erik Verroken

ABSTRACT: Archival research by Erik Verroken has shown that the illuminator Jean Le Tavernier from Oudenaarde could not be identified with his namesake documented in Tournai as early as 1434. Probably being the son of the illuminator Jakob de Tavernier (1428-1454), he was rather a painter of a younger generation who was nevertheless influenced by the art of Robert Campin. According to these new data, Le Tavernier was active in Oudenaarde from about 1449 to his death in 1462.

A little-known book of hours from the British Library in London (Add. ms. 19416) is illustrated with miniatures that may belong to Le Tavernier's early work. These illuminations in colour are important for the reassessment of an artist celebrated above all for his exceptional grisailles. The historiated miniatures of this manuscript made for a wealthy patron from the 'Land of Aalst' foreshadow the magisterial books painted for the duke of Burgundy. Moreover borders painted in the style of the Masters of Guillebert de Mets provide a precious link between two styles developed in the wake of the Campinesque tradition, between Tournai and Ghent.

At the beginning of the 16th century, the manuscript was owned by Charles Le Clerc (†1533), president of the Chamber of Accounts in Lille, an important power broker at Maximilian of Austria's court, who became Charles v's chamberlain. Like his brother Robert, abbot of Ter Duinen, Charles owned a respectable collection of illuminated manuscripts.

The generally accepted biography of Jean Le Tavernier is undoubtedly well known, but it might be useful to recall its broad outline.¹ In 1434, a certain Jehan Tavernier becomes a master in the Tournai guild of painters. He is seemingly well established there since six years later, in 1440, he takes on an apprentice, a certain Haquinot le Franc.² This is very likely the same Tavernier who, in December 1441, comes into conflict with the Ghent painters' guild and is denied access to the profession unless he pays his dues.³ It has been assumed that this artist could be identified with the famous illuminator of the same name living in Oudenaarde (Audenarde), who, at the request of Philip the Good, painted some of the most beautiful manuscripts of the ducal library. At the end of March 1460, he is paid for the grisailles of a copy of the *Chroniques et Conquestes de Charlemagne*, preserved today in Brussels. This is the reference work around which has been constructed the corpus of some twenty works that is currently attributed to him.⁴

An article published in 1960 by Antoine Frederix did not contradict this reconstitution of the remarkable career of the Duke's illuminator.⁵ And, based as it was on new and apparently exhaustive research in the Oudenaarde archives, everything

seemed to accredit the official story, notwithstanding two rather embarrassing details: first of all the fact that, from 1434 to 1454, there is no mention of Le Tavernier in the accounts of his most important patron, the Duke of Burgundy; secondly, the absence of any illuminated work that can be attributed to his alleged Tournai period, despite extensive research on book painting in this city.⁶

But when two historians – Karl Van Hoecke⁷ and Erik Verroken⁸ – examined once again and with no preconceived ideas the Oudenaarde archives, they soon realized that the records were far from having revealed all their secrets. These scholars came across a large amount of new information enabling them to replace Le Tavernier in his family and socio-professional context. These new data have made breaches in the accepted biography of the master of Oudenaarde, calling for a complete revision of his curriculum vitae and enabling us to advance new and stimulating hypotheses about his artistic activity.

De Tavernier in Oudenaarde

At the time Jean Tavernier became a master at Tournai in 1434, an illuminator named Jakob de Tavernier was active in Oudenaarde. His presence there is attested from 1428 to 1454. Jakob and his two brothers, Gillis and Geraerd, were burghers of Oudenaarde and were, along with Saladin de Stoevere, the prominent painters in this city between 1430 and 1475.⁹ Jakob de Tavernier took on two apprentices, Lauwereins Vleming fs Goessins (attested 1431–1434) and Willem van den Haute fs Arends (att. 1436–1442), which demonstrates the vitality of his workshop.¹⁰ He also collaborated with the local bookbinder Clais van den Hecke (att. 1423–1459) and was well acquainted with the city clerk Jakob Hanoke (att. 1415–1459) and his son Pieter (att. 1439–1477), to whom we shall come back later. We currently know of three commissions that were entrusted to him. In 1431, he illuminated two books for the nearby abbey of Ename. Twelve years later, he painted a representation of the Virgin on a letter of indul-

gence for the Brotherhood of Our Lady of Oudenaarde. And for the same confraternity, he decorated a small missal in 1448–1449. The record of this commission¹¹ is of paramount interest because it indicates that Jakob was assisted by his son, a help that was visibly appreciated and which brought the young man a gratuity of two *sols*.

Several converging elements tend to identify this young illuminator with none other than the great Jean Le Tavernier of Oudenaarde, illuminator to Philip the Good, who gladly depicted the buildings of his native city, even in his work for the Duke.¹²

1. Jean Le Tavernier was clearly an illegitimate child. Already in 1882, Canon Dehaisnes had discovered a document dating from November 1456 in which the bastard *Jehan Le Tavernier d'Audenarde* petitioned to be legitimized by the Burgundian administration. Dehaisnes related this mention to the Duke's illuminator.¹³ Very recently, a new document corroborating Dehaisnes's assumption has come to light in the Oudenaarde archives: an addition dating from 1450–1455 to the list of members of the Guild of St. George reports a *Jan de Tavernier fs Jakobs bastart*.¹⁴ This bastard son of Jakob is more than likely the man mentioned in the Burgundian records.

