

Constructing Imaginary Cities in Fifteenth-Century Illumination:

The Iconography of Troy as Mental Discourse¹

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Abstract: In the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the Trojan legend was one of the most popular myths in the European courts, and in the Burgundian court in particular. The legend was depicted in numerous tapestries and illuminated manuscripts. This article examines the image of Troy in Franco-Flemish illumination of the fifteenth century. I explore and interpret the iconography of Troy as a mental and semiotic construct linked to such real cities as Jerusalem, Rome, and Constantinople. I will examine images of the real cities and the ways in which they influenced the formation of Troy's iconography, a connection overlooked in current scholarship. The research will therefore focus on the permanent architectural and landscape elements borrowed from real cities, which were mythologized and sacralized in the European tradition. Emphasis will be placed on the city's visual representation in the miniatures as influenced by literary materials (i.e. medieval manuscripts containing stories of Troy). My particular interest lies in how the image of Troy evolved simultaneously through a religious and political perspective. That is to say, I will pay particular attention to the cultural codes, the sacred topography and the contexts creating images of the nonexistent city.

Keywords: Imaginary Cities, Troy, Medieval Manuscript Illumination, 15th Century, Duchy of Burgundy, Trojan Legends.

¹ I would like to thank the professor Natalia Mazur (European University at Saint-Petersburg) and professor Barbara Baert (KU Leuven) for their supervision. I would like also to thank the head of the *Illuminare* research center (KU Leuven) professor Jan Van der Stock and professor Lieve Watteuw (KU Leuven) for their precious advice, hospitality and for welcoming me in their research team. I am also grateful to the International Center of Medieval Art for supporting my work by awarding me the 2014 ICMA Student Essay Prize.

Introduction

This article examines the image of Troy in Franco-Flemish illuminations, examining how people constructed imaginary cities in the fifteenth century. By imaginary cities I mean cities that stopped existing in reality but were still depicted in art and occasionally represented on maps, as in medieval *mappae mundi*. The *libraires* who made programs of the manuscripts and the masters who created images of imaginary cities in various media including tapestry, paintings, printings and illumination, could not see these cities in reality. At the same time, these imaginary cities occupied a significant place on the mental map of the Franco-Flemish world, fueling European imagination over centuries. Miniature painters manipulated famous images of the faraway land that were influenced by the collective memory of generations and by historical events. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the iconography of Troy as a semiotic construct.

My study is based on analysis of forty examples of fifteenth-century illuminated manuscripts with the Trojan legend. First, I will study both the permanent architectural and landscape elements that comprise the Troy image. Second, I will consider the influence of the literary material on visual representation, as medieval literature devoted to the Trojan cycle certainly affected the principles of its representation in the accompanying miniatures. Finally, I will compare the image of Troy with depictions of such real cities as Jerusalem, Rome and Constantinople as mythologized and sacralized by the European tradition. In other words, particular attention will be paid to the cultural codes, the sacred topography and the contexts creating the image of the non-existent city of Troy.²

² Like Shepard and Powell (2004), I am interested in the Trojan legend as a part of the social imaginary. However, my study is based on visual art. Following Taylor (2004: 23), I define social imaginary as what “is shared by large group of people, if not the whole society.” The exhibition *La ciutat que mai no existí. Arquitectures fantàstiques en l’art occidental* (Ramoneda 2003) was also dedicated to viewing cities as mental constructs. The curators drew parallels between invented, fantastic cities and real cities unknown to artists or consciously modified by them. Part of the exhibition featured Flemish Baroque art, displaying two seventeenth-century paintings with the image of Troy by Francisco Collantes and Juan de la Corte. The curators’ classification of Troy as a cursed city—equal to Babylon, Sodom and Gomorrah—though unmentioned in the Bible, is of special value here (Ramoneda 2003: 145).

A number of studies of the Trojan myth in the visual arts were published in the second part of the twentieth century.³ These works provide evidence of the emerging interest in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the ideological implications of commissioning tapestries representing the Trojan legend.⁴ As a result of these studies, the tapestries are now considered not only as works of art and decorations but also as parts of complicated ideological programs serving the terms of power.⁵

The permanent architectural and landscape elements of Troy will serve as the basis for examination of historical and mythological analogies between Troy and the cities significant for European cultural tradition. These elements will be analyzed iconographically, in combination with textual analysis.

The legend of Troy, which appeared in antiquity, circulated at the European courts from the sixth through the sixteenth century. On an equal basis with biblical scenes, the Trojan myth was perceived in the Middle Ages as part of world history and was included in chronicles. Inasmuch as the Trojan heroes proved to be invaluable for enhancing the high status and the ancient origins of the newly established Duchy of Burgundy, the fourteenth and especially the fifteenth century saw the appropriation of the Troy image by the Franco-Flemish world as its

³ For instance, in her book, Scherer (1963) collected materials including 190 works of art created throughout European history from the ninth century B.C.E. through the twentieth century (e.g. paintings, frescos, sculptures, tapestries and drawings for tapestries, wood engravings, lithographs, bas-reliefs, reliefs, watercolors, and even cassone panels) and illustrated the visual representations of the Trojan myth with quotes from various texts by more than a hundred authors (e.g. writers, poets, travelers, philosophers, historians, orators, and musical compositions). Her attempt to compare the form of the dome in a miniature from the Trojan cycle with the form of the Hagia Sofia in Constantinople is, in my view, not entirely satisfactory, as will be shown later.

⁴ On some of the surviving French and Flemish tapestries and tapestry cartoons with the Trojan legend, some architectural elements can be occasionally found. The city of Troy is depicted with arches, gates and parts of the city walls. As Hedeman (2010: 297) has pointed out: "Spaces defined by city walls, architecture, and tents isolate individual scenes that fully fill the surface, from the ground plane to the horizon, as was typical of fifteenth-century tapestry and of some late-fifteenth-century manuscripts." Based on theatrical and narration principals, such scenes inside the buildings as, for example, the councils of war, are of utmost interest for my research. Among the other subjects, the battles in front of the city walls and the destruction of Troy deserve special attention.

⁵ For more on the visual programs of tapestries, their subjects, and their patrons in the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Franco-Flemish world see Asselberghs (1972), Duverger (1960, 1962), D'Hulst (1960: 49-58), Forsyth (1955), McKendrick (1988), and Smith (1979, 1989). McKendrick's comprehensive study (1991) manages to reveal the connection between the original tapestries and their numerous reproductions, demonstrating a change in the nobility's taste in the middle ages under the influence of art. The author reconstructs the history of the creation and existence of a series of tapestries on the Troy legend from the fourteenth through the nineteenth century.

own historical past. During the period of the religious wars in the sixteenth century, the Trojan myth was used as a basis for the consolidation of the unlimited monarchy.⁶ At the turn of the seventeenth century, the Trojan legend ceased to be perceived as a reliable historical source and no longer promoted the creation of a genealogical myth.⁷ Therefore, Troy was becoming a less attractive subject for representation in miniatures. Concerning the art technique itself, engraving and printing books had replaced manuscripts by the end of the fifteenth century.⁸ Taken together, these circumstances determine the upper chronological boundary of my research.

The Trojan Myth's Ideological Context in the Franco-Flemish World of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries

⁶ The printed text of Homer's epic appeared in Europe in 1488. In France, Homer's works influenced such humanists as the Hellenist Guillaume Budé (1468-1540) and the court poet Jean Dorat (1508-1588), who in turn had an impact on the members of the poetic association "La Pléiade." For more on propaganda of the early sixteenth century in French literature, see Lindner (1978). The result was the emergence of two works related to the Trojan myth: the text *Les illustrations de Gaule et singularités de Troye* (1509-1513) by Jean Lemaire de Belges (1473-1524) and the unfinished poem "Franciade" (1572) by Pierre de Ronsard (1524 -1585).

⁷ The sixteenth century saw the change of a cultural paradigm and the public ceased to trust chronicles recording the origin of the monarchs from Trojan heroes. However, the Trojan legend remained a popular subject in art: Caravagghi seized the opportunity to show the effects of light and shadow in images of Troy captured by fire. Due to the excavation in Herculaneum and Pompeii and infatuation with classicism, Troy started to be represented as an antique city instead of a medieval one. During the post-Renaissance period, Paris stopped being called New Troy, with Rome taking its place.

⁸ Troy appears as well on the engravings from *The Nuremberg Chronicle* known as *Schedelsche Weltchronik* (1493) by Hartmann Schedel. Three kings (Troys, Anchises and Laomedon) are depicted on folio XXXVI due to their connection with the Trojan story, with the city of Troy seen below. One can observe the confusion of names in the recounting of the Trojan legend. The chronicle narrates the story about the construction and destruction of the city. The chronicler, referring to Homer, describes Troy as "the most celebrated city among all other cities under the sun and the heavenly stars." (All translations are my own unless otherwise noted). Alluding to Ovid and Virgil, the chronicler created an almost bucolic image of Troy with fields, farms, and ruins. In the engraving, the city of Troy is depicted in the days of its prosperity rather than in the period of destruction and rebuilding. In contrast, in the same chronicle the city of Jerusalem has three different images. In the engravings the city of Troy is represented as a typical European city strongly fortified by walls and towers, with a citadel erected on a hill, a river flowing below, and two gothic churches with a crescent. The same image of Troy served as a model for creating other cities. For example, on the first folio (LXXI v) the city of Tolosa was founded by the Trojan Tolosus. The next copy from the first engraving with Troy is the city of Tiburtina (folio CXIII) still called ancient Tibur. It lies not far from Rome and is believed to be of Greek origin. The last image from the Chronicle is that of Ravenna (folio CXLII), which in different periods of its history was connected with the Sabines and Emperor Tiberius who surrounded this city with walls. Why was only one prototype used for creating 4 images of different cities? Perhaps it can be explained by their common antique heritage. The engravings showing Troy's destruction are found in another printed book, the *Grandes chroniques de France* (New York Public Library, Spencer Collection, French 1493) published by Anthoine Vérard in Paris in 1493. The medal tradition of the Trojan subject goes back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The image of the Trojan horse is depicted on medals in the center of the square of the blazing Troy. It evokes the tradition of illumination where the Trojan horse is the only element identifying the city as Troy. The second variant of the medal bears the image of a guard with a gun on the tower. For the Flemish tradition see Van Loon (1732-1737).

The Burgundian, Anjou, and Orleans courts, which established close relations with the royal court in Paris, actively cultivated the Trojan myth. This is reflected in their collections of tapestries and miniatures on Trojan subjects in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁹ The first tapestries with the Trojan legend appeared in the collection of Duke Louis of Anjou in 1364 (McKendrick 1991: 44). The other courts followed the Duke of Anjou by ordering tapestries on the same subjects.

Tapestries were an elite art, costly for customers. They were nonetheless easily accessible to general viewers, thus playing a significant role in visual propaganda.¹⁰ The illuminated manuscripts, primarily chronicles, performed the same propagandistic function and could be used to produce the impression of the Duchy of Burgundy's high status and, therefore, could be seen by the privileged. The presence of the tapestries and miniatures in the ducal collections vividly demonstrates that the adoption of a patrimonial connection with Troy was regarded by royalty as vital, first of all, in the public sphere.¹¹

The Trojan legend was popular in artworks created for the Burgundian court for two main reasons. First, the French kings and the Burgundian dukes, who traced their ancestry back to the Trojan kings and heroes, claimed the throne, especially in the case of the recently formed Duchy of Burgundy (1363-1477). Second, ideas of the crusades, which echoed the travel of the Argonauts to the East, were still central. As the preface to the novels about Troy, the Argonauts' campaign was perceived as heralding the new crusade against the "infidels" for which the Duke of Burgundy Philip the Good (1396-1467) founded the order of the Golden Fleece in 1430. The

⁹ Around a hundred sets of tapestries consisting of ten or more parts were created for Duke Philip the Good. The duke preferred the Trojan legend along with the histories of Jason and Gideon and of Alexander the Great's deeds. (Smith 1989: 123).

¹⁰ As Shepard and Powell (2004: 3) put it: "fantasies of Troy often had as target audiences ordinary people and the collective frameworks and foundational myths of their societies."

¹¹ The beginning of the twentieth century saw the first research into the Trojan legend devoted to Duchy of Burgundy (Bayot 1908). The scholar gives a thorough description of fifteen manuscripts and compares the texts of the manuscripts from the collections of Bibliothèque Nationale de France and Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique. It is remarkable that the author paid no attention to the potential influence of the manuscripts' customers and, consequently, the books were analyzed without the ideological context of the circulation of the Trojan legend at the Burgundian court.

order of the Golden Fleece's meeting hall was decorated with Trojan War tapestries (McKendrick 1991: 56).¹²

Taking Philip the Good's library as an example, it is possible to show the duke's growing interest in the myth of Jason's journey for the Golden Fleece.¹³ The duke's collection of manuscripts connected with the Trojan legend grew in number from two books inherited by the duke in 1420 to sixteen manuscripts acquired by 1467 (Vanderjagt 1995: 272). It is from Duke Philip the Good that the history of the Duchy of Burgundy starts being rewritten.¹⁴ Opening with the world's foundation, the chronicles then address the Trojan heroes, the fall of Troy and the threat from Muslims.¹⁵ The inner circle of Duke Philip the Good, fascinated by the myth of the Golden Fleece, commissioned manuscripts describing the Trojan legend.¹⁶ Among his inner circle were: his illegitimate son, Anthony, bastard of Burgundy (1421-1504);¹⁷ Philippe I de

¹² During the Feast of the Pheasant in 1454 when Duke Philip the Good and his entourage pledged to go on a crusade against the Turks, who had captured Constantinople the year before, the banquet hall was decorated with tapestries on subjects from the Trojan cycle about the heroic deeds of Hercules and the Argonauts.

¹³ Duke Philip the Good commissioned the priest Raoul Le Fèvre to write an epic text in honor of the Order of the Golden Fleece. The latter created two tales of chivalry: *L'Histoire de Jason* (1460) and *Recueil des histoires de Troie* (1464). Raoul Le Fèvre took works by Ovid, Dares Phrygius, and Guido de Columna as his basis and depicted Jason as an ideal knight.

¹⁴ For more on chroniclers' attempts to rewrite history in favor of the Duchy of Burgundy, which connected the dukes with the Brabantine tradition and appeared to be more ancient than the Valois French dynasty, see Moodey (2012: 33-35).

¹⁵ I will also refer to a variety of works of a historical nature as chronicles, including *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César* (thirteenth to fourteenth centuries) based on the biblical legends, *Heroides* by Ovid, as well as the history of the world in four volumes by the Burgundian writer Jean Mansel, *La fleur des Histoires* (1467), namely the history of France from Creation to the reign of Charles VI containing a mixture of biblical and pagan legends.

¹⁶ The following manuscripts commissioned by Philip the Good were devoted to Troy:

- 1) Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique. Ms. 9005. *De Civitate Dei*. Aurelius Augustinus. Low Countries. 1420-1435.
- 2) Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique. Ms. 9240. *Historia destructionis Trojae*. Guido de Columna. Mons (?), Low Countries. 1430.
- 3) Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique. Ms. 9231. *Fleur des Histoires*. Jean Mansel. Belgium. 1446-1451.
- 4) Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique. Ms. 9392. *Épître d'Othea a Hector*. Christine de Pizan. Lille, South of the Low Countries. After 1460.
- 5) Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique. Ms. 9253. *Historia destructionis Trojae*. Guido de Columna. South of the Low Countries. Not later than 1467.
- 6) Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique. Ms. 9261. *Recueil des histoires de Troie*. Raoul Le Fèvre. Flanders. 1467.
- 7) St. Petersburg, the Russian National Library. Fr. F. v. IV. 12. *Histoire universelle*. Commissioned by Philip the Good (?). Bruges, Flanders. Second half of the XV century.
- 8) St. Petersburg, the Russian National Library. Fr. F. v. IV. 13/1-2. *Chronique d'histoire ancienne (La Bouquechardière)*. Jean de Courcy. Vol. I-II. France. 1470.

¹⁷ Manuscript commissioned by Anthony, bastard of Burgundy, which was devoted to Troy: Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique. Ms. 9571-72. *Historia destructionis Trojae*. Guido de Columna. Flanders. 1468.

Croÿ (1435-1511),¹⁸ the representative of a noble family that gained prominence during the Burgundian dukes' rule; and Jean de Wavrin (1398-1474),¹⁹ another illegitimate offspring of a noble family, a military officer and a chronicler who held high positions during the rule of Philip the Good. I assume that by addressing the Trojan myth, those aware of their unstable position asserted their right to power or their place in the ruling dynasty. Thus establishing its position in world history, Burgundy, along with some other European monarchies,²⁰ made claims to the great historical past – the Trojan ancestors – and to future goals, such as participation in a new crusade.

Included in genealogical mythology, the Trojan myth promoted legitimization and glorification of monarchs over the period of ten centuries (the sixth to the sixteenth centuries). It also promoted the revival of crusades. The Troy legend was widespread both in mass culture (e.g. decorations for the king's entrance into cities)²¹ and in elite culture (e.g. tapestries and miniatures), passing from one cultural level to another and playing a significant role in the consolidation of European monarchies.

The City of Troy between Depiction and Description: Comparative Analysis

For the purpose of carrying out a comparative analysis, I have identified a list of permanent elements in the representation of Troy as found in forty manuscripts: the moat, the city walls, the gates, the towers, the temple, the interior space, the sea, and the Trojan Horse. Since the miniatures of Troy serve as illustrations for texts about Troy, the great city's

¹⁸ Manuscript commissioned by Philippe I de Croÿ, which was devoted to Troy: Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique. Ms. 9264. *Historia destructionis Trojae*. Guido de Columna. Mons, Belgium. 1452.

¹⁹ Manuscript commissioned by Jean de Wavrin, which was devoted to Troy: Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique. Ms. 9650-9652. *Romançe of Thebes. Roman de Troie*. Flanders. 1459-1460.

²⁰ As the Burgundian dukes, the French (Charles IX) and English (Elizabeth I) crowned persons also used the Trojan legend, which served wonderfully for the purpose of sacralizing their power. Yates showed the interaction of different types of art (i.e. literature, theater, painting, and city decoration) to meet the political demands of both royal courts (Yates 1975). For London (Troynovast, Troia Nova or Trinovantum) and Paris as a New Troy see Frederico (2003).

²¹ It should be noted that the humanists also created the programs for the triumphal entries of kings, which served to promote the idea of the monarchy. For example, in 1571 the poets Pierre de Ronsard and Jean Dorat were invited for the decoration of the triumphal arches for the entry of King Charles IX into Paris. (Yates 1975: 130)

descriptions in the literary sources will be compared with its image in illuminated books.²² The miniatures of Troy represent it as a well-fortified and prosperous city (Fig. 1, 5, 6, 8, 9) and similar characteristics can be found in novels about Troy: “En plusieurs endroits étaient érigés des ouvrages fortifiés,... prenant appui sur de hautes mottes et ceints de profonds fossés.”²³ Moats and ramparts, although absent in the miniatures of Troy, are found in the narratives about Troy.

City walls were the second element of Trojan iconography in the miniatures to attract my attention.²⁴ The emphasis on fortifications is associated with Trojan mythology. According to legend, the Greek gods Poseidon and Apollo erected the walls of Troy in such a way as to make them unassailable. It was not until the Greeks penetrated Troy by deception that the city fell. In the foreground of the miniatures depicting the construction of Troy one can see the erection of the walls, with the gods Poseidon and Apollo as the builders (Fig.1, 2): “Priam mit tout son cœur

²² The Trojan myth belongs to a number of subjects that first took shape in ancient literature and were subsequently developed in medieval literature. Since the twelfth century, the Trojan subjects of the chronicles had gradually penetrated into literature. In the middle ages the ancient sources were treated differently. In particular, Virgil's *Aeneid* (c. 29-19 B.C.E.) enjoyed more credibility than Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (c. 8th-6th c. B.C.E.). The text of the *Iliad* was unknown in medieval Europe. With the gradual spread of printing, the Greek texts by Homer appeared in the High Renaissance period. The plot of the Homeric poems was known owing to the so-called “Latin Iliad,” the abridged rendering from the first century attributed to Pindar of Thebes. As far as the numerous courtly novels about Troy written in the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, it is possible to distinguish the two earliest and most popular ones, namely the *Roman de Troie* (1155-1160) by Benoît de Sainte-Maure and the *Historia destructionis Trojae* (1287) by Guido de Columna based on *De Excidio Trojae Historia* (Dares Phrygius) and *Ephemeris Belli Troiani* (Dictys Cretensis), two works by unknown authors that were regarded as notes left by eyewitnesses of Trojan War events. The middle ages saw a large number of different versions and compilations of the aforementioned texts. This can be illustrated by the poem “Filostrato” (1337-1339) by Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375), its story going back to Benoît de Sainte-Maure's and Guido de Columna's texts. The allegorical poem *Épître d'Othéa déesse de la Prudence, à Hector chef des Troyens* (1410) by Christine de Pizan (1365-1430) was widespread as well. In 1412 to 1420 the poem “Troy Book,” based on Guido de Columna's text, was written by the English poet and monk John Lydgate (1370-1451). For more on the medieval tradition of novels about Troy and a comparison of the text of *Roman de Troie* with its adaptations, see Jung (1996). Discussing the popularity of the texts in the regions of their distribution, we have to take into account the languages in which they were written. *Roman de Troie* by Benoît de Sainte-Maure instantly achieved fame in France and in Italy. Thirty examples from the twelfth to the fourteenth century survive, a third of which are of Italian origin (Jung 1996: 16-330). In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the text by Guido de Columna came a close second to that of Benoît de Sainte-Maure. At present, 240 manuscripts of *Historia destructionis Trojae* are known to exist in Latin, along with dozens of its translations and versions in European languages. In the middle ages, Christine de Pizan's *Épître d'Othéa a Hector* enjoyed wide popularity and is preserved in more than forty examples from the fifteenth century. Over fifty manuscripts of *Fleur des Histoires* survive.

²³ (Benoît de Sainte-Maure: vv. 3015-3018). *En plusors lués ot fortereces/.../ Sor granz motes en haut levees,/ De granz fossez avironees*. [Trans. by Baumgartner E., Vielliard Fr.]

²⁴ For more on city walls in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century France, see Reyerson (2000). For statistical data on the number of the city walls in medieval Germany see Tracy (2000: 83-86).

à la relever. Il l'entoura soigneusement d'une bonne muraille de marbre, haute, épaisse et solide.

Les parapets s'élevaient très haut.²⁵



Figure 1. Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art. Ms. 1945.65.1. f. 66 v. Construction and destruction of Troy. *The City of God (De Civitate Dei)*. Augustinus Aurelius. Paris, France. 1408-1410. Illuminated by the Orosius Master and Assistants.



Figure 2. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Ms fr. 137, f. 150. Construction of Troy by Poseidon and Apollo. *Metamorphoses*. Book XI. Ovid. France. 1450-1500.

The city gates are also an important mythological and iconographic component of the city. Benoît de Sainte-Maure names six gates of Troy—*Antenoridas*, *Dardanydés*, *Ylia*, *Ceca*, *Tinbree* and *Troiana*—while the miniatures show only the besieged gates. The gates are part of the city wall, and occasionally they were additionally strengthened by a tower (Fig. 1, 5, 9) or were flanked by towers (Fig. 8, 10, 11). The French gives the following description of the gates: “Ces portes étaient très imposantes: sur chacune s'élevait une tour principale aux murailles hautes et épaisses, et facile à défendre.”²⁶

On the whole, miniatures show far more freedom of imagination than do paintings.²⁷ Due to the spread of secular literature in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, religious subjects,

²⁵ (Benoît de Sainte-Maure: vv. 3004-3007). *Mout i mist Prianz grant entente:/ Mout la fist clore de bons murs/ De marbre, hauz, espés e durs./ Mout en erent haut li terrier.*

²⁶ (Benoît de Sainte-Maure: vv. 3155-3157). *Riche furent mout li portal;/ Sor chascune ot tor principal/ Haute e espesse e defensible.*

²⁷ One should not forget that the iconography of religious subjects, both in paintings and in miniatures, was not formed until the fifteenth century. In comparison, secular subjects in most cases did not have well established

which had previously prevailed, were replaced by secular ones. Elements were actively borrowed from the tradition of religious illuminated books to create secular subjects. Unlike the religious subjects, classical myths had no strict iconography.²⁸ It is notable that some of the miniatures of Troy include an image of a small sculpture of the Virgin and Child, or a saint, (Fig. 11) represented above the gates. The sculpture was meant to protect the entrance to the city. Remarkably, the same applies to miniatures devoted to both Biblical (Fig. 3) and ancient historical subjects (Fig. 4). Thus, the sacred motif found its way to the secular genre of chivalry tales.



Figure 3. Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium. Ms. 9967, f. 9. The Siege of Rome by pagans. *History of St. Helena, the mother of St. Martin of Tours.* Jean Wauquelin. Flanders. Before 1467. Illuminated by Loyset Liédet.



Figure 4. Dijon, Bibliothèque municipale de Dijon. Ms. 493. f. 1. Xerxes, besieging Greeks. A detail. *Bucolic. Georgics. Aeneid.* Virgil. Paris, France. 15th century. Illuminated by the Master de Robert. 1. Gaguin.

The citadel of Troy stands alone, in some cases represented in the form of a temple. (Fig. 1, 8, 11). The temple occupies the dominant position in the ring of the city walls (Fig. 1, 8, 11, 18, 19), sometimes resembling a medieval gothic church (Fig. 8, 11). The next element of Trojan iconography is a palace, which embodies secular power. Finally, some miniatures represent

traditions of depictions (as there was not a canon of depicting Greek gods or Alexander the Great), affording more freedom to a master in image creation.

²⁸ Huizinga (1986: 323) examines one of the manuscripts through the medieval artist's imagination. He notes the awkwardness of the artist in the sphere of freedom of imagination.

internal spaces of the city, such as squares, streets, and houses (Fig. 11, 12): “Tiels mil meisons i ot e plus/ A reis, a contes e a dus:/ La meinz forz n’eüst pas dotance/ De trestot l’empire de France.”²⁹



Figure 5. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Arsenal Library. Ms. 3685, f. 183 v. Hector killed in his back. *Histoire universelle*. France, 15th century.³⁰

The miniatures represent the medieval European city’s space with the main market place near the temple, narrow crooked streets, and low houses with gabled roofs. In spite of the fact that the miniatures illustrate narratives about Troy, the descriptions of the city space in the literature and its image in the miniatures are entirely different. In narrative sources Troy is represented as the ideal city with straight streets: “They say that the [whole] city of Troy had not a single house or a single dwelling whose lowest erected part was not at least sixty cubits in height. ... Streets [Troy] were straight and wide.”³¹ Yet, the miniatures depict it as a labyrinth of crooked streets. It is curious that the houses were described as made of marble and not of stone (which was a rarity for Europe with its wooden houses that suffered from fires). The phrases “nobody would wet their feet”³² and “the streets were paved”³³ emphasize the ideal image of the streets, which was a far cry from European cities of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as well as of the fifteenth century: “Et tous ces gens l’avaient si bien peuplée et couverte de maisons qu’en faire le tour complet aurait pris, sans aucun doute, trois jours et plus. Les rues étaient très

²⁹ (Benoît de Sainte-Maure: vv. 3019-3022). *Pro certo enim asserunt nullam domum, nullum hospicium in ciuitate Troie fuisse constructum cuius illud quod minoris depressionis extiterat supra terram saltem erectum in lx cubitorum altitudine non fuisset... que ciuitatem eandem ornabant in multarum latitudine platearum.*

³⁰ Elagina 2009: 162.

³¹ (Guido de Columnis: 47). *On avait construit plus de mille maisons destinées aux rois, aux comtes et aux ducs. La moins bien fortifiée n’aurait pas redouté toutes les forces du royaume de France.*

³² “Ja nus hon n’i moillast son pié”, (Benoît de Sainte-Maure: vv. 3036). *Personne, à Troie, ne se mouillait les pieds.*

³³ “De soz erent pavimentees”, (Benoît de Sainte-Maure: vv. 3039). *Le sol en était pave.*

belles, toutes bordées de magnifiques demeures, et il y avait de très beaux palais – jamais vous n’en verrez d’aussi somptueux.”³⁴

From my point of view, the space of Troy is contrasted with small medieval cities with their narrow streets in order to embody the medieval person’s dream of space. I also dare to assume that in their descriptions of Troy the authors created an ideal city image, thus addressing such medieval concerns as hunger (with the descriptions of feasts) and narrowness (with a vast expanse).

Beyond the architectural elements it is possible to add two more details to the permanent elements of the image of Troy: the Trojan horse, and the sea. In representations of Troy, the Trojan horse is the only element identifying the city. (Fig. 5, 6, 7, 11).



Figure 6. Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium. Ms. 9231, f. 116. The entrance of the Trojