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The Penitent Saint Jerome in the Wilderness: A French Miniature from the Beginning of the 16th Century in the Collection of the National Museum in Warsaw

Among the group of medieval and early Renaissance illuminations kept at the Department of Prints and Drawings of the National Museum in Warsaw, *The Penitent Saint Jerome in the Wilderness* (**figs 1, 2**) is one that definitely merits attention.[1] The composition was cut out from an unknown codex, presumably a book of hours. It belongs to the set of 90 illuminations donated to the Museum between 1934 and 1938 by Stanisław Neyman (1882–1952), long-standing member of the Polish delegation at the League of Nations in Geneva.[2] In his article published in 1938, Neyman, a collector of medieval art with expert knowledge on the subject, attributed this work to Jean Perréal (before 1450 – after 1530) and dated it to the beginning of the 16th century.[3] After the Second World War, the miniature was published twice more, as a work of an unknown French artist.[4] Nevertheless, it remains virtually unknown to scholars in the field of illumination art.

The image of the penitent Saint Jerome was removed from its original context: it was cut out from the manuscript along the external edges of the golden frame around the composition. Consequently, the work was deprived of the surrounding margin (of unknown width), and the first line of text is presumably missing from the verso. This is one of thousands of examples

[1] Tempera and gold paint on parchment, 16.2 × 11.4 cm; on verso, a block of text (13.2 × 8.1 cm) comprising 12 lines (of a total of 16) in light brown ink, with two decorative initials (tempera and gold paint), line ending (tempera), upper case letters with yellow-brown wash: *O Domine Ihū Xpiste adoro* | *te ad celos ascendentem seden* | *tem* [...] *ad dexteram Dei patris* | *Deprecor te miserere mei sede* | *tis in tenebris et umbra mor* | *tis. amen. Pater noster.* | *O Domine Ihū Xpiste ado* | *ro te pastor bone iustos conser* | *va peccatores iustificia omni* | *bus fidelibus miserere, et pro* | *picius esto mihi peccatori ā.* | *Pater noster. Ave Maria g.*; at the bottom, in pen and red ink: *De sancto ieronimo antiphoā*; inv. no. 126443 MNW.

[2] This donation was made on behalf of his prematurely deceased stepdaughter, engineer Wanda Woyciechowska (1904–32). Stanisław Neyman's collection is being researched by Paulina Miś (NMW Library) and myself.

[3] Stanisław Neyman, "Iluminacje rękopisów średniowiecza," *Przegląd Współczesny*, vol. 67, no. 2 (1939), p. 41 (201), fig. 16. We do not know why Neyman attributed this miniature to Jean Perréal. Little is known about the artist's illuminations; he is currently associated with three miniatures, the analysis of which has not yielded any evidence that would confirm Neyman's attribution. See *France 1500. Entre Moyen Age et Renaissance*, Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, Geneviève Bresc-Bautier, Thierry Crépin-Leblond, academic eds, exh. cat., Galeries nationales, Grand Palais, 2010–11 (Paris, 2010), figs 6 and 40 and pp. 108–9, cat. no. 33.

[4] Stanisława Sawicka, "Rękopisy iluminowane wywiezione z Polski lub zniszczone przez okupantów niemieckich oraz zaginione w latach wojny 1939–1945," in ead., *Straty wojenne zbiorów polskich w dziedzinie rękopisów iluminowanych* (Warsaw, 1952), p. 37, cat. no. 97, tab. XLIX (as France, 16th c.); Agnieszka Chmielewska, Ewa Frąckowiak, Justyna Guze, *Pokaz dawnych rysunków i grafiki. Gabinet Grafiki i Rysunku Nowożytnego Obcego* (The National Museum in Warsaw: Warsaw, 2002), cat. no. 18 (as France, early 16th c.).

of the age-old practice, followed with abandon from the late 18th throughout the 19th century: in order to satisfy collectors' demand, illuminations, particularly full-page miniatures, were regularly cut out of various books.[5] Like in other similar cases, the miniature showing Saint Jerome has to be analysed as an autonomous work of art.