2. Le Tavernier's presumed Tournai period is generally dated from 1434, the year he became a master illuminator, to 1455, when his presence is first recorded in Oudenaarde. If the Tavernier from Tournai and his Oudenaarde namesake were one and the same person, one would logically expect the illuminator, during his participation at the Feast of the Pheasant in 1454, to have been part of the Tournai delegation led by Jacques Daret. However, *Jehannin Tavernier* is mentioned along with Saladin de Stoevere, a painter from Oudenaarde.¹⁵

3. If Jan is the son of Jakob de Tavernier, he would have begun his career around 1449, still under his father's guidance. This provides a simple explanation of why attempts to find earlier works dating back to his presumed Tournai period have so far proved fruitless.

4. From the documents we also learn that Jan de Tavernier died suddenly after 6 March 1462 (n.st.).¹⁶ This new piece of information fits very well with the stylistic analysis of the Le Tavernier group, which has never permitted a dating later than the early 1460s. In addition, this sudden death occurs exactly when the illuminator disappears from the archives. After 1460, Le Tavernier is no longer mentioned in the ducal accounts. His death could also explain why several works he had begun could not be completed and were finished only in the ensuing months or years by other illuminators like Willem Vrelant. One thinks here particularly of the *Breviary of Philip the Good*,¹⁷ which contains two superb miniatures belonging to the very best of Le Tavernier's production (ill. 3.16), and other compositions he only sketched and painted in part, like the Resurrection (fol. 180), of which he produced only the landscape.¹⁸

If this tragic end decisively concludes Le Tavernier's professional activities, the beginning of his career, his training and his early work are much more problematic.

François Avril has addressed these issues in an article devoted to a new acquisition by the Bibliothèque nationale de France, a book of hours he places among the earliest known works of the miniaturist, 'at the beginning of the artist's career, around 1450 or even before'.¹⁹

The Hours of Charles Le Clerc

Sometime after the publication of this memorable study, François Avril kindly sent us some black and white photographs of a book of hours preserved in London, which we subsequently examined *in situ*.²⁰ This manuscript of small size bears traces of intensive use: some of the pages are worn and copious notes have been added by its successive owners. The original commissioner is unknown, but at the beginning of the sixteenth century it belonged to Charles Le Clerc, a senior official in the service of the Habsburgs, who ended his brilliant career as chamberlain of Charles v, after being, among other things, *maître ordinaire* and

president of the Lille Chamber of Accounts.²¹ In one of the sections added to the original body of the book, Charles had himself represented in prayer in front of Charlemagne, his patron saint (ill. 3.1). He also had his three successive wives depicted in the same attitude.²² Unfortunately we have no time to dwell here on this highly literate man who packed his book with extremely interesting reading and genealogy notes.²³

The book of hours follows a use that is difficult to determine with any precision. The calendar is clearly intended for the diocese of Cambrai, but the rubricated feasts are general and do not allow us to specify the exact destination of the manuscript. However, the combined presence of Bavo (feast day 1 October), Livinus (12 November) and Macarius (9 May), is a valuable indication that points toward the Ghent region. But the fact that these saints appear in black ink in the calendar, ranking them as simple commemorations, seems to



III. 3.1 Anonymous artist, *Charles Le Clerc and Charlemagne, his Patron Saint* (detail of the miniature), Southern Netherlands (Mechelen?), after 1505, 118 x 78 mm (page). London, British Library (Add. ms. 19416), *Book of Hours*, fol. 178.

exclude Ghent itself. It is worth noting that the spelling of certain feasts betrays a Flemish copyist.²⁴ The litany, short and of a general nature, is of no help. Moreover, both the Little Hours of the Virgin and – what is less frequent – the Office of the Dead unfortunately follow an undetermined use.²⁵

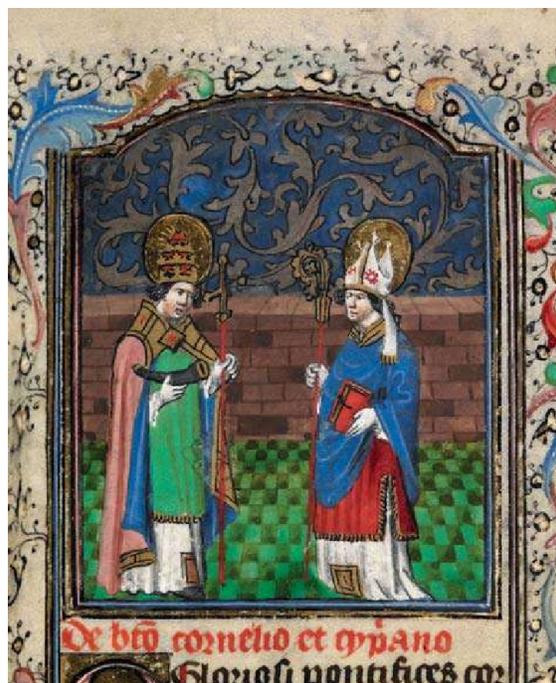
Much more interesting are the saints honoured in the suffrages. The selection is actually quite unusual: Hermes (ill. 3.2), along with the duo of Cornelius and Cyprian (ill. 3.3), are all three associated with the collegiate church of Ronse (Renaix), dedicated to St. Hermes.²⁶ The cult of Wilgefortis (ill. 3.4), the crucified bearded female saint, enjoyed great popularity in the 'Land of Aalst' (*Land van Aalst*).²⁷ St. Adrian (fol. 132) was widely venerated, but the epicentre of his cult is again situated in the same region, at the Benedictine abbey of Geraardsbergen (Grammont).²⁸ St. Ghislain (ill. 3.5) is a typical saint of the diocese of Cambrai. His representation in the company of King Dagobert, donor of the land on which the

Abbey of Saint-Ghislain was founded, is rare. We know of only one other example, in a prayer book from Valenciennes dating to the third quarter of the fifteenth century.²⁹ More intriguing is the exceptional presence of a prayer to St. Beatrix, a Roman saint (ill. 3.6). She opens the series of virgins, preceding even the celebrated St. Barbara. Should we consider this prominence as a reference to the first name of the woman who commissioned the book?³⁰ In any event, we have been unable until now to find any traces of a local cult to Beatrix in the Southern Netherlands. This rather unusual combination of saints seems to indicate that the work was intended for a patron settled in the county of Flanders, between the Rivers Scheldt and Dender, more precisely to the south of Aalst within a perimeter bounded roughly by Ronse, Geraardsbergen, Zottegem and Oudenaarde.

