



THE ROMAN DE LA ROSE
ILLUMINATED BY JEAN SEMONT

2d de l'œuvre, non et mentionnés

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THE ROMAN DE LA ROSE
ILLUMINATED BY JEAN SEMONT

Sandra Hindman

exhibition
Chicago, June 1 to June 10, 2021



GUILLAUME DE LORRIS and JEAN DE MEUN, with
interpolations of GUI DE MORI, *Roman de la Rose*

Southern Netherlands, Tournai, c. 1390
Illuminated by Jean Semont





Rogier van der Weyden
Saint Columba Altarpiece (detail)
Southern Netherlands, 1450–1455
(Munich, Alte Pinakothek, WAF 1189)

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1 Introduction

This exhibition in Chicago features a single illuminated manuscript, the *Roman de la Rose*, a splendid, grand copy of a seminal text of French literature. In an anonymous age before artists signed their works, it is always remarkable to know the name of a painter—to be able to tell their story. Such is the case with this manuscript of the *Rose*. It was illuminated by Jean Semont, the first manuscript painter documented by name in the artistic center that produced some of the most important early Flemish panel paintings. Jean Semont lived in Tournai in today's Belgium. Known from documents, he worked both as a painter and a manuscript illuminator for nearby churches and monasteries. He also painted secular works like this one for the townspeople. Tournai cannot have been a big town around 1400, but it was the bastion of Flemish painting. In the era just preceding Jan van Eyck, Roger van der Weyden and Robert Campin were its leading artists. They must have rubbed shoulders with Jean Semont.

The *Roman de la Rose* (or the Romance of the Rose) is perhaps the greatest love story in French literature. It is a poem written in Old French around 1230 initially by Guillaume de Lorris. The Lover falls asleep and dreams of finding his love, symbolized by the *Rose*. On his quest he encounters many personifications—

Jealousy, Desire, Hate, Old Age. But not the Rose. Alas he suddenly wakes up, bereft, dejected, lovelorn. A second poet, Jean de Meun, takes over forty-five years later, around 1275. In a much lengthier, meandering, highly erotic section, the Lover eventually plucks the *Rose*. Seductively couched in the language of love, the poem was enormously popular. More than three hundred manuscripts exist, two-thirds of them illustrated, all of them different. Nearly every manuscript of the *Rose* is today in a public museum or library.

The frontispiece portraying the sleeping Lover is unique in cycles of *Rose* illumination, as is the charming marginal decoration framing the page. Two further illuminations illustrate the accompanying texts by the second poet Jean de Meun that complete the *Rose*, the *Testament* and the *Codicil*. All are by the master illuminator Jean Semont. As extraordinary as the picture cycle is the suite of page after page of lush, burnished gold initials and ivy leaves. These sometimes blanket the pages in gold, seductively leading the viewer on, a veritable feast for the eyes.

The *Roman de la Rose* is iconic. The appearance of any manuscript of it is noteworthy. This one—once the treasure of one of the most famous bibliophiles of our time, Marcel Jeanson, hence referred to here as the “Jeanson Rose” – was his MS 1. Today it takes its place in the artistic context of the advent of Flemish realism before Jan van Eyck. This is but one step in the story of its continuing journey.



Tower Retable with Infancy Cycle
Southern Netherlands, late 14th century
(Antwerp, Musée Mayer van den Bergh, cat. no. 35)



Tower Retable with Infancy Cycle (detail)
Southern Netherlands, late 14th century
(Antwerp, Musée Mayer van den Bergh, cat. no. 35)



Auntz gens dient que en songes
 Na se fable; non et mensonges
 Mais on poet tels songes songier
 Ne sont mie mensongier
 Mais sont apres bien aparant
 I en puis bien traire agarant
 Meilleur ou et non m'acorde

Et me dormo
Si vi. j. song
Qu'il mit ma tell
Mais en cel so
Qu'il trestout a
Si com li son
Qu'il voel cel so
Pus vos mot
Amours le n
Et se nuls oi
Comment ie u
Soit appelle
Cest li vrais
Ou lars dam
La matere et
Dr'ouist die
Celle pour cu
Est celle qui
Et bien est d



2

Manuscripts of the *Roman de la Rose*:
A Pivotal Work

The *Roman de la Rose* was one of the most widely read and debated of medieval works. The fact that more than 300 manuscript or manuscript fragments survive is an eloquent demonstration of its popularity. Of the 328 extant manuscripts, 253 are illustrated, a far greater number than any other literary text of the Middle Ages apart from Dante. It was the pre-eminent poem of chivalric love, and it had a decisive impact on European literature through its influence on Dante, Petrarch, and Chaucer. For nearly 200 years, the scholarship on the *Rose* has been prolific, and it remains just as lively today. Students of art, literature, linguistics, philosophy, politics, and law have all contributed to the scholarly literature. The poem resonates with concerns about authorship, reception theory, gender, sexuality, and more recently with globalism and postcolonialism, not to mention thorny questions of interpretation. In the last half century, as many as 300 books and articles on the *Rose* appeared every ten years. As a recent scholar put it: “the *Rose*’s popularity ... has never been greater” and “shows no sign of losing any of its vibrancy.” (Morton 2015).

Today, most of the 328 manuscripts are in institutional collections; only a few remain in private hands, while several others are still untraced. The appearance, therefore, of any *Rose* on the market is of utmost interest. This one, as we shall see, is pivotal not only for its textual distinctiveness and the identification of the illuminator by name but also for its place in the context of the emergence of Flemish realism in an important center, that of Tournai.

The poem was begun around 1230 by Guillaume de Lorris and left incomplete, perhaps on his death; it was taken up some fifty years later by Jean de Meun, a scholar and translator resident in Paris. Guillaume de Lorris set his allegory of the Lover's quest to attain the *Rose* in the framework of a dream, a dream that he declares he had as a twenty-year-old, some five years earlier. The author enters the Garden of Delight, falls in love with the *Rose*, and explores the nature of love with those personifications who help or hinder him in his endeavor to reach the *Rose*. Through the course of the poem, he see-saws between hope and despair. This is the earliest sustained first-person narrative and narrative allegory in French. Jean de Meun's continuation on ff. 28v to 152v,

four times the length of Lorris's original poem, changed the nature of the work and extended the range of the debate. Before the Lover finally achieves the *Rose*, the reader is taken through the sort of semi-encyclopedic compilation so favored in the Middle Ages. Here, however, the traditional assumptions are apparently parodied or even provocatively revised. The tone is often satirical, and the allegory is more evidently erotic. The mix of old and new, the infinite possibilities of interpretation, the evocative descriptions of the beauties of nature, all gave the poem an immediate and enduring appeal.

