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National Library of the Netherlands

**SPLENDOUR OF
THE BURGUNDIAN
NETHERLANDS**

Anne Margreet W. As-Vijvers and Anne S. Korteweg

W BOOKS



SPLENDOUR OF THE BURGUNDIAN NETHERLANDS

Southern Netherlandish
Illuminated Manuscripts
in Dutch Collections

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En commençee le premier u
ure de la bible moralizee trans
latee de latin en francois.

In primapio cre
avit deus celu
et terram. dixit
quoque deus fiat
lux. et facta
est lux.

En commencement dieu
crea le ciel et la terre et dieu dist

lumiere soit faite. et lumiere
fut faite. **¶** La creation de la
lumiere emporte la creation
des anges car ilz ont lumiere
d'entendement.

Et dieu regarda que lu
miere estoit bonne et la devisa
des tenebres et appella la lu
miere jour et les tenebres nuit
et fut celle besierree et la mati
nee ensueuane comptee pour



A THE PROVENANCE OF SOUTHERN NETHERLANDISH MANUSCRIPTS IN DUTCH PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Ed van der Vlist

Fig. A.1
The Creation. *Bible moralisée*
of Anthony of Burgundy.
Bruges, c. 1455-1460.
The Hague, Koninklijke
Bibliotheek, Ms. 76 E 7,
fol. 1r

More than five hundred illuminated manuscripts from the southern Netherlands are preserved in Dutch public collections. One-third of these, 174 manuscripts, are kept at the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (KB), the National Library of the Netherlands in The Hague. Important collections reside in the university libraries of Leiden (48 manuscripts), Nijmegen (45) and Utrecht (24), and at the Museum Catharijneconvent in Utrecht (34) and the Museum Meermanno in The Hague (26). More than 160 manuscripts are housed in other public institutions. These figures are derived from the database of the Alexander Willem Byvanck Working Group, a steadily growing repository of information, kept at the KB in The Hague, on illuminated medieval manuscripts in Dutch collections.

The more than ninety manuscripts presented in this publication made their way to the Netherlands over the course of ten centuries. Only a small number have been in the country since the Middle Ages. The earliest manuscript, the Egmond Gospels, was donated – as soon as the

presentation miniatures had been inserted – to Egmond Abbey in the province of North Holland (cat. no. 1). During the turmoil of the Reformation, this manuscript disappeared from view for some time but surfaced again in Utrecht in the nineteenth century. The *Remissorium Philippi*, an inventory of the counts' archives in The Hague, which the Hague official Pieter van Renesse van Beoostenzweene (d. 1459) presented to Duke Philip the Good in Brussels in 1450, was sent the same year to the Exchequer in The Hague, where it is still to be found, though now in the National Archives (cat. no. 34). The important collection of books amassed by the counts of Nassau and the princes of Orange at the castle of Breda was taken to The Hague for safekeeping at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The stadholder's library that took shape in this new centre of government was subsumed by the KB at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The pontifical that David of Burgundy, an illegitimate son of Philip the Good, brought from Théroutanne when he was appointed bishop of Utrecht (cat. no. 72), as well as the copy of Augustine's *City of God* that belonged to the Zeeland nobleman Wolfert VI of Borsele (cat. no. 46), were probably in the possession of owners in the north before they were acquired by the Teylers Museum in Haarlem and the Utrecht University Library in the eighteenth century. The other southern Netherlandish manuscripts entered the country from the seventeenth century onwards.

THE KONINKLIJKE BIBLIOTHEEK IN THE HAGUE

The core collection of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek consists of the books collected by Prince William V of Orange-Nassau (1748-1806), the last stadholder. After William fled to England in 1795, leaving his books behind in The Hague, the French 'liberators' took 250 of the most valuable books and manuscripts from the stadholder's collection to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. What remained of the stadholder's library in The Hague became the core of the 'Nationale Bibliotheek', founded in 1798. Shortly thereafter it became the 'Royal Library' under Louis Napoleon (the brother of Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte), who reigned as king of Holland from 1806 to 1810. After the fall of Napoleon, the allied armies ordered, in 1816, the restitution of the art treasures plundered from all of Europe, but only a fraction of the goods confiscated from the stadholder's collections ever returned from Paris. That twenty-seven of the