The programme of illustrations is also particularly rich and interesting, containing complete cycles of illustrations for both the Little Hours of



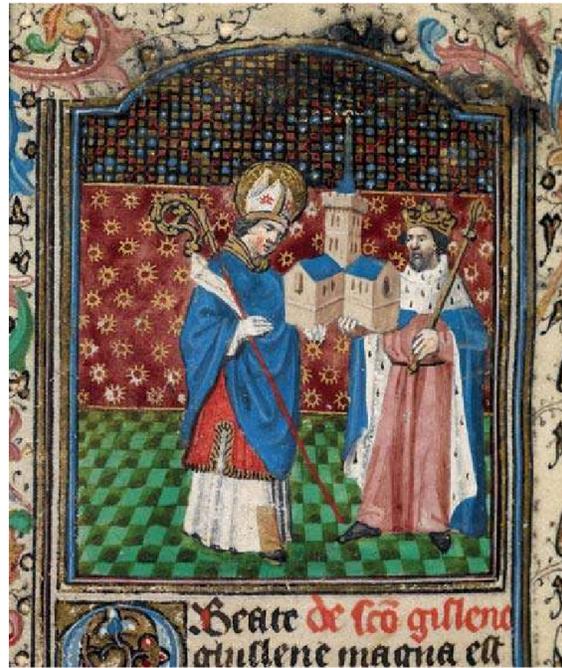
III. 3.2 Jean Le Tavernier, *Saint Hermes Exorcising a Woman Possessed by a Demon* (detail of the miniature), Oudenaarde, c. 1445–1450, 118 × 78 mm (page). London, British Library (Add. ms. 19416), *Book of Hours*, fol. 133.



III. 3.3 Jean Le Tavernier, *Saint Cornelius and Saint Cyprian* (detail of the miniature), Oudenaarde, c. 1445–1450, 118 × 78 mm (page). London, British Library (Add. ms. 19416), *Book of Hours*, fol. 134.



III. 3.4 Jean Le Tavernier, *Saint Wilgefortis* (detail of the miniature), Oudenaarde, c. 1445–1450, 118 x 78 mm (page).
London, British Library (Add. ms. 19416),
Book of Hours, fol. 145v.



III. 3.5 Jean Le Tavernier, *Saint Ghislain and King Dagobert* (detail of the miniature), Oudenaarde, c. 1445–1450, 118 x 78 mm (page).
London, British Library (Add. ms. 19416),
Book of Hours, fol. 137v.



III. 3.6 Jean Le Tavernier, *Saint Beatrix* (detail of the miniature), Oudenaarde, c. 1445–1450, 118 x 78 mm (page).
London, British Library (Add. ms. 19416),
Book of Hours, fol. 139v.



III. 3.7 Jean Le Tavernier, *The Massacre of the Innocents*, Oudenaarde, c. 1445–1450, 118 x 78 mm (page).
London, British Library (Add. ms. 19416),
Book of Hours, fol. 71v.

TABLE 1

	Flemish cycle		Le Tavernier variant	Le Clerc Hours
Matins	Annunciation		Annunciation	Annunciation
Lauds	Visitation		Visitation	Visitation
Prime	Nativity		Annunciation to the Shepherds	Annunciation to the Shepherds
Terce	Annunciation to the Shepherds	↔	Nativity	Nativity
Sext	Adoration of the Magi	↔	Presentation in the Temple	Adoration of the Magi
None	Presentation in the Temple	↔	Adoration of the Magi	Presentation in the Temple
Vespers	Massacre of the Innocents	↔	Flight into Egypt	Flight into Egypt
Compline	Flight into Egypt	↔	Massacre of the Innocents	Massacre of the Innocents

the Virgin and those of the Cross (where all the miniatures are full-page), as well as a series of twenty representations of saints introducing the suffrages. The eight miniatures that structure the hours of the Virgin follow a unique sequence (TABLE 1), the variant – we want to emphasize this point – of a cycle that to our knowledge is only found in books of hours painted by Jean Le Tavernier.³¹

A Work by Jean Le Tavernier

It is precisely this name that spontaneously comes to mind when examining the miniatures from the *codex*. Even if the execution is of very variable quality, which could justify attributions to different hands, we perceive at once the lively, dynamic and spontaneous style and, in several places, the narrative verve of Jean Le Tavernier. The Massacre of the Innocents (ill. 3.7 and p. 28), for example, is presented as a choreography that coordinates in the same élan Herod's order, the killing of a small child by a soldier brandishing his sword and the protective gesture of the mother looking indignantly at the sovereign. The magnitude of the

tragedy is splendidly contained within the narrow walls of the palace. Typical of Le Tavernier's production is the way his figures are everywhere in motion, whether standing, one foot advanced, ready to step forward or carried away in a quick, twisting movement of the upper body.