Around 1500, representations of the penitent Saint Jerome in the wilderness were steadily gaining popularity in France. This subject, which had already been known in Italy since the 14th century, arrived in France more than a hundred years later. This was associated, i.a., with military campaigns conducted on the Apennine Peninsula (by Charles VIII between 1494 and 1495, and by Louis XII starting from 1499), as a result of which French collections noted a steady influx of Italian Renaissance art.[6] Local artists, including illuminators, sometimes found inspiration in these works. In his miniature of Saint Sebastian in the so-called *Hours of Henry VIII* from the Morgan Library and Museum in New York,[7] Jean Poyer (active between 1483 and 1503) employed a composition by Perugino that had been known in France already before 1499.[8] Jean Bourdichon (c. 1456–57 – c. 1520–21) also repeated it in his full-page illustration found in the *Great Book of Hours of Anne of Brittany* from c. 1505–10.[9] Nicholas Herman notes that while it is possible to find many more references to works of this Italian artist, which had been brought to France at the time, they are not always as clear-cut.[10] Another obvious example is *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness*, dated between 1496 and 1502, which belonged to Louis XII himself (Musée des beaux-arts, Caen) (**fig. 3**).[11] Poyer used it as a model for his full-page miniature in the aforementioned *Book of Hours of Henry VIII* (**fig. 4**).[12] The saint's figure is a mirror image of the one from the Caen painting: Saint Jerome kneels on one knee among thorns, wearing a cilice instead of a blue cape,[13] while the crucifix he adores is located at eye level at the entrance to his hermitage. In the background and landscape part, both works feature comparable elements of similar proportions (Poyer's landscape being slightly more open on the left-hand side). The painting's execution date and the supposed moment of its inclusion in Louis XII's collection (c. 1499, the year of his first military campaign to the Apennine Peninsula, right after his coronation) determine the *terminus post quem* of creating

[5] See, e.g., Stella Panayotova, "Vandalism and Reuse," in *Colour. The Art and Science of Illuminated Manuscripts*, Stella Panayotova, ed., exh. cat., Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, 2016 (London, 2016), pp. 163–66.

[6] Thomas Tolley, "Monarchy and Prestige in France," in *Viewing Renaissance Art*, Kim W. Woods, Carol M. Richardson, Angelika Lymberopoulou, eds (New Haven–London, 2007), pp. 144–47; Henri Zerner, "La France des arts," in *France 1500...*, op. cit., pp. 26–30.

[7] C. 1500, inv. no. H.8, fol. 170r. See, above all, Mara Hofmann, *Jean Poyer. Das Gesamtwerk* (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 35–36, 126–31, figs 104–12; Roger S. Wieck, *The Hours of Henry VIII* (Barcelona, 2016). *The Hours of Henry VII* is a traditional title; we now know that the manuscript never belonged to the king of England.

[8] See Nicholas Herman, "'Fouquet redivivus.' Migrant Motifs in Tours, 1480–1520," in *Re-inventing Traditions: On the Transmission of Artistic Patterns in Late Medieval Manuscript Illumination*, Joris Corin Heyder, Christine Seidel, eds (Frankfurt am Main, 2015), pp. 191–92.

[9] Bibliothèque nationale de France (Département des Manuscrits), Paris, inv. no. Latin 9474, fol. 175v.

[10] Herman, "'Fouquet redivivus'...," op. cit., p. 192.

[11] Inv. no. 79.

[12] Fol. 170r.

[13] Its form could have been inspired by the image of Saint Jerome in the *La Flora* Hours (Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli, inv. no. Ms.I.B.51), which are known to have belonged to Charles VII.

the illumination, with the *terminus ante quem* being the artist's death. Consequently, Poyer's *Hours* should be dated to c. 1499–1503.