B UNDERDRAWING IN MINIATURE

Examining Manuscripts from the Southern Netherlands with Infrared Reflectography*

Micha Leeftang and Margreet Wolters



Infrared reflectography (IRR) is a method for the optical penetration of the paint layers of a work of art to reveal the artist's preliminary design, the underdrawing. Although several of the miniatures in the *Très belles heures de Notre Dame*, also known as the Turin-Milan Hours, had been examined with IRR as early as 1987, research on underdrawings has so far been largely restricted to paintings.¹ In the past this was mainly due to the practical constraints of IRR examination, which required the object to be standing in front of the camera, which is a problem with manuscripts. The current types of camera, though, can document an object when it is lying flat, thus facilitating the study of the miniatures and border decorations of manuscripts. Nevertheless, working with this material does impose specific demands, due to the small size of the illuminations to be studied, the convex curvature of the pages and undulations in the parchment. Although these limitations do not preclude examination of the underdrawings of miniatures, and technical studies of manuscripts are now being carried out with growing regularity,² such a broadly based IRR study of a specific group of miniatures and border decorations had never been attempted before.

The exhibition being organized by the Koninklijke Bibliotheek and Museum Catharijneconvent was a unique opportunity to examine miniatures with IRR jointly with the RKD - Netherlands Institute for Art History and Stichting ABC (fig. B.1). A large group of manuscripts from one and the same region, the southern Low Countries, were studied with IRR for the very first time. More than seventy miniatures in twenty manuscripts from the Koninklijke Bibliotheek and five from Museum Catharijneconvent were documented, initially on the basis of their size.³ The most representative results are presented below.

IRR RESEARCH

Miniaturists, like painters working on panel and canvas,⁴ started by making an underdrawing to prepare the composition that was to be painted on

Fig. B.1
The technical examination of manuscripts in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague.
From left to right: Jan Bos, Claudine Chavannes-Mazel, Micha Leeftang and Margreet Wolters
(photo: Kris van Veen)

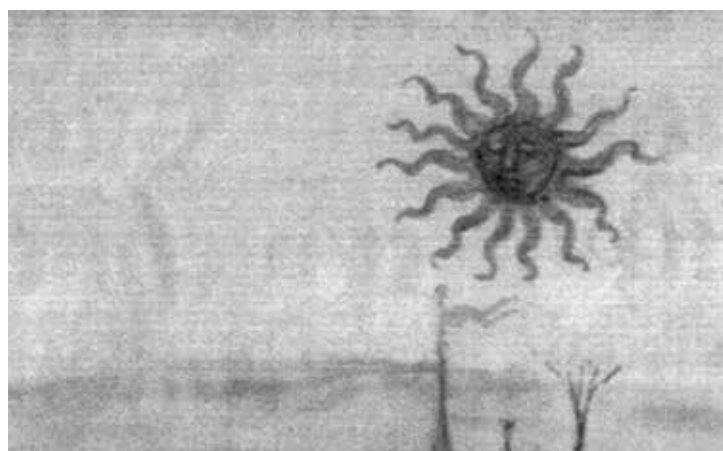


Fig. B.2
Detail of the sun in Aristotle Discussing Medicine and Moral and Natural Philosophy. Pseudo-Aristotle, *Le Livre des problèmes*, Lille, c. 1470–1475. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Ms. 133 A 3, vol. I, fol. 1r (cat. no. 41)



Fig. B.3
Detail of the man on the left, Jean Molinet Presenting His Book to Philip of Cleves. Jean Molinet, *Roman de la rose moralisé et translaté de rime en prose*, follower of the Master of Antoine Rolin, Hainaut, 1500. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Ms. 128 C 5, fol. 1r (cat. no. 54)



Fig. B.4
Detail of the man kneeling in the foreground: Beheading. Vincent of Beauvais, *Miroir historial*, translation by Jean de Vignay, Master of the Chattering Hands, Master of the Stuttgart *Livre de Chasse*, Master of the Trivial Heads and Master of Edward IV, Bruges, c. 1478–1480 and c. 1485. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Ms. 128 C 1, vol. 1, fol. 241v (cat. no. 42)

parchment or paper. Gold leaf was then applied to the first design before painting began.⁵ Changes relative to the underdrawing could be made during the painting stage, and occasionally the paint layers themselves were modified or corrected. Such stages in the working method can be detected with IRR under certain circumstances.

