



‘And a Branch shall grow out of his roots’: Rosary and Marian Devotion as Context for *The Tree of Jesse*

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The Rijksmuseum holds in its collection a remarkable panel painting titled *The Tree of Jesse* (fig. 1).¹ The title refers directly to the painting’s iconography: a tree depicting the descendant lineage of the Old Testament progenitor Jesse, up to and including Jesus Christ.² Jesse can always be identified as the sleeping figure out of whose body sprouts the trunk of a tree or bush, with, seated on its various branches, (a selection of) Jesus’s ancestors, the kings of Judah, culminating with the Christ Child, on Mary’s lap. The iconography is based on the two biblical genealogies of Jesus’s ancestors, respectively found in Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38, and a quotation from Isaiah 11:1: ‘And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots’.³ While Jesus forms the crowning glory of every ‘Tree’, the iconography was above all associated with Mary. In fact, Matthew’s and Luke’s genealogies also formed the prescribed Gospel readings for many Marian feasts.⁴ The origin of the Tree’s Marian interpretation comes from the church father St Jerome (c. 347-420), who wrote *virga est virgo*: ‘the branch is the Virgin’.⁵ The iconography can be found in virtually all forms of medieval art: stained glass, ironwork, sculpture, murals and illumi-

< Fig. 1
ATTRIBUTED
TO GEERTGEN
TOT SINT JANS,
The Tree of Jesse,
c. 1500, Haarlem.
Oil on panel,
89.8 x 60.6 cm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. SK-A-3901,
purchased with
the support of the
Vereniging
Rembrandt.

nation, and, as in the case of the work discussed here, panel painting.

The Rijksmuseum panel dates from circa 1500 and is attributed to (the circle of) Geertgen tot Sint Jans.⁶ Many studies have already been devoted to the panel, primarily concerning its attribution, with inquiries regarding its subject matter and function largely overlooked. In addressing this omission, the present study sets out to examine this work more closely through the consultation of liturgical and devotional sources dating from the same period and environs as the panel itself. The aim of this inquiry is three-fold: to localize the iconography of this specific Tree of Jesse, to determine the most accurate interpretation of the iconographic details, and to identify those figures added to the traditional Tree iconography.

Unicity of the Panel

The attribution to (the circle of) Geertgen tot Sint Jans situates the Rijksmuseum panel in (the environs of) Haarlem, where several contemporary documents mention images of a ‘Tree’. From the St Bavo’s Church (Grote or Sint-Bavokerk), for example, a surviving account dated 12 July 1490 records the churchwardens’ commissioning of two painters for a ‘[tree] trunk of Jesse in the two empty black fields at the bottom of the large

altarpiece'.⁷ Furthermore, two such 'Trees' are listed in a 1572 inventory of the convent of St John of the Haarlem Knights Hospitaller (St Jansconvent): a 'Scene of the Tree of Jesse' and a 'Scene adorned with the Tree of Jesse'.⁸ Lastly, a 1573 inventory from the same confraternity mentions a 'Scene without side panels of the Tree of Jesse'.⁹ Unclear is whether these three latter citations concerned painted *panels*, though the description 'without side panels' possibly implies this.

In any event, the St Bavo's Church commission firmly establishes that the Tree iconography existed in panel painting. Across the entire Low Countries region,¹⁰ however, very few such paintings of a Tree have survived.¹¹ Among them is a large, incomplete depiction from circa 1500, today preserved in the Rijksmuseum Twenthe, described as 'originating from the Lower Rhine region' (fig. 2).¹² It shows Jesse asleep, sitting on a throne, flanked

by four female saints and two prophets, one of whom is Isaiah. In the register above, the tree's vines and branches meander outwards horizontally in order to accommodate all twelve of Jesus's forebears, also seated. The top section with Mary and the Christ Child, situated in the crown of the tree, is missing. The fact that the (significantly smaller) Rijksmuseum panel of the Tree of Jesse has survived entirely intact is exceptional.

A brief comparison with the Tree of Jesse from the Lower Rhine region and representations in illuminated manuscripts highlights the distinctive iconographical features of the Rijksmuseum panel. Here the recumbent figure of the patriarch Jesse is not situated on a throne or in a bed, but has been placed in a *hortus conclusus*.¹³ This theme belongs to the Marian iconographic tradition, which traces its origins to the Marian interpretation of Song of Songs 4:12, in which

Fig. 2
ANONYMOUS,
The Tree of Jesse,
c. 1500,
Lower Rhine region.
Tempera, oil and
gold leaf on panel,
116.6 x 186.6 cm.
Enschede,
Rijksmuseum
Twenthe,
inv. no. 0035.
Photo: Rik Klein
Grotink Photography



the figure of the bride is described as an 'enclosed garden'.¹⁴ The tree in the Rijksmuseum panel reaches upwards and is rendered realistically; Jesus's ancestors are shown actively climbing it, as if to secure their places. This is a clear departure from most Tree depictions, where the kings are portrayed in static poses, with no overlapping and each occupying his own separate vine tendril.¹⁵ Similarly, the depiction of the architecture in the background is also realistic.

On the present panel, several key details catch the eye: the young woman holds a string of red and white beads, and the climbing king with his back towards the beholder wears a rose bonnet and a sash or hoop of red and white roses. Distributed throughout the tree, some of the other kings also possess strings of beads. All are references to the Rosary devotion, in which prayers addressed to the Virgin Mary are recited by means of the eponymous string of beads. Compared to other contemporary religious images – many of which also include the portrayal of figures clasping a prayer string as a symbol of their piety – the motif is more prominently displayed in the present panel.¹⁶ Moreover, Rosary symbolism can be discerned in other works attributed to Geertgen tot Sint Jans, including the diptych *The Glorification of the Virgin* – which features a rose bonnet worn beneath Mary's crown, and rosaries brought to her by angels – and *The Crucifixion* (fig. 3).¹⁷ Another work by Geertgen's hand, a now lost panel of which the iconography is preserved in a copy, even depicts the legend in which St Dominic, upon receiving a rosary from Mary, is urged to propagate its usage.¹⁸

At the time the Rijksmuseum panel was created, the Marian interpretation of Jesse's Tree had already existed for well over a thousand years; so too the symbolism equating Mary with a rose.¹⁹ Accordingly, representations of the



Fig. 3

ATTRIBUTED
TO GEERTGEN
TOT SINT JANS,
*The Glorification of
the Virgin*, c. 1490–95.
Panel, 24.5 x 20.5 cm
(incl. frame).
Rotterdam,
Museum Boijmans
Van Beuningen,
inv. no. 2450 (OK),
acquired with the
collection of
D.G. van Beuningen.

Tree in the form of a rosebush or rose tree, with the descendant kings sitting on the blossoms, are by no means uncommon. Nevertheless, the Rijksmuseum panel remains the only known example in which actual Rosary symbols are combined with a Tree of Jesse.²⁰

Besides the twelve kings, Jesus and Mary, the Rijksmuseum panel also includes three figures who are not climbing Jesse's tree: a young woman kneeling in prayer and two standing male figures. Unquestionably, the woman's presence is in no way explained by the Tree iconography; given her monastic attire, she might have been the commissioner of the panel and/or its owner, or the person it was meant to commemorate. Her nun's habit is contemporaneous with the painting, as is the garment of the male figure right. We may therefore tenably conclude that the panel includes two devotional portraits. This, too, is exceptional, as only one other Tree of

Jesse with portraits is known to exist in the Netherlands: a mural in the *Buurkerk* in Utrecht, dating from the second half of the fifteenth century. Visible in the lower left corner are the painting's patrons, Floris Otten and his wife, Geertruid, both of whom are readily identifiable thanks to their accompanying coats of arms (fig. 4).²¹ The Rijksmuseum panel, by contrast, bears no such means of identification.

In short, the Rijksmuseum panel derives its uniqueness from the combination of three elements: the medium chosen for the Tree iconography; the specificity of the iconography, expanded with Rosary symbols; and the presence of devotional portraits. This unicity naturally raises questions regarding the impetus for the work's production and its function.

Rosary Devotion in the Low Countries

Like the above-cited Tree depictions – the surviving as well as those mentioned in the archival sources – the Rijksmuseum panel probably functioned in a ritualistic context: within the liturgy (defined here as the body of prescribed prayers, ceremonies and acts constituting divine worship performed in and around church²²), and/or in the paraliturgy (the communal religious celebrations in which lay devotion can express itself freely²³) and private devotion (individual prayer).

The devotion of the Rosary, to which the painting alludes, was expressed in all these kinds of contexts: essentially, this devotion evolved from what was originally a paraliturgical, private devotion – i.e. private prayers recited during or in conjunction with official liturgy, such as a celebration of Mass or the Liturgy of the Hours – into an institutionalized private and communal devotion.²⁴ During the Middle Ages, prayer recitation using a string of prayer beads – a practice already known to the third-century desert

fathers – was widespread. Starting in the thirteenth century, this prayer practice was being actively promoted throughout Europe, mainly – though by no means exclusively – through the efforts of the Dominicans. Some even maintained that it was the order's founder, Domingo de Guzmán (1170–1221), who had established the devotion upon receiving a rosary from Mary. As part of this promotion, so-called Rosary confraternities were established, overseen by the clergy.²⁵ Confraternity members were to recite a number of prayers daily, among them the Rosary. In this way, it became part of the daily prayer regimen, also for the laity.