With all certainty, Perugino's composition may also be regarded as the point of departure for the author of the Warsaw miniature, which would determine the time of its creation: not earlier than c. 1499. Most striking, however, are the similarities to Poyer's composition, e.g., the position of the hermit's body, which underwent identical modifications with regard to the painted original. Texts on the verso of both illuminations were probably written by the same scribe (**figs 5 a, b**), who worked with Poyer on several occasions.[14] The initials that adorn the text are also alike. Another interesting factor is that in both cases, the antiphon to Saint Jerome is preceded by the prayers of Saint Gregory: while only the two last ones (out of seven) may be seen on the folio from the National Museum in Warsaw, they differ very little from those found in Poyer's codex.[15] Compositional analogies, involvement of the same scribe, identically painted initials, and finally an equal layout of prayers (at least in this particular fragment of the manuscript) can hardly be treated as a coincidence. The conclusion that comes to mind is that the book – most likely a book of hours – which originally included the Warsaw image of Saint Jerome might also have been created in Jean Poyer's workshop. Could he, too, be the author of our miniature?

Even a cursory analysis of the composition reveals that its painted layer was applied with great care and precision: in the eye of the viewer, the overlapping and alternating patches of colour and ultrathin lines create coherent, uniform planes. Some of the details merit a closer look. The saint's face and body are rendered with parallel, sometimes intersecting, hairline thin strokes of the brush (**fig. 6a**): light brown, cream, orange, pink and grey (modelling), dark brown (outline), and red hues (lips, traces of blood on the chest and legs) are harmoniously applied onto the flesh-coloured underpainting. The final touches were made with semi-transparent white gouache (forehead, nose and cheeks) to suggest reflections of light emanating from the crucifix. The cilice is also rendered using several layers of paint. The artist covered the flesh-toned underpainting (supplemented with greys in the shaded areas) with a delicate sketch in two shades of brown, which he topped with strokes of gold paint with added patches of white between the intersecting fibres. This was aimed at conveying the shade cast by the weaves of the fabric onto the naked body and achieving a convincing, tangible depiction of the cilice. The artist was similarly diligent in depicting the leaves of trees and shrubbery in the middle ground (using three shades of green) (**fig. 7a**) and the rocks around the entrance to the hermitage (a few shades of grey, sometimes mixed with green and supplemented with semi-transparent white gouache). The background of the composition – the greenish-blue plains gradually giving way to awe-inspiring mountains and the sky, rendered in hues of blue – shows an exquisite use of colour. Finally, it is worth noting that the gold paint was not only applied in Saint Jerome's cilice, his halo and the rays emanating from the crucifix, but also in the reflections of light on the tangled thorns, tree-stumps, cardinal's hat and red vestments lying there, as well as the trunks of trees in the background and the lion's mane. The deep, saturated hues, none of which are

[14] In this context, Roger S. Wieck (2016, p. 42) lists the *Chronique martinienne* (Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen, inv. no. Thott 430 20; see Hofmann, op. cit., pp. 93–97), but it seems possible that the same scribe could have already written the text in the *Briçonnet Hours* (c. 1485, see Hofmann, op. cit., pp. 90–92) from Teylers Museum in Haarlem or the two Books of Hours from the 1490s (inv. nos M.9 and M.388, see Hofmann, op. cit., pp. 131–33 and 139–41) and the *Prayer Book of Anne de Bretagne* (inv. no. M.50, see Hofmann, op. cit., pp. 133–36), kept at the Morgan Library and Museum.

[15] The last prayer in the discussed version features a fragment of Psalm 106 (Ps 106: 10).

dominant in the composition, combine to form a harmonious whole. The colour effects are additionally nuanced by the skilful use of paints, sometimes transparent ones, like with the tree leaves, where the blue of the sky comes through the semi-translucent layer of dark green.

This is in stark contrast to the image of Saint Jerome from *The Hours of Henry VIII*, which perfectly exemplifies Jean Poyer's late style, developed already c. 1494–95.[16] It is characterized by a more spontaneous application of paint: the individual small patches and strokes of the brush are easy to trace, as though the artist did not care to conceal his painting method.[17] Contrary to the miniature kept at the NMW, the saint's body is depicted here using merely three colours: flesh tints and two shades of brown, with added red highlights marking the hermit's wounds (**fig. 6b**).[18] Although the cilice is painted based on an identical pattern, it is rendered in thicker and less precise strokes of the brush, which markedly lessens the impression of three-dimensionality. Spots of green found in the tree leaves – large and distinct – are devoid of the subtlety emanating from the corresponding fragment of the Warsaw miniature (**fig. 7b**). The vast, soft, sun-drenched scenery brings to mind Italian paintings, and one is immediately struck by an impression that the artist must have been familiar with local landscapes. Paint was applied in non-transparent layers. Both this work and the remaining illuminations in this book of hours are characterized by a lighter, almost pastel colour palette, the only exception being the robes of the figures (here: cardinal's hat and cape), which represent bolder accents of colour. All of the above are typical elements of Poyer's style.