Some 95 manuscripts are known from the second half of the fourteenth century, when this copy was made. The poem appealed to a wide range of social classes and levels of education. In 1373 Charles V of France (king from 1364-1380) owned no fewer than four copies, while a contemporary bourgeois of Douai had a copy to leave in his will. With so many manuscripts in circulation, further copies were easily obtained. A contract with a Dijon scribe in 1399 shows that three months was considered adequate for writing the text (see Badel, 1980). At the end of the century, it was the centerpiece of fierce literary debate initiated by the authoress Christine de

ien se doit homs reure
pour traireur a droit
ui pecc mortelment
puis q il tout ce uoit
ui bien regarderoit
Qa son comencement
ont il vint qui le fist
et pour quoy z yment
t son estat present
et son definement
amaus ne deuoit pndre
de pechie hardement
Pechies est si vil chose
que plus vil ne pot estre
echies soulla tous ceur
qui onqs poroit naistre
echies mist a la mort
Thi le roy celestie
ui pecc mortelment
il rochist dieu so maistre
nus que dieu po destruire
pechie uolt perdre vie
ui pecc il le rochist
ce samble et crucifie
i fait il quand en soy
mais fols est q si fie
dieus muire iamaus
car il ne morra iue

Pour dieu et pour
ne nous deuoion
ous ueons que l
akourt plus q li
ous no' estuet m
nuls nen aura u
ostre captiue vu
nest cuns petis n
antost que li ho
Il yment a mi
eu pot force et io
en home signou
- xxx. ans ou xl
prent la teste a f
r de la en auant
ne fait que lang
Qu il a mal de nesh
de pis ou de port
e pomon ou de fo
de costes ou desch
ors le conuient la
et prendre medec
insi se auentist
et degaste et dedi
l dangier de plu
vure no' en cor
ors no' pnt for
mais ne no' en



Et filz tard a le fois
ne no' uost amur
ins soyons uiguer
contre le soudiur



Mi pousans Roys de gloire
q sans fin regne et vit
tout ams q uens fut
for et congnut et vit
tout poer i soustent
et gouerne et chaut
oelle purgier nos ames
ams que la car doit
a uirge glorieuse
qui glorieusement
enfanta uirge apres
uirge au comencement
i face comme mere
son douc mandement
et li purt come fille
de nre sauagement
uirge tres gracieuse
de toute grace plane
uirge qui nas parelle
premier ne darrieme
leue effoule de mer
certaine namoieant
ame nous et condui
a la roye souueraine

Mirge donc a la quelle
mille ne se compare
uirge mere ton fil
uirge fille ton pere
aunt no' des .v. places
ton fil si quil y pre
les glorieus sans
en nos cers boulle i pre
uirge q dou haut fil
de dieu trenchanturas
le douc fruit de vie
en tes flans meuras
our tout lanecture
don monde assanomas
e nous onbte mie
car de nous la cur as
ame de Paradis
Roine Comonee
reloier de grace
auant fait q nec
e la grant sapience
de dieu prestance
encore font leur
q tu sus engendree
ame en la cui biance
tout paradis se nure
ame la cui toute
langue ne pot deleur
ant a de biens en toy
q uens ni pot soustent
ni es mere de dieu
nuls ne te pot mie' dire
est la gigneur toncur
q nuls te puisse faire
est la cor'e qui plus
te plait i te dot plaine

Pour ce te supplie
mer dieu de bonaire
ni par ce saint nom
no' noelle a toi traie
our ce es tu mer dieu
q de nous prece aie
our ce es tu mer dieu
q tu p' no' le proies
ont plus habiteit
te pa q tu oie
t que tu no' impies
les celestiens roies
tes douc mer dieu
le ce a te repouie
u tu as misone
ne blame ne repouie
ins est ta gite honcur
i q pl' pres te touie
our ce en hardie
i mon cor'e i ma louie
u l'es ma uolente
tu l'es mintermon
t pour ce te supplie
pur gram affection
tu en no' impies
uare remission
t lassus auer toy
parfait uision
celle uision
no' uelle auer
a court de paradis
q en uelle p'oner
on fils q est li pres
de tout nre loier
a sainte Trinite
le no' uelle ottoner

Sic di gaur plus
le me toubr q l' nauit
s gans cui dier doit
ioye i lante arant
ar a ce clouier
formet ce dit amur
mer .x. iours a d'ye
q il pot dire en .viii.
i plus saur sechoy s'ont
de buer orendroit
la prohetes
amue en tout en droit
estuet souuer tane
sont en totz sort e droit
amur: tone parole
pl' q l' uel coue'droit
ni dit comunalmet
q bia' parlers amue
que qui a trop uent
q dier h done plue
u uale mie' ce me s'able
que taur me dedue
le par nuy parler
qu'is tai fait destrue
et fil ya nul bien
en la gloie du aulle
t au salu de mame
as ascoutas u aulle
dou mal fil y est
loz p' q l' ne loz caulle
ais reuegniet le gram
i soustent fors la paille
i biens sont mis a ocure
i li ma's oubliés
i le purt nen ya
dier en sort meries

Et furent saint francois
faignat qui loy en poise
Mais ce non uoy. 7. seul
q uolentz sen uoise
Doublers est q son fait
ne conuote a son dit
Et qui a met a oeur
q la langue estondit
Ael gnt samblet la faue
q so noir duct blondit
Cle non sous le gaue
reput et abscondit
Et neng q loy dit sou
de bu faue exemplare;
Ais ia puis q lors dis
sont a loy faus et auer;
Et condus que li dis
est plus sams q li faue;
Et que vie de Court
loy est souet repare;
L dient que ce est
virtu de hediene
Eouleur q pect auon
que noir dient en ce
Mais sil aile pourcaent
pur certame faene
Ene lai sil y poent
sauner loy; faene
Espour que sil aillent
Auuel refonour
n conuēt 2me a court
et .7. auel de court
Et li legier capire
et li courtors retour
De la court se souffissent
ce aud et de latour

Ben loy couuet megallent
oec y dros y nauans
Bons pilsos tōne; eus
lons uns vies i nouua
Cles tont en ioye
mas et blans i nouua
En loy lieu se ceussent
pour auoir loy; auans
Et noct dur vne coe
q a q nait li glaent
Cet ordie et des leur
nue; loy; pui y pourcaent
Et y prendent souuent
alles de ce qui cacent
Ar les vns i les aues
quil lient et enlacent
Et y prendent les roys
li autre les wyne;
Dour sauoir les sears
des coets i les comune;
Et ar il sont turt certain
que pur ces .ii. rachim;
Ao sont les autres bñes;
subiectes et endine;
L ont sans engender
fils i fille; gnt masse
Ar puis que lue i tane
sentatent i loy; nalle
Souspachone; deuenent
quante; auat ne passe
Enli ont il la Court
endore; i puse a tasse
L ont seigneur des lais
quor q loy; don deye
Contre au il se font
arme et haubrege

Dour le contens qui ont
encontre euz enuegie
Dont il solo; ent estre
vestu et herberge
L contens a est
gns des plas i drais
Et nelt pas to; ctains
est tamage; i drais
So pourqnt li pelat
les mamet atropia;
Bien font sil les accoent
pour leur prochaus
Et ne neng as plus fors
et a ceuz qui namont
Mais li fixe et samble
le pl; tel q uaire ont
Car il sont en fausne
on il tant remaid; or
Due la propiete
sil pcent atand; or
Dour leur le pou; neiet
quō lo; solont preter
Me li pelat ne pcent
au rauoir contester
Ear le pax ne uoelt
la grace interpret
Cil lo; fist. li eluet
dn le peuple arester
Dil pourcaent lo; pui
il ne fōt pas que nre
Dour tant q ce puit estre
sans autru; preudie
Mais la autru; damage
se pourcaent offic
Ames; gēs y pouient
noter ceuz ou nre

Dout le sear des ames
dnt agnoistre i enend; e
Ehils qui en dnt a dieu
respnd; e; talō rend; e
Dont ne li pect nuls autre;
souffraue sans m espnd; e
A pour et les ames;
dont il se dnt defend; e
Eil m auoit pect
si est ce vilomie
Ar lonc temps a est
sonoure i chere
Eest gnt des pelas
si ne ceussent mie
Auoir outre loy; gre
lo; pilsane faue
Et nelli gnt pour
cōme il ont il auoient
Duand del auctoite
as pelas en vforent
Car ou la leur donoit
uote; fors q uoloient
Tout amh loy; queelle
et lo; amis gardieent
Mtant sens est tamis faue
grignour est du garder
Mais peu en fait i garde
q les uoelt escarde;
D ngs gens mie; ne soent
les pelas affarde;
Dchil font q lo; oeur;
uoelt nrebn; estgarder
Eo; pour et laucuy
p tel art no; estonnēt
Ao; pour li pelat
car tāt lo; habadōnēt

Pizan, who decried Jean de Meun's attack on women and his arguably blasphemous language. It was printed seven times during the incunable period, first in Geneva in 1481, followed by two editions in Lyons in the 1480s and one edition in Paris in the 1490s.

3 The Text of the Jeanson *Rose*: A "Complete" *Rose*

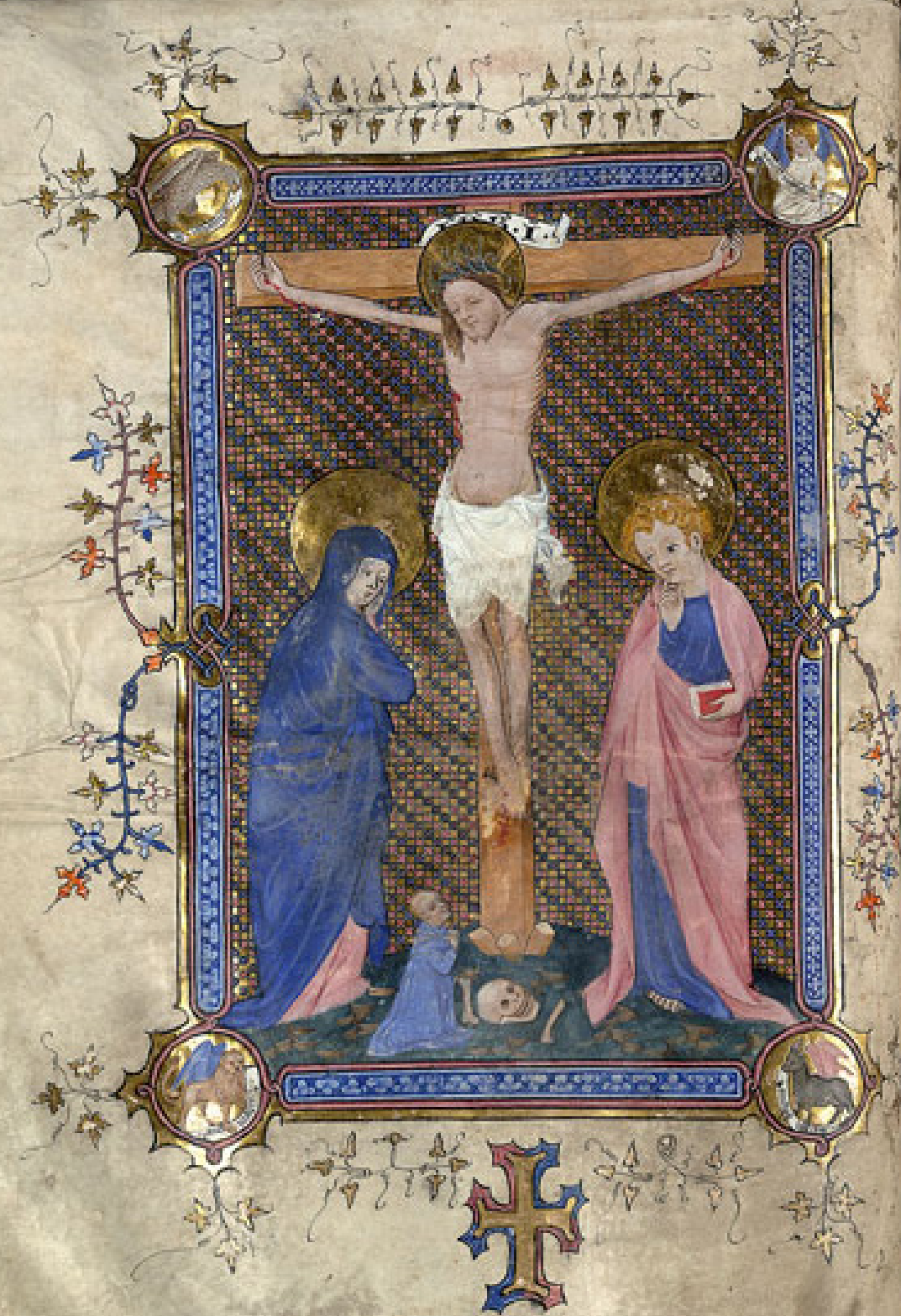
This copy of the *Rose* is unusual not only for the text of the *Roman de la Rose* itself but also for its inclusion of additions, revisions, and satellite texts, making it one of the most "complete" extant manuscripts. In his standard study of *Rose* manuscripts, Ernst Langlois classified the Jeanson *Rose*, especially its version of the Jean de Meun section, as among "les meilleurs" (or best) manuscripts. The text has many features in common with that of two closely related manuscripts identified by Langlois as dependent upon a lost Picard exemplar, and there are obvious Picard features to the language (Langlois, 246-47 and 405-410).

The Jeanson *Rose* differs from those, however, in being one of only nineteen copies to contain additions and moralizing revisions made by a third author, Gui de Mori, a Picard cleric. These were originally written between 1290 and 1330. Gui de Mori added, deleted, and rearranged many passages with the general effect of bringing the love story at the heart of the poem more into line with traditional Christian notions of human and divine love. One of Gui's innovations was the

introduction of an additional allegorical vice, Pride, on the wall of the Garden of Delight. This is one of the passages included in the present manuscript where it occurs at the beginning of the descriptions of the vices (f. 2, l.7).

Manuscripts of the *Rose* are often accompanied, as here, with other shorter works by the second poet, Jean de Meun, the *Testament du maistre Jehan de Meun* and the *Codicil*. These two poems, written at the end of the poet's life, are so linked to the *Rose* that they are sometimes considered to be "satellite" works or spin-offs of it. They rarely occur in manuscript copies on their own, and especially in fourteenth-century examples they accompany the *Rose* (cf. also British Library Add. MS 42123). The *Testament* is framed as an edifying conclusion to the *Roman de la Rose*, in which its author apologizes for the folly of youthful works (the *Rose*?) he wrote just to achieve success and embarks on a spiritual journey to discover Truth and Good, albeit still sprinkled with critiques found in the *Rose*, such as his denunciation of women and of the mendicants. The much shorter *Codicil* with its appeal to God in its 88 lines is considered an appendix to the *Testament*. The text of the Jeanson *Rose* is thus very rare indeed in its inclusion not only of Gui de Mori's revisions but also Jean de Meun's spin-offs, offering a "complete" *Rose*.





Ergo de
dem
assi
me

patre pro ihesum christi
filium tuum dominum
num: supplices rogamus
ac precibus uti accepta
habitas et benedixisti hec
† dona. hec † munera.
† hec † sancta sacra-
mentum illud.
† et precibus que tibi offerimus
pro ecclesia tua
sancta catholica quam
pacem. custodire a-
dunare et regere digue-
ris toto ore tenatur.
una cum famulo tuo
papa nostro. et antea-
tate nro. et regere no-

stro et omnibus orthodoxe
is ant: catholice et apol-
tolice fidei cultoribus
Quoniam domine
famulorum fa-
mularumque tuarum. et
et omnium curialium
um quorum tibi fides cogi-
ta est et nota devotio
p quibus tibi offerimus.
vel qui tibi offerunt hoc
sacrificium laudis pro se
suisque omnibus pro re-
demptione animarum
suarum pro hie salutis et
in columitans sue. tibi
reddunt vota sua et inno-
cento iure et iure.

Qommunicantes
et memoriam ac-
nerantes. In primis
glorioso semp: uirginis

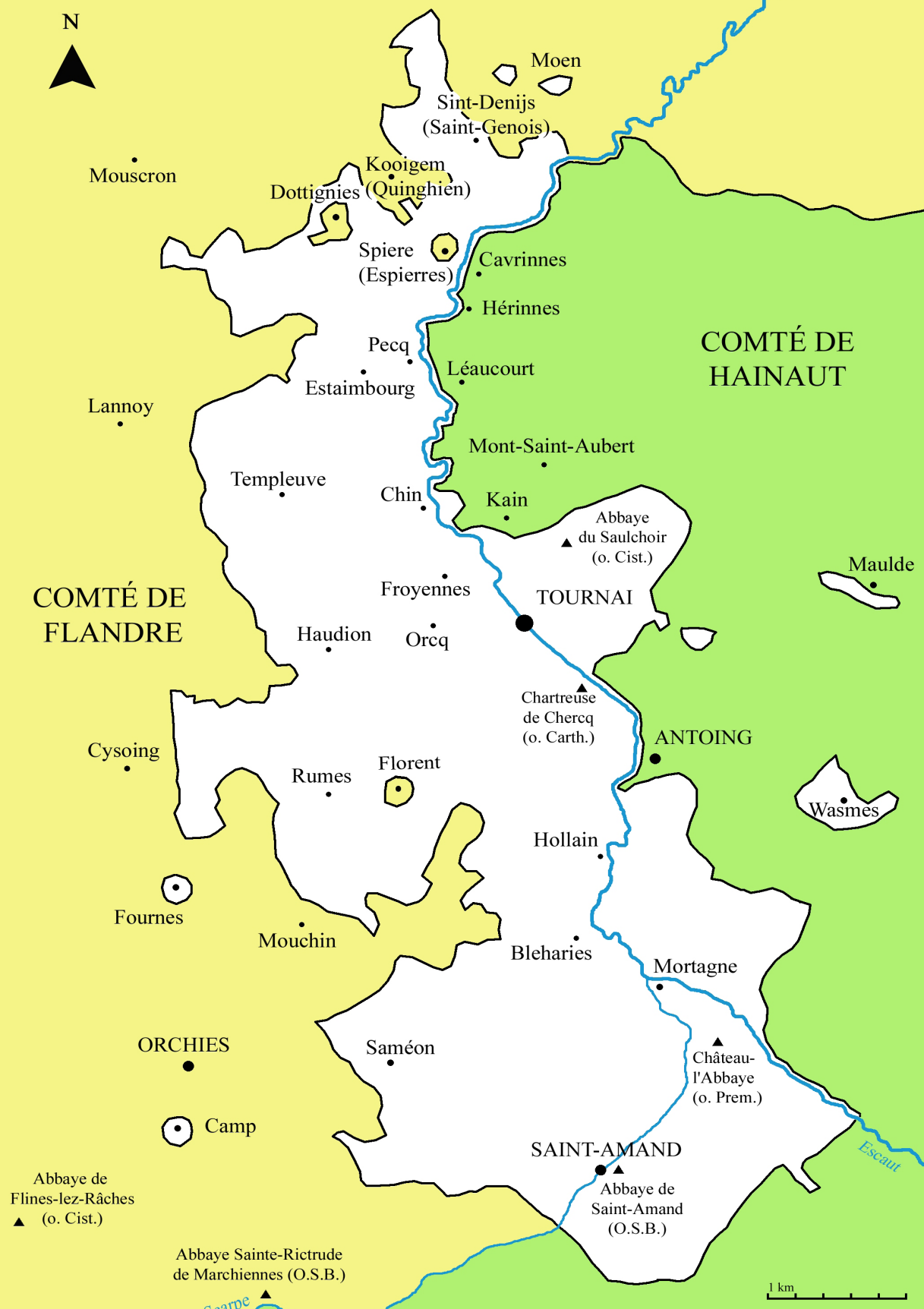
4

The Career of the Illuminator Jean Semont: An Artist with a Name

In a magisterial monograph, Dominique Vanwijnsberghe has attributed the illumination of the present manuscript to Jean Semont, an artist active in Tournai from c.1385 until his death in 1414 (see Vanwijnsberghe, 2007, p. 356 et passim, ill.). This artist is also responsible for most of the initials with shining golden grounds and sprays of colored and golden ivy-leaves curling into the margins, a feature that makes the *Jeanson Rose* particularly appealing. A second illuminator collaborated on the decoration of four gatherings and may be responsible for the drolleries on the opening leaf.

Relatively few South Netherlandish illuminators of the era are known by name, which makes the discovery by Vanwijnsberghe all the more remarkable. A document in the testament of a local ecclesiastic Jean Olivier (active 1383-1409) describes a Missal for the use of Saint-Amand written by Jean Cuvelier and illuminated by “Jehan Semonth.” This Missal, dated around 1409 has been identified as Valenciennes Bibliothèque municipale, MS





118, and provides us with crucial evidence around which the career of Jean Semont can now be reconstructed. Other documents describe works that have not been identified, a “tavelet” [or small panel painting] portraying Saint John the Evangelist in 1413 and a manuscript of baptism in the accounts of the Church of Saint-Brice in 1400-1401. Vanwijnsberghe found no other family members with this surname living in or near Tournai, and he therefore assumes that the artist originated in another, possibly Flemish, town.

In the Missal of Jean Olivier, a full-page miniature of the Crucifixion and eight pages with historiated initials thus provide the sole basis for assembling other works around the artist. These works include a wide range of types of texts and images: a Missal of Saint-Pierre (Lille, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 807); a Book of Hours (Paris, BnF, MS lat. 1364); another Missal dated before 1414 (St. Trond, Monastery of the Vlaamse Minderbroeders, MS A. 49); an extraordinary Psalter in Poughkeepsie (Vassar College Library, MS 4); a *Roman de la Rose* in New York (Morgan Library and Museum, MS G. 32); another Livre de prières in Paris (BnF, MS n.a.fr. 4412); and a two-volume secular work including *Les Voeux de Paon* and *the Sept Sages de Rome* (Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MSS 11191 and 11192).

Apparent in the wide variety of texts he illuminated, our artist's International Gothic style remains relatively consistent. He uses a palette made up of predominantly red and blue. The ivy leaf decoration derives ultimately from Parisian sources. His uncomplicated compositions, as well as his palette, are not unlike those found in a group of pre-Eyckian panels, such as an Altarpiece with Scenes of the Infancy of Christ (Antwerp, Musée Mayer van den Berghe, cat. No. 359). The Trinity in the Jeanson Rose bears close comparison with the same subject in the documented Missal of Jean Olivier. Vanwijnsberghe notes that the same exquisite border decoration with its sparkling gold and crisp ivy leaves is found in all the Jean Semont works, and he speculates that the artist himself may have been responsible for it. Exchanges with the Beaufort Master among pre-Eyckian illuminators and the Master of the Rinceaux d'or are signaled by Vanwijnsberghe, who also lays out the subsequent artistic contributions in manuscript painting in Tournai, among which are those by the interesting but less accomplished Master of the Règle de l'Hôpital Notre Dame (Tournai, Bibliothèque de la Ville, MS 24).

rent les portes fermées.