Noteworthy in this context is the influence of Alanus de Rupe (c. 1428–1475), a Dominican from Brittany who, in 1468, established a confraternity in the French city of Douai and was likely also involved in the founding of confraternities in Lille, Ghent and Rostock. He too was purportedly visited by Mary, in 1464, and charged with the task of popularizing the Marian Psalter (more on this shortly).²⁶ Another avid propagandist of the Rosary devotion was Jacobus Weyts, a student of De Rupe's, who, at some point between 1476 and 1478, was elected prior of the Dominican friary in Haarlem, the city where Geertgen tot Sint Jans was active.²⁷

The Rosary confraternity in Cologne, supported by Emperor Frederick III,²⁸ was the first to be recognized by Pope Sixtus IV, in 1478 (and therefore often cited as the oldest). In that same year, the first confraternity in what is now the Netherlands was founded in Haarlem. By the late fifteenth century, the Rosary devotion had received both imperial and papal recognition, had been granted an indulgence and was being actively promoted by ecclesiastically approved monastic orders. Accordingly, it formed an integral part of official liturgical practice.²⁹



Fig. 4
ANONYMOUS,
*The Tree of Jesse
with Donors*, 1430–80.
Mural on the
southern wall of
the Buurkerk's
tower, Utrecht.
Photo:
Het Utrechts Archief,
cat. no. 115671

The Books of the Rosary Devotion

Also attesting to the growing popularization of devotion in the late Middle Ages is the appearance, from circa 1480 onwards, of printed devotional booklets.³⁰ Such booklets were published for the laity (and therefore often written in the vernacular) as well as clergy affiliated with confraternities (for whom the Latin-language editions were mainly intended). Contemporary sources of this nature shed light on the

ritualistic context in which the Rijksmuseum panel possibly functioned. With this premise in mind, these sources were explored to determine whether they might reveal information in respect to the broader localization of the panel's iconography and a proper interpretation of its iconographic details.

I will begin the presentation of my findings by turning to three contemporary books specifically concerning the Rosary devotion:

1. **Van Marien rosenransken een suverlic boexken.** Gouda, Gerard Leeu, 9 March 1484 (fig. 5).³¹ Dutch-language edition of the treatise *Quodlibet de veritate fraternitatis Rosarii* (1476, rev. 1479) published by the then recently approved confraternity of Cologne.³² This work contains a collection of texts relevant to the Rosary confraternities.
2. **Rosarium Beatae Virginis Mariae.** Gouda, Gerard Leeu, 1487.³³ Spiritual exercises centred on the life of Jesus and Mary, presented as roses, compiler unknown.
3. **Vrouwen souter,** Middle Dutch, fifteenth/sixteenth-century translation of the *Psalterium Virginis Mariae* by Alanus de Rupe, whose work was printed in seven editions between 1483-1502.³⁴ The 'Marian psalter' contains a condensed, simpler form of the Liturgy of the Hours, specifically in honour of Mary. It could be prayed every day in Latin or Dutch.



The printed booklet *Van Marien rosenransken* is the first Dutch translation of the treatise that Michel François de Lille wrote in 1476 upon the institution of the Cologne confraternity. An expanded and revised version of the original Latin treatise appeared in 1479, first translated into Dutch and printed for the Haarlem Rosary confraternity by the influential Gouda printer Gerard Leeu in 1484.³⁵ The other two sources, *Rosarium Beatae Virginis Mariae* and *Vrouwen souter*, were used within the devotional practice described and prescribed in *Van Marien rosenransken*.³⁶ Consequently, all three books may be considered primary sources of the Rosary devotion.

Van Marien rosenransken contains a description of the indulgence bestowed on the Rosary confraternities by the pope, miracle stories and various descriptions of confraternity

practice. Above all this last category holds clues for an interpretation of the Rijksmuseum panel. The book states that both men and women, including those less fortunate, are eligible for membership in the confraternity; even the deceased may be enrolled posthumously.³⁷ Emphasis is placed on members' obligation to support endowments and masses, with donations towards the 'adornment' of the confraternity's altar deemed highly commendable.³⁸ A recurring element in the regulations, descriptions and miracle stories alike is the flexible framework for prayer: each individual prays according to his or her own capability: 'For some pray a *rosenhoedje* [alternation *Ave Maria* and *Pater Noster*]; others, a [Marian] psalter. Others, certain prayers; or they perform good works'.³⁹ Devotion could be practiced either privately (see the description below) or communally;

Fig. 5
Van Marien rosenransken een suverlic boexken, Gouda: Gerard Leeu, 1484. Leiden University Libraries, 1370 G 35: 1, title page.

frequent reference is made to the act of praying 'in vergaderinghe' (in assembly). Typical for this era is the personal nature of religious experience, involving a conscious striving to identify with Christ's suffering or Mary's joys and sorrows. One description illustrates this autonomy of devotion, both in practice and setting:

Den derden lese ic voer sonderlinghe outaren ende gemaecte beelden. inder kercken of binnen huse. lesende den enghelen neghen ave marien sinte jan baptiste een. den apostelen xii. ende also veel ander heylighen biddende dat ic hem in enighe manier mach ghelijck warden.⁴⁰

(Thirdly, I read in front of specific altars and statues/images in the church or in the home: the angel, nine *Ave Marias*; John the Baptist, one; the Apostles, twelve; and also many other saints; praying that I may in some way become as Him.)

As the description stipulates, the devotee moves from one altar and image to the next, offering prayers of varying lengths at each successive location. In the context of such descriptions in *Van Marien rosenkransken*, the Rijksmuseum panel could therefore have served as a decorative element on an altar or as a freestanding devotional image hanging in the church (or even in the home). Yet it could also have functioned as a memorial piece within the confraternity. In other words: a panel painting of this sort could be a focal point of prayer in different devotional contexts.

Van Marien rosenkransken contains a profusion of quotations, references, proclamations and visions that draw extensively from various sources: the Bible, the works of Bernard of Clairvaux, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Alanus de Rupe and the *Legenda Aurea*. Nowhere, however, does one encounter any mention of a

Tree of Jesse. The prophet Isaiah is referred to only twice in the entire book (in both cases unrelated to the Tree motif);⁴¹ quotations from Matthew are wholly absent. The other two primary Rosary sources named above also make no mention of the Tree, nor are there any quotations from Isaiah or Matthew. The descriptions of visions in the three books centre primarily on St Dominic and the Passion of Christ; in this respect, the books are far more closely aligned with the iconography of another painting by Geertgen tot Sint Jans, *The Glorification of Mary* (fig. 3), in which all the Instruments of the Passion are incorporated. Except for the image on the title page of *Van Marien rosenkransken* (fig. 5),⁴² in which allusion is made to Christ's wounds, none of the three primary Rosary sources contains illustrations. Given the vast array of metaphors filling the pages of these books, the Marian interpretation of the Tree – by the mid-fifteenth century already many centuries old – and the iconography's popularity in Haarlem at this time (as evidenced by the aforementioned citations from the St Bavo's Church and the St John's convent), the omission of the Tree is significant. From this, we may reasonably conclude that the unique iconography of the Rijksmuseum panel is *not* derived from the primary sources of the Rosary devotion.

The 'Tree' in Other Liturgical and Devotional Books

Might then the iconography of the Tree of Jesse perhaps belong to another specific ritualistic context? In finding an answer to this question, I shifted my focus to liturgical, paraliturgical and devotional manuscripts and (post-)incunabula in the Low Countries from the period 1450–1525⁴³ containing a depiction of the Tree of Jesse.⁴⁴ This resulted in the following corpus:

1. **New York, The Morgan Library and Museum, ms. M.917, 'Hours of Catherine of Cleves, Part II'.** Book of hours (private prayer book in accordance with canonical hours), usus of Windesheim, c. 1440, illumination by the Master of Catherine of Cleves. Tree of Jesse preceding the Hours of the Virgin (p. 148) and a prayer to St Anne (p. 292).
2. **Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium, ms. II 7619.** Book of hours of Jan van Amerongen/Mary van Vronensteyn, usus of Utrecht, c. 1460, illumination by the Master of the Vederwolken, the Master of Evert Zoudenbalch and others. Tree of Jesse as opening to the Hours of the Virgin (fol. 18r).
3. **Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium, ms. 9511, 'Breviary of Philip the Good'.** Breviary (official prayer book containing readings for canonical hours), winter section, usus of Paris, c. 1460-65, illumination by Willem Vrelant. Tree of Jesse in an enclosed garden, as opening to the First Vespers of Advent I (fol. 15r) (fig. 6).
4. **Groningen, University Library, inc. 96.** Book of hours, usus of Utrecht, printed by Johannes Higman, Paris 1497. Tree of Jesse as opening to the Hours of the Virgin (fol. G2r-G4r).
5. **Utrecht, Museum Catharijneconvent, OKM h3, 'Breviary of Beatrijs van Assendelft'.** Breviary, usus of Utrecht and Windesheim, in use in the Zijlkllooster, Haarlem, c. 1485, illumination by the 'Hemelvaartmeester', Delft. Tree of Jesse in the initial of the Nativity of the Virgin (fol. 119r).
6. **Leiden, University Library, BPL 2747.** Book of hours, usus of Utrecht, incl. the Hollandic St Jeroen; Beverwijk, Sion monastery, brother Gerrit van Castricum, 1498; illumination by 'Spierinck', 1499. Tree of Jesse as opening to the Hours of the Virgin (fol. 10r).
7. **New York, The Morgan Library and Museum, ms. M.1078, 'Croesinck Hours'.** Book of hours, Northern Netherlands, usus of Utrecht, c. 1494, illumination by the Master with the Dark Eyes or Master of Cornelis Croesinck. Tree of Jesse preceding the Hours of the Virgin (fol. 112v).
8. **The Hague, KB – National Library of the Netherlands, 76 G 9.** Book of hours, Holland (usus of Utrecht, incl. the Hollandic St Jeroen), c. 1490, illumination by the Master of the Dark Eyes. Tree of Jesse preceding the Hours of the Virgin (fol. 13v).
9. **The Hague, KB – National Library of the Netherlands, 133 H 30.** Book of hours, South Holland (usus of Utrecht), 1478, unknown illuminator. Tree of Jesse as opening to the Hours of the Virgin (fol. 17r) (fig. 7).
10. **The Hague, KB – National Library of the Netherlands, 135 E 12.** Book of hours, Leiden (usus of Utrecht), 1490-1500, illumination by Master of Hugo Jansz van Woerden (?). Tree of Jesse as opening to the Hours of the Virgin (fol. 13r).
11. **Amsterdam, University Library Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, xv 05502.** Prayer book, usus of Flanders/Utrecht (?), c. 1494-1500, illumination by the Master of Raphael de Mercatellis. The Virgin and Child with St Anne, with behind them the Tree of Jesse, preceding the prayer to St Anne (fol. 163v).
12. **The Hague, Rijksmuseum Huis van het Boek, ms. 10 F 14.** Book of hours and prayer book, usus of Rome, c. 1500, unknown illuminator, Southern Netherlands. Full-page miniature of the Tree of Jesse preceding the Hours of the Virgin (fol. 11v).



