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The Lamentation Triptych from the National Museum in Warsaw in Light of a New Technological Analysis

Recent years have seen a renewed interest in the oeuvre of Jean Bellegambe, a painter active in Douai (c. 1470–1535/36), as exemplified by doctoral dissertations written by Hervé Boëdec (2007)[1] and Anna Koopstra (2016).[2] These research studies are an attempt at verifying previous findings, also with respect to *The Lamentation Triptych*[3] from the National Museum in Warsaw. The technological analysis conducted at the NMW in 2016 marked a new stage of research on this work.

The central part of the triptych (**figs 1, 2**) depicts the Lamentation scene with the holy women and Saint John the Evangelist, who are gathered round the body of Christ held by Mary. In the background are the buildings of Jerusalem, the Calvary and the prepared tomb. The left wing contains a representation of the Mass of Saint Gregory with the donor in canon's dress, and in the right wing, against a landscape which is a continuation of that in the central section, we see a kneeling female donor and Saint Josse. The outer side of the wings features grisaille paintings of Christ and Saint Mary Magdalene, forming the *Noli me tangere* scene (John 20: 15–17). The bottom slats of the frames of the central part and wings are filled with the inscription *C'est ir + ue mon ir + ue desir*, repeated on the banderoles that adorn the fabric covering the prie-dieu in the right wing. The triptych was acquired for the NMW in 1862 at an auction of Johann Peter Weyer's (1794–1864) collection in Cologne. Its earlier history is unknown.

State of Research

Art historians analysing the triptych have frequently attempted to establish the identity of donors depicted in the wings, though without access to archive materials which could explain

[1] Hervé Boëdec, "Invention picturale et pensée théologique dans l'œuvre de Jean Bellegambe : autour des retables conservés dans le Nord de la France," unpublished PhD dissertation in two volumes, Université de Lille 3, 2007.

[2] Anna Koopstra, "Inventing Realities, Picturing Salvation: Making, Meaning and Patronage of the Paintings of Jean Bellegambe (c. 1470–1535/36)," unpublished PhD dissertation, The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 2016.

[3] *The Lamentation Triptych*, inv. no. M.Ob.15 MNW (old inventory numbers: MSP 669; 19); dimensions: central part 106 × 64 cm without the frame (130 × 80 cm with the frame), each wing 101 × 28 cm without the frame (130 × 40 cm with the frame); oakwood, three horizontal boards in the central part, wings: two vertical boards each, chalk and glue ground, grey; tempera and oil binders (identified based on 1979 research); visible joints between boards, fill-in of a small hole in the support in the middle of the central part, many individual retouches; regular pattern of cracks – see Hanna Benesz, Maria Kluk, *Early Netherlandish, Dutch, Flemish and Belgian Paintings 1494–1983 in the Collections of the National Museum on Warsaw and the Palace at Nieborów. Complete Illustrated Summary Catalogue*, vol. 1, *Signed and Attributed Paintings* (Warsaw, 2016), pp. 45–46, cat. no. 33 (with previous bibliography); see also Boëdec, op. cit., pp. 86–87, 148–50, cat. no. R 2; Koopstra, op. cit., pp. 100–2.

the circumstances of the work's creation. The latest technological study, which revealed the scope of modifications to the initial painted composition of the triptych's panels, shed new light on who may have funded the work.

Based on the coat of arms on the frame, Władysław Terlecki identified the canon in the left wing as Jan Moscron,[4] a parish priest from the Onze-Lieve-Vrouw church in Bruges, who died on 14 July 1523, and the female donor as Louise Veneta, wife of the clergyman's brother Wilhelm, who died in the same year.[5] This hypothesis concerning the woman's identity was based on an erroneous assumption that the patron accompanying her represented Saint Louis.[6] Robert Genaille also identified the coats of arms in the triptych as that belonging to the Mouscron family from Bruges.[7] He recognized the saint accompanying the female donor as Josse (Joos), and inferred that Saint Josse and Saint Gregory must have been the patrons of the kneeling donors: Gregoire and Jossine Mouscron, husband and wife[8] (in obvious disregard of the man's robes, which indicate his clerical status). Anna Koopstra tentatively associated the canon with Jean Mouscron (d. 1535), the archdeacon of Cambrai, referred to in sources between 1507 and 1535. The clergyman made a number of donations to institutions subordinate to the diocese.[9] Koopstra also undermined the identification of both donors as husband and wife,[10] and was the first to notice that the person in the left wing was added already after the initial composition had been completed.[11] The above was confirmed by the latest study.

[4] In 1929, Władysław Terlecki identified the coat of arms on the frame as that belonging to one of the branches of the Moschron (Mouscron, Moscroens, Moscron) family. This is the spelling of the surname found in his letter. Terlecki noticed similarities to the escutcheon used by another branch of the family (which spelled their surname Mouscron), with a third rose on the ribbon instead of a key (correspondence with Director Bronisław Gembarzewski of 2 October 1929, Archives of the National Museum in Warsaw, Correspondence of the Department of Foreign Painting [further: AMNW, dept. correspondence], ref. no. 4/52, no. 19). See also the description of coats of arms in Johannes Baptist Rietstap, *Armorial général. Précédé d'un dictionnaire des Termes du blazon* [online], vol. 2 (Gouda, 1884), p. 267 (Moschron) and p. 272 (Mouscron), [retrieved: 19 October 2016], at: <https://archive.org/stream/armorialgnra02rietuoft#page/272/mode/1up>. Both families lived in Bruges and were related; they most likely came from the County of Hainaut, where the village of Mouscron is located, to the north-east of Lille. Members of the family belonged to the highest social class: Giovanni and Alessandro Moscheroni (i.e., Johan and Alexandre Mouscron) bought *The Virgin and Child* from Michelangelo's workshop; it which was placed in the family chapel in the Onze Lieve Vrouwekerk church in Bruges in 1506 – see Jan Białostocki, Maria Skubiszewska et al., *Malarstwo francuskie, niderlandzkie, włoskie do 1600. Katalog zbiorów. Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie. Galeria Malarstwa Obcego* (Warsaw, 1979), p. 28, cat. no. 10; Susie Nash, *Northern Renaissance Art* (New York, 2008), p. 3. Oxford History of Art. Further on in the text, I use the spelling "Mouscron."

[5] Correspondence with Gembarzewski, AMNW, dept. correspondence, ref. no. 4/52, no. 19; a similar opinion was put forward by Paul Lefrancq – see Robert Genaille, "Le retable de Varsovie. La Déploration de Jean Bellegambe," *Bulletin du Musée National de Varsovie*, no 4 (1963), p. 44.