The underdrawing can be made in various ways and with different materials, such as chalk, or ink, that was applied with a brush, reed pen or quill.⁶ IRR, though, cannot detect all materials. For example, there are some types of ink that become transparent in infrared light. Iron gall ink, which is made from the gallnut of a wasp, does not contain any carbon, which is essential for the detection of drawing materials with IRR. To the left of the painted sun on fol. 1r of the *Livre des problèmes* there is an underdrawn circle with rays that is visible to the naked eye but is totally invisible in IRR, so that underdrawing may have been made with iron gall ink (fig. B.2).

Other materials do show up well in IRR, which reveals various types of underdrawing. There are remarkably detailed examples laid down with forceful lines, as in a number of Maerlant manuscripts (figs. B.7, B.8, B.12), or with an extensive system of hatchings in preparation for shaded modelling, as can be seen in a book of hours from Museum Catharijneconvent (fig. B.9). The composition of the miniatures in the latter manuscript was probably underdrawn initially with a dry material, which was then worked up here and there with a liquid medium, mainly in the red passages (see below).⁷ There are also miniatures with very cursory underdrawings, as on fol. 214v in the Gospel Book of Egmond (cat. no. 1), where only a few underdrawn lines are visible.



C THE BIRTH OF THE BURGUNDIAN NETHERLANDS

Anne S. Korteweg

The regions regarded as comprising the southern Netherlands at the beginning of the fifteenth century consisted of a patchwork of counties, duchies, and ecclesiastical territories. The most important among them were the counties of Flanders, Artois,

Hainaut and Namur, and the duchies of Brabant, Limburg and Luxembourg (fig. C.1). Artois was administratively part of Flanders, while Limburg was governed by Brabant. Hainaut had been united with Holland and Zeeland in 1299, and after the House of Holland-Hainaut died out in 1356, it was ruled by the House of Bavaria-Holland. There were also the bishoprics of Tournai, Cambrai and Liège, the latter two being allowed to call themselves prince-bishoprics, since the bishop also exercised secular power there. After the collapse of the Carolingian Empire in the ninth century, Western Europe had acquired two rival power blocs: the western region, which would grow into the kingdom of France, and the eastern region, which would become the German Empire. This same period saw the creation of the feudal administrative structure, in which the most powerful rulers acquired territory as fiefs bestowed by the king of France or the German emperor. The border between the two power blocs ran through present-day Belgium: Flanders was a fief from the French king,

while the other parts of the 'Low Countries', from the tenth century onwards, were part of the German Empire. For mutual relations between these territories, the east-west border was of little significance. The fate of the separate territories was governed by the desire of the local overlords to expand their territories and hence their influence, most notably through power politics and personal alliances in the form of marriages. The death of a childless ruler, in particular, frequently led to the territory's seizure by a ruler who invoked close family ties to legitimise his claim.

In the fifteenth century, many of the aforementioned territories were united under a single ruler, a development set in motion by the 1369 marriage between Philip the Bold of Burgundy and Margaret of Flanders. Philip the Bold (1342-1404) was the fourth son of King Jean II 'le Bon' of France, who had given him the duchy of Burgundy in eastern France as his own domain (that is, not as a fief). Philip's marriage to the heiress to the county of Flanders and Artois united these widely separated territories. Although Philip had a large palace built in Dijon, he spent most of his time in Paris, as did his son, John the Fearless (1371-1419). This situation did not change until John's assassination in 1419, when his son, Philip the Good, moved his government to Flanders, residing there alternately between palaces in Lille, Bruges, and later Brussels.