Fig. 6
WILLEM VRELANT,
The Tree of Jesse,
c. 1460-65.
Miniature, approx.
295 x 215 mm (sheet).
Brussels, Royal
Library of Belgium,
ms. 9511, Breviary of
Philip the Good,
opening to the First
Vespers of Advent I,
fol. 15r.

13. Cuijk, St Agatha, Crosier monastery, ms. 1 'Gradual of Johannes van Deventer'. Gradual (book containing Mass chants) after usus of the Crosiers, c. 1512, unknown illuminator. Tree of Jesse as marginal decoration accompanying the opening hymn of the Vigil Mass for the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (fol. 180v).

That the above-cited criteria generate such a relatively small corpus is, in and of itself, a telling fact.⁴⁵ A perusal of sources from Germany,⁴⁶ France⁴⁷ and England⁴⁸ containing the Tree of Jesse iconography reveals that such representations were found in many kinds of books: bibles, missals and lectionaries, all of which contain gospel texts, often accompanying the elongated opening initial 'L' (Liber) of the Gospel of

Mathew perfectly suited for this purpose. The Tree also appears in psalters in connection with Jesse's son David, poet of the Book of Psalms and an important progenitor in Jesus's genealogy.⁴⁹ In these sorts of books, the Tree of Jesse iconography was clearly a common element, unlike in comparable books originating from the Low Countries, in which not a

single depiction of a Tree is to be found. The same applies to the many chant compositions of the genealogies from Matthew and Luke. A total of forty-seven genealogical compositions are found in chant books from the Low Countries.⁵⁰ Notably, two such compositions even appear in a 1511 missal of the Haarlem Knights Hospitaller: a source very close to Geertgen tot Sint

Fig. 7
ANONYMOUS,
The Tree of Jesse,
1478.
Miniature,
181 x 132 mm (sheet).
The Hague, KB –
National Library of
the Netherlands,
133 H 30, Book of
Hours, opening to the
Hours of the Virgin,
fol. 17r.



Jans and his circle.⁵¹ Sung by clergy at Christmas and during the various Marian feasts celebrated throughout the church year, these compositions were often accompanied by the most stately of ceremonial attributes (costly raiment, candles, church interior decoration, etc.).⁵² Illumination in chant books generally accompanies chants on (high) feasts,⁵³ functioning as visual tools guiding celebrants through a liturgical book. This is precisely why one would expect to find a representation of the Tree of Jesse in such a book.⁵⁴ Yet, among the forty-seven compositions, only in the 'Gradual of Johannes van Deventer' (no. 13 in the source list above) does one find a scene with this iconography.

Despite the scant number of surviving manuscripts, one may conclude that, given the total *absence* of Tree depictions in extant illuminated bibles, missals or lectionaries from the Low Countries (where they do occur in similar sources from outside the Low Countries) and the indisputable *presence* thereof in the sources cited in the list compiled above, circa 1500 the Tree iconography primarily appears in Lowland breviaries and books of hours.⁵⁵ This suggests that the origin of the unique Rijksmuseum image must be sought in such books. This finding is additionally supported by the only other Lowland (and *older*) illustration of Jesse set in an enclosed garden: a miniature in the winter section of the Breviary of Philip the Good⁵⁶ (no. 3 in the source list, fig. 6). Almost all the breviary's miniatures are by Willem Vrelant, an Utrecht illuminator active in Bruges from 1454 to 1481.⁵⁷ The miniature of Jesse in the enclosed garden can therefore be regarded as a work originating from the Low Countries. Placed in the section of Advent (days of preparation leading up to Christmas), in the breviary it precedes the hymn *Ecce dies veniunt*: 'Behold, the days come, sayeth the Lord, and I will raise up a righteous branch of David'.⁵⁸

The Hours of the Virgin

In nine of the above-cited sources from the Low Countries, representations of the Tree of Jesse are found in the Hours of the Virgin (for example fig. 7). This series of prayers to the Virgin is a constant in every book of hours, a condensed and simpler form of the Liturgy of the Hours (the set of daily prayer moments), specifically in honour of Mary. Unlike the 'regular' Office, which has its own interpretation of the hours for each feast and a unique composition of psalms for each day of the week, the Hours of the Virgin has virtually the same form and content for every day and can be prayed any day of the week.⁵⁹ In the listed books of hours, the placement of the Tree images is in direct relation to the Hours of the Virgin. A logical choice, given that in the texts of these hours reference is made to the Tree or genealogical theme in several places, for example, in verses such as: 'Like a grapevine I bore fruit'; 'And He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the lineage of his child David'; and 'Yesse's root has grown, out of Jacob has come a star, a virgin has begotten the Saviour'.⁶⁰ As we have seen, *Van Marien rosenkransken* clearly demonstrates that reading the Hours of the Virgin was a core activity within the Rosary devotion. In this context, in which prayers were recited with a Rosary in the hand and the illustrated Hours of the Virgin as a guide, the choice of the iconography of the Tree of Jesse as a visual means to express the Rosary theme becomes understandable.

The Identities of the Three Figures

Equally intriguing as the origin of the iconographic combination of the Tree of Jesse and Rosary symbols is the identity of the figures depicted. After all, the three auxiliary figures – two men and a woman – are not part of the traditional Tree iconography. The male figure on the left, however, might be



Fig. 8

Detail of devotional figures in *The Tree of Jesse* (fig. 1).

Fig. 9

JAN MOSTAERT,
The Prophet Isaiah,
c. 1520 (?).
Oil on panel,
53.8 x 102.2 cm.
Rotterdam, Museum
Boijmans Van
Beuningen, inv. no.
St 13, loan Stichting
Museum Boijmans
Van Beuningen, gift
Dr D. Hannema.
Photo: Studio Tromp.

linked to the iconography, as the fabrics and the numerous pearls (allusions to the Rosary devotion) adorning his outfit match those of the kings (fig. 8). Moreover, the direction of his gaze clearly demonstrates a link to Christ's ancestors in the Tree. In fact, this figure's overall appearance and head-gear are akin to a contemporary depiction of the prophet Isaiah (fig. 9) by Jan Mostaert (c. 1475-1552/53),⁶¹ an artist active in the same period and region as the present panel and in some studies even identified as its maker. This provides sufficient grounds for interpreting this man as a prophet



(despite the absence of a book or scroll), most likely Isaiah, as is the one by Mostaert, given the biblical source of the Tree iconography in Isaiah's prophesy (Isaiah 11:1): 'And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots'. Because of the figure's upward gaze, focussed on a point beyond the picture frame, the Tree might be understood as a visualization of what the prophet mentally envisions.

Unlike the man on the left, the two remaining figures – a second male and a religious woman kneeling in prayer – are wearing clothing contemporaneous

with the panel. As noted above, there are no accompanying coats of arms or inscriptions by which to identify them, and it is not known if the panel ever hung in the vicinity of a specific grave. Because of her prominent position in the composition, most attention has been devoted to the woman figure (fig. 8).⁶² Unfortunately, theories positing that she belonged to one of the convents in the area, such as the Haarlem White Sisters' monastery⁶³ or the Amsterdam Poor Clares⁶⁴ have little basis, for the simple reason that her religious habit lacks sufficient specificity to facilitate a more accurate identification. If anything, the woman's plain, white robes, youthful appearance and modest rosary possibly convey she was a novice. Yet beyond this, unfortunately, little can be said, as a white habit worn by novices was the designated raiment in numerous orders. Moreover, within the popular orders of the day – Augustinians, Poor Clares, Dominican Sisters, Cistercians, the Modern Devotion communities – habits could vary from one monastery to another, or even the representation thereof on an altarpiece.⁶⁵ Also possible is that the woman was a (deceased) layperson, who, as a reflection of her devotion, chose to be depicted in a monastic habit. Indeed, one such known depiction is the memorial tablet *Geertruy Haeck Kneels in Prayer before St Agnes* (c. 1465).⁶⁶ As stated in *Van Marien rosenkransken*, a person already deceased could become a member of a Rosary confraternity posthumously. In conclusion, in the absence of more specific means of identification, very little can be said about the kneeling woman.

Confirmation that the man on the right (fig. 10) was an actual, living person is provided not only by his contemporary attire, but also by the detailed painting style applied to his individualized facial features,



Fig. 10
Detail of devotional
figure in *The Tree of
Jesse* (fig. 1).

contrary to the more general rendering of the ancestors and the man on the left. What appears to be a liturgical book clasped in the man's hand likely confirms his status as a cleric, despite the fact that he is not depicted wearing a habit.⁶⁷ My recent examination of a chant book, dating from the same period and produced in the same region as the panel, led unexpectedly to a convincing identification of this figure. In its turn, this identification provides further clarification regarding the context in which the panel is certain to have functioned.