The same ease characterizes the execution of the monumental draperies with their skilfully broken folds, a Campinesque element. The ample garments of St. Christopher and of the Infant Christ (ill. 3.8) are lifted by the strong wind that hinders the giant's crossing of the river. This resistance and the saint's effort are strongly suggested by the swirling ends of his and the Child's cloaks. The whole composition strikingly resembles its counterpart in the *Hours of Philip the Good*³² where even the pattern of the drapery is similar. Likewise, a rustling movement animates the Virgin's mantle in the Flight into Egypt (ill. 3.9).

Numerous details associate the London miniatures with Le Tavernier's production: the particular way of painting palm-shaped trees, their wispy foliage suggested by a light wash heightened in places with a few dots of dark colour, and with the trunks



III. 3.8 Jean Le Tavernier, *Saint Christopher*, Oudenaarde, c. 1445–1450, 118 x 78 mm (page).
 London, British Library (Add. ms. 19416), *Book of Hours*, fol. 130.

and branches streaked with lines of gold (ill. 3.9); the hummocky landscapes of rugged rocks and a succession of coulisses revealing a city or castle (ill. 3.9); the fabrics, either brocades or precious cloths sown with little toothed disks, in the backgrounds (ill. 3.5); or in their place, silver and gold acanthus leaves, a motif of French origin, also used by the Masters of Guillebert de Mets and their followers, as we shall see (ill. 3.6, 3.10); the three-sided brick walls in the outdoor scenes (ill. 3.10); the good-natured animals with their big eyes, seen in profile (ill. 3.9); the 'iced gems' domes (fols 81v, 140v), or the particular type of lecterns with twisted supports (fols 37v, 148v). The human figures are also depicted in the same way: Mary, with her oval face and high forehead with a hairline framed by long, curly locks, suggested by pairs of small light

yellow parallel lines (ill. 3.12 and 3.16); St. John's dishevelled hair (fol. 84v); or again, the angels shown frontally with outstretched wings (fol. 55). All these protagonists show up again and again in Jean Le Tavernier's production.

Nor should we forget the extraordinary richness of the palette, that of a very talented colourist who skilfully blends bright colours and pastel tones. It is obvious from these miniatures that Le Tavernier's talent was not limited to grisaille painting.

The compositions in the *Le Clerc Hours* also belong to the repertoire of the illuminator from Oudenaarde and are clearly based on models. The scene of Christ before Pilate is coupled with that of Pilate Washing his Hands, a combination found in the *Hours of Philip the Good*.³³ Other compositions are shared by both manuscripts, the most striking



III.3.9 Jean Le Tavernier, *The Flight into Egypt*, Oudenaarde, c. 1445–1450, 118 x 78 mm (page).
London, British Library (Add. ms. 19416),
Book of Hours, fol. 67v.



III.3.10 Jean Le Tavernier, *Virgin and Child*, Oudenaarde, c. 1445–1450, 118 x 78 mm (page).
London, British Library (Add. ms. 19416),
Book of Hours, fol. 100v.



III. 3. 11 Jean Le Tavernier, *The Descent from the Cross*, Oudenaarde, c. 1445–1450, 118 x 78 mm (page).
London, British Library (Add. ms. 19416), *Book of Hours*, fol. 83v.

undoubtedly being that of the Descent from the Cross (ill. 3.11). The parallel movement of Christ's lifeless body and that of His mother echoes the famous model of Rogier van der Weyden's masterpiece in the Prado.³⁴ But the composition again has striking affinities with that of the *Hours of Philip the Good*, in particular, in the upper part of the miniature, the movement of the man gripping the horizontal arm of the cross with his left arm. An identically positioned figure appears in the manuscript in The Hague.³⁵ Similarly, the Rogerian motif of Christ's body with one arm dangling loose, the other held along the body, seems to have had some success, also inspiring sculptors.³⁶ This is precisely the same model that Le Tavernier used for his Entombment (fol. 84v).

These are not the only motifs that betray the influence of Tournai painting on Le Tavernier, a point to which Georges Hulin de Loo and later François Avril³⁷ had already drawn attention. The domestic interior of the Annunciation (fol. 37v), its wooden-shuttered windows and its open-joisted ceiling are clearly inspired by Robert Campin. The *Virgin and Child* on a grassy bench (fol. 100v) evokes the Campinesque composition in Berlin,³⁸ while the way the Child sits on Mary's lap, with the very specific position of its legs, is an almost exact replica of the *Durán Virgin* in Madrid,³⁹ generally considered an early work by Rogier de le Pasture, alias Van der Weyden.

The Masters of Guillebert de Mets: the Link with Tradition

Another influence is clearly perceptible here: that of the Masters of Guillebert de Mets, a group of illuminators based in Ghent, but also operating along the natural axis formed by the River Scheldt, including Tournai.⁴⁰ Close links exist between the *Le Clerc Hours* and the later production of this group, especially the book of hours produced around 1445 for Marguerite de Gavre d'Escornaix (Margareta van Gavere-Schorisse), abbess of Nivelles, a native of the Land of Aalst.⁴¹ Some compositions in the two books are very close, like

the Nativity scenes (ill. 3.12 and 3.13), which share the same setting, the same barn, a similar position of the Virgin and of the Child, lying on a cushion from which rays emerge, with Joseph looking on. In both cases, a servant is drying the Child's swaddling clothes by waving them in front of a small fire, a rare motif found occasionally in 'pre-Eyckian' illumination.⁴² The Adoration of the Magi (fol. 62v) displays the same affinities and kings wearing crowns over their hats are also found elsewhere in the Mets group.⁴³

The relationship between the two manuscripts is not limited to the use of common compositions. The marginal decoration, if not by the same hand, is closely related and could have borrowed certain motifs from a common source, like the woman breastfeeding in the margins of the Massacre of the Innocents (ill. 3.7 and 3.14), or the man hiding behind a giant leaf in the margins of fols 65 and 68 of the *Le Clerc Hours*, who reappears in a bas-de-page of the *Gavre Hours* (fol. 103). The similarities also extend to the ornamental repertoire, to several fanciful plant motifs, or to the ligneous acanthus scrolls with their protruding ribs and characteristic bracket-shaped leaves.