[6] Bronisław Gembarzewski, *Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie. Wybór i opis celniejszych zabytków i dzieł sztuki* (Krakow, 1926), p. 29, cat. no. 252.

[7] See n. 4; Genaille could not have been aware of Terlecki's findings, which – to the best of my knowledge – have never been published; see Robert Genaille, "La Déploration du Christ du Musée de Varsovie et les débuts de Jean Bellegambe," *La Revue des Arts*, no 3 (1953), p. 161.

[8] Genaille, "La Déploration...," op. cit.; id., "Le retable de Varsovie...," op. cit., p. 44.

[9] This information comes from Anna Koopstra.

[10] Koopstra, op. cit., pp. 13, 101, n. 301.

[11] The researcher noticed it in 2013. See also Koopstra, op. cit., p. 100.

The Lamentation Triptych had been attributed to Rogier van der Weyden[12] (c. 1399–1464, most likely owing to the clear inspiration with the oeuvre of this master or his shop in the composition of the central scene),[13] and to Hans Memling (c. 1433–94).[14] In the 1930s, Bellegambe's authorship was proposed by Paul Wescher;[15] this attribution was soon backed by Max Friedländer[16] and Robert Genaille.[17] The latter drew attention to a typical feature of the master's style, namely the proportions of figures with elongated forearms, particularly visible in the portrayal of Christ and his mother. He emphasized the characteristic manner of depicting the faces of Mary and the two women accompanying her: their long, straight noses, almond eyes and mouths half-open in a cry of grief. He noted the partial resemblance of Mary Magdalene (her facial features, headdress, pose and robes) to the personification of Faith from a wing of the *Triptych of the Mystic Bath of Souls* (*Fons Pietatis*) from Lille.[18] He also believed that the arrangement of Christ's body – particularly the setting of his head and the placement of his shoulders – were analogical to the *Triptych of the Trinity* from Lille.[19] Similar features may be seen in the *Polyptych of the Trinity* from Anchin created c. 1511–20[20] (**figs 3, 4**). Genaille also described what he thought to be typical of Bellegambe's "hand": the manner of painting Saint Josse and the donors (whose faces are distinguished by a slightly squinted look), the gilded decorations of robes and – what has been particularly emphasized by the art historian – the distribution of colours, including grey-purples.[21] The researcher believed that the outer sides of wings were overpainted at a later date, and as such should not be included in an analysis of the artist's style.[22] In his opinion, the two-sided panel from Douai with *The Last Judgement* (recto) and *The Virgin of the Protective Cloak as Patron of the Cistercians* (verso), funded by Isabel de Malefiance for the Flines abbey and dated to 1507–8[23] (**figs 5, 6**), bore the closest resemblance to the Warsaw triptych. However, its association with Bellegambe gives

[12] Entry in the inventory of the Museum of Fine Arts, item 669/19. See also Jan Białostocki, "The Weyer Collection and the Beginning of the Warsaw Art Museum," *Bulletin du Musée National de Varsovie*, no 2 (1962), p. 39.

[13] Cf. *The Lamentation of Christ*, Mauritshuis, The Hague, inv. no. WGA25691. See also Paul Wescher, "Œuvres inconnues de J. Bellegambe," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, no 74 (1932), pp. 222, 224.

[14] Karol Korsak, "Sponiewierany Memling," *Kurier Warszawski*, no. 146 (30 March 1922); see also Genaille, "La Déploration...," op. cit., p. 158.

[15] Wescher, op. cit., p. 220.

[16] Max Jakob Friedländer, *Die altniederländische Malerei*, vol. 12 (Berlin, 1935), p. 117, cat. no. 118; see also the English edition, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, vol. 12 (Leyden–Brussels, 1975), p. 134, cat. no. 118, fig. 54 and comments on pp. 134, 146.

[17] He initially believed that the triptych was painted by one of Bellegambe's pupils – see Robert Genaille, "Jean Bellegambe, peintre de la Flandre wallonne (1er tiers du XVI^{e} siècle) et l'école de Douai," *Le Bulletin des Musées de France*, année 6e, no 8 (1934), p. 164; id., "La Déploration...," op. cit., pp. 155–64; id., "Le retable de Varsovie...," op. cit., pp. 37–49; id., "L'œuvre de Jean Bellegambe," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, vol. 87, année 118e (1976), pp. 7–28.

[18] Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille, inv. no. P. 832. See Gerdi B. Krebber, G. Kotting, "Jean Bellegambe en zijn *Mystiek Bad* voor Anchin," *Oud Holland*, vol. 104, no. 3/4 (1990), pp. 123–39.

[19] Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille, inv. no. P. 833. See Genaille, "Le retable de Varsovie...," op. cit., p. 39.

[20] Musée de la Chartreuse, Douai, inv. no. 2175. See ibid., p. 49. This is Jean Bellegambe's most important work, and it is documented in the archives.

[21] Ibid., p. 42.

[22] Ibid., pp. 37–50; id., "L'œuvre...," op. cit., pp. 7, 16.

[23] C. 1507–8, Musée de la Chartreuse, Douai, inv. no. 408.

rise to many doubts,[24] so invoking the similarities of style between the Douai panel and the Warsaw altarpiece in any deliberations concerning the attribution of the latter to Bellegambe seems risky to say the least. The same holds true for any comparisons between the Warsaw altarpiece and the *Triptych with the Crucifixion* from the Museum der bildenden Künste in Leipzig, once attributed to Bellegambe and currently to an artist from his circle.[25] Stylistic similarities are particularly visible in the manner of shaping the figures' faces, their gestures and the way in which the protagonists are arranged within the landscape.[26]

Bellegambe's authorship has also been questioned with reference to *The Lamentation Triptych*, and was eventually rejected by Hervé Boëdec[27] and Anna Koopstra.[28] Boëdec noted that virtually none of the characteristic elements of the composition and style of the triptych have any clear counterparts among the artist's documented works. On the other hand, the disparities include physiognomic features, draping of the robes and shaping of the landscape. Another atypical solution is the use of a "pure" grisaille technique.[29] Bellegambe was wont to supplement the grisaille modelling of figures with flesh tones,[30] a fact also stressed by Koopstra. The researcher's doubts are further fuelled by the lack of pentimenti in the painted layer and a more detailed underdrawing than in Bellegambe's confirmed works.[31] In her opinion, these differences point to the authorship of another artist.[32]

[24] Cf. Jean Bellegambe, *The Last Judgement* and *The Virgin of the Protective Cloak as Patron of the Cistercians*, panel painting, 91 × 74 cm, Musée de la Chartreuse, Douai, inv. no. 408 [online], [retrieved: 2 February 2017], at: <http://collection.musenor.com/application/moteur_recherche/ConsultationOeuvre.aspx?idOeuvre=377017>.