Master Willem van Schoten in a Haarlem Gradual

The chant book in question is a large, beautifully illuminated gradual, i.e. a book containing all the chants for the Mass, made for the then newly founded Haarlem monastery of the Augustinian Hermits (fig. 11a).⁶⁸ Today preserved in the New York Public Library as ms. 92, this liturgical book was heretofore scarcely known in the Netherlands and had not yet been examined in the context of the Rijksmuseum panel.⁶⁹ A colophon in the gradual states that it was written from 4 September 1493 to 22 November 1494, thus confirming it could very well have been created in the same year as *The Tree of Jesse*.⁷⁰ In a verse on fol. 307v, the copyist identifies himself as 'Leonardus van Aken'.

Four miniaturists worked on the gradual, among them a Northern Netherlandish book illuminator named 'Spierinck' (who also worked on book no. 5 in the list of liturgical works on pp. 212-13). Active in Haarlem and/or Beverwijk in the period circa 1485-1519, he left behind a substantial oeuvre comprising some seventeen manuscripts (sixteen of which are signed, with fifteen dated – a unicum). Described as a 'not exceptionally talented artist', the marginal decorations adorning the pages of the works Spierinck illuminated are nevertheless of good quality.⁷¹

Nine pages of the gradual feature historiated initials (the Nativity, the Adoration, the Crucifixion, etc.); eight of these also display extensive marginal decoration. In the bottom



margins of the pages for the major feasts of the liturgical year, one finds depictions of various distinguished inhabitants of Haarlem, together with their respective patron saints and family coats of arms. These include monastic founders, burgomasters, churchwardens, priests, members of religious orders, and sometimes even entire families. No other book from the Low Countries is known to contain such a large number of depictions of individual persons.⁷² This magnificent book can be seen as a veritable

Figs. 11a, b
ANONYMOUS
Master Willem van Schoten in the lower margin of a chant book, 1493-94. Marginal decoration, approx. 533 x 395 mm (sheet). The New York Public Library, ms. 92, Gradual of the Haarlem Augustinian Hermits, fol. 218r, entire page (a) and detail (b).



who's who of Haarlem's notables at the end of the fifteenth century. Their memories were therefore preserved among the brothers of the hermit confraternity in a book intended for the celebration of the Mass, the most important celebration of the day.

On the page for Easter Sunday (fol. 218r), the most important day of the liturgical year, one finds a solitary man, the only figure unaccompanied by others in the book's margins (fig. 11b). Dressed in a brown mantle featuring a white lining and trim, his attire is of a type normally favoured for depictions of clerics when not in their liturgical vestments (e.g. an alb or surplice).⁷³ He kneels at a prayer desk, on which lie a liturgical book and his black hat. The banderole above him is inscribed with the following words: 'Deus propicius esto michi peccatori' (God, be merciful to me, a sinner; Luke 18:13). Certainly, such words of supplication were widespread and popular.⁷⁴ In this case, however, the phrase unquestionably refers to the depicted figure's priestly ministry. Indeed, this plea constitutes the central phrase of Jesus's parable regarding proper prayer in the Temple of Jerusalem (Luke 18:9-14).⁷⁵ In the depiction, the man is surrounded by a peacock and his ancestors' eight coats of arms. Based on what can only be described as an extensive 'arsenal' of family arms – by far outnumbering those of any other individual depicted in the entire gradual – he can unmistakably be identified as the Haarlem priest Master Willem van Schoten (?-1496).⁷⁶

What we know about Master Willem is the following. He was a scion of the highly influential Van Schoten family (also spelled *Schooten*, *Scoten*, or *Scoeten*). Besides an impressive number of knights, bailiffs, priests, parish priests and nuns, Willem's long lineage also counted four consecutive commanders of the St John's convent. Prior to the appointment of a bishop in 1559, this ecclesiastical office was the most

important church leadership position in the city and region.⁷⁷ Willem was the son of Jacob van Schoten and Sophie Gerritsdr van Adrichem, and the brother of bailiff Gerrit van Schoten. As we learn from his depiction in the gradual, Willem was somehow involved with the Augustinian Hermits' monastery in Haarlem. In the church of Akersloot, a small town north of Haarlem, he was appointed priest at a vicarage (a benefice from which private prayers for individuals were paid) dedicated to the Virgin Mary, in the documentation of which is stated that he died in 1496.⁷⁸ Like the many Van Schotens who preceded him in death, Willem was laid to rest in the church of the St John's convent.⁷⁹ In the necrology of the commandery, Willem is listed as 'presbiter et frater', thus conveying that, in addition to being a priest, he was a 'brother' of St John.

Willem's social standing can be deduced from his prominent placement in the gradual, as well as the exceptional number of family coats of arms. His portrait is by far the best executed of all, and also possesses a level of detail – the tonsure, double chin, the precise rendering of his mantle – not found with any of the others. We can assume it is an accurate portrayal of Willem, whose death occurred not long after the gradual was finished.

The Van Schoten Triptych

The mention of the name Willem van Schoten brings us to an earlier discussion of the Rijksmuseum panel.⁸⁰ As early as 1966, Karel Gerard Boon observed a resemblance between the *Tree of Jesse* and a lost(?),⁸¹ contemporary triptych by Jan Mostaert comprising a monumental scene of the Last Judgment flanked left and right by devotional portraits. Today, the so-called Van Schoten triptych is known only through a set of nineteenth-century drawings also held in the Rijksmuseum collection



(figs. 12–14). Despite being copies, the three drawings are rendered in such detail that, to quote Boon, ‘they do allow for several inferences’. Indeed, thanks to the artist’s precision, later researchers were able to at least identify the various sitters based on the heraldry on the armorial robes and shields and determine the dates of their clothing styles.⁸² Depicted on the right panel are bailiff Gerrit van Schoten (Willem’s brother) and his wife, Luytgard van Swieten. Across from them, appearing on the left panel, are four members of Gerrit’s family – three men and a woman: in front Gerrit’s father and mother (wearing an attire fashionable in the fourteen eighties), and behind them Gerrit’s two brothers, Willem and a

second brother likely to have perished in his youth. The style of Luytgard’s clothing came into fashion no earlier than 1520; the triptych could therefore not have been commissioned prior to this time. There is no doubt that, from the outset, the triptych was conceived as a memorial tablet: by 1520, every family member on the left panel – including Willem – was already deceased, as was Gerrit, who died in 1513.⁸³ It almost certainly hung above the Van Schoten family tomb in the church of the St John’s convent.⁸⁴

In terms of the architecture in the background, the upwards-sloping landscape and the peacock perched on the wall, the left panel of the triptych (fig. 12) displays a marked similarity to *The Tree of Jesse*.⁸⁵ And it was precisely



Figs. 12, 13, 14
Anonymous
drawings of panels
forming *Triptych
with Last Judgement*
(c. 1520), nineteenth
century.
Pencil, pen and brush,
respectively
562 x 201 mm,
567 x 421 mm,
563 x 197 mm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. nos.
RP-T-1971-100,
RP-T-1971-101A and
RP-T-1971-101B.

these commonalities Boon saw as sufficient grounds to attribute the Rijksmuseum panel to Mostaert in 1966.

Identification as Master Willem

That some kind of a connection exists between artworks produced in the (environs of) Haarlem and the influential Van Schotens is highly credible. This is not to say that depictions of peacocks, priests – whether or not with a double chin – and step-gabled facades were unique to the Van Schotens. Nevertheless, the combination of several unique elements – commonalities shared by the Rijksmuseum panel, the triptych and the gradual – strongly points to an identification of the man in *The Tree of Jesse* as Master Willem van Schoten.

Firstly, the Van Schoten Triptych and the gradual confirm that Willem commissioned depictions of himself – or was depicted posthumously as a memorial – in works of contemporary religious art. As has been observed above, the Van Schotens held considerable sway within the convent of St John – an important place for the artists of that day, and a community from which three documented inventory entries citing a *Tree of Jesse* are known.⁸⁶ The identification of the man in the Rijksmuseum panel as Willem would make it even more probable that one of the works referring to a *Tree of Jesse* described in the convent's inventories of 1572 and 1573 is in fact this very panel. Like many other members of the Van Schoten family, Willem, too, was buried in the St John's Church. It is conceivable that the Rijksmuseum painted panel of the *Tree of Jesse* functioned as a memorial piece for Willem hanging above the family tomb, eventually accompanied by the later commissioned devotional panel – the triptych – for Gerrit van Schoten's family, on which he also appears. There it remained until it was removed from the church – together with many other panels – amidst the turmoil of the Eighty Years' War.⁸⁷

Like all members of the Van Schoten family, Willem was involved with at least one other Haarlem monastery (the Augustinian Hermits). Moreover, he held (in any case at least) one vicarage, located just outside Haarlem (in the church of Akersloot). Willem's involvement in various religious communities makes it highly plausible that, in one way or another, he participated in the Rosary devotion (for instance, through his vicarage dedicated to the Virgin Mary) and that it is within this specific context that he is depicted on the Rijksmuseum panel. While indeed propagated by the Dominican Order, the Rosary devotion was also practiced by (parish) priests and within other religious orders.⁸⁸ That this devotion

held a place within the Augustinian monastery in Haarlem – which Willem supported – is affirmed by the gradual: on folio 244v, an Augustinian monk is praying the Rosary.⁸⁹ Due to a lack of other sources regarding the Haarlem and Akersloot devotions, there is unfortunately no way to verify Willem's possible role.