Codicological study seems to confirm the strong ties between the two illuminators. Careful examination of the *Le Clerc Hours* shows how the intervention of Le Tavernier and that of the *vignetteur* of the Mets group are interlinked: they worked together on certain bifolios and, in several instances, even painted opposite pages.⁴⁴ Such a complex situation often indicates a close collaboration, a concerted effort, which offers the best guarantee that the quires will be assembled correctly when the book is bound. In the present case, the hypothesis of a coordinated effort between the two illuminators therefore seems the most plausible. If it proves right, then the young Le Tavernier would have had direct contact with the representative of an older tradition.

Jean Le Tavernier's work also has other – essentially ornamental – points of contact with that of the Masters of Guillebert de Mets and their follow-



III. 3.12 Jean Le Tavernier, *The Nativity*, Oudenaarde, c. 1445–1450, 118 x 78 mm (page). London, British Library (Add. ms. 19416), *Book of Hours*, fol. 59v.



III. 3.13 Masters of Guillebert de Mets, *The Nativity*, Ghent, April 1445 or shortly after, 195 x 135 mm (page) Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium (ms. IV 1113), *Book of Hours of Marguerite de Gavre d'Escornaux*, abbess of Nivelles, fol. 37.

ers. The silver or gold foliage in the backgrounds of some historiated miniatures (ill. 3.3, 3.6, 3.10), can be observed very early in the Mets group⁴⁵ and are still used by their follower, the Master of the Privileges of Ghent and Flanders.⁴⁶ Another traditional motif, the diaper ground (ill. 3.5), is often treated creatively by the Mets illuminators. It appears on the stem or in the bowl of the initials, or in the baguettes, at times even invading the margins.⁴⁷ Le Tavernier may have been seduced by this play with convention. In any event it is echoed in one of the books of hours of his group.⁴⁸ Greek-key patterned tiling was apparently popular with Ghent illuminators, also with the Masters of Guillebert de Mets.⁴⁹ Le Tavernier adopts the motif too.⁵⁰

While Le Tavernier obviously appears to have known the work of the Masters of Guillebert de Mets, and although there seems to be a certain continuum between these two groups,⁵¹ it is more difficult to ascertain in what circumstances the influence actually took place. Indirect contact via manuscripts is attested in any case: as Ilona Hans-Collas has pointed out, Le Tavernier was commissioned to retouch miniatures by the Mets group. He repainted the patrons kneeling down in prayer on two pages of the *Van der Meere Hours*.⁵²

The *Le Clerc Hours* thus appears as a transitional work, a missing link between, on the one hand, a Ghent-Tournai Campinesque tradition and that of the Masters of Guillebert de Mets and, on the other, the style of the mature Jean Le Tavernier,



III. 3.14 Masters of Guillebert de Mets, *Breastfeeding Woman* (detail of the margin), Ghent, April 1445 or shortly after; 195 x 135 mm (page).
Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium (ms. IV 1113),
Book of Hours of Marguerite de Gavre d'Escornaix, abbess of Nivelles, fol. 52.

as shown in his work for Philip the Good. This intermediate position justifies an early dating of the manuscript in Le Tavernier's oeuvre, placing it between the *Hours of Marguerite de Gavre d'Escornaix*, one of the last productions of the Mets group – the writing was completed in 1445 – and Le Tavernier's first datable works from c. 1450. The very fluctuating quality of the illuminations in the *Le Clerc Hours*, where the best rubs shoulders with the less good, seems to corroborate this dating, pointing to the production of a young artist who, despite a certain clumsiness, clearly possessed a great potential in terms of pictorial technique, force of expression and narrative inventiveness. The models devised here by a still hesitant hand will be fully developed in works like the *Book of Hours of Philip the Good*, with which the *Le Clerc Hours* shares several compositions.

If it is indeed an early work by Jean Le Tavernier, the *Le Clerc Hours* would then antedate the book of hours recently acquired by the BNF, that François Avril situated around or just before the

middle of the century.⁵³ Without being faithful replicas, compositions such as the Visitation (fol. 52v), the Presentation in the Temple (fol. 71) and certain details of the Crucifixion (fol. 13) are fully consistent with those of the London manuscript. The Massacre of the Innocents (ill. 3.15) is a narrative amplification of the scene in the *Le Clerc Hours* (ill. 3.7): with an additional four figures, it retains the swirling movement uniting the main protagonists. While the two manuscripts differ significantly in marginal decoration and in palette – the BNF hours goes for powerful blue-orange contrasts – they both belong, within Jean Le Tavernier's oeuvre, to the same type of books: devotional works embellished with illuminations and decorations in colour, produced probably for wealthy lay patrons, and clearly distinct, in both appearance and layout, from the large volumes painted for the Duke of Burgundy.