At first, Genaille believed that the Douai panel was painted by Jan Provoost (1462–1525), an artist from Valenciennes who took over the workshop after Simon Marmion's death (c. 1420–25 – 14689) and, according to the researcher, could have influenced Bellegambe's style – see Genaille, "Le retable de Varsovie...," op. cit. In later analyses, he attributed the work to Bellegambe – see Robert Genaille, Maciej Monkiewicz, Antoni Ziemba, *Encyklopedia malarstwa flamandzkiego i holenderskiego* (Warsaw, 2001), p. 34. This attribution was rejected by Molly Faries in 1987 – see Molly Faries, "The underdrawing of Jan Provoost's *Last Judgement* and related paintings," in *Le dessin sous-jacent dans la peinture*, Roger Van Schoute, Hélène Verougstraete-Marcq, eds (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1989), p. 141; fig. 9, p. 143. Colloque pour l'Étude du Dessin Sous-Jacent 7. Based on archive research, Françoise Baligand reattributed the panel to Bellegambe in 1992 – see Françoise Baligand, "Jean Bellegambe au musée de Douai," [online] *Revue du Nord*, vol. 74, no 297–8 (1992), [retrieved: 2 February 2017], pp. 759–69, at: https://doi.org/10.3406/rnord.1992.4775 . The author returns to Friedländer's attribution from 1935 (see Friedländer, *Die altniederländische...*, op. cit., vol. 12, p. 178, cat. no. 130). However, this attribution is contested by Christian Heck and Anna Koopstra – see Christian Heck et al., *Collections du Nord-Pas-de-Calais. La peinture de Flandre et France du Nord au XV^e^ et au début du XVI^e^ siècle* (Brussels, 2005), vol. 2, pp. 451–56, cat. no. 69 (as a work by an unknown artist from the Southern Netherlands); Koopstra, op. cit., p. 47, n. 138; therein a reference to Boëdec's PhD dissertation – he is also against this attribution (Boëdec, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 136–48).

[25] Circle of Jean Bellegambe, *Triptych with the Crucifixion*, Museum der bildenden Künste in Leipzig, painting on panel, 120 × 86.5 cm (central panel), 120 × 34.5 cm (each of the wings), inv. no. 1551 – see Stephan Kemperdick, "Umkreis Jean Bellegambe d. Ä.," in *Maximilian Speck von Sternburg. Ein Europäer der Goethezeit als Kunstsammler*, Herwig Guratzsch, Alexandra Nina Bauer, eds, exh. cat., Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig, 1998, Leipzig, 1998, pp. 55–57.

[26] I would like to thank Peter van den Brink for pointing out this analogy.

[27] Boëdec, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 86–87, as cited in Koopstra, op. cit., p. 101, n. 303.

[28] Koopstra, op. cit., p. 101.

[29] Boëdec, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 86.

[30] Cf. wings with the *Annunciation* scene from Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, inv. no. 37.288.

[31] Koopstra, op. cit., p. 102.

[32] A copy of the *Lamentation* scene appeared at an auction organized by Lempertz auction house in Cologne on 20 March 1930 (as a work by Quinten Massijs), which backs the hypothesis proposed by Koopstra: this composition could have been repeated in works produced by Bellegambe's workshop; cf. illustration no. 0000061263 in RKD.

Determining the time of the triptych's creation is also encumbered with difficulties. Based on the features of the female donor's dress, Genaille ultimately dated the work to c. 1495,[33] as a result of which the triptych would have been Bellegambe's earliest work known at the time – created long before the artist's presence in Douai as confirmed in archive sources (1504).[34] According to the art historian, *The Lamentation Triptych* heralded the master's future style, which was to be fully embodied by the *Polyptych of the Trinity* from Anchin. Jan Białostocki noticed the stylistic influence of the aforementioned Douai panel on the triptych, and also observed the "Mannerist" formula of Mary Magdalene's robes, which induced him to date the work to c. 1515–20.[35] At that time, he reminded, the so-called Antwerp Mannerism had already become fully mature and spread to areas outside Antwerp. Białostocki's opinion was backed by Joanna Jabłońska[36] and Anna Koopstra.[37]

Interpreting the triptych's iconographic programme is a separate issue.[38] As a result of deciphering the initial arrangement of the composition, previous findings have largely been invalidated.[39] Therefore, at the current stage of research on the attribution and style of the work, one ought to pose three fundamental questions: who created the work (Bellegambe himself or another master, possibly from his circle?); who funded the triptych, and how should its iconographic programme be interpreted?

Technological Study from 2016

The point of departure for the deliberations below is a technological study of the triptych, which included infrared (IR) photographs, X-radiographs and a microscopic analysis of details that have visibly been overpainted.[40] IR photographs revealed underdrawings with a dry material – presumably charcoal (**fig. 7**).[41] In the Lamentation scene (**fig. 8**) and the Mass of Saint Gregory, the outline of the figures and their three-dimensionality, conveyed using dense hatching, are shaped by clear strokes. It may be assumed that in line with the practice followed at the time, such a detailed sketch had been prepared by the master for one of the members of

[33] Genaille, "Le retable de Varsovie...," op. cit., p. 42.

[34] Ibid., p. 43.

[35] *Malarstwo francuskie...*, op. cit., pp. 27–28, cat. no. 10.

[36] Joanna Jabłońska, "Tryptyk Opłakiwania Jeana Bellegambe'a ze zbiorów Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie," *Quart*, no. 2(24) (2012), p. 30.

[37] This information comes from a conversation held in 2013.

[38] A detailed comparative analysis of the arrangement of these scenes in Netherlandish art of the 15th–16th centuries would require a separate article.

[39] See Jabłońska, op. cit.

[40] The following analyses were carried out as part of a research project conducted at the NMW: Marta Bielicka (Sculpture and Painting on Wood Conservation Studio) made observations under a Nikon SMZ 800 optical stereo microscope with an integrated image capture option; IR photographs (1000–1200 nm range) were made by Piotr Lisowski from the Canvas Painting Conservation Studio using a Canon EOS 6D camera converted to infrared and a Heliopan RG 1000 nm infrared filter; X-ray photographs were made by Roman Stasiuk using a Baltospot 100 kV X-ray generator by Balteau and Fuji Medical X-Ray Super RX materials, 32 kV capture range (beginning of the hard X-ray spectrum); additional IR photographs (1000–1200 nm range) were made by Roman Stasiuk using a Nikon D 700 camera converted to infrared and a Heliopan RG 1000 nm infrared filter.