Secondly, there is the uniqueness of the figure's attire. The portraits in the bottom margins of the gradual offer a unique glimpse into the wealthiest stratum of Haarlem society anno 1494 – concurrent with the creation of the Tree of Jesse panel. Amidst all the notables, among them a large number of clergymen, Willem's attire is unique. Even the presumed parish priest of the Church of St Bavo (fol. 265v) wears different attire. Particularly noteworthy is the broad, white lining of Willem's mantle: undoubtedly a white fur inner lining, which, in keeping with the fashion of the day, continues as a decorative trim along the outer border. The white colour suggests a fur type derived from either squirrel (*minever*), ermine or weasel: without exception materials of great cost, the price of which was directly proportional to their whiteness and uniformity. Logically, depictions with luxury materials of this sort occur only in connection with the highest ranks of the nobility and clergy.⁹⁰ For example, the entire oeuvre of Geertgen tot Sint Jans's attributed works⁹¹ contains only one figure wearing a garment with a similar inner lining, specifically, the cleric in *The Raising of Lazarus*⁹² (dated c. 1480). Absent, however, is the broad, white border lining found in both the gradual and on the Tree of Jesse panel; moreover, his mantle is lined with a different variety of fur. Clearly, the painter of the Rijksmuseum panel devoted great effort to rendering the various types of fur in detail; one can even discern the seams where the individual pieces of fur were

joined together within the priest's sleeves. Intriguingly, a comparative analysis of the attire worn by clerics in memorial tablets dated between circa 1450 and 1550⁹³ produced not one comparable example. The closest resemblance is the mantle worn by Willem van Schoten on the left panel of the Van Schoten triptych.

An identification as Willem van Schoten also offers a possible explanation for the noticeably broad, black collar (or undermantle?) worn by the man in the panel. In principle, no one but Benedictine and Knights Hospitaller brothers wore mantles that were entirely black.⁹⁴ In the necrology of the St John's convent, Willem is referred to as *frater*, or 'brother'.⁹⁵ Conceivably, the inclusion of this piece of clothing was therefore meant to convey his status as a brother of St John. In the same line, this would also explain the choice of background architecture – possibly representing the St John's convent itself.⁹⁶

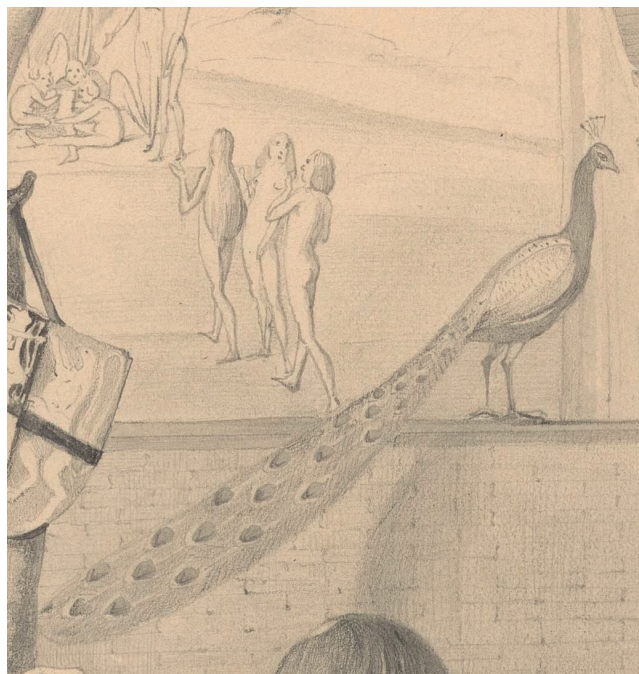
A third shared element is the resemblance between the depictions of the peacock (figs. 15a-c). As a symbol of the righteous and immortality,⁹⁷ its inclusion in all three works is fitting: on the Van Schoten Triptych, it sits on the enclosure wall of the Garden of Paradise, into which the righteous are led toward their heavenly existence; in *The Tree of Jesse*, it signals the wall in question is actually Mary's enclosed garden; and in the gradual, the peacock appears on the page for Easter Sunday, the day celebrating Christ's resurrection. In all types of painting and illumination from the period, the peacock was a widespread motif. In most cases, however, the bird appears with its tail feathers fully fanned or merely as an element in the distant background.⁹⁸ The prominent and similar positioning of the peacock – centrally placed, viewed from behind, with its tail feathers cascading to the left, and in a resting posture – in all



three works is therefore striking. Given that the gradual and the triptych were created to serve a commemorative function, the presence of the animal on the Rijksmuseum panel would appear to suggest a similar function.

A fourth shared characteristic of the images on the panel, the triptych, and in the gradual is the manner of the sitters' presentation before Christ, depicted without the intercession of a patron saint, directly 'in the front row.' Such a direct presentation is not exclusive to these three works; however – as a comparison with the other images in the gradual and other contemporary memorial tablets reveals⁹⁹ – it was a less common form of portraiture.

Figs. 15a-c
Details of peacocks
from *The Tree of*
Jesse (fig. 1), triptych
(fig. 12) and gradual
(figs. 11a, b).



The clothing, architecture, peacock and presentation style are not merely part of the prevailing idiom used by painters of the day. Together, these four elements offer convincing proof that a link exists between the three depictions, in part explained by the probable localization of both the Rijksmuseum panel and the Van Schoten triptych in the St John's convent church in Haarlem. The family memorial painting is certain to have hung in proximity to the family tomb. The Rijksmuseum panel could most certainly be one of those mentioned in the convent's inventories. If near the family grave already by circa 1500, it could easily have inspired the inclusion of the very same iconographic elements in the Van Schoten triptych, dated slightly later, in which Willem also figures.

In its turn, the identification of the priest as Master Willem raises questions to be addressed by future research regarding the exact nature of his affiliation with the Rosary devotion and the Hours of the Virgin, as well as his connection to the kneeling young woman. One can now raise the possibility that the woman depicted on the panel was a member of the Van Schoten family, several of whom entered religious life as nuns. Based on age, attire and the popularity of the Hours of the Virgin at the time, two of Willem's own nieces emerge as plausible candidates: Sophia (at the Cistercian convent of Leeuwenhorst in Noordwijk) and Alijd (at the convent of the Regular Canonesses, Maria-ter-Zijl, in Haarlem).¹⁰⁰ As affirmed by three different sources – the Van Schoten triptych, the memorial tablet of Geertruy Haeck, and the descriptions in *Van Marien rosenkransken* – it must also be taken into account that the woman in question on the panel could very well have been deceased at the time of the panel's creation.

Conclusion

As has been shown, an exploration of the Rijksmuseum panel of the Tree of Jesse offers a glimpse into a world full of fascinating religious traditions. Based on the notion that a work of its kind is certain to have functioned in a ritualistic context, an attempt has been made to explain the panel painting's unique elements by consulting contemporary (para-) liturgical and devotional sources. The added value lies mainly in observations that could not have been made if solely relying on visual comparisons, to wit: the striking absence of the theme of the Tree of Jesse in the primary sources of the Rosary devotion in the Low Countries; the existence of an older example of Jesse in an enclosed garden; and the close association of the Tree iconography with the Hours of the Virgin in contemporary breviaries and books of hours. In the specific case of the Rijksmuseum panel, the focus on liturgical-devotional sources even led to the unexpected, likely identification of one of the three auxiliary figures in the panel, specifically the man on the right, as the Haarlem priest Willem van Schoten, based on a depiction in a contemporary gradual. This identification provides an explanation for the specificity of the depiction of the man's attire, the architecture in the background, and the similarities between the panel and the Van Schoten triptych, as well as an additional (tenable) identification of the kneeling religious woman. Lastly, the identification offers an argument for situating the panel in the church of the St John's convent in Haarlem, linking it to references to a Tree of Jesse in that convent's inventories. Such observations may hopefully prove useful in the further interpretation of this exceptional panel.

ABSTRACT

The Tree of Jesse in the Rijksmuseum is a panel painting from circa 1500, attributed to (the circle of) Geertgen tot Sint Jans. Numerous studies have already been devoted to this panel, the majority of which centred on the question of its attribution. The present study's endeavour, however, is to determine the panel's function and the origin of the unique combination of the iconography of the Tree of Jesse with elements of the Rosary devotion. Consultation made clear this composite iconography cannot be traced to contemporary (para)liturgical and devotional sources, not even those concerning this Marian devotion. The Tree of Jesse iconography was by no means an obvious choice to visually express the Rosary theme, as is the case with the Rijksmuseum panel. In acknowledgement of the virtually exclusive occurrence of this iconography in breviaries and books of hours originating from the Low Countries (including the only other example of Jesse in an enclosed garden in a Lowland breviary), it is posited that the combined iconography arises from the practice of the Hours of the Virgin, and the breviaries and books of hours used for that purpose. Based on a unique visual correspondence to a Haarlem gradual and the Van Schoten triptych (consulted in drawings) combined with historical context, the man on the right of the panel can tenably be identified as Master Willem van Schoten. This would explain the figure's unconventional attire and the distinctive background architecture; it also allows a possible identification of the young religious woman. Most importantly, it provides an argument for situating the panel in the church of the St John's convent in Haarlem, linking it to the institution's inventories.