An analysis of the NMW miniature's underdrawing (**fig. 8**) leads to some interesting conclusions.[19] It is rather sparse and executed with a brush: in the infrared photograph, it is discernible in the shadows that mark, e.g., the shape of Saint Jerome's arms and legs. Only in a few places – and only very slightly – does the painted layer deviate from this outline (**fig. 9**).[20] Isolated, thin lines may be seen in but a few places, such as the base of the sloping tree on the right. Such small differences would suggest that the idea for the composition must have been formulated earlier, and not directly on the support. The photograph also confirms what may be seen with the naked eye: the trees and thorns were painted after the composition had already been partially completed. The golden frame was added at the very end, covering, among other things, the uneven ends of tree branches at upper left. Known underdrawings of Poyer's compositions are essentially different. Take the soldier on the left of the *Resurrection* scene from the *Missal of Guillaume Lallemant*[21] created at roughly the same time as the *Hours of Henry VIII*. The infrared photograph shows a drawing of a naked man, who was only "dressed" in the painted layer, in line with the practice followed by Italian painters in the early Renaissance and

[16] See the *Primer of Charles-Orland (The Prayer Book of Anne de Bretagne)*, c. 1492–95, The Morgan Library and Museum, New York, inv. no. MS M.50 – see Wieck, op. cit., p. 27.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Here it should be noted, though, that the faces and bodies of figures depicted in other miniatures in these hours are sometimes painted in a more refined manner.

[19] The IR photograph was made by Anna Lewandowska from the NMW's Canvas Painting Conservation Workshop.

[20] E.g., the saint's right calf was originally wider (like the shadow in the underdrawing), and his right thigh was slightly narrower.

[21] 1500–3, The Morgan Library and Museum, New York, inv. no. M.495, fol. 50v – see Hofmann, op. cit., pp. 142–45, figs 118–24; Wieck, op. cit., pp. 35–37, fig. p. 36.

Leon Battista Alberti's guidelines contained in *De pictura* (1435).[22] The spontaneous, dynamic sketch indicates that Poyer may have designed the composition directly on the parchment.[23] What is more, the artist treated underdrawings as a starting point for executing figures in the painted layer, which usually departed from the initial idea. In a number of instances, this is also visible in the illuminations of the *Hours of Henry VIII*, where one does not need specialist equipment to discern the differences between the underdrawing and the solutions ultimately employed by the artist.[24]