[41] See n. 11.

his shop, who was to be responsible for the triptych's painted layer.[42] The only figure without an underdrawing is the canon in the left wing. Microscopic analysis confirmed Koopstra's earlier observation: the man was added already after the initial composition of the panel had been completed – abrasions of the paint layer in the clergyman's surplice and hair reveal the blue and gold used to paint Saint Gregory's cope (**fig. 9**).

An IR image of the right wing showed later modifications that have previously gone unnoticed (**fig. 10**). These mostly involved painting over the figure of a monk kneeling behind the female donor, whose light-coloured habit and dark, hooded cape permit his identification as a Dominican. He is pointing towards the woman with his left hand, and his right hand, directed upwards, most likely signifies entrusting her to divine care. His figure has been overpainted by broadening the patron saint's cope and developing the landscape part, which was rendered more loosely here: paint was applied in a thick layer, using relatively broad strokes of the brush, without accentuating any highlights, as has been done in the landscape background of the Lamentation scene.

Infrared examination also made it possible to observe modifications to the robes of the saint accompanying the donatrix. His light-coloured habit and dark, hooded cape, under which his tonsure was once visible (as evidenced by the X-ray image) (**fig. 11**), have been substituted with a grey-purple cloak. Other added elements included the seashell necklace and hat with seashell decoration (symbols of a pilgrim), as well as a crown hung across his forearm. These are the attributes of Saint Josse. Microscopic observation confirmed the secondary character of the man's dark hair. Further microscopic analysis revealed an original detail of a light-grey habit (**fig. 12**) directly above the book held by the saint in his left hand. The book itself is an original element of the composition (its underdrawing is visible in infrared light), like the walking stick with a cross (which had initially been narrower) (**fig. 12**) and the star on the patron's forehead, which may still be seen today. All of the above elements indicate that the donatrix depicted in the right wing was initially accompanied by Saint Dominic.[43]

Another intervention of the painter involved adding two coats of arms. One of them was arranged to form part of the earlier inscription on the frame of the left wing, under the figure of the canon: *c'est ir + ue mon ir + ue desir*, in a manner that partially obscures the word *mon*. The relevant X-radiograph revealed an outline of the letter *m*, which had been painted over while preparing the background for the escutcheon (**fig. 13**). The fabric covering the female donor's prie-dieu features another coat of arms, this time with a double escutcheon: the division into two symbolizes a union between two families. The left (male) part is well preserved and its colours are identical to the coat of arms depicted on the frame,[44] while the right (female) part

[42] Aleksandra Janiszewska, "Hidden from View. Underdrawings in Sixteenth-Century Netherlandish Paintings from the Collection of the National Museum in Warsaw," in *W warsztacie niderlandzkiego mistrza. Holenderskie i flamandzkie rysunki z kolekcji Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie / In the Workshop of a Netherlandish Master. Dutch and Flemish Drawings from the Collection of the National Museum in Warsaw*, exh. cat., The National Museum in Warsaw, 2017 (Warsaw, 2017), pp. 79–83.

[43] Previously also identified as Saint Jacob (see Wescher, "Œuvre...," op. cit., p. 222) and Saint Louis (because of the crown – see, e.g., Juliusz Starzyński, Michał Walicki, *Katalog Galerii Malarstwa Obcego. Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie* (Warsaw, 1938), p. 66, cat. no. 104).

[44] The key at the end of the ribbon, visible in the second coat of arms, is currently not there. According to archive materials, it was still visible in 1929 – see n. 45.

remains illegible owing to the damaged paint layer[45] (**fig. 14**). The escutcheon on the cover on the female donor's prie-dieu presumably obscured the slightly smaller coat of arms that had been painted there earlier. This is suggested by the distribution of the fabric's floral pattern: symmetrical and precise on its entire surface, it had partially been covered by the enlarged escutcheon directly next to the coat of arms. These observations were confirmed by a microscopic analysis of this detail. Under the overpainted layer, in the upper part of the left field of the original coat of arms, the X-radiograph revealed a shape reminiscent of a heraldic figure referred to as the label (French: *lambel*; German: *Turnierkragen*), which was mostly employed to designate the coat of arms of the heir to the title (**fig. 15**) (this element is also visible in oblique angle light and in an archive photograph from c. 1935).[46] The occurrence of a distinction belonging to male offspring in the coat of arms of the triptych's female donor is clearly something out of the ordinary.

Consequently, the painted representations on the altarpiece were created in two stages. It ought to be assumed that the Lamentation scene in the central part, the scenes in the wings: the Mass of Saint Gregory and the image of the female donor with Saint Dominic and an unknown Dominican friar in a landscape, as well as the *Noli me tangere* on the outer side of the wings were completed c. 1515. The second stage included repainting the verso of wings: the kneeling canon was added in the left wing, and in the right wing, the friar was painted over and Saint Dominic was replaced with Saint Josse. Two coats of arms of the Mouscron[47] family were also added: on the bottom slat of the frame of the left wing and in the location of the earlier escutcheon on the fabric adorning the prie-dieu. Only an initiative of the triptych's new owner – the canon – seems to offer a rational justification of the above changes. The overpaintings clearly differ from the original paint layer, although the artist tried to imitate the style of the existing composition. This is clear in the manner of draping the fabric, for instance in Saint Josse's cloak and the sleeves of his robe, which is formed like the drapes of robes worn by the figures in the central and left panels (e.g., sleeves of the dresses worn by Mary Magdalene and the Mary standing behind Christ's head, Saint Gregory's robe). The light and shade effects adding three-dimensionality to the folds of Saint Josse's (formerly Saint Dominic's) cloak are not as contrasting, as a result of which the drapes lose their depth. By applying bluish greys onto the layer of bronze, the painter obtained a grey-navy-purple colour palette. In the first phase of creating the triptych, such softened colours were created by mixing two different pigments rather than through overlapping patches of colour. The overpaintings were made using much thicker and less translucent paints, which were sometimes applied almost impasto-like. This leads me to believe that the figure of the new donor and the remaining modifications were made by another artist, most likely in the 1520s or 1530s.[48]

[45] There is a surviving drawn copy thereof from 1929 (NMW Archives, ref. no. 4/52, no. 19), later published in Genaille, "La Déploration...," op. cit., fig. on p. 158 with the following description: "L'écu est parti à dextre des armes du mari et à senestre: d'or à la fasce haussée d'azur, accompagné en chef de deux taus au pied ancré (?) du même, et en pointe d'un léopard (?) passant au naturel" – ibid., p. 160.