Lempereur vint a l'empereur hi mit fu urie de cou bele ne pot a complir
 son desirer & fist pour samblant. **L**empereur le regarda si le voit biesse & gentre blonde & jeune & q plus
 le regarda plus esprit d'amaio & dist dame q auco l'v. **H**is s'ur dist
 elle co iai mo cur tristez n'iet no p'is po moi mais po bir damage
 si si est g'is & pour bir g'it a millance que ie l'oi a pierreniet naistre & a
 venir dame de quos. **S**ur de cel diable q l'ois n'ieser fil lu se p'ue de vous
 a p' honorer. **E**t tout ill'uo en p'uit il auentir q'il fist au sangler lu fu
 mais en g'itaur.

Dame g'ient auentir il a col sangler p'ur foi sire iel l'ois du fu
 Lor jadis en cest p'is vne fouest g'it & m'ieueuse garnie de fruit.
Vns sanglers se noit de dens g'it & f'irme & p'rens tant f'iers
 & orgillous que nus nel osoit a p'otier. **E**n un cele fouest auoit vne
 prairie. **E**t en un cele prairie auoit vne fontaine & p' desous le fon
 taine auoit J'alyer g'it & v'nicur & b'it curg'iet de m'ieues. **A**lies
 ill'ue l'noit li sanglers cest' l'ois vne fois po lu soeler. **A**unt cose q
 vns past' auoit a v'uir vne soie b'ieste & fu ferue en la fouest.
Li past' vint cele p' avoit J'alyer. **L**ors qu'oit des alies que il vit



A nez amis asses de bien
 en un attendre te convenu
 Tant que temps z lieu en feu
 Et sil auient aucune fie
 la esperance te soit faillie
 y ouz quelque cose tu te deulles
 Et que de moy partu te deulles
 D'oit il ton amy ten uis
 Et vraiment et si li dirus
 Comment il test ne en quel point
 Et que ne li choise point
 Il te feu qu'unt aliance
 Et te ramement esperance
 Et si bien te conseillem
 Qui bonne pais te me ten
 en un quiete que convene me tieniez
 Et que mes commandemens tieniez
 Car se tu me seir sans me prendre
 A nez te qu'ch se moult bien rendre
 Et se te donis congie a tunc

Dout maintenant q'amos mot
 tout son plus su se ne soy mot
 Que il se fu esuamys
 Et se venes tous esblyes
 Quant se ne by les moy nulluy
 Se mes plaines moult me solluy
 Et soy que tant ne poie
 foz par le bouton ou fauore
 Tout mon cuer me z ma bance
 Si nuise en nullu fiance
 foz au dieu damours de laou
 A nehois fauore tout ce dov
 Que de laou noient ne soit
 Amours ne sen entremetore

Li wiser d'une hare furent
 Et los tout entour si v'ls d'ice
 In me se passasse la cloison
 In oult volentier pour loconson
 Si bouton qui flaire meur q' bame
 Se se non ceusse auon blame
 In un asses cost peust sambler

Que les roses d'olisse embler



Nisi com se me pour penfoie
 soultre le hare passerie
 Et de vos moy tout droit venant
 D'indret bel z auenant
 En au il not veno que blamer
 belacueil se faisoit nommer
 f'iz fu courtoisie la face
 C'iz ma bantonna le passage
 Se la hare moult doucement
 Et me dist amablement
 b'auz doulz amys se il vous plet
 p'asses la hare sans auest
 p'ou l'ondou des roses sentu
 i e vous y puis bien g'auant
 Que u m'as en ambrier
 Se se de veno vous puis arder
 p' res sui de faire de fiance
 C'e vous si se bien z affice
 Que si se a belacueil
 C'este promesse en gre recueil
 Et vous vench qu'ices z merite
 Se la bonte que vous me ditte
 C'iz moult vous vient de g'it
 Et quant vous plait die secul
 Sur pres de prendre volentier
 p' ar f'osses z par englentier
 D'auent la hare auoir asses





Autre gens dient que en songes
Na se fable non et mensonges
Mais on puet tels songes songier
Ne font fine mensongier
Mais sont apres bien appareut
I en puis bien traire agavant
I autteur qui ot nom macotes
N ne tint pas songes a loires
Nistors elcist laustion
I autit au roy Cypion
I menq's cude ne qui die i no
I ue cest folours i malar die
I e court que songes au regne
I qui uolka pour fol me regne
I ar en droit moys a rou hancie
I ue songes est signifiante
I es biens as gens ou des auus
I ar li plusour songent de mis
I antes cost: conuertement
I ue on fet puis apertement
I Yntime au de mon cage
I El pomaq'mours pnt le page
I es ioner gens. couchier malore
I ue n'ur si com re foloir

Et me dormore moult foiment
In .i. songe en mon dorment
Mit matelli i me plor
As en tel songe riens i ot
Nu trestout auenu ne soit
Irom li songes reconfort
Et uoel tel songe rimoyer
Duos coers fure reconner
Mours le me pue et somande
Et se nuls ou nulle demande
Oment ie uoel q'chils romans
Oit apelles que ie comans
Est li maus liures de la rose
Nlars damours est touce endose
A matter est et forme et uoene
Et dunt diez q' q' le refouue
Elle pour au ie lay empas
Est celle qui tant a de pas
Et bien est digne de dire amee
Ne dor estre vose clamee
Mus me fu qui estoit mais
Il ya bien .v. ans hui mais
Nen may estoit li songe
Et temps amouue plain de ioye
Et temps .v. touce riens seigay
Ne on ne uoit buillon ne haye
En may pure ne se uoelle
Ecouuer de nouvelle foelle
Ilos requoellent lo: uedure
Sont sek ture es yuies dure
A ne machine: so:goelle
Our la rose qui se moelle
Et oublie la purete
Nelle a tout h'uer este
Ois deuent la fire si gote
Elle uoet auoir noene rose



Dieu ne fist Cestua
 q'il ne daigna trembler
 e ne doij oublier
 en adout nen sepeche
Dieu ma fait par la grace
 mais vns coppechier
 no: ma il plus fait
 E symment
Il ma tois iours este
 large: rempement
 our qu'on le daigne
 auer n'oy coeche
Ier ma fait sans reproche
 de ionee et de fene
Ier ma par mains pens
 vndut sans meche
Ier ma done au nre
 honoure cheance
Ieus ma done seque
 les plus gns ges de fene
Iais vne tamenbice
 mespoite et estonte
Iqui plus nent de dieu
 pl' en dot rend cope
Iuls ne pnt si gnt cop
 q' chils q' n'oy haut monte
Imal vlc domare
 bn dot ueur a honre
Ioy est oers auugles
 q' souent ne recorde
Ie que dieus li a fait
 car rasons li acorde
Ie nous fions pas tant
 de le misericorde
Ie nous n'ayons paour
 de la iuste disorde

Dieu her ingratide
 dieus her este et e li
 en desomoullance
Sour n'oy enleue
 ojons a lui seure
 p'ien et desgoudeh
Et v'lois bn des grace
 q' no' auons de li
 ni en la consaene
Voldront souuet muler
 sses p' nouueve
 de quoy soy auer
Nils ne nule q' uue
 ne se pot exaer
Des grace: de dieu
 ne puelle bien user
Iu est fors et cest mie
 p' mutter ne p' hater
Et pour luter a. n.
 ou a. m. ou a quatre
Ais pour soy radeit
 nre p'che combaer
Et pour faire p'ance
 lieuent sans delate
Iu a sens et cest mie
 pour auer aueher
 e p' deuoer femme:
 p' faullement p'uer
Ais pour bn s'illier
 Et pour echeher
 unu p' h'ne: o'uer:
 et p' dieu machuer
Iu est bia' et cest mie
 p' soy en orgoellir
Ais pour telle: p'lee:
 en la biaut qu'elir