The Patron

The identity of the original owner of the *Le Clerc Hours* remains a mystery. We now suspect that the original part of the book was probably painted in Oudenaarde around 1445–1450. Analysis of the text shows it was made for a Flemish patron or patroness, probably from the southern part of the Land of Aalst. Although it might be perilous to climb back up a family chain in search of a patron, in this case we can cautiously suggest that Charles Le Clerc may have acquired the manuscript through his wife's family. Indeed, it turns out that Pieter Hanoke, the grandfather of Anna Hanoke, Charles' third wife, originated from Oudenaarde and that he was the son of the city clerk Jakob († 1459).⁵⁴ Recommended by Philip the Good, the young Pieter became the bailiff (*scouteet*) of the court at Delft. He had to purchase this office and paid in 1442 a considerable sum of money to the widow of the Ghent burgher Simoen Alijn. It is particularly striking that, among his guarantors one finds, in addition to his father Jakob Hanoke, the illuminator Jakob de Tavernier, Jan's father, an acquaintance of the family.⁵⁵ It seems therefore reasonable



III.3.15 Jean Le Tavernier, *The Massacre of the Innocents*, Oudenaarde, c. 1450, 160 x 115 mm (page).
 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (ms. NAL 3225),
Book of Hours for use of Rome, fol. 85.



III. 3.16 Jean Le Tavernier, *The Nativity*, Oudenaarde, 1460–1462, 295 x 215 mm (page).
Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium (ms. 9511),
Breviary of Philip the Good, fol. 43v.

to assume that the book may have passed into Charles Le Clerc's hands via Pieter Hanoke. We can even go further and speculate that the manuscript was commissioned by Pieter himself, who pursued a brilliant career in the ducal administration as *rentmeester* of southern Holland (1444–1462) and is even mentioned as a councillor to Philip the Good in 1449.⁵⁶ To this we can add a more trivial detail: while his father Jakob was accustomed to include a letter 'N' in the large loop of his signature, Pieter opted for an 'M'. Could this be the letter that repeatedly appears in the margins of the *Le Clerc Hours* (ill. 3.9)?⁵⁷

At the Crossroads of Various Influences

Examination of new archival sources relating to Jean Le Tavernier and his entourage, combined with the study of the *Le Clerc Hours*, a significant addition to his corpus of works, allow us to draw a new picture of the Flemish miniaturist. He would no longer be an Oudenaarde-born artist, who settled in Tournai in the 1430s, was directly exposed to the art of Robert Campin and translated it in a masterly series of grisaille miniatures. Instead, he would rather be a burgher of Oudenaarde, educated a generation later, around 1440–1450, in his home town, by painters open to various artistic influences.

1. First of all, Campinesque painting, possibly filtered by its Ghent variant,⁵⁸ as represented for example by the *Nativity* in the Great Butchers' Hall in Ghent, a wall painting traditionally attributed to the Ghent painter Nabur Martins⁵⁹ and very close both to the Campinesque *Nativities* and to Le Tavernier's contribution to the *Breviary of Philip the Good* (ill. 3.16). In 1442–43, Nabur Martins had worked for the Church of St. Walburga in Oudenaarde and for the prioress of the city hospital.⁶⁰ This would have brought him into contact with painters active in Oudenaarde. Moreover, it is perfectly conceivable that an artist like Saladin de Stoevere could have served as an agent for disseminating the Campinesque style in Oudenaarde, as he belonged himself to an illustrious family of

Ghent painters, among them Jan de Stoevere, his father's cousin, who had been apprenticed to Robert Campin.⁶¹ Given that Jan's father, Geraerd de Stoevere, had been Saladin's guardian (*voogd*) from 1414 to 1419, one may wonder if he had not sent him also to Tournai to learn his trade there. Saladin's brothers, in any case, had received their training outside Flanders (*butenlands* as the texts say).⁶²

2. Another source of influence, a corollary of the previous one, is provided by the Ghent illuminators and the now established links with the work of the Masters of Guillebert de Mets.

3. To this we must add Eyckian art, that Le Tavernier could have known through direct observation of the panels of the *Ghent Altarpiece* in the church of St. John. In any case, he has perfectly captured Van Eyck's fascination with the accurate rendering of materials. In the *Nativity* of the *Breviary of Philip the Good* (ill. 3.16), the midwife Salome's blue hat, strewn with precious stones and covered with a transparent veil, echoes an Eyckian sensitivity, as do the angels with their personalized expressions, wearing large capes of embroidered brocade with delicately tooled morsers, that irresistibly remind us of the 'singing angels' on the left hand panel of the *Ghent Altarpiece*.

The discovery of new documents and the emergence of an unpublished manuscript that we attribute to the early years of Le Tavernier's activity offer precious reference points that help clarify the professional and artistic development of one of the major book painters of his generation. These new findings open up a wide field of research, first of all with regard to the intriguing question of Le Tavernier's training: where, when and to whom was he apprenticed? They also encourage us to search, in his entourage, for possible collaborators whose style was both very close to and recognizably distinct from his. Most certainly, Le Tavernier did not work alone. An anonymous *valeton* accompanied him to the Feast of the Pheasant in Lille in 1454. The stylistic variations observed between the manuscripts attributed to him, and even inside books

such as the *Chroniques et Conquêtes de Charlemagne*, the *Hours of Philip the Good* in The Hague or the *Tavernier Hours* in Brussels,⁶³ show that the Oudenaarde illuminator could call on craftsmen trained in his own style. The archives are unfortunately silent about potential assistants, and equally uninformative about any followers. We can nevertheless assume that a painter like Saladin de Stoevere and especially Jakob de Tavernier's apprentice Willem van den Haute may have continued the tradition started by their celebrated colleague.⁶⁴

One thing is certain: the Oudenaarde master exerted a lasting influence on other grisaille painters working in the Southern Netherlands in the 1460s. Recently, two little-known manuscripts have been linked to his style.⁶⁵ The works of anonymous illuminators, they could have been produced elsewhere than in Oudenaarde, since during Le Tavernier's lifetime his work no doubt acquired a certain reputation and became well-known beyond the walls of his small Flemish city.