[46] Archives of the NMW Visual Documentation Department, glass negative no. 278 (by Józef Grein); see Genaille, "La Déploration...," op. cit., fig. on p. 158.

[47] See n. 6.

[48] However, Peter van den Brink believes that the triptych was created in three stages. According to this interpretation, the figure of the canon would have been added last, i.e., in the 1550s or 1560s. In Van den Brink's opinion, this is indicated by the fact the canon was painted in an entirely different manner to the other parts of the composition, including the overpaintings on the right wing (replacing Saint Dominic with Saint Josse), and

The arrangement of the coat of arms, one of which replaced the original escutcheon of the unknown donatrix, was to suggest the consanguinity between the canon and the woman in the right wing. The female figure was presumably "annexed" by the clergyman, who had wanted the portrayed woman to be identified with his mother, sister or sister-in-law. In all likelihood, repainting the image of Saint Dominic was also requested by him. The presence of this patron and the representation of another monk undoubtedly indicated the donatrix's spiritual affiliation with the Order of Preachers. Removing these figures and requesting Saint Josse to be painted instead may have been associated with the saint being the patron of either the canon or the woman to which he was related (possibly named Jossine?). The triptych could also have been moved from a Dominican church to another one dedicated to Saint Josse (or to a chapel with the said *patrocinium*). The original elements of the triptych's painted composition, particularly its iconographic programme, may provide vital information concerning the female donor of the altarpiece.

Iconography

In the Lamentation scene, painted on the triptych's most important, central panel, the figure of Mary Magdalene is the most prominent one after Christ. The saint is holding the Saviour's limp hand in her right hand, and wiping her tears with her left. A covered *albarello* (medicinal jar made of maiolica and designed to hold oils for anointing the dead) can be seen at her feet. One ought to mention that Mary Magdalene is the only person touching Christ's body directly and not through fabric.[49] This striking gesture not only accentuates the two figures, emphasizing their significance in the group displayed in the foreground, and in the composition as a whole, but also combines the two most important subjects of the altarpiece: the mystery of Incarnation and the cult of Saint Mary Magdalene.

The left wing features a depiction of the Mass of Saint Gregory. The event is described in Paul the Deacon's life of Pope Gregory the Great (8th c.), but the story became popular thanks to the *Golden Legend*. The miracle which happened during the mass celebrated by the pope directed the thoughts of the congregation towards the mystery of transubstantiation – the real transformation of bread into the body, and wine into the blood, of Christ.[50] The doctrine of transubstantiation was reaffirmed during the Fourth Council of Lateran in 1215; the Dominican Order largely contributed to the propagation of the cult of the Body of Christ. It was Saint Thomas Aquinas who introduced a separate proper (variable part of the mass) devoted to *Corpus Domini*. The reverence towards the figures of the Eucharist had a considerable influence on piety and individual experience of contact with God in that period.

The motif of God as man is also repeated on the outer sides of the altarpiece wings, in the scene of *Noli me tangere*. Mary Magdalene goes to Christ's tomb to anoint his body with fragrant oils, but she does not find him there. She assumes a man she meets to be a gardener and it is only after a while that she recognizes him as the Saviour. She utters the word *Rabboni*

unskilfully 'inserted' into the Mass of Saint Gregory. Nevertheless, singling out not two, but three stages of the triptych's creation and transformations cannot, in my opinion, be justified by a change in ownership, which is why I stand by my initial hypothesis of the triptych being painted in two stages.

[49] I would like to thank professor Adam S. Labuda for this valuable observation.

[50] See, e.g., *Das Bild der Erscheinung. Die Gregorsmesse im Mittelalter*, Andreas Gormans, Thomas Lentes, eds (Berlin, 2007).

("my teacher"), kneels and intends to touch him. Christ, however, stops her with a gesture and says *Noli me tangere* ("do not touch me"). The resurrected Christ manifests himself in his revered body and walks among people, but will soon join his Father. Therefore, the subject of Incarnation is given a broad and multifaceted interpretation in the iconographic programme of the triptych – including the questions of Sacrifice and belief in the real, carnal presence of Christ during Eucharist.

The motif of Mary Magdalene is the other important aspect of the altarpiece's ideological programme – the saint is portrayed twice in the Warsaw triptych: in the central panel, where she is shown according to the Northern tradition, as a converted harlot[51] in a rich, red-and-green robe with blue sleeves, and in the *Noli me tangere* scene. In the paintings on the reverse side of the wings, the artist uses an iconographic motif which was widespread in Northern Europe, with Christ dressed as a gardener.[52] The theme, known from the Bible, was often featured in sermons, which contributed to its popularity. The figure of the saint was mentioned in the context of penance. Priests often resorted to a metaphor from the biblical tale: because Mary Magdalene fervently followed the path of purity and received the gift of mercy from Christ-Gardener, her life transformed from *terra inculta* ("uncultivated land") to a fertile and flourishing *hortus conclusus* ("closed garden").[53] The story was used especially in sermons addressed to pious women, because it reminded them that it was a female who was chosen by Christ to be the first witness,[54] the herald of the truth about Resurrection, and sent to his disciples with the Good News.[55] The choice of the *Noli me tangere* scene to decorate the closed altarpiece wings is somewhat surprising. Apart from the Warsaw altarpiece, this motif appears in such a location in only one other Netherlandish altarpiece known to the author: the *Triptych of Dieleghem Abbey* by the Master of 1518, which is entirely devoted to Mary Magdalene.[56] Anna Koopstra observes that the arrangement of the composition (**fig. 1b**) with Christ on the left and Mary Magdalene on the right (together with the inscriptions that accompany the figures) is inconsistent with the biblical narrative, where it is Magdalene who starts the conversation with the Resurrected.[57] The scholar therefore presumed that the figures of the patron saint and the female donor could have been painted on the same wing in order to emphasize that the donatrix especially revered Mary Magdalene. However, it is to be pointed out that this arrangement of figures often appears in Netherlandish and European paintings, also c. 1525,[58]

[51] Susan Haskins, "Foreword," in *Mary Magdalene. Iconographic Studies from the Middle Ages to the Baroque*, Michelle A. Erhardt and Amy M. Morris, eds (Leiden–Boston, 2012), p. xxxii.

[52] Barbara Baert, "The Gaze in the Garden. Mary Magdalene in *Noli me tangere*," in *Mary Magdalene...*, op. cit., pp. 211–12.

[53] Katherine L. Jansen, "Like a Virgin: The Meaning of the Magdalen for Female Penitents of Later Medieval Italy," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, vol. 45 (2000), p. 141; see also n. 29.