NOTES

- 1 Jan Piet Filedt Kok, 2010, 'Circle of Geertgen tot Sint Jans, *The Tree of Jesse*, Haarlem, c. 1500', in idem (ed.), *Early Netherlandish Paintings*, online coll. cat. Amsterdam: <https://data.rijksmuseum.nl/200107774> (consulted 1 June 2026), also with an extensive bibliography for the present panel.
- 2 For the most recent publication on the history of Tree of Jesse iconography, see Susan L. Green, *Tree of Jesse Iconography in Northern Europe in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, London/New York 2018.
- 3 Standard King James Version, for instance on <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org> (consulted 1 June 2026).
- 4 Rens Tienstra, 'The "Liber Generationis" in Liturgical Manuscripts from the Low Countries: Sources, Repertory, and Tradition', *Tijdschrift van de Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziek-geschiedenis* 75 (2025), no. 1, pp. 26-27.
- 5 See the entry on the Rijksmuseum *Tree of Jesse*, in Henk van Os et al. (eds.), *Netherlandish Art in the Rijksmuseum 1400-1600*, Amsterdam 2000, pp. 72-74, esp. p. 72.
- 6 Filedt Kok 2010 (note 1).
- 7 'dat die twee ghebroeders voers. noch sullen maecken in di twee leghe zwarte velden byneden in die groete tafel den stam van Yesse'. Haarlem, Noord-Hollands Archief (henceforth NL-HlMnHA), Kerkvoogdij van de Nederlands-Hervormde Gemeente te Haarlem (acc. no. 1561), inv. no. 316, Rekening van de kerkmeesters van de St. Bavoparochie, fol. 48. First edition of the text in A. van der Willigen Pz., *Geschiedkundige aantekeningen over Haarlemsche schilders en andere beoefenaren van de beeldende kunsten*, Haarlem 1866, pp. 50-51. See Liesbeth M. Helmus, *Schilderen in opdracht: Noord-Nederlandse contracten voor altaarstukken 1485-1570*, Amsterdam (diss. University of Amsterdam) 2010, pp. 360-61, 413-14. This altarpiece comprised a central caisse with carved scenes and four doors, of which the two small doors were attached at the top and the two large doors at the bottom. None of the scenes are further specified in the five preserved commissions related to this altarpiece. As far as can be ascertained, the Tree panel from this commission has not been preserved. The Rijksmuseum panel does not correspond to the description in terms of its size. It also displays no marks indicating it ever fulfilled the function of an altarpiece panel.
- 8 'Tauoreel vanden boom van Iesse'; 'Tauoreel geciert vanden boom van Iesse'. NL-HlMnHA, Kloosters te Haarlem (acc. no. 2123), inv. no. I.I.2.4, Commanderie van Sint Jan: Roerende goederen, no. 231, Inventory of the housewares in the house

- of the commandery, compiled 1572 and renewed 1580. See also Truus van Bueren, *Tot lof van Haarlem*, Hilversum 1993, pp. 394-96, 494-96. The inventory was drawn up in connection with the quartering of Geuzen troupes in their convent, for which reason they attempted to bring all their housewares and altarpieces into safety.
- 9 'Tauoreel sonder deuren vanden boom van Iesse'. Van Bueren 1993 (note 8), pp. 395, 515.
 - 10 The term 'Low Countries' in the present article refers to the regions in the valleys of the rivers Schelde, Maas and Rhine, including the Lower Rhine region, which c. 1500 included: Antwerp, Artesia, Brabant, Drenthe, Flanders and Walloon Flanders, Friesland, Gelderland and Zutphen, Groningen, Hainaut, Holland, Limburg and the lands of Overmaas, Lingen, Liège, Luxembourg, Mechelen, Namur, Overijssel, Tournai, Utrecht, Wedde and Westwoldingerland, Zeeland. These regions were largely reigned over by the House of Habsburg. The eastern border of this area was chiefly formed by the prince-bishoprics Münster and Cologne.
 - 11 Besides the panel in the Rijksmuseum Twenthe discussed hereafter, the only other panels known to me are the eight painted organ shutters of the church in Scheemda (Groningen), c. 1526, an ensemble attributed to a German painter. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. BK-NM-8184; see <https://id.rijksmuseum.nl/200141203> (consulted 1 June 2026).
 - 12 See the collection entry online: <https://collectie.rijksmuseumtwenthe.nl/detail/id/c242155a-2c27-569f-9f71-fc99ab9b0593> (consulted 1 June 2026).
 - 13 Cf. the eighteen examples on the website *Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts*: <https://manuscripts.kb.nl/> (KB – National Library of the Netherlands and Rijksmuseum Huis van het Boek, The Hague), search term 'Jesse' (no longer available from 15 December 2025 on, now included in Byvanck Database, RKD, consulted 1 June 2026).
 - 14 Brian E. Daley, 'The "Closed Garden" and the "Sealed Fountain": Song of Songs 4:12 in the Late Medieval Iconography of Mary', in Elizabeth B. Macdougall (ed.), *Medieval Gardens*, Washington (DC) 1986 (*Proceedings of the Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium*, vol. 9).
 - 15 The sleeping Jesse and the active forefathers are reminiscent of these figures in an engraving by Israhel van Meckenem, Bucholt (Germany), see Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. RP-P-OB-1142. The horizontal placement of the figures, however, is comparable to those on the panel in Twenthe.
 - 16 In the case of the present panel, the Rosary symbols form an additional argument for a localization (in the vicinity of) Haarlem, where the first Rosary confraternity in the Low Countries was founded in 1478.
 - 17 *The Virgin and Child* (Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, inv. no. 2450) and *The Crucifixion with Sts Dominic and Jerome* (Edinburgh, National Galleries Scotland, inv. no. NG 1253). See also Bernhard Ridderbos, 'Maria in sole en de rozenkransdevotie: het tweeluik Rotterdam-Edinburgh', in Henk van Os (ed.), *Gebed in schoonheid: Schatten van privé-devotie in Europa: 1300-1500*, Amsterdam 1994, pp. 151-56.
 - 18 The copy is preserved in Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Künste, inv. no. I.912, and is discussed in Klara Broekhuijsen-Kruijer, '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* 123 (2010), no. 3/4, pp. 220-34.
 - 19 Anne Winston-Allen, *Stories of the Rose: The Making of the Rosary in the Middle Ages*, Pennsylvania 1999, pp. 81-110.
 - 20 Observation based on the following:
 - the known murals of a 'Tree of Jesse' in the Netherlands: St Peter's Church (Pieterskerk), Utrecht; St John's Cathedral (Sint Janskathedraal), Den Bosch; Zuiderkerk, Enkhuizen; Bergkerk, Deventer; St Andrew's Church (Andrijskerk), Amerongen; St Gudula's Church (Grote or Gudula-Kerk), Lochem; Oude Kerk, Borne; Hervormde Kerk, Nisse; St Maarten's Church (St Maartenskerk), Zaltbommel (damaged, largely incomplete);
 - aforementioned panel painting in Rijksmuseum Twenthe (fig. 2) and the organ wings of the church in Scheemda (see note 11);
 - manuscripts with miniatures depicting a 'Tree' on the website *Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts*: <https://manuscripts.kb.nl/> (no longer available as of 15 December 2025, but currently found in the Byvanck Database, RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, search term 'Jesse', consulted 1 June 2026);
 - sources with miniatures of a 'Tree' in the British Library, London: mss. Royal 4 D 1; Burney 3; Royal 1 D 1; Arundel 83; Yates Thompson 14; Lansdowne 346; Royal 2 A XVIII;

- literature: Green 2018 (note 2); Barbara Haeger, Elliott Wise and James Clifton, *Mary, Mother of God: Devotion and Doctrine in the Visual Arts, 1450-1700*, Leiden 2023; Urs-Beat Frei, *Der Rosenkranz: Andacht, Geschichte, Kunst*, Bern 2003.
- 21 Truus van Bueren, *Leven na de dood: Gedenken in de late Middeleeuwen*, exh. cat. Utrecht (Museum Catharijneconvent) 1999, pp. 111, 277.
- 22 Here I apply the term as defined in L. Brinkhoff et al. (ed.), *Liturgisch - woordenboek*, Roermond 1965-68, pp. 1573-96, lemma 'liturgie'.
- 23 Ibid., p. 2140, lemma 'paraliturgie'.
- 24 Anne Winston, 'Tracing the Origins of the Rosary: German Vernacular Texts', *Speculum* 68 (1993), no. 3, pp. 619-36.
- 25 Bogusław Kochaniewicz, 'The Contribution of the Dominicans to the Development of the Rosary', *Dominican Spirituality | Angelicum* 81 (2004), no. 2, pp. 377-403.
- 26 Maurits Smeyers, 'Het Marianum of Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-in-de-zon: Getuige van een laat-middeleeuwse devotie in de Nederlanden en in Duitsland', *Beelden in de Late Middeleeuwen en Renaissance | Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 45 (1994), pp. 270-99, esp. p. 286.
- 27 Haeger, Wise and Clifton (eds.) 2023 (note 20), p. 75.
- 28 Winston 1993 (note 24), p. 630.
- 29 The annual feast of Our Dear Lady of Victory on 7 October, instituted later, formed the culmination of this liturgy. This feast was created as a yearly commemoration of the Catholic victory over the Ottomans in the Siege of Lepanto (1571). This victory was ascribed to the intercession of the Virgin Mary, because earlier that same day, a Rosary procession was held on the St Peter's Square in Rome.
- 30 Winston 1993 (note 24), p. 630.
- 31 Copy consulted: Leiden, University Library, 1370 G 35: 1. Digitization: <https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl/view/item/2208579> (consulted 1 June 2026).
- 32 Koen Goudriaan, 'Een drukker en zijn markt: Gheraert Leeu (Gouda 1477-Antwerpen 1492/3)', *Madoc* (1992), no. 4, pp. 194-205, esp. p. 199; Anna Dlabacova, 'Marian Devotions from a Printer's Perspective: The Rosary, the Seven Sorrows, and Gerard Leeu (d. 1492)', in Haeger, Wise and Clifton (eds.) 2023 (note 20), pp. 64-112.
- 33 Copy consulted: The Hague, KB – National Library of the Netherlands, 150 F 9.
- 34 Ulm, Konrad Dinckmut (1483, 1489, 1492); Augsburg, Anton Sorg (1490, 1492); Augsburg, Lukas Zeissenmair (1495, 1502). Copy consulted: Leiden, Leiden University Library, LTK 218: a compiled manuscript in three parts (Dutch language), with, in the first part (Northern Netherlands, IJssel region [Zwolle-Zutphen], 15th/16th century), the Dutch-language translation of the *Psalterium Virginis Mariae* on fols. 25v-43r, and *exempla* (miracle stories) of Mary on fols. 43r-53v.
- 35 Paul H.A.M. Abels et al., *Geschiedenis van Gouda*, Hilversum 2021, p. 89.
- 36 *Van Marien rosenkransen* has been mentioned in two recent studies concerning the work of Geertgen tot Sint Jans, see Haeger, Wise and Clifton (eds.) 2023 (note 20), p. 82 ff.; Broekhuijsen-Kruijer 2010 (note 18).
- 37 'Ende die broederscap laet oec mede toe die ghestorven sijn ende maect deelachtich haer goede werken als si dede voer hem doe si leefden.' (Abbreviations here and in the quotations below have been transcribed in italics.) Leiden, University Library, 1370 G 35, fol. 37r. The posthumous admittance of deceased individuals was possible as a consequence of Pope Sixtus IV's 1476 decree stating that Rosary indulgences also applied to souls in Purgatory.
- 38 'ende sijn heylighen wat te gheven tot waslichte [waskaarsen] of aelmis om te vercieren die outaren ende ander dingen'. Leiden, University Library, 1370 G 35, fol. 27r.
- 39 'Want die sommighen lesen alle daghe een vrouwen hoet. Die ander een souter. Die ander seker ghebeden of guede werken toedoen [also alst die mededeyler alre gaven ghelijc mitter maget maria een yeghelike mensche des broederscaps mededeylet na dattet van noot is]'. Leiden, University Library, 1370 G 35, fol. 36r.
- 40 Leiden, University Library, 1370 G 35, fol. 99r.
- 41 Specifically, Isa. 53:4 and Isa. 55:10-11.
- 42 The title page shows a heart encircled by a crown of thorns, in its turn encircled by a string of beads with five flowers, each containing one of the five wounds of Christ.
- 43 Dendrochronological analysis of the Rijksmuseum panel showed that the panel's wood could have been ready for use by as early as 1480, though a dating in or after 1494 was deemed more probable. For an overview of the scientific research, reports and bibliography of the panel, see Filedt Kok 2010 (note 1).
- 44 Consulted collections for manuscripts (all web addresses last consulted 1 June 2026):