The precise finish, colour palette and manner of applying paint, as well as a clearly different approach to painting landscape along with disparate underdrawings are all indications that the miniature from the National Museum in Warsaw cannot be associated with Jean Poyer. This is an intriguing situation. A composition by an anonymous artist is included in a manuscript whose layout (at least in this one fragment) corresponds to that of the *Hours of Henry VIII*, and, what is more, the text on the verso is written by a scribe who also cooperated with Poyer's workshop. However, this is not an entirely isolated case. In a monograph on Poyer, Mara Hofmann provides a list of the manuscripts he illuminated in whole or in part;[25] interestingly, among his co-authors one may find both anonymous painters from his workshop or milieu and other, independent artists. These situations occurred because highly valued illuminators, particularly ones working for members of the royal court (and Poyer also belonged to this group), seldom had time to fully involve themselves in all incoming commissions. When they did work on their own from start to finish, this was usually for the most prestigious orders placed by the king, queen, or the highest court officials. Since there was little time left for the remaining projects, entire groups of artists, not necessarily from one workshop, would be involved in decorating manuscripts. More often than not, these were independent artists, treated as equal partners, co-authors of the final work. In order to describe this complex network of relationships, one ought to add that the responsibility for completing such commissions often lay with the so-called *libraires* (booksellers), who frequently also initiated such projects.[26] They coordinated the work – either on behalf of the person who ordered the manuscript or on their own initiative – to ensure that the book was completed within a reasonable time and maintained a high artistic merit. The contribution of individual artists varied, but in most cases one "hand" dominated, and the remaining illuminators would supplement the book with a few miniatures (or even a single one). The painters who worked with Poyer ranged from anonymous members of his workshop or milieu to artists who were known by name (Jean Pichore, Jean Bourdichon) or by the nicknames they later gained (Master of Claude de France, Master of Morgan 388, Master of Robert Gaguin, Master of Lallement-Boethius, Master of Chronique Scandaleuse, Master of Spencer 6). Some of them, Poyer included, would sometimes only make a single composition in a set of several to several dozen miniatures. Analysing the body of work of the aforementioned artists is a good starting point in our quest to find the author of the illumination kept at the

[22] See Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*, introduction and notes by Martin Kemp (London, 1991).

[23] Wieck, op. cit., p. 37.

[24] E.g., in fol. 40r (the feet of Mary and Saint Elizabeth) or 168r (the torch held by the deacon on the left).

[25] Hofmann, op. cit., passim.

[26] Herman, "'Fouquet redivivus'...," op. cit., pp. 180–88 (with previous bibliography).

NMW. This work is characterized by an incredibly precise execution of details and saturated colours. In terms of style, it may actually be associated with only one artist – Jean Bourdichon.

Bourdichon is regarded as one of the most important artists (not just miniature artists) at the court of four subsequent kings of France: Louis XI, Charles VIII, Louis XII and Francis I; after Jean Fouquet's death, he received the title of *peintre du roi*. His oeuvre has always been included in the canon of art created c. 1500, but for the last decade or so, it has also given rise to in-depth research pursued both in the context of French art in general and the local milieu of the artist's native town of Tours.[27] It is worth noting that Bourdichon's miniatures appear in at least two manuscripts decorated by Poyer: the *Book of Hours* currently held in Geneva[28] and the *Book of Hours of Anne of Brittany and Mary of England* in Lyon.[29] Could he then be regarded as the author of our miniature?

The aforementioned meticulous finish, colour palette and certain compositional solutions, such as the type of landscape, may be associated with Bourdichon's oeuvre. This attribution is backed by an analysis of underdrawings of miniatures cut out of the *Hours of Louis XII* held at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles.[30] Nevertheless, while appreciating the high quality of the composition kept in Warsaw, Nicolas Herman noticed that it has a more "painterly" character compared to Bourdichon's other works and was painted with greater freedom.[31] This may be seen, e.g., in the manner of depicting Saint Jerome's beard with a more disorderly arrangement of thin lines than in the corresponding fragments of miniatures in the *Hours of Louis XII*[32] and the *Great Book of Hours of Anne of Brittany*.[33] The patches of colour and brushstrokes that constitute the leaves of trees and bushes and the hermit's body do not blend as harmoniously as in Bourdichon's other works, and the outlines sometimes lack smoothness. Consequently, one could assume that *Saint Jerome* was created by a painter from the artist's workshop or immediate milieu, or his follower, but the artistic merit of the NMW miniature greatly exceeds that of any such works I am familiar with. There is another possibility that seems more likely. An in-depth analysis of the master's works has revealed that his trademark painstaking finish did not preclude certain differences in terms of the precision of executing individual illuminations.[34] This way, Bourdichon could save time without yielding full control

[27] See, above all, *A Masterpiece Reconstructed. The Hours of Louis XII*, Thomas Kren, Mark Evans, eds (Los Angeles–London, 2006); *France 1500...*, op. cit.; Nicholas Herman, "'Ut certius et melius ipsumdepingeret'. Observations sur la production et l'activité de Jean Bourdichon," in *Peindre en France à la Renaissance. Courants stylistiques au temps de Louis XII et de François 1er*, Frédéric Elsig, Imola Kiss, eds (Milan, 2011), pp. 209–25; *Tours 1500. Capitale des arts*, sous la direction de Béatrice de Chancel-Bardelot et al., exh. cat., Musée des beaux-arts de Tours, 2012 (Paris, 2012); Herman, "'Fouquet redivivus'...," op. cit. (with previous bibliography on the artist and his milieu).