[54] See John 20: 14–18; Mark 16: 9–11; Matthew 28: 9–10. Saint Matthew does not mention Mary Magdalene, only the women.

[55] Barbara Baert, "The Gaze in the Garden...," op. cit., p. 219

[56] Painting on panel, 180 × 150 cm (central panel), 185 × 70 cm (each of the wings), Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten van België, Brussels, inv. no. 329. I am grateful to Peter van den Brink for drawing my attention to this work.

[57] This information comes from e-mail correspondence.

[58] See examples from Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie (RKD), www.rkd.nl.

as well as in prints by Hans Schäufelein (c. 1504), Albrecht Dürer (1510), and Lucas van Leyden (1519), among others.

Saint Mary Magdalene was a particularly important figure in Dominican spirituality. According to the bull of Pope Boniface VIII, issued on 6th of April 1295, the monks were appointed guardians of her tomb in Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume (Provence) and contributed to the development of her cult in Europe.[59] The saint also became the official co-patroness of the order. In their sermons, Dominicans often mentioned her as the example of a reformed sinner, and referred to her role of *Apostola apostolorum* ("apostle to the apostles") – the first person to bring the news of Resurrection.

All of the aforementioned motifs may attest to the influence that the piety and homiletics of the Order of Preachers had on the iconography of the triptych. This conclusion is further confirmed by the depictions of Saint Dominic and a kneeling monk in the original composition of the right wing of the triptych. The connection of the donatrix with the Dominican Order is also corroborated by the prayer beads hanging from her belt – this indicates that she might have belonged to one of the confraternities of the rosary that emerged in many European cities in the late 15th century. The first one is assumed to have been founded in Douai, on the initiative of Alain de la Roche (Dominican monk, c. 1428–75) in 1468,[60] with subsequent ones established in Lille and Ghent (before 1475). The confraternities were supervised by the Dominicans, which was officially confirmed by Pope Sixtus IV in the bull of 1478. These societies were egalitarian: everyone was free to join, regardless of sex or wealth (no payments were required in order to become and remain a member). The members were obliged to say one *psalterium* a week – for themselves and their confreres, in order to receive absolution.[61] The permission to say the prayers at home drew many secular women to the confraternities.[62] A dissertation published in 1477 by Dominican monk Michel François (1435–1502) contributed to the popularity of these societies – the author explains the meaning of all the prayers of the rosary, as well as the benefits of reciting them and using the prayer beads. The latter had various forms, depending on the kind of prayer they were intended for.[63] The confreres were obliged to carry a rosary at all times; it was usually attached to the belt supporting their clothing,[64] which can be seen in many commemorative portraits, and also in the wing of *The Lamentation Triptych*.

The technological analysis which revealed the original composition of the paintings confirmed that the triptych was created on the sole initiative of the donatrix portrayed in the

[59] Michelle A. Erhardt, Amy M. Morris, "Introduction," in *Mary Magdalene...*, op. cit., pp. 9–10.

[60] Cited after: Klara H. Broekhuijsen, "The Institution of the Rosary. Establishing the context for a recently discovered copy after a lost panel by Geertgen tot Sint Jans in the Pommersfelden Book of Hours, Ms. 343," *Oud Holland*, vol. 223, no. 3/4 (2010), p. 224; see also Stefan Jäggi, "Rosenkranzbruderschaften. Vom Spätmittelalter bis zur Konfessionalisierun," in *Der Rosenkranz. Andacht, Geschichte, Kunst*, Urs-Beat Frei and Fredy Bühler, eds (Bern, 2003), p. 92. Jäggi doubts whether De La Roche indeed established the confraternity, believing that he merely introduced the habit of saying the psalterium every day to the rule of the pre-existent Marian brotherhood.

[61] Katarzyna Zalewska, *Modlitwa i obraz. Średniowieczna ikonografia różańcowa* (Warsaw, 1999), p. 13.

[62] Roberta Olson, "The Rosary and Its Iconography," part 1: "Background for Devotional Tondi," *Arte Cristiana*, vol. 86, no. 787 (1998), p. 264.

[63] The present-day form of the rosary – sets of ten beads for saying *Ave Maria* divided with a single, larger bead for the *Pater Noster*, with an additional bead for the *Credo* and a cross at the end of the entire chain – dates to the late 15th c.; see Zalewska, op. cit., p. 15.

[64] Ibid.

right wing. Therefore, the words *C'est ir + ue mon ir + ue desir* ("I desire it," "This is my desire") inscribed on the frame and in the decoration on the prie-dieu (where they are placed next to the coat-of-arms), can be considered as her maxim (or possibly, her heraldic motto).[65] It seems legitimate to interpret the motto in a literal way. It can be associated with the message of the painting itself, expressing the desire of salvation of the soul through contemplation, compassion and experiencing the Passion of Christ and the mystery of Incarnation. It is also possible that, interpreted as "this is my wish," "this is my desire" (*désir* – desire, but also wish, request, will, demand), the motto could pertain to the act of funding the triptych. Apart from female rulers and high-rank members of convents, the narrow group of women who were able to freely dispose of their property at that time included widows. In 15th-century Netherlands, women were allowed to inherit their spouse's estate – only managed by the husband during his lifetime. This gave them considerable (and in case of widows: full) economic freedom and allowed them to be active as independent donors.[66] The secular attire of the donatrix may therefore indicate her widowhood. It is also possible that the creation of the painted altarpiece was the result of a testamentary disposition. Perhaps, according to the deceased woman's wish, the heirs established a commemorative prayer fund, ensuring regular prayers and masses for her soul.

The subject matter of the triptych seems to be rooted in the spirituality of the Order of Preachers (**fig. 1, 2**). In their pastoral activities, the Dominicans disseminated the ideas of *compassio* and *conformitas* – spiritual participation in the suffering of Christ and Mary, and an emphatic identification with them. The contemplation of painted images concerning specific subjects, such as the Lamentation scene in the Warsaw triptych, was a helpful aspect of the path of spiritual development. The ideas present in the altarpiece's subject matter are close to the philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas. In the third part of *Summa*, Doctor Angelicus is contemplating the mysteries of Incarnation and Passion of Christ, as well as his actual presence in the sacrament of Eucharist, realized through transubstantiation. The altarpiece enables the adoration of the incarnated Christ, whose suffering and death redeemed humankind, and who is now present in the Eucharist and thus allows the congregation to achieve full unity with God. The depiction of the female donor, immersed in prayer, embodies this attitude. Her desire to be closer to God is particularly emphasized in the figure of Mary Magdalene, with whom the pious donatrix seems to identify herself. It is worth noting that in the central section of the triptych, the saint is the only person to have direct contact with Christ's body, whereas in the *Noli me tangere* scene the Resurrected says to Magdalene (who is holding the opened jar containing oils for anointing the dead): "Do not touch me," directing her, and therefore all believers, towards the path of spiritual contact with God.