- KB – National Library of the Netherlands, The Hague; Rijksmuseum Huis van het Boek, The Hague; University Library, Leiden; Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht; University Library, Utrecht; Noord-Hollands Archief, Haarlem; Athenaeumbibliotheek, Deventer; Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels; digitized manuscripts in de Erzbischöfliche Diözesan- und Dombibliothek Köln mit Bibliothek St. Albertus Magnus (<https://www.dombibliothek-koeln.de/start/>); digitized incunabula University of Groningen Library (<https://dbc.rug.nl/digital/search/advanced>). Consulted databases: *Byvanck-database* (via RKD Research; <https://research.rkd.nl/>; search terms 'Jesse', 'Yesse', 'tree', 'rosary'); *Short-Title Catalogue Netherlands* (https://data.cerl.org/stcn/_search?lang=nl); *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue (ISTC)* (https://data.cerl.org/istc/_search).
- 45 Another, catechetical work, i.e. not to be interpreted as a liturgical source, is *Spiegel der Menschlijker behoudensse/ onser behoudensse*, a Middle Dutch booklet circulating in print, e.g. The Hague, Rijksmuseum Huis van het Boek, 001 E 021 (Culenburg: Johan Veldener, 27 September 1483). The oldest known (incomplete) print in the West-Flemish language is London, British Library, Add. 11575 (c. 1410). The oldest surviving print in the Netherlands is Haarlem, Stadsbibliotheek, Depot Frans Hals Museum, 11 17. See Joost Roger Robbe, *Der mittelniederländische Spiegel onser behoudensse und seine lateinische Quelle. Text, Kontext und Funktion*, Münster 2010 (*Niederlande-Studien*, vol. 48). It is a translation of the popular-theological work *Speculum humanae salvationis* (1309-24) by an anonymous Dominican brother from southern Germany or northern Italy, disseminated in both manuscripts and incunabula (e.g. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 2 Inc.s.a. 1087: *Speculum humanae salvationis* (Augsburg, before 1473)). The work clearly expresses the Marian interpretation of the Tree: 'Virga Yesse Mariam signans' (the tree trunk of Jesse symbolizes Mary), as the inscription above the Tree reads in one of the prints. In the images included in multiple editions (including *Spiegel onser behoudensse*), however, one is also presented with a remarkable visual re-interpretation of the Tree: the figure of Jesse is replaced by Mary herself; or, Jesse lies simply in bed, while Mary looks on with the tree growing out of her belly (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Rar. 713, fol. 14v).
- 46 See the indexed sources in the *Handschriften-datenbank* of the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel (<https://diglib.hab.de/?db=mss>; consulted 6 November 2025), search term 'Jesse'.
- 47 See the indexed sources on *Gallica* of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (<https://gallica.bnf.fr/accueil/en/html/accueil-en>; consulted 1 June 2026), search term 'L'arbre de Jesse'.
- 48 E.g. KB – National Library of the Netherlands, The Hague: ms. 76 E 22, fol. 336v; 76 F 23, fol. 243v; 76 G 2, fol. 327v; 132 F 21, fol. 485r. British Library, London: Royal 4 D 1, fol. 2; Burney 3, fol. 402; Royal 1 D 1, fol. 431v.
- 49 E.g. British Library, London: ms. Arundel 83, fol. 14; Yates Thompson 14, fol. 7; Lansdowne 346, fol. 7; Royal 2 A XVIII, fol. 96.
- 50 Tienstra 2025 (note 4), pp. 43-48.
- 51 Haarlem, NL-HlMNH, ms. 184 C 1.
- 52 Tienstra 2025 (note 4), p. 20.
- 53 Several Low Country examples in which this is the case: Utrecht, Museum Catharijneconvent, ms. ABM 62 (missal winter part of Utrecht's cathedral of St Martin, early thirteenth century); New York, Public Library, ms. 92 (gradual of the Haarlem Augustine Hermits, 1493-94); Haarlem, Noord-Hollands Archief, ms. 184 C 4 (antiphonal of the Haarlem Commandery of St John the Baptist, sixteenth century); Den Bosch, Brabants Historisch Informatie Centrum, Illustre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap in 's-Hertogenbosch (acc. no. 1232), inv. no. 152 'Codex Smijers' (choir book containing Gregorian chant and polyphonic compositions in square notation, made by the Gregoriushuis in Den Bosch, later supplemented by Philippus de Spina, c. 1529-64); Amsterdam, University Library, 1 B 50 (processional St Martin's church (Martinker) Groningen, 1600).
- 54 Several examples originating from outside the Low Countries where this is the case: Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, Latin 8892 (*Evangeliarium ad usum capellae regiae Parisiensis*, dit Premier Evangélaire de la Sainte-Chapelle, 1230-48); Latin 9455 (*Evangeliarium ad usum Sanctae Capellae Parisiensis*, dit Deuxième Evangélaire de la Sainte-Chapelle, 1239-42); Lübeck, Stadtbibliothek, ms. theol. lat. 2° 10 (Cistercian antiphonal, northern Germany, fourteenth century).

- 55 Both are book types in which one finds the texts with prayers said daily. The breviary was above all used by clergy, monks and priests for their required daily prayer. Although based on the breviary, the book of hours was chiefly used in the private devotion of lay persons, monials and beguines. Less comprehensive and complex than the breviary, it contained those prayers not linked to any one specific day in the church year. As a rule, a book of hours has three core texts – *Little Office of Our Lady* (also called the ‘Hours of the Virgin’), the seven *Penitential Psalms* and the *Vigil of the Dead* (also called the ‘Office of the Dead’) – and is typically supplemented with other thematized prayers. The Dutch-language book of hours was unprecedentedly popular in the late Middle Ages and was written and printed on a large scale. For literature, see Anna Dlabacova, Irene Van Eldere and Susanne de Jong, ‘Het heil, het leven en de dag: De tijd in Middelnederlandse gebedenboeken’, *De Boekenwereld* 40 (2024), no. 4, pp. 10-15; Sandra Hindman and James Marrow (eds.), *Book of Hours Reconsidered*, London/Turnhout 2013 (*Studies in Medieval and Early Renaissance Art History*, vol. 72); Gregory Clark, Rob Dückers and Ruud Priem (eds.), *The Hours of Catherine of Cleves: Devotion, Demons and Daily Life in the Fifteenth Century*, Antwerp 2009; Saskia van Bergen, ‘Boeken voor de anonieme markt’, in Saskia van Bergen, Anne Margreet M.W. As-Vijvers and Micha Leeflang (eds.), *Beeldschone Boeken: De Middeleeuwen in goud en inkt*, exh. cat. Utrecht (Museum Catharijneconvent) 2009, pp. 80-96.
- 56 Dominique Vanwijnsberghe and Erik Verroken, ‘Brevier van Filips de Goede ten gebruike van Parijs, winterdeel [Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium, ms. 9511]’, in Bernard Bousmanne et al., *Vlaamse miniaturen: 1404-1482*, exh. cat. Brussels (Royal Library of Belgium)/Paris (Bibliothèque nationale de France) 2012, pp. 234-36, cat. no. 42.
- 57 *Ibid.*, p. 235.
- 58 Also noteworthy is an illumination found in an epistolary (selection of the New Testament letters) from Amiens from c. 1475-1505, which depicts Jesse sitting on a wall (of an enclosed garden?). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, ms-662 réserve, fol. 104v. My thanks to Anne-Maria van Egmond for bringing this image to my attention.
- 59 For extensive information on the compilation, history and meaning of the Hours of the Virgin, see Angelinus J. Koenders O.Carm., *Maria in den Eeredienst der Katholieke Kerk*, Amsterdam 1927, pp. 195-256; Ethelred L. Taunton, *The Little Office of Our Lady: A Treatise. Theoretical, Practical and Exegetical*, London 1903; Roger S. Wieck, *Time Sanctified*, New York 1988, pp. 60-88. The Hours of the Virgin should not be confused with the ‘Saturday Hours of the Virgin’, prayed only on Saturdays.
- 60 Literal English translations of ‘Als een wijnranc droech ick vrucht’, ‘Ende hi hevet ons opgerecht den hoern der salicheit in David sijns kindes geslachte’, ‘Yesses wortel hevet gegroyt. wt Iacob is wtgegaen een sterre. een maget hevet den gesontmaker ghewonnen’. Leiden, University Library, BPL 2747, resp. fol. 29r, 29v, 38r.
- 61 Jan Mostaert painted both Isaiah and Jeremiah (Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, inv. no. St 14). Both works are dated c. 1520.
- 62 Filedt Kok 2010 (note 1). The female figure has been hidden for some time beneath a wall and fence added later but was revealed during a 1932 restoration.
- 63 Remmet van Luttervelt, ‘De herkomst en lotgevallen van Mostaert’s Boom van Jesse’, *Historia* 13 (1948), pp. 265-68.
- 64 Max J. Friedländer, *Die altniederländische Malerei*, vol. 10, Berlin/Leiden 1932, p. 28.
- 65 For a comprehensive discussion of this subject, see Loncke Hoondert, *Kloosterkleding in beeld*, diss. Utrecht (Utrecht University) 2010, and the numerous illustrations on the eponymous website: <https://staticweb.hum.uu.nl/memo/kloosterkleding/Home.html>. Examples of ‘problem cases’ are presented on <https://staticweb.hum.uu.nl/memo/kloosterkleding/Probleemgevallen.html> (consulted 1 June 2026).
- 66 Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-3926.
- 67 Cf. a contemporaneous example of such a liturgical book from Haarlem: NL-HlmNHA, ms. 184 C 1: missal from the St John’s convent, 1511.
- 68 For an extensive description of the founding of this monastery, see J.M. Sterck-Proot, ‘Het Haarlemsche Jacobsgilde’, *Bijdragen voor de Geschiedenis van het Bisdóm Haarlem* 54 (1937), pp. 290-302.
- 69 For an introduction to the book, see Wilhelmina (Helen) C.M. Wüstefeld, ‘Een graduale ter nagedachtenis: een