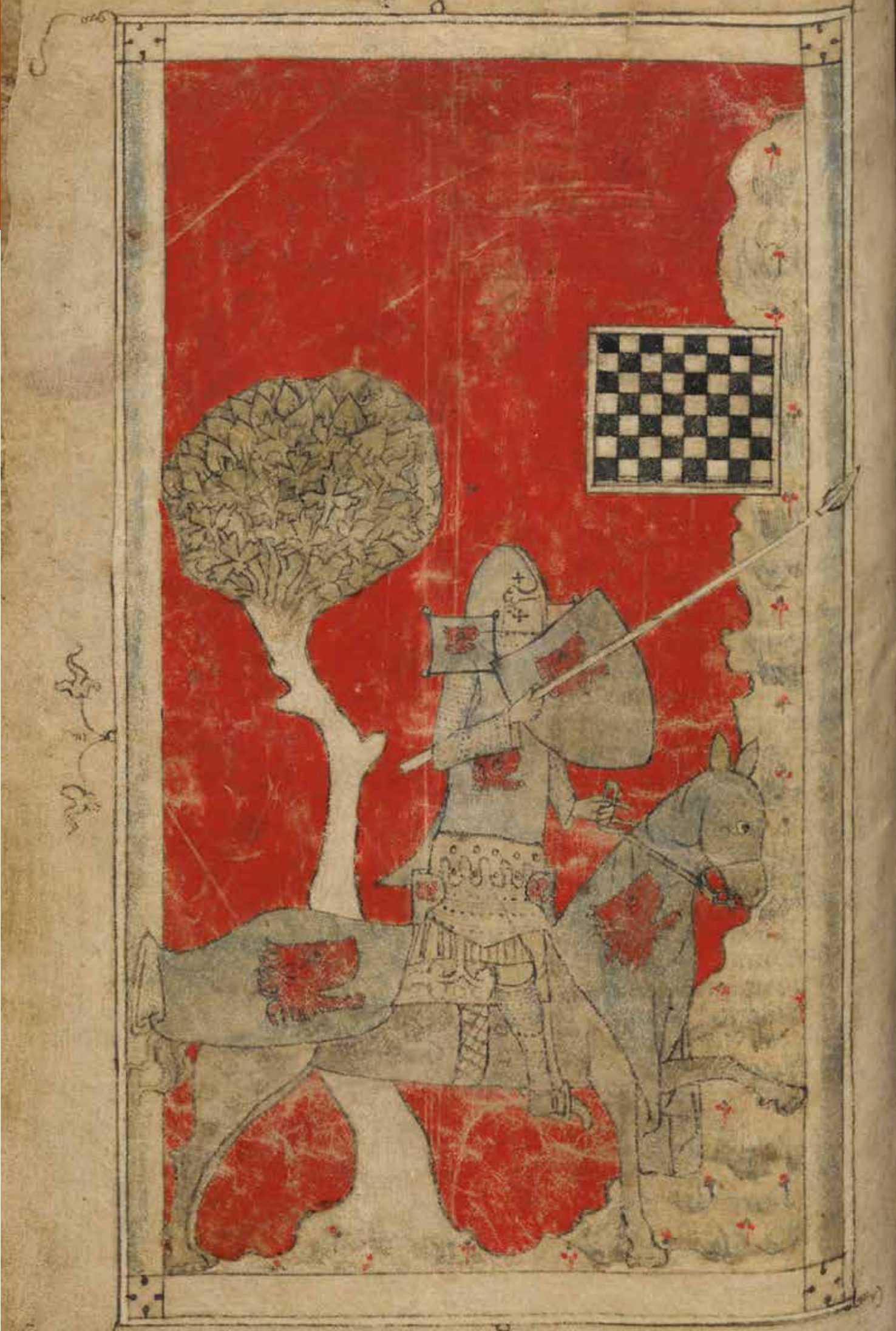
Driven by the desire to create an empire that could vie with that of the French king, Philip the Good pursued an unprecedented policy of expansion. In 1429 he became count of Namur (by purchasing the county), and in 1430, when his cousin Philippe de Saint-Pol died childless, he also became duke of Brabant and Limburg. In 1433, Philip succeeded his childless niece Jacoba of Bavaria as count of Hainaut, Holland and Zeeland. In addition, in 1435 he concluded a peace treaty with the king of France, through which he acquired Picardy as a fief. Finally, in 1443 he purchased Luxembourg from the last duchess, Elizabeth of Görlitz, whom he succeeded as duke upon her death in 1451. In the most important bishoprics, Philip managed to install bishops who operated under his influence. For instance, in 1456 he succeeded in appointing his illegitimate son David of Burgundy as bishop of Utrecht, and that same year he secured the appointment of his cousin Louis de Bourbon as Prince-Bishop of Liège. Both these appointments provoked considerable resentment, however, which frequently erupted into insurgencies in the decades that followed.