Adam S. Labuda remarks that the subject matter of the triptych was precisely thought through, realized with great consistency, and revealed the full semantic potential of a triptych with movable wings. Whether the triptych is opened or closed, Mary Magdalene is always shown on the right, in two different moments of passion and paschal history. Especially significant

[65] Jan Białostocki regarded the inscription as the unknown male donor's motto, and the set of letters "ir + ue/ve" as abbreviated names of donors – see J. Białostocki, M. Skubiszewska, *Malarstwo francuskie...*, op. cit., p. 27.

[66] For information on the considerable legal and economic freedom enjoyed by women in the Netherlands in the late Middle Ages compared to other countries, see, e.g., Martha C. Howell, *The Marriage Exchange. Property, Social Place, and Gender in Cities of the Low Countries, 1330–1550* (Chicago, 1998); for a description of the position of widows in the Netherlands, see Marianne Danneel, *Weduwen en wezen in het laat-middeleeuwse Gent* (Leuven, 1995), particularly pp. 264–302.

is the juxtaposition of two situations: when Mary Magdalene touches the martyred body of Christ, and when she meets him moments after his Resurrection, in the glorified body which she is no longer allowed to touch (it is worth emphasizing that both scenes feature the motif of the opened and closed jar containing fragrant oils). The subjects included in this work are an important element of the theological discourse of that period, concerning the doctrines of Incarnation, transubstantiation and the Eucharistic unity with Christ. Unfortunately, it is not possible here to further elaborate on that subject.[67]

While contemplating the issue of the triptych's original iconography, it is worth stressing the aforementioned kneeling figure of a Dominican monk in the right wing (**fig. 16**). One could conclude that he was the co-donor[68] of the work, were it not for the significant gesture of his hands, expressing guidance and protection. It seems that he plays the role of a guardian, guide, and spiritual father of the donatrix. In conventional iconography, the role of an advocate is reserved for saints, therefore this is an original, very unusual interpretation, indicating a special bond between the priest and his protégée, perhaps based on family relations. At this stage, however, it would be difficult to find a satisfactory explanation.

To sum up, the iconographic programme, centred upon the doctrine of Incarnation and the idea of *compassio Christi*, reflects important aspects of Dominican spirituality. This assumption is confirmed by the presence of Saint Dominic as the patron saint (in a spiritual sense and not as a namesake) of the donatrix and the aforementioned monk, her spiritual guide. The piety of the Dominicans is also indicated by the prominent position of Mary Magdalene, co-patroness of the Order of Preachers. The saint embodies the female donor's pursuit of a spiritual union with Christ through contemplation, and – first and foremost – participation in the mystery of the Eucharist.

Attribution

The following remarks are based on the findings of Anna Koopstra, who definitely rejected Bellegambe as the author of *The Lamentation Triptych* in her unpublished dissertation on his oeuvre. In her opinion, it is the detailed underdrawing, sometimes visible to the naked eye underneath the paint layers, that gives rise to the greatest doubts: it suggests that the artist wanted to precisely develop the volume of figures and distribution of light and shade effects already at this early stage. This bears no analogy to any of the master's works confirmed in archive sources. Reflectograms of the Anchin polyptych reveal a hasty, sketchy underdrawing devoid of hatching (**fig. 17**). Its author intended to arrive at a general outline of the most important elements of the composition and convey the appropriate proportions. However, it is worth noting certain similarities in the details of Christ's face in his image from the Warsaw triptych (the Mass of Saint Gregory) and the scene in the wing of the Anchin polyptych (Christ

[67] I would like to thank Prof. Adam S. Labuda for his remarks that allowed me to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the triptych's iconography. For an analysis of internal, semantically charged relationships within multi-image structures, including retables, see *Klappeffekte. Faltbare Bildträger in der Vormoderne*, David Ganz, Marius Rimmele, eds (Berlin, 2016); Antoni Ziemba, *Sztuka Burgundii i Niderlandów*, vol. 3: *Wspólnota rzeczy. Sztuka niderlandzka i północnoeuropejska 1380–1520* (Warsaw, 2015), p. 416–75.

[68] Cf., e.g., *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne Accompanied by Members of the Van Beesd and Van Heemskerck-Van Diemen Family*, Master of Frankfurt (central scene), Master of Delft (wings), c. 1509 – c. 1520, Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum, Aachen, inv. no. GK 1526; *The Crucifixion with Members of the Kievit Family*, Master of Delft, c. 1500–20, Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne, inv. no. WRM 477.

enthroned): the same manner of conveying the eyes (as schematic circles to be refined in detail at the painting stage) and chin, formed in two separate parts in the underdrawing (**fig. 18**).

Koopstra also observes that *The Lamentation Triptych* employs popular iconographic patterns, both in its individual scenes and their interrelationship. The presentation of Christ's martyred body, resulting from the idea of *compassio*, and the Mass of Saint Gregory, which induces viewers to meditate on his real presence in the Eucharist, are an oft-employed scheme. On the other hand, the iconographic programme of confirmed works by Bellegambe tends to be strongly individualized and adapted to the sophisticated requests and needs of the abbeys that commissioned them.[69]

It is difficult to agree with the above assessment of the Warsaw triptych. As has previously been demonstrated, the iconographic programme of the work is clearly associated with the figure of the female donor. It contains elements of individual nature, presumably introduced on her request or on the initiative of executors of her will, like the highlighted "Dominican theme" (Dominican friar and patron saint of the order as her spiritual guardians, prayer beads suggesting membership in a confraternity of the rosary) and themes related to the Incarnation and cult of the Corpus Christi. Another very unusual solution is placing the *Noli me tangere* scene on the verso of the wings (also mentioned by Koopstra). It ought to be stressed that apart from altarpieces with very sophisticated iconography, Bellegambe's oeuvre also includes works with a clearly conventional iconographic programme, such as the *Triptych of the Last Judgement* from Berlin (c. 1520–25)[70] or the triptych with *The Virgin and Child* in the central part, Saints Catherine and Barbara in the wings and a grisaille *Annunciation* on the verso (preserved in parts in Brussels, Baltimore and on the antiquarian market).[71]

Another argument put forward by Koopstra against Bellegambe's authorship is the simplified composition and less diversification in terms of the poses and gestures, for instance compared to the Anchin polyptych. Although one may speak of a relatively schematic depiction of the figures, particularly in the central scene, *The Lamentation Triptych* is not the only example of this tendency, which may also be observed in the figures adoring the Virgin and Child in the *Altarpiece from Le Cellier*, to give one example. The above accusation may further be undermined by pointing out the refined – both in terms of composition and meaning – arrangement of gestures presented by figures originally painted in the right wing: the female donor, friar and Saint Dominic.