There is also the pending and particularly vexing question of the Tournai Jean Tavernier, a figure who fitted so well into the traditional construction. Certainly, the last word is far from being said on the subject.

NOTES

1 On Jean Le Tavernier/Jan de Tavernier, see mainly Dehaisnes 1882; Winkler 1925; Hulin de Loo 1926–1929; Hulin de Loo 1928; Brussels 1959; Dogaer 1987; Brinkmann 1996; Avril 1999; Vanwijnsberghe 2001; Brussels 2002; Verroken 2006B; Vanwijnsberghe & Verroken 2011B; Vanwijnsberghe & Verroken 2012.

2 Documents gathered in Vanwijnsberghe 2001: 296.

3 Mention reported by De Schryver 1975: 327 and published by Verroken 2007: 234.

4 Brussels, KBR, ms. 9066–9068. Dehaisnes 1882: 25–29, 32–34. On the *Chroniques*, see Lieve Watteeuw's entries in Brussels–Paris 2011: 229–232, no. 39–40.

5 Fredericx 1960.

6 Vanwijnsberghe 2001: 23.

7 Van Hoecke 2004.

8 Verroken 2006B.

9 Verroken 2006A.

10 Their apprenticeship contracts date respectively from 1431 and 1436 (published in Verroken 2006B: 115–116).

11 Document published in Verroken 2006B: 100.

12 For example the realistic view of Our Lady of Pamele, the church on the right bank of the River Scheldt, portrayed in the

Voyages d'Outremer of Bertrandon de La Broquière (Paris, BNF, ms. fr. 9087, fol. 152v). See the entry by Dominique Vanwijnsberghe and Erik Verroken in Brussels–Paris 2011: 226–227, no. 37 (with illustrations).

13 Dehaisnes 1882: 24–25, 34–35.

14 Document published in Verroken 2006B: 103.

15 De Laborde 1849: 424–425, no. 1549 [read 'Fauconnier' instead of 'Tavernier': corrected in Pinchart 1860–1881, vol. 3, 102].

16 Verroken 2006B: 106. Jan de Tavernier is the first deceased mentioned in the list of the dead in the Journal of the *oppervoogden* (main guardians), transcribed from 6 March 1462 (n.st.) onwards ('Doede beghonnen scriven in tjaer XIII c ende LXI den visten in maert' (Oudenaarde, City Archives, series 92, 1462–1475), 1462, fol. 1).

17 Brussels, KBR, ms. 9511. See the entry by Dominique Vanwijnsberghe and Erik Verroken in Brussels–Paris 2011: 234–236, no. 42.

18 Another manuscript left unfinished by Jean Le Tavernier, the Paris *Miroir de la Salvation Humaine* (BNF, ms. fr. 6275), was completed by Loyset Liédet and the Master of Edward IV. See the entry by Ilona Hans-Collas in Brussels–Paris 2011: 236–237, no. 43.

19 Paris, BNF, ms. n.a.l. 3225. See Avril 1999; Brussels–Paris 2011: 228–229, no. 38.

20 London, BL, Add. ms. 19416. See London 1853: no. 1866, p. 125; Strohm 1985: 149, 179–180; Backhouse 2004: ill. 72, p. 87. Reproductions of the complete series of miniatures are to be found, with commentaries, in Vanwijnsberghe & Verroken 2012. Avril reported in writing that, in his opinion, the manuscript was one of Le Tavernier's first works. We would like to thank him most heartily for drawing our attention to this important book of hours.

21 Van Langenhove de Bouvekercke 1957 (in particular: 75–79); Jean 1992: 318–319; Hagg 2003: 95–96; Wijsman 2010A: 495–496; Vanwijnsberghe & Verroken 2012: 23–26, 29.

22 On fol. 179 (Eléonora Lem), 180 (Elisabeth de Pau), 181 (Anna Hanoke).

23 We hope to dedicate a separate publication to Charles Le Clerc and his artistic patronage.

24 For example: Geertrudis (17/3), Wilhelmi (20/7), Leonaerdi (6/11).

25 The use of the Little Hours of the Virgin is very close to that of Thérouanne, from which it differs, among other things, in the three lessons of Matins, the *Benedictus* antiphon at Lauds and the collect for Vespers. The variant of the Office of the Dead does not feature in the study by Knud Ottosen (Ottosen 1993). The sequence of responses, following his system, is as follows: 25-93-18/79-1-76/1-58-29.

26 Literature on Ronse is relatively abundant, but local in scope. See, among recent references: Van Damme 2000; Devos & Collin 2010 [with bibliography and reference to some of the numerous articles by Albert Cambier]. On the cult of St. Hermes, invoked against insanity, one can consult the remarkable study of Beek 1969: 156, 219, 237.

27 Gessler 1938. In the *Le Clerc Hours*, the saint appears on the unusual date of 12 July.

28 Van Bockstaele 1977.

29 Vanwijnsberghe 2013: 70, ill. 64.

30 Two important prayers, the *O intemerata* (fol. 100v–103) and the *Obsecro te* (fol. 103–106), contain masculine forms which would seem to exclude the possibility of a female commissioner, although this criterion is far from absolute.

31 Vanwijnsberghe 2007B: 363–364. The 'seventh variant' is a triple inversion of the hours of prime and terce, of sext and none, and of vespers and compline. In the *Le Clerc Hours*, sext and none follow the traditional sequence: Adoration of the Magi – Presentation in the Temple.