After Philip's death in 1467, his son Charles the Bold (1433-1477) continued his expansionist policies with undiminished vigour. At the end of 1472, he succeeded – by supporting Duke Arnold of Guelders, who was embroiled in a power struggle with his son Adolph – in being chosen as Arnold's heir in the duchy of Guelders and the county of Zutphen. However, Philip's primary ambition was to join his territories in the north to those in the south, giving him an empire extending from the North Sea to the Mediterranean that would revive the old empire of Lotharius in the ninth century. In 1473, he even made a vain attempt, in Trier, to persuade the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III to crown him king. In 1469 he managed to acquire Lower Alsace and Breisgau as imperial fiefs, and in 1475 he occupied the duchies of Bar and Lorraine, which did effectively create a more or less continuous territory between Luxembourg and Burgundy. After suffering two heavy defeats at the hands of the Swiss Confederacy, however, Charles was killed in 1477 in the Battle of Nancy. The regions in the Alsace and Lorraine were lost for good and the king of France took advantage of the resulting turbulence to bring Burgundy and Picardy back under French control.

That same year, Charles's only daughter, Mary of Burgundy, married the Habsburg prince Maximilian of Austria, the son of the German emperor Frederick III. After Mary's premature death in 1482, the succession passed officially to Mary and Maximilian's three-year-old son, Philip the Handsome. This brought the Netherlands under the control of the House of Habsburg, and the Burgundian Netherlands became part of an empire. Over the following decades, matrimonial politics would continue to determine the fate of the Netherlands. In 1496, Philip the Handsome (1478-1506) married the Spanish princess Joanna of Aragon, laying the foundations for a bond between the Low Countries (or rather, the southern Netherlands) and Spain that would endure for over two hundred years. When Joanna's mother died in 1504, Joanna succeeded her as queen of Castile. Philip the Handsome died in 1506, but in 1516, following the death of Joanna's father King Ferdinand of Aragon, the whole of Spain, including its rich South American colonies, came into the possession of her eldest son, Charles V. Born in Ghent in 1500, Charles had been Lord of the Netherlands since 1506, and in 1519 he would succeed Maximilian as Holy Roman Emperor.

Fig. C.1
Map of the southern
Netherlands
© Dimitri Belayew

I THE FIRST CENTURIES



COUNTIES, DUCHIES AND
PRINCE-BISHOPRICS 900-1400





4 GOSPEL BOOK
In Latin
Meuse region, c. 1150-1175
 The Hague, Koninklijke
 Bibliotheek, Ms. 76 E 17

The art of illumination experienced a heyday in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in the Meuse region, where the Abbey of Saint-Laurent in the episcopal city of Liège was one of the most important centres of production. Richly illustrated manuscripts were also produced in other Benedictine abbeys, in particular those of Stavelot, Floreffe and Lobbes. The gospel book in the KB is attributed on stylistic

grounds to the Meuse region, but it has not yet been determined which abbey was responsible for its high-quality illumination. The manuscript opens with a series of canon plates, flanked by colourfully decorated classical columns. Each of the four gospels begins with a full-page portrait of the evangelist and his symbol. The monumental figures are depicted in the act of writing and placed against gold, blue and green grounds. In the case of the evangelists Matthew and Luke, the text begins on the facing page with a decorated gold initial, and the first words are placed on coloured bands (fig. I.1.9). In the case of Mark and John, the letters I and N with which their gospels begin (INicium and IN principio), are interlaced and placed against the background of the figure, an archaizing characteristic that points to an Ottonian

Fig. I.1.9
 St Luke the Evangelist with his symbol, the ox,
 and illuminated incipit on the first page of his
 gospel (fols. 64v-65r)

example (fig. I.1.10). Since in this way the first word had already been incorporated in the miniature, the text of John on the opposite page simply continues in gold letters on coloured bands. The portrait of Mark is not on a verso, but on a recto – possibly the scribe's mistake – so the opening of this text is not as attractive as the other ones. On the reverse of the portrait, the following words of the text were no longer placed on coloured bands, but only executed in coloured capital letters. Ask

This gospel book was copied in *littera praegothica*, the new script that began to emerge across Europe around 1100.¹ It includes several key features of this script: minims are given feet that turn to the right; round *s* is regularly used at the end of words; and the two components of the *pp* combination overlap, a practice called biting. This last trait is an important indicator of the manuscript's production date: it can be placed after 1150, when biting in *pp* first emerged.² The absence of other forms of biting, including in the pairs *de* and *do* which were early adopters of this trait, shows that lateral compression, whereby letters were placed increasingly closer together, was not yet fully developed at the moment of production. This suggests that the gospel book was copied well before the end of the twelfth century, perhaps in the third quarter.