Et les b'aus: les laus
 couuet to' en uellir
Inest si gnt biaut
 q' ne couuent falir
Inest si b'aus u'lage:
 ne si iunelle fae
Vne pour feure
 en peu deur n'efface
Et se par auentur
 mox si eulter: i glae
Inest nuls q' adint
 a uoer ne le hace
Ioy est orible chose
 dome mox: i de fone
Et n'oy est auugles
 oers q' n'oy se eflame
Dour ce p'it pour dieu
 et pour la donee dame
Del coys p' n' o' caulle
 i pensons bn del ame
Iuoy q' li coys deuegne
 lame ne pot feure
Dour ce nous dot ades
 des ame: souuent
Et si deuois les coys
 si au desous teur
Ne lame puist a dieu
 qui le oia veur
Ime nest mie fait
 pour to' iours sequeuer
Et ce mecheant n'ide
 qu' uoer tout lefoumer
Ais si bien et si biel
 se dot si atourner
Ou son droit heritage
 puist tost retourner

Ime est si noble chose
 qui ne s'ben le remue
 ne. y. nulle monde:
 combles do' nre a nre
Et qu'on pot p'iser
 ne sonhadier ne dire
 ois que dieu p'uenent
 ne li poent souffire
Et nest nre manuelle
 ams est necessite
Iuenti soit: i. et mou' fte
 que ce soit v'ente
Et li mou' fte nest mie
 n'oy gram subalite
Ais n'ore le contraue
 seroit m'ique
Alsams ser q' qnt lame
 de la canoigne part
Et ce monde nen porte
 auoc li p'nt de part
A deffete le mane
 bien ou mal sans depart
Et aussi peu de temps
 ome il t'one ou ch'et
Eulons q' qnt li homs
 est el naual de mox
Ihor ne ses r'k'ce:
 ne ualent nes q' mox
Et li peent oster
 languille q' le mox
Et ce dont consaene
 le rep'ent et remort
Ois sil le poent faire
 v'oront tout fouruier
Et bn uon q' tel bien
 ne li poent diuer



5 The Illuminations of the *Jeanson Rose*: A Unique Interpretation

Illustrations in the 253 illuminated *Rose* manuscripts vary significantly both in number and subject matter. There are, however, some consistencies: the lover-scribe dreaming that introduces Guillaume de Lorris's text is commonplace, although as we shall see his treatment differs from one copy to another. Many fourteenth-century copies include a sequence of the Virtues in the garden, such as the other *Rose* manuscript painted by Jean Semont (New York, Morgan Library and Museum, MS G.32). However, even *Rose* manuscripts apparently produced in the same workshop may differ in the extent of illustration, the subjects selected, and the treatment of individual subjects (see McMunn 2001, pp. 210-214). It may be that with a text in the vernacular, and a story that was widely known, illuminators felt confident enough to devise their own interpretations.

Our artist tells the whole story of the *Rose* in his opening picture. Fully clothed, the Dreamer-Lover (author) lies in

bed. Before sleeping he propped his sword on his pillow. His books, pen, and parchment are laid out on a desk with an attached arm and chair next to his bed. He must have been a near-sighted 20-year-old because we see his discarded spectacles alongside his quills. His dream takes visual form in the two chaplets exchanged by lovers hanging above him. At the foot of the bed is the enclosed garden where Fair Welcome (Bel-Accueil) will admit him so he can steal a kiss from the unattainable *Rose* on the bush within. The tower in which Jealousy then indignantly imprisons Fair Welcome is shown in the right background in the modest, tall and narrow house – not unlike the houses that adorn Tournai itself in Roger van der Weyden's painting. The rosebush, secure from love-lorn young men, stands on the balcony. The charming, rather literal visualization of the Dreamer-Lover in this frontispiece miniature appears to be a largely distinctive interpretation. Dr. McMunn has graciously pointed out the following unique features: the sword and buckler by the bed of the dreamer occur in no other frontispiece. The Dreamer's headgear appears on only three figures in *Rose* frontispieces. The two pink chaplets attached to the bed hangings are also unique. So too are the multi-storied building with rose bushes on the balcony, and the small walled garden surrounded by roses and enclosing

a single rose is reminiscent of the one Danger will later guard from the Lover and Fair Welcome.

The delightful marginal illustration is also unique. In the center of the bottom margin is a face with big ears, while on the right a monk with a dragon body, legs and a tail gestures in supplication to a nun (named Margo, probably in a fifteenth-century hand). Margo also has a dragon's body, legs, and a tail, and she holds in her right hand what appears to be a rosary. To their right, the monkey Martin stands on a sprig of trefoil leaves and looks back over his shoulder at the two groups of figures in the bottom margin. On the left of the lower margin the monkey labelled Martico is tossing food from a bowl he holds in his right hand. The brewer in front of him is offering a drink to accompany his food. In the left top margin are a grotesque head and a squirrel holding a branch with a nut and another nut in his mouth. To his right is what appears to be a burrow where, presumably, he intends to store his nuts. Further to the right is a dragon and two grotesque heads. A mermaid, unnamed, in the right center margin holds her traditional attributes of a comb and a mirror – a symbol of luxury? The dark smear around her groin is likely the result of later censorship. Such grotesques are intended to amuse the reader,

ne on fait plus appertement

A Vintisme an de mon eage
El pomeqimours pnt le peage
es ionez gens. couchier maloric
ne nuit si com ie soloie

marthico.



Maryn.

P our la rosee qui se moelle
E t oublie la pouette
O u elle a tout l'iuier este
L ors deuent la tre si gole
O lle noet auoir noeue robe

oult forment
mon doiment
ne plot
riens iu ot
u ne soit
recensoit
rimouer
re resiouer
e et comande
le demande
chils romans
romans



de la vole
t toute endose
me et noeue
le rethocue
empres
de pris
estre amee
lance
ort mais
hu mais
ongore
lain de roye
ns selgave
lon ne haye



Et si men courunt il par force
ntamer. .i. pi del escorce
nterit avoir ne sauoie
e dont li gire desir auoie
la parfin tant us' en di
.i. pi de graue y' eshandi
uis q' te touzon oi hochie
e fu gire dedis loi tochie
les fueller: reuerchier
ar ie uoloit tout archier
usques au fons del touzonet
i' come me sambla ton: et
rhis lors li meller les graue:
l se desmettaissent a paine
iq' tout le touzonet tendre
n'his eslaupr et estendre
e du tout q'iq' ie fourhis
ais de ce fu ie b'n lors his
u'q' nul malgre ne me' for
i' d' q' nul mal m' pensot
ms me' soit r' suer' faire
n'q' set q' me' doit plainre
i' mapelle il de couenant
ie li fat deslaueuant
t' su' n'oy ouu'age' ce dit
ais il m' met nul' ardit
ne p'nd' de mille r' quelle
ou'os' i'ost: r' fleurs r' foelle
it en li haut degre me' y'
Q'oi li noblement de'u
mes p'it: net mais d'itable:
e que fins et agrable:
usse us' d' mes b'nfaitens
com' d'oit faire l'ons deurs
ar mlt' chose a eur' tous
it p'cus greir' deuenus