- monumentaal koorboek nog eens bekeken', *Tijdschrift voor Gregoriaans* 25 (2000), no. 3, pp. 100-12. For a discussion of the book's musical content, see Rens Tienstra, *Duizend jaar doorgegeven*, Hilversum 2024, pp. 147-55.
- 70 For the dating of the Rijksmuseum panel, see note 43.
- 71 See Klaas van der Hoek, 'De Noord Hollandse verluchter Spierinck: Haarlem en/of Beverwijk, ca. 1485-1519', in *Middeleeuwse handschriftenkunde in de Nederlanden 1988: verslag van de Groningse Codicologendagen 28-29 april 1988*, Grave 1989, pp. 163-82. Van der Hoek posits that Spierinck is to be identified as Sybrant Spierinck, brother in the Augustine monastery in Beverwij.
- 72 Wüstefeld 2000 (note 69), esp. p. 101.
- 73 Cf. for example the depicted Johannites and their monastic brothers in Geertgen tot Sint Jans's *Legend of the Relics of St John the Baptist* (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. no. Gemäldegalerie, 993), or the cleric in front in Geertgen's *Raising of Lazarus* (Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. RF 1285).
- 74 Alexandra Barratt and Stephanie Hollis (eds.), *Migrations: Medieval Manuscripts in New Zealand*, Newcastle 2007, p. 252.
- 75 In the parable about proper prayer, a Pharisee prays confident of his own righteousness while looking down on the evil deeds of others, while a tax collector humbly beseeches God for mercy, that he may be forgiven for his sins. Jesus ends his parable by concluding that it is the humble tax collector who returned home justified before God.
- 76 Identification by mr. Th. Bye de Dölleman, published for the first time in Wilhelmina (Helen) C.M. Wüstefeld, *De boeken van de Grote of Sint Bavokerk: Een bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van het middeleeuwse boek in Haarlem*, Hilversum 1989, note 195. Bye de Dölleman's extensive dossier on the Van Schotens is preserved as NL-HlMnHA, *Collectie van Thierry de Bye Dölleman* (acc. no. 1132), 'betreffende genealogieën van Haarlemse families vóór ca. 1600' and is digitized. For the present study, these annotations were reviewed in person.
- 77 For an overview of the history of the St John's Church, see the website 'Janskerk Haarlem 700 jaar': <https://janskerk-haarlem700.nl/index.html> (consulted 1 June 2026). The four Van Schoten commanders were: Willem (1391-1428), Gerrit (1428-1460), Pieter (1461-1472) and Nicolaes (1473-1484). Master Willem is not to be confused with the Johannite commander of the same name from the same family, who lived from 1391 to 1428.
- 78 Date of death known via the appointment of priest Arnoldus van Dorp at the vicarage of 'Onze Lieve Vrouw' in the church at Akersloot in connection with Willem's death: '1495/96: Institutio Arnoldi de Dorp ad vicariam B. Mariae sitam in eccl. de Ackersloet vac. p. mort. Wilhelmi de Scoten, 3 scuta. 20 stuf. Act. 23 Aprilis.' See *Haarlemsche bijdragen*, vol. 45/46, Haarlem 1928, p. 291, and C.P.M. Holtkamp, *Register op de parochiën, altaren, vicarieën en de bedienaars zooals die voorkomen in de middeleeuwsche rekeningen van den officiaal des aartsdiakens van den Utrechtschen Dom. Derde deel: Kennemaria*, Haarlem 1930, p. 15.
- 79 This is confirmed in the necrology of the commandery: NL-HlMnHA, Kloosters te Haarlem (acc. no. 2123), inv. no. 1.1.4.1, Mislezing, no. 359-360, 'Liber memoriarum domus hospitalis S. Joannis Hierosolimitani in Haerle(m)' (created 1570, maintained until 1606), fol. 43v: 'Meester Willem van Scoten presbiter et frater'. This is also the only Van Schoten listed as 'Meester'. That this is not in reference to the commander Willem of the same name is evident from the fact that this commander – with his title – is named on fol. 21.
- 80 Karel Gerard Boon, 'Geertgen tot Sint Jans of Jan Mostaert', *Oud-Holland* 81 (1966), pp. 61-72.
- 81 Van Bueren 1999 (note 21), p. 222: 'een drieluik waarvan de huidige verblijfplaats niet bekend is'.
- 82 Van Bueren 1999 (note 21), pp. 222-23.
- 83 Ibid.
- 84 All of them are described as being buried beneath the blue tombstone ('de blauwe zerk') in the necrology of St John's convent (see note 79) on fol. 62v-63r. The necrology lists a total of twenty-four Van Schotens by surname; see fols. 5r, 9r, 14r, 15r, 20r, 21r, 32r, 34r, 43v, 49r, 58r, 62v (bailiff Gerrit and family), 63r, 65r, 72r.
- 85 This is also the case in the *Virgin and Child in a Garden* by the Master of the Tiburtine Sibyl (private collection, RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, image no. 71997).
- 86 See notes 8 and 9.
- 87 Van Bueren 1993 (note 8), pp. 394-496, esp. p. 515 (inventory of the goods transferred to the Adriaansdoelen). For the history of the St John's Church, see note 77.
- 88 Erminia Ardisino, 'Literary and Visual Forms of a Domestic Devotion: The Rosary in Renaissance Italy', in Maya Corry,

- Marco Faini and Alessia Meneghin (eds.), *Domestic Devotions in Early Modern Italy*, Leiden/Boston 2019 (*Intersections: Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture*, vol. 59/1), p. 346.
- 89 Wüstefeld 2000 (note 69), pp. 107-08.
- 90 Cf. the catalogues *Medieval Memoria Online* (Utrecht University) and *Leven na de dood* (Van Bueren 1999 (note 21)).
- 91 Here I am following the catalogue cited in Aart van der Kuijl, *Geertgen tot Sint Jans: Het mirakel van Haarlem*, Haarlem 2019, pp. 171-296.
- 92 Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. RF 1285.
- 93 The comparison involved the catalogues *Medieval Memoria Online* (Utrecht University), *Leven na de dood* (Van Bueren 1999 (note 21)) and the (digitized) collections of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Museum Catharijneconvent (Utrecht), Museum De Lakenhal (Leiden), Rijksmuseum Twenthe (Enschede) and Bonnefanten (Maastricht).
- 94 Hoondert 2010 (note 65), pp. 44-45. See especially Geertgen tot Sint Jans's *Legend of the Relics of St John the Baptist*, in which Knights Hospitaller brothers in various raiment are depicted (see note 73).
- 95 For the necrology, see note 79.
- 96 The depicted courtyard garden and church tower suggest a monastery complex. There are no known images of the St John's convent contemporaneous with the panel. Nevertheless, the oldest known ground plan of the convent's site, from 1570-80, and later depictions suggest a complex in which some of the convent buildings have stepped-gable facades. See NL-HlMnHA, Beeldcollectie van de gemeente Haarlem (acc. no. 1100), Kaarten en plattegronden, 1500-2005, inv. no. 52.359, 'Plattegrond van het terrein van het Sint-Jansklooster'.
- 97 This annotation originates from St Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, book XXI, chapter 4. See <https://theologienet.nl/bestanden/augustinus-de-stad-gods-compleet.pdf> (consulted 1 June 2026).
- 98 Cf. the paintings with peacocks by Jan Mostaert (*Portrait of Abel van der Coulster*, Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, inv. no. 2935); the Master of the Brunswick Diptych (*Virgin and Child, St Anne, Donor and St Barbara*, Braunschweig, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, inv. no. GG 13); and the Master of the Tiburtine Sibyl (*Emperor Augustus and the Tiburtine Sibyl*, Frankfurt am Main, Städtisches Kunstinstitut und Städtische Galerie, inv. no. 727).
- 99 For that comparison, see note 93.
- 100 Wouter van Gouthoeven, *D'oude Chronijcke ende Historien van Holland met West-Vriesland, van Zeeland ende van Utrecht. Van nieuw oversien, vermeerderd (etc.) Beginnende van den Jare ... 449. tot ... Jaer 1636*, The Hague (Hillebrant van Wouw) 1636, p. 205.