32 The Hague, KB: ms. 76 F 2, fol. 260v. On this manuscript, see Korteweg 2002. The miniatures can be viewed on the library website: <http://www.kb.nl/en/digitized-books> [consulted on 1 March 2013].

33 The Hague, KB: ms. 76 F 2, fol. 25.

- 34 Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, inv. 2825. Reproduction in Leuven 2009: 18.
- 35 The Hague, KB: ms. 76 K 2, fol. 29v.
- 36 For example, the Lamentations in Brussels (MRAH/KMKG, inv. ret. 1) or Detroit (Institute of Arts, inv. 61.164). See the entry by Robert Didier in Leuven 2009: 520–522, no. 79; 229, ill. 119.
- 37 Hulin de Loo 1928: 49–50, Avril 1999: 14–15.
- 38 Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Gemäldegalerie, cat. 1835. Reproduction in Frankfurt–Berlin 2008–2009: 185.
- 39 Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, inv. 2722. Reproduction in Leuven 2009: 215, ill. 114.
- 40 On this group, see Vanwijnsberghe & Verroken 2011A.
- 41 Brussels, KBR, ms. IV 1113. On this manuscript, see the entry by Dominique Vanwijnsberghe and Erik Verroken in Brussels–Paris 2011: 162–164, no. 16.
- 42 For example, in the Nativity of the *Tower Retable* in Antwerp (Museum Mayer van den Bergh, inv. 2). See the entry by Hans Nieuw-dorp in Dijon–Cleveland 2004–2005: 204–205, no. 73.
- 43 For example, a book of hours preserved in the Vatican (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Ottob. lat. 2919, fol. 109v). Reproduced in König & Bartz 1998: 100, ill. 97.
- 44 The book being very tightly bound, we had to limit our study to a representative quire that could be reconstructed without straining the binding, that of fol. 46 to 53v, which seems regular. To obtain a homogeneous decoration in the openings of fol. 46v–47 (*Le Tavernier*) and 52v–53 (*Masters of Guillebert de Mets*), it was necessary to paint stylistically mixed margins on pages 46v–53 of the first bifolio and of 52v–47 of the second.
- 45 In the *Beck Hours*, for example (*olim* London, Sotheby's, 16 June 1997, lot 23, fol. 87v, Tournai?, c. 1425–1435). Reproduction in Vanwijnsberghe 2007A: 242, ill. 385.
- 46 Clark 2000: ill. 62; Vanwijnsberghe 2007A: 212, ill. 341.
- 47 See *olim* London, Sotheby's, 3 July 1984, lot 89, Southern Netherlands (Ghent?), c. 1440–1450. Reproductions in Clark 2000: 61–62, 64, 66–67.
- 48 Tenschert & König 1994: 391, no. 72 (fol. 85).
- 49 See the miniature of St. Barbara and St. Avoic (Hedwig) in the *Book of Hours of John the Fearless*, Ghent?, before 1414 (New York, FPL, ms. M 439, fol. 31v. Reproduction in Vanwijnsberghe 2007A: 61, ill. 81), or the frontispiece of the *Ghent Brewers' Book*, Ghent, c. 1453 (Ghent, Stadsarchief, series 160, no. 6, fol. 7v. Reproduced in Brussels–Paris 2011: 20).
- 50 Tenschert & König 1994: 381, no. 72 (fol. 37v).
- 51 Hulin de Loo had already intuited this relationship and, at a time when the production of this group was still considered as the work of one man, he even proposed to regard the Master of Guillebert de Mets as an Oudenaarde artisan. See Hulin de Loo 1926–1929: col. 636; Hulin de Loo 1928: 48.
- 52 Paris, BNF, ms. n.a.l. 3112, fol. 56v and 60v. See the entry by Ilona Hans-Collas and Erik Verroken in Brussels–Paris 2011: 165, no. 17.
- 53 Avril 1999: 18.
- 54 On Jakob and Pieter Hanoke, see Verroken 2006B: 94–96.
- 55 Oudenaarde, City Archives, Deeds and contracts, no. 1, fol. 128.
- 56 Pieter Hanoke was also *rentmeester* of Zevenbergen (1442–1446), *rentmeester* of Zeeland-Bewesterschelde (1448–1451), lord of Bergen in Kennemerland (1450–1463) and castellan of Loevestein (1462–1464). See Annokkee, 2001: 55–77, 21–20.
- 57 In fol. 38v, 55, 59v, 65, 67v.
- 58 On Ghent painting at the time of Robert Campin, see Lievois 2007 and Verroken 2007.
- 59 On this mural, see Martens 1989: 138–149, 213 (with bibliography). Colour illustration in Vanwijnsberghe & Verroken 2012: 27.
- 60 Verroken 2006B: 76–77. For a *status quaestionis* on Nabur Martins, see Lievois 2007: 215–216.
- 61 On the De Stoevere family of painters, see Verroken 2006A: 38–40 and *passim*.
- 62 Verroken 2006A: 42. Ghent City Archives, Series 330 (Register of aldermen of *ghedele*, no. 18 (1422–23), fol. 14v.
- 63 Brussels, KBR, ms. IV 1290. See Brussels 2002.
- 64 Willem van den Haute was paid for calligraphic work (chryso-graphy) for the Feast of the Guild of St. George in 1462. See Oudenaarde, City Archives, Guild of St. George, no. 507/11/4B (Account of Wouter van der Meere), fol. 8v. See Verroken 2006B: 89.
- 65 Paris, BNF, ms. lat. 1183 and Tours, BM, ms. 219. See Clark 2009; Hans-Collas & Wijsman 2009.