The scribe produced particularly elegant script and exhibits striking individual peculiarities: a leans too far to the left (in the English manner); the tip of long *s* frequently connects to its body to form a loop; an unusually large 7-shaped Tironian note for *et* appears at the beginnings of sentences and clauses; ampersand is oddly shaped (resembling *ae*); and round *s* is occasionally used in the *st* ligature.³ The same features are encountered in the reading schedule at fols. 126r-131v. While the script on these pages has a distinctly different feel (it is much smaller and less well-executed) the presence of peculiarities of the scribe who copied the gospels shows that this part was likewise by his hand. In other words, he both copied the text and prepared the book for use.

While we cannot determine the scribe's precise whereabouts and status (we may assume he was a monk but cannot exclude the possibility that he was a professional scribe), it must be noted that the smaller handwriting used for the reading schedule features traits of early cursive script, such as extended ascenders, the curly shape of the macron abbreviation in those ascenders, and the extension of the approach stroke of *v*. Moreover, these are all features common

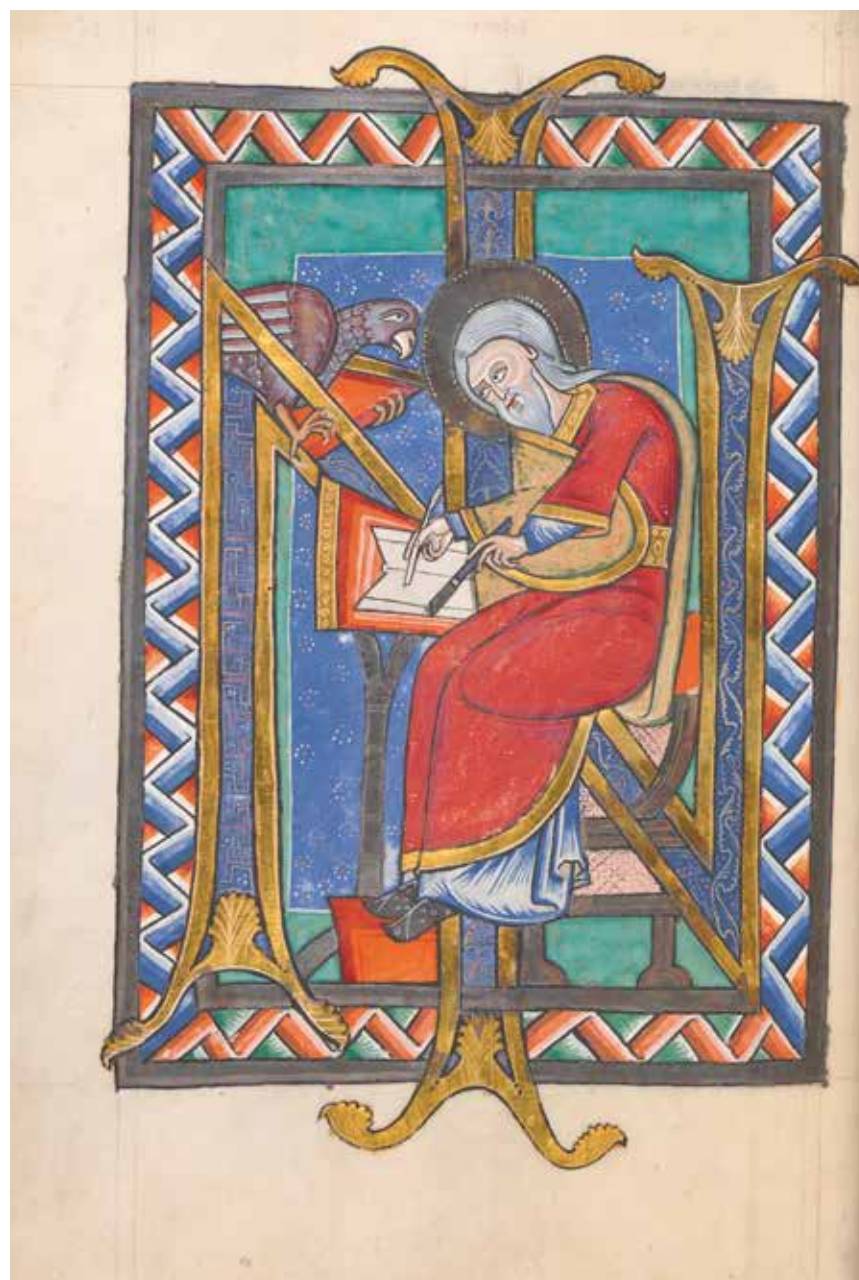


Fig. I.1.10
St John the Evangelist with his symbol, the eagle (fol. 100v)

to the script of someone who is used to copying charters, which suggests that the individual who produced this manuscript did not limit his writing activities to books. EK

¹ Derolez 2003, pp. 56-71.

² Kwakkel 2012a, p. 97.

³ See fol. 69v, col. B, l. 14; fol. 127v, col. A, l. 19.

13 JACOB VAN MAERLANT, RIJMBIJBEL, DIE WRAKE VAN JHERUSALEM, SPIEGEL HISTORIAEL (EXCERPT), STROPHIC POEMS

In Dutch

Mariënweerd (?), c. 1340
Groningen, Universiteits-
bibliotheek, Ms. 405

The 'Groningen-Zutphen manuscript' – so called after its last whereabouts – mainly contains work by Jacob van Maerlant, including the *Rijmbijbel* (a rhyming biblical paraphrase), *Die wrake van Jherusalem* (The Vengeance of Jerusalem), an excerpt from the *Spiegel historiael*, and his strophic poems. Of importance to the dating are the Easter Tables for the period 1339-1377. The manuscript also contains lists of solar and lunar eclipses for the years 1341-1386 and 1340-1386. A date of origin around 1340 is therefore