Si r'at: q' pour uoir lafice
idelle n'estoit pas li ue
u' dieu d'auoir r' a yenus
Q' moiet adie p' q' nus
Sel a qu'ot et a' stan
mont est' n'eston am
uis a tous les l'ous del ost
oit ie p' dieu q' ia nes ost
es seours as l'us amou'e
n'ar les laist'ers sauo'e
endi grace: r' fors ou y'm
ais de r'aison ne me' souu'it
a moi gasta tant de paine
algre r'ider le vilaine
ouque: de p'ite n'ula
it leu'ar me' u'f'ula
u' seuer'et quelle g'ardot
e' est'iu' pas ne se g'ardot
ar ou ie su' ceus u'ous
ep'ostement les la' men'
algre mes mo'e' anoms
tant mo'e' ar'ar' mis
s'ernalment l'alousie
tout son capel de soullie
des am'as la u'e' g'ard
it en a' fait o' l'one g'ard
ms q' diloe' me' remu'asse
A mon uoel en'ow' dem'asse
ar g'it soluere' quell'
a fleur du tel u'osier' fuell'
n'it oi la Ro'e' manelle
tant fu iours: r' ie me'uelle



Uer: Et li s'is
Et li s'ans e' h'ens
u' dieu en' u'is p'f'one:
hommes et ch'ens
reigne les l'ons en g'alee
Et retout les p'ens
t' d'ont que d'als names
font a mame m'ens
ap' fait en ma' ionee
mams d'is par u'ant
u' plusieurs gens se font
mame: l'us d'el'e
m'ent d'ont d'ice: .i. faire
Par u'ar' Cant
our' amender les ame:
qu' pi moit' pourf'ice
ien d'oit estre' creales
Bone' u'ers en ionee
it d'ice li d'ome g'alee
de'f're v'els en v'ellee
ais n'it est' g'it v'itu
et n'est'haue' noblece
it u'ers en ionee cage
A m'ant' l'ad'ice

Das le mien et m'ant' aut'e
Si font de tel d'ur'e
uen' nul' estat ne uo'lent
V'ent' a m'ur'e
ms se font a' ionee
li' come et a' h'ur'e
om' se de' tous iours u'ur'e
eussent seur'e
ais il est' aut'ement
ar nous s'one: sen
e mo'e' r' mais tou' t'ine
mo'y' nau'ru' n'ass'eur
lus' tost' m'ur'e' li' ionee
s'ou'ent que li' m'ur'e
e ne sa' bien ou' mal
en g'ace ou' com'e' ar'
ois est' a' tous' m'ur'e
mors est' a' u' h'ur'e
ais n'uls ne p'ot' sauo'e
leu'e' ne la' m'ur'e
p' dieu et la' m'ur'e
que mes co'e's a' fait' d'ur'e
ul' uo'ellent' reu'ou'e
en g'it' est' m'ur'e
m'ent a' l'ome' fu'
de' l'om' com'm'ent
l' d'oit' tend'e' a' u'is' u'le:
sil' a' l'om' f'ond'ent
le' Glo'e' de' dieu
et a' son' sauo'e'm'ent
t' a' d'onne' par' tout
l'om' e'ch'ement
r' fils' dieu' gl'ou'e'us
p'it' le' hen' no' s'ant'ine
e' d'om'gne' sil' l'ui' pl'ant
par' tout' est' r'ime

whether they comment directly or indirectly on the text. Here we might hypothesize that the bodily enjoyment of food and drink on the lower left is playfully contrasted to spiritual benefits of prayer on the lower right – a theme that is consistent with most interpretations of the text of the *Rose*. Similar marginal grotesques exist in other manuscripts by Jean Semont; compare for example a manuscript of Sermons in Tournai (Archives of the Cathedral Chapter, Register 359 B, f. 3) and a Breviary for the use of Tournai (Cambrai, Médiatheque municipale, MS A 104, f. 359), both reproduced in Vanwijnsberghe, figs. 293, 294a, 294b.

The miniatures illustrating the satellite texts are no less accomplished. The Trinity on f. 153 shows God the Father supporting Christ on the Cross, a dove and above them, against a checkered ground within a frame of pink and burnished gold, with a three-sided border with baguettes and ivy-leaf sprays of burnished gold, pink and blue. This is a direct illustration of the opening phrase of Jean de Meun's *Testament*: "Li peres et li fils et li sains esperis/ Un dieu en trois personnes adoures et cheris" (The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit/ God in three persons, loved and adored). The next miniature on f. 181v depicts Christ in Majesty seated on a bench against a checkered ground,

one hand raised in blessing the other resting on an orb with a cross, all within a frame of blue and burnished gold. Here the miniature illustrates the opening of a stanza within the *Codicil* (line 2049): "C'il puissant Roye de gloire qui sans fin regne et vie" (This powerful King of glory who lives and reigns forever). Both miniatures find close parallels in historiated initials found in Jean Semont's documented Missal for Jean Olivier, leaving no doubt of the attribution of the Jeanson *Rose* to him.

De sancta trinitate ad



et quia fecit nobiscum

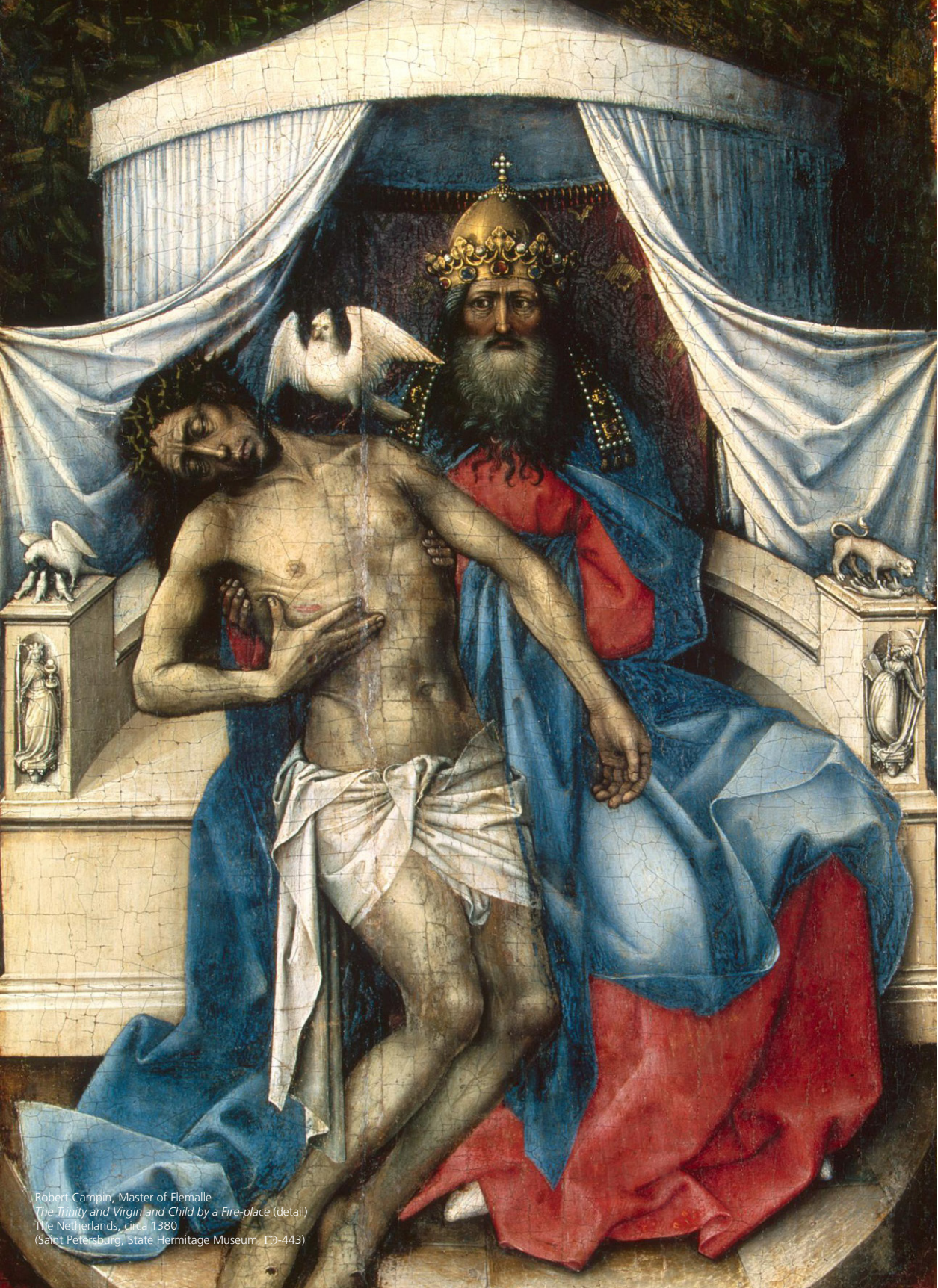
Deus et filius
Et hunc Spiritum
in diebus. personarum
hominum et deorum