[28] Bibliothèque publique et universitaire, Geneva, inv. no. CL 124, fol. 13; see Hofmann, op. cit., pp. 87–89 (in the style of Bourdichon); Nicholas Herman in *Tours 1500...*, op. cit., pp. 314–15, cat. no. 77 (Jean Bourdichon).

[29] Bibliothèque municipale, Lyon, inv. no. Ms.1558, fols 17v–18. See Hofmann, op. cit., pp. 117–21.

[30] Nancy Turner, "The Manuscript Painting Techniques of Jean Bourdichon," in *A Masterpiece Reconstructed...*, op. cit., pp. 63–64, figs 3.1 and 3.2.

[31] Opinion of 12 March 2018, based on digital photographs – see the scholarly documentation of the drawing kept at the NMW's Department of Prints and Drawings.

[32] The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, inv. no. Ms.79b and The British Museum, London, inv. no. Ms. Add. 35254, fol. T, respectively.

[33] Fols 70v and 119v.

[34] Herman, "'Ut certius...," op. cit., pp. 220–21.

over the manuscript.[35] This is evident in the miniatures that decorate his most famous works: the aforementioned royal hours, where the faces of figures are painted in a diverse manner even within a single composition.[36] Could this also hold true in the case of individual miniatures he made for books illustrated by another artist or group of artists? At the current stage of research, this remains open to debate, and the attribution of the NMW work to Bourdichon still requires a question mark.

Lastly, it is worth considering what the original folio with *Saint Jerome* could have looked like, what manuscript it could form part of and who the original owner could have been. This is definitely a full-page miniature: on the verso, at the bottom of the page, is the title of the antiphon that always appeared in the last line in a block of text (below was only the margin). The fact that the illumination showing the hermit and the antiphon's title are on both sides of the same folio indicates that in the original manuscript, the text was on the recto, and the image of Saint Jerome on the verso. Consequently, the title of the antiphon designated both the illustration and the text. Whoever cut the miniature would probably not have removed decorative margins, had they surrounded the main composition (unless they would have been very damaged). This might indicate that such ornamentation simply was not there, like in the *Hours of Henry VIII*. The other side of the folio presumably only contained the words of a prayer, without any decorative margins (although it seems that whoever removed the miniature from the book was only concerned about the painted composition; the block of text luckily found itself within its scope). In terms of size, the original manuscript was probably similar to the *Hours of Henry VIII*, as testified by the dimensions of the illustration and the block of text.[37] The hypothesis that they had a similar, if not identical layout, also seems plausible. One thing is certain, though: in this book of hours, very similar miniatures showing Saint Jerome appear in an analogous context. It follows that by analysing the *Hours of Henry VIII*, we might obtain some answers as to the origins of the work which used to include the miniature from the Warsaw collection, particularly with regard to the milieu represented by the commissioner of the manuscript or the person for whom it was designated.

The *Hours of Henry VIII* do not contain any elements, such as original coats of arms or inscriptions, that could help us identify the founder or owner of the codex.[38] The only indication, albeit a very important one, is provided by the miniature with Saint Jerome. According to Roger S. Wieck, the fact that it opens the set of prayers to saints (*suffragia*) should be regarded as an uncommon solution. The order of those prayers usually reflected the divine hierarchy: from the Holy Trinity, to the Mother of God, Archangel Michael, Saint John the Baptist, etc.[39] Such a deviation would suggest that the commissioner or the person for whom the codex was ordered held Saint Jerome in great veneration.[40] Given that this is a monumental, homogeneous and richly decorated work, it would seem that this commissioner or addressee belonged to the highest echelons of the court of Louis XII. The painstaking nature of creating such a manuscript definitely translated into its high price.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Turner, op. cit., pp. 67–70.