However, latest technological research provides additional evidence against Bellegambe's authorship. The previously cited similarities to the master's style, visible in the manner of conveying the (secondary, after all) figures of Saint Josse and the canon, have to be rejected. Underdrawings revealed in the latest study indicate a partial similarity to the Douai master's confirmed works, such as the aforementioned typical shape of Christ's eyes and chin in the Mass of Saint Gregory or the pose of Saint Mary Magdalene and the body of the lamented Christ, which – as has rightly been observed by Genaille – may be compared to both triptychs from Lille and the Anchin polyptych. Consequently, the author of the Warsaw triptych must have been a member of Jean Bellegambe's workshop or his immediate milieu. When Bellegambe

[69] Koopstra, op. cit., pp. 21, 68, 78, 143, 186 and elsewhere.

[70] Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, inv. no. 641.

[71] *The Virgin and Child*, Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten van België, Brussels, inv. no. 2550; *Saint Catherine and Saint Barbara*, Parke-Bernet Galleries auction, Kimbell Art Foundation e.a., New York, 1976-12-02, lot no. 263; *The Annunciation*, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore; Boëdec, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 41–44, Koopstra, op. cit., p. 78.

was commissioned with large-format altarpieces for important abbeys, such as Flines, Anchin and Marchiennes, he relied on the help of other painters, whose surnames are included on bills preserved in the archives. It is difficult to unambiguously establish the principles of their employment in his shop: whether they were permanent members of his workshop as journeymen-cum-assistants or whether they enjoyed the status of co-workers or co-authors working under the supervision of the head of the workshop,[72] which had operated as a painting enterprise (like Rogier van der Weyden presumably once worked in the enterprise of Robert Campin in Tournai). Perhaps they were occasionally hired to work on specific commissions. Amongst them, Koopstra recognizes Jacquet d'Anvers, referred to as a *varlet* (educated assistant) of master Jean Bellegambe in the documents,[73] and Martin Bellegambe, Jean's son, whose cooperation with his father is testified in sources from c. 1530.[74] The workshop most likely employed a few persons, given the fact that apart from large-format commissions it was also given smaller orders by the city council, such as painting coats of arms, conserving paintings that belonged to the public, as well as designing tapestries, costumes, embroideries and painting frames.[75] Bellegambe most likely also received commissions from burghers, and these compositions – under the master's supervision and based on the patterns he provided – could have been made by his co-workers or journeymen.

The underdrawings in *The Lamentation Triptych* are very precise, but they differ from these prepared by the head of the shop as an aid for his assistants, who were responsible for the final work. Such detailed underdrawings have not been discovered in other documented works by Bellegambe. They may have been created by painstakingly transferring compositional patterns that had been employed in this or another workshop. Such a mode of action was typical of "backstage artists," who were trained on the basis of patterns of eminent masters or worked in their shops on commissions the workshop head designated for independent preparation – these works are currently referred to as created by the given artist's workshop. The painted layer of the triptych also reveals the author's predilection for a detailed depiction of all elements of the composition. Parts of the landscape, particularly the vegetation, the prie-dieu's decoration with inscriptions on the banderoles and various gilded elements are conveyed with a precision worthy of an illuminator. The artist was equally exact in the gilded parts of fabrics and halos, employing gold striations (chrysography). All of them must have been created by a dexterous hand. The aforementioned Jacquet d'Anvers, who worked for the Flines abbey between 1511 and 1512, is listed in documents as an illuminator and, according to the archives, was responsible for the lettering in and outside vignettes in the paintings.[76] In all likelihood, Bellegambe did not only hire him for the details, but also for larger painted parts, for instance in the *Altarpiece from Le Cellier.*[77] Interestingly, highlights modelling the drapes

[72] See, e.g., Antoni Ziemba, *Sztuka Burgundii i Niderlandów*, vol. 2: *Niderlandzkie malarstwo tablicowe 1430–1500* (Warsaw, 2011), p. 494.

[73] Koopstra, op. cit., p. 45.

[74] Ibid., pp. 106–7; Lorne Campbell, *The Sixteenth Century Netherlandish Paintings with French Paintings before 1600* (London, 2014), p. 76.

[75] *Northern European and Spanish Paintings before 1600 in the Art Institute of Chicago. A Catalogue of the Collection*, Martha Wolff, ed. (Chicago, 2008), p. 437.

[76] Koopstra, op. cit., p. 120.

[77] Ibid., p. 121.

of robes in the latter work are also applied using gold striations,[78] like in the NMW triptych. This suggests that Jacquet d'Anvers could have authored (or at least contributed to) the Warsaw work. However, present knowledge of Bellegambe's shop does not allow me to go beyond this hypothetical suggestion.

Conclusions

The 2016 analysis and conclusions that may be drawn from it shed new light on a number of issues related to *The Lamentation Triptych*. The altarpiece was created in two stages. The Lamentation scene, the Mass of Saint Gregory, the donatrix with Saint Dominic and a friar as well as *Noli me tangere* on the outer side of the wings had been painted first. The work may have been commissioned directly by the woman depicted in the wing or by her heirs, acting on her last will. In the second stage, the figure of the canon was added as the new donor of the triptych and (undoubtedly upon his request) Saint Dominic was "transformed" into Saint Josse, the figure of the friar in the right wing was painted over, and the Mouscron coat of arms was added on the frame of the triptych and in the location of the female donor's escutcheon.

The iconographic programme is associated with the Dominican rule: given the presence of Saint Dominic and a Dominican friar, this could suggest that the donatrix, who was a member of a confraternity of the rosary, remained under the order's pastoral care. The identity of the kneeling monk – whether he was the woman's spiritual protector, priest and confessor or perhaps her relative and a co-donor – has proved impossible to establish. However, an analysis of underdrawings, backed by a comparative study, suggests that the work may be attributed to an artist from Bellegambe's workshop or his immediate milieu.

I am grateful to Prof. Antoni Ziemba, Dr. Anna Koopstra and Hanna Benesz, whose help in the preparation of this article has been invaluable.

Translated by Aleksandra Szkudłapska

[78] Koopstra writes about "gold strokes applied as highlights in robes"; ibid., p. 120.