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A Late Work from the Circle of the Master of Catherine of Cleves:

The 'Seven Days of Creation' from the Bible of Henri de Cherauz (Brussels, B.R., Ms. 9158-67)

The only figurative decoration in the multivolumed Bible of Henri de Cherauz, the 'Seven Days of Creation' in an historiated initial I (Ms. 9158, fol. 10), has been described as the product of a Liège workshop. A colophon on fol. 190 v of the Bible's fourth volume (Ms. 9163-64) has been used to buttress this opinion:

Finita cum multo labore Dei auxilio fuit biblia hæc integraliter anno Domini a nativitate M.CCCC.LVI. Deo Gracias. Et pertinent monasterio sancti Laurentii prope et extra muros leodiensis, empta eodem tempore per Reverendum in Christo patrem ac dominum domnium Henricum del Cherauxe abbatem XXVI° et conwentum ipsius monasterii, precio trecentorum XXX° griffonum communis pagamente et monete civitatis leodiensis. Quorum nomina per miserercordiam omnipotentis Dei in libro vitae scribi indelebiliter mereantur. Amen.

However, this only affirms that the Bible was finished by Christmas 1456, and that Henri de Cherauz, the abbot of St Laurent, paid 330 griffons (money of Liège) to have the manuscript written and decorated.

During the 1450's several other manuscripts were made for the Abbey of St. Laurent, but these bear little resemblance to the Bible. Similarly, the 'Creation Sequence' [Fig. 1] has no counterpart among contemporary manuscripts made for other religious houses in Liège. Its uniqueness suggests that the artists who executed the Bible were not members of the community at St. Laurent and were residents of Liège only briefly. If the Bible of Henri de Cherauz contained no colophon few scholars would


2 Stiennon, 'Saint-Laurent', 151, and Exposition Liège, 1968, 31. The Bible contains another inscription (Ms. 9159-61, fol. 1): 'Pertinent monasterio sancti Laurentii prope Leodium'. Neither makes any mention of artists involved in the decorative program.

3 The following manuscripts were among those made in Liège during the abbacy of Henri de Cherauz: Brussels, Bibl. Roy., Ms. 9146, 9147, 9214, 9289, 9373, 9374-75, and 9700-9704.

4 Compare Stiennon, 'Saint-Laurent', 151:...mais la qualité de la grande lettre historiée dans le premier (fol. 10r) fait de cette Bible un des plus beaux manuscrits à miniatures que l'on ait exécuté à Liège vers le milieu du XV° siècles.

5 Unfortunately, we have few archival references to artists active at Liège before 1468. We cannot support Prof. Stiennon's suggestion that Antoine Cautel was responsible, either directly or indirectly, for the compositions of these miniatures (see Stiennon, 'Saint-Laurent', 151). No documented paintings can be given to Cautel for his career, see Jean Verhaeg, 'Antoine Cautel, de Gand, et son fils Martin, peintres à Liège aux XV° et XVI° siècles, Revue belge d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art, XVII, 1947-48, 23ff).
conclude that it was executed by Liége artists; the style of the 'Seven Days of Creation' and the other painted decorations owe too much to prototypes from the circle of the Master of Catherine of Cleves.

The seven scenes making up the 'Days of Creation' [Fig. 1a-g] have direct compositional ties to miniatures by the Master of Catherine of Cleves. Where the remarkable manuscripts containing these miniatures were produced is hotly debated, and Pieper's recent findings that there were Masters of Catherine of Cleves should stimulate more research.

Large manuscript Bibles decorated by the Cleves artists generally do not contain an elaborate 'Creation Sequence' at the beginning of the Book of Genesis. We find instead smaller scenes of the individual days placed at the head of the appropriate chapter. These follow the text closely and always appear in strictly chronologic order.

Four of the seven miniatures of the 'Days of Creation' in the de Cherauz Bible owe their compositions to miniatures in the Lochorst Bible (London, B.M., Add. Ms. 38, 122). The only differences in the 'Second Day' [Fig. 1c], 'Third Day' [Fig. 1d], and

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8 In the Lochorst Bible (London, B.M., Add. Ms. 38, 122), the miniatures of the Creation painted by the artists of this workshop are commonly called Bibles, but, in reality, they are Dutch paraphrases of biblical texts with additions concerning the exploits of Alexander the Great and other ancient worthies (see S. Hindman, 'Fifteenth Century Dutch Bible Illustration and the Historia Scholastica', Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, XXXVII, 1974, 133 and 142-143). The Bible of Henri de Cheraux is a canonical text with additions relevant to feasts in the Diocese of Liége (see Van de Gheyn, Catalogue, 14-16). Since these two types of Bibles were produced for different patrons, we should expect their decorative programs to differ. At least two late 'Dutch Picture Bibles', the Bible of Evert van Soudenbalch (Vienna, Nat. Bibl., Cod. 2771-2772), dated 1455-1465, and a related Bible (the Hague, Kon. Bibl., Ms. 38 D 39), dated 1468, apparently combine the two programs and have elaborate 'Creation Sequences' at the beginning of Genesis and smaller miniatures at the head of the other chapters. The Vienna manuscript was made for a canon at the Cathedral of Utrecht (see Noord-nederlandse Miniaturen, 39-40, no. 25, for the bibliography of the Vienna Bible, and Hindman, 'Dutch Bible Illumination', 133).

7 Three of the manuscripts containing illuminations by the artists of this workshop are commonly called Bibles, but, in reality, they are Dutch paraphrases of biblical texts with additions concerning the exploits of Alexander the Great and other ancient worthies (see S. Hindman, 'Fifteenth Century Dutch Bible Illustration and the Historia Scholastica', Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, XXXVII, 1974, 133 and 142-143). The Bible of Henri de Cheraux is a canonical text with additions relevant to feasts in the Diocese of Liége (see Van de Gheyn, Catalogue, 14-16). Since these two types of Bibles were produced for different patrons, we should expect their decorative programs to differ. At least two late 'Dutch Picture Bibles', the Bible of Evert van Soudenbalch (Vienna, Nat. Bibl., Cod. 2771-2772), dated 1455-1465, and a related Bible (the Hague, Kon. Bibl., Ms. 38 D 39), dated 1468, apparently combine the two programs and have elaborate 'Creation Sequences' at the beginning of Genesis and smaller miniatures at the head of the other chapters. The Vienna manuscript was made for a canon at the Cathedral of Utrecht (see Noord-nederlandse Miniaturen, 39-40, no. 25, for the bibliography of the Vienna Bible, and Hindman, 'Dutch Bible Illumination', 133).