[37] Page in *The Hours of Henry VIII* – 23 × 17 cm, block of text – 15.7 × 9.5 cm (17 columns).

[38] Wieck, op. cit., p. 199, n. 2.

[39] Ibid., p. 140.

[40] Ibid., p. 142.

Only the wealthiest could afford such a purchase. Saint Jerome has never been the patron saint of France or any of its rulers, but that does not mean he was "absent" from the royal court, particularly in the discussed period, i.e., around 1500. This was due to the Dominican Antoine Dufour and his *Vies des femmes célèbres*, commissioned by queen Anne of Brittany. Dufour joined the rather sizable group of authors who chronicled the lives of famous women. In line with the queen's wish, such biographies were written in French, for the benefit of high-born ladies-in-waiting who did not know Latin.[41] They served as a treasury of exemplary role models, but also contained warnings. The author referred to the writings of recognized authors, particularly to Saint Jerome. According to Michelle Szkilnik, this could stem from the fact that the hermit had gathered around him a group of pious women-followers, whose lives could serve as inspiring examples to follow.[42] The queen was happy with the manuscript received in 1504 (Musée Dobrée, Nantes). Two years later, she commissioned Jean Pichore to illuminate the book, and the Dominican monk became the personal confessor of the royal couple. *Femmes célèbres* were to reflect (to a varying degree) the virtues of the queen herself: to Dufour, she appeared as the new Theodelinda, Mammea or Blaesilla.[43] This is particularly visible in the wording of the virtues of Blaesilla, one of Saint Jerome's followers (*le registre et abysme de science, sainteté, miséricordie, innocence et piété* – 'the memorial and unmeasurable depth of knowledge, sainthood, clemency, innocence and piety') juxtaposed with the expressions employed by the monk in the introduction to describe the queen (*l'abisme et comble de vertus* – 'the height and depth of virtues').[44] Using his position, Dufour made the royal couple interested in the figure of Saint Jerome – a few years later, Anne of Brittany commissioned the Dominican to translate a selection of his letters into French (they were published in 1518). Toward the end of 1514, Louis XII ordered the Master of Claude de France to create a miniature with Saint Jerome (whose composition was similar to both Perugino's painting and the discussed illuminations) accompanied by a prayer directed to him. It was included in the much earlier prayer book of Anne of Brittany, which – after her death – the king gave to his new wife, Mary of England.[45] Consequently, it would seem that the saint was particularly venerated by women from the highest echelons of the French court, including the queen. It appears that the *Hours of Henry VIII* with the image of the Church Father could also have been created for one of the addressees of *Vies des femmes célèbres*. Wieck noticed that the antiphon accompanying the miniature underlined the saint's role as a teacher rather than penitent.[46] The fact that the manuscript was written in Latin additionally narrows the circle of its potential recipients.[47] Could the book have been addressed to a lady-in-waiting from the French royal court? Or perhaps to Anne of Brittany herself? And, last but not least,

[41] He mentions it in the introduction to his work – see Sophie Cassagnes-Brouquet, *Un manuscrit d'Anne de Bretagne. Les* Vies des femmes célèbres *d'Antoine Dufour* (Rennes, 2007).

[42] Dufour lists five pupils, four of whom have not been described in any such compilation before – see Michelle Szkilnik, "Mentoring Noble Ladies. Antoine Dufour's 'Vies des femmes célèbres,'" in *The Cultural and Political Legacy of Anne de Bretagne. Negotiating Convention in Books and Documents*, Cynthia J. Brown, ed. (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 65–80.

[43] Ibid., p. 80 and n. 77

[44] Ibid., p. 70, n. 34.

[45] Bibliothèque municipale, Lyon, inv. no. MS 1558, fol. 7v.

[46] Wieck, op. cit., p. 142.

[47] See n. 41.

was the manuscript which used to include the miniature now held at the NMW made for a person from the same milieu? Was its original owner also one of the new "followers of Saint Jerome"? For now, these questions will have to remained unanswered.

Translated by Aleksandra Szkudłapska