plausible, the more so because the tables and lists were written by the same scribe – referred to in the literature as Hand B – who was also responsible for almost the entire codex. Only a small number of folios seem to have been written by two other hands. It is not impossible, however, that these seemingly distinct hands actually belong to the same scribe. The difference can be explained by the production of the codex in stages: it was a manuscript that evolved over a longer period in the second quarter of the fourteenth century.¹

Hand B of the Maerlant manuscript also leads us to the Premonstratensian monastery of Mariënweerd near Beesd. There the same scribe began work in 1346-1347 on a monastery cartulary, to which he later added a number of texts.² It is therefore likely that this scribe was himself active at Mariënweerd and not in a lay workshop in a place like 's-Hertogenbosch, as has been suggested.³ Remarkably, fragments of another copy



of Maerlant's *Rijmbijbel*, written by the same hand, have recently been discovered.⁴ Because that text also occurs in the Groningen manuscript, we must consider the possibility of commercial book production in a monastic milieu.

Fig. I.4.5
Christ Enthroned (fol. 23r)



Fig. I.4.6
Siege of Jerusalem (fol. 163r)

It is still unclear whether the illustration was also carried out in Beesd, or indeed elsewhere, in Utrecht or 's-Hertogenbosch, for example.

In the meantime, the existence of close ties between Mariënweerd and 's-Hertogenbosch have been demonstrated. It is even possible that the manuscript was produced at the behest of Jacob van Zuylichem (d. 1344), a cleric of 's-Hertogenbosch, whose date of death is recorded in the calendar.⁵ Even so, the *Rijmbijbel* opens with an initial in which a crowned golden lion appears on a blue field. It is disputed whether this is the heraldic device of Reinoud (Reginald) II of Guelders, who exchanged his title of count for that of duke in 1339 and was supposed to pay a visit to Mariënweerd in 1340. Moreover, the lion seems to have been added later, possibly painted over another coat of arms.⁶

¹ For an overview and a comprehensive paleographic and codicological analysis, see Biemans 1996. More detailed information can be found in Biemans [in preparation].

² Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, Ms. 17904-06; see Biemans [in preparation].

³ See Lieftinck 1959.

⁴ The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Ms. 79 K 25.

⁵ Other members of this family of 's-Hertogenbosch also occur in the calendar. They are discussed in Hermans 1979, pp. 38-40.

⁶ For more detailed information on this coat of arms, see Meuwese 2001, pp. 147-148.

PUBLICATION

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info@wbooks.com
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in collaboration with
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www.catharijneconvent.nl
and
Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague
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This book is published in conjunction with the exhibition *Magical Miniatures*, an event produced in partnership between Museum Catharijneconvent in Utrecht and the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague, on view at Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht, from 23 February to 3 June 2018.

The Dutch edition of this book is entitled *Zuid-Nederlandse miniatuurkunst. De mooiste verluchte handschriften in Nederlands bezit*.

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TRANSLATIONS

Dutch-English: Diane Webb (chapter A, I.1, I.4, II.1, II.4, III.1, III.2, IV.2, IV.4, IV.5, cat. nos. 55-66, V.3, V.4, VI.1, VI.2, VI.3, VI.5), Beverley Jackson (foreword, acknowledgements, chapter C, VI.4), Michael Hoyle (chapter B)

English-Dutch: Caroline Meijer (chapter I.2, I.3, II.2, IV.1, IV.3, introduction to V.1, introduction to V.2)

French-English: Patricia Stirnemann (cat. no. 18, chapter II.3)

French-Dutch: Judith Wesselingh (cat. no. 18, chapter II.3)

Catalogue (English-Dutch): Paula Pumplin in collaboration with Micha Leeftang

Copy-editing of English edition: Michael Hoyle (chapter I.1, I.2, I.3, II.2, IV.1, IV.3, introduction to V.1, introduction to V.2), Jenneke Janzen (chapter I.1: contribution by EK)

PICTORIAL EDITING

Anne Margreet W. As-Vijvers, Anne S. Korteweg,
Kees van Schooten

DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Miriam Schlick, Amsterdam

EXHIBITION

Concept

Micha Leeftang, based on the concept for the book edited and compiled by Anne Margreet As-Vijvers and Anne Korteweg

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Registration of loans

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Marketing

Rosa van der Wielen / Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht

Design

Trapped in Suburbia

LENDERS

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum; Amsterdam, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Bijzondere Collecties; Den Haag, Koninklijke Bibliotheek; Den Haag, Museum Meermanno; Den Haag, Nationaal Archief; Enschede, Rijksmuseum Twenthe; Groningen, Universiteitsbibliotheek; Haarlem, Teylers Museum; 's-Heerenberg, Huis Bergh; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek; Rotterdam, Bibliotheek Rotterdam; Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek

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ISBN 978 94 625 8249 1 (Nederlands)

ISBN 978 94 625 8263 7 (Engels)

NUR 684



This book presents a survey of ninety of the finest and most interesting medieval manuscripts produced in the southern Netherlands – present-day Belgium – which ended up in Dutch public collections at various points in time. This largely unknown cultural heritage is displayed here in a vast panoramic context ranging from the tenth to the mid-sixteenth century. The painted scenes in these handwritten books are not only of a high artistic quality, but also present a richly-textured picture of medieval life. The emphasis is on the role of books in the society of the Middle Ages: they served as expressions of sumptuousness on the part of the aristocracy, as richly-decorated books for church services, and as cherished objects used by affluent burghers for their private devotion. The authors also devote attention to the large-size, superbly-illustrated works of history and literature that were produced under the patronage of the dukes of Burgundy. Other subjects include the Order of the Golden Fleece, the artistic ties between the northern and southern Netherlands, pilgrims' badges, and the transition from manuscripts to printed books.

The book contains twenty-four chapters, each one consisting of an introduction to the art-historical and cultural-historical context, followed by discussions of individual manuscripts. These chapters were written by fifteen international specialists in the field of medieval manuscripts and book illumination of the southern Netherlands. In addition, the book contains an introduction on the ways in which these manuscripts ended up in the Netherlands, a technical analysis of a number of manuscripts, and a map accompanied by an account of the rise and unification of the southern Netherlands. At the back of the book, readers will find detailed descriptions of the manuscripts. The entire publication is lavishly illustrated, with some 250 magnificent colour reproductions.