6
Flemish Realism in Tournai:
Jean Semont and *ars nova*

Tournai was central to the extraordinary artistic developments of *ars nova* evident in the work of Robert Campin (identified with the Master of Flémalle, 1375-1444), documented in Tournai from 1406 until his death in 1444, his pupil Rogier van der Weyden, born in Tournai in 1399/1400 and died in 1465, and the Van Eycks. The exceptionally thorough iconoclasm in Tournai in the sixteenth century means that little is known of the artistic context of Campin's mature achievements or Van der Weyden's youth. Vanwijnsberghe's careful reconstruction of Tournai manuscript illumination is, therefore, critical for the history of art, laying out the artistic context in which these panel painters worked, so crucial for our understanding of the overall practice of painting during the period. Thanks to Vanwijnsberghe, we now realize that the work of Jean Semont stands just a half-generation before Robert Campin; if Campin was active as a master painter in 1406, this date falls within the height of Jean Semont's career. An exceptional



Rogier van der Weyden
Saint Columba Altarpiece (detail)
Southern Netherlands, 1450–1455
(Munich, Alte Pinakothek, WAF 1189)



Robert Campin, Master of Flemalle
The Trinity and Virgin and Child by a Fire-place (detail)
The Netherlands, circa 1380
(Saint Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, LD-443)



manuscript leaf in Enschede (Rijksmuseum Twenthe inv. no. 16) from a Book of Hours now in Princeton (University Art Museum, MS Y1030) is attributed to the “entourage of Robert Campin,” and Vanwijnsberghe specifically cites the rich ivy-leaf decoration by Jean Semont in the Jeanson Rose as a direct analogue. The Enschede-Princeton Book of Hours is placed around 1415 to 1425, thus at the end of Jean Semont’s career. Entering Campin’s workshop perhaps in 1427 and remaining in Tournai until at least 1432, Roger van der Weyden represents the next generation of the Tournai *ars nova*.

If, indeed, as Vanwijnsbergh has shown, painters and illuminators were united in the same guild, officially from 1423 onwards, which must reflect earlier practice, then the study of manuscript painting with monumental painting becomes vital. The rich body of work that defines Jean Semont’s career, including this manuscript of the *Roman de la Rose*, now plays a significant role in this history.

Appendix

Physical description

182 folios, on parchment (collation i-ii8 iii8 [-2] iv-xix8 xx9 [1, a singleton] xxi-xxii8 xxiii6), catchwords an entire line written in a small cursive hand in the inner lower margin of final versos, two columns of 36 lines written in a Gothic bookhand in black or brown ink between 37 horizontals, top and bottom ruled across the margin, and four verticals ruled the height of the page, pairs of verticals the height of the text separating the initial letter of each line, all ruled in plummet, (justification 226 x 68-14-68 mm.), rubrics in red, every page illuminated with two-line initials alternately dark pink or blue on grounds of burnished gold with trefoil leaves in the infills and delicate ivy-leaf sprays extending into the margins, opening folio with introductory miniature and a full-page border with drollery figures in the bas-de-page and margins, the other texts opening with two further miniatures, one with a full-page border (opening folio slightly darkened and thumbbed at the outer edge, tiny pigment losses from the bed-hangings in the miniature, smudging of a few initials, the Trinity miniature on f.153 worn, presumably by kissing). Eighteenth-century French mottled calf binding gilt (splits at head and foot of upper joint, extremities scuffed). Dimensions 320 x 205 mm.

Text

ff. 1-152v, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Roman de la Rose*; ff. 153-181v, Jean de Meun, *Le Testament*; ff. 181v-182, Jean de Meun, *Codicil*.

Illustrations

f.1 The Lover resting on his bed, behind him hang two rose chaplets as exchanged by lovers, his sword propped by his pillow, in the foreground a seat, with an attached lectern, and a table with books and the materials and tools, including spectacles, for writing, to the right an enclosed garden around a rosebush, in the background a tall balconied building, the miniature and text within a full-page border illustrated with grotesques; f.153 Trinity, with God the Father supporting Christ on the Cross, against a checkered ground and within a frame of pink and burnished gold, with a three-sided border with baguettes and ivy-leaf sprays of burnished gold, pink and blue; f.181v Christ in Majesty, seated on a bench against a checkered ground, one hand raised in blessing the other resting on an orb with a cross, all within a frame of blue and burnished gold.

Provenance

1. The majority of the extant manuscripts of the *Roman de la Rose* were made in northern France, many of them in Paris. This manuscript, on the other hand, was produced in Tournai:

the Picard features of the text and the style of illumination are typical of the manuscripts produced in this region at the turn of the century.

2. There are brief annotations and *nota* signs written in French in a 15th-century hand in some margins, including names identifying the marginal figures of the opening folio. A title in French, in manuscript, within an 18th-century engraved surround is pasted on to a front endleaf.
3. Sir Jacob Astley Bart, of Melton Constable, Norfolk (1797-1859): his bookplate inside upper cover.
4. London, Sotheby's, July 20, 1931, lot 5 to G. Wells.
5. Marcel Jeanson (1885-1942), Paris, France, his bookplate, marked MS. 1, on front endleaf. Successful industrialist and one of the most important bibliophiles of the 20th century, Marcel Jeanson assembled one of the finest collections of books on hunting and ornithology, among many other manuscripts and printed books (sale, Sotheby's, Monaco, 1987, Part I); another part of the collection was sold by Christie's in 2000 (Part IV).

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Digital Library of Medieval Manuscripts (The Roman de la Rose Digital Library)

<https://dlmm.library.jhu.edu/en/romandelarose/extant-manuscripts/>

List of Extant Manuscripts of the Rose (DLMM)

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/10CB49KODbQ0Vl_rnJUyLYM0awKu_VXvrJ46QyZsFczk/edit#gid=0

where the Jeanson Rose is listed as “Unknown Location”

Les Archives de littérature du Moyen Âge (ARLIMA)

https://www.arlima.net/eh/gui_de_mori.html

The Jeanson Rose is listed in ARLIMA under Gui de Mori as “localisation actuelle inconnue”

New downloadable English translation of the *Roman de la Rose* by

A.S. Kline

<https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/French/LeRomanDeLaRosehome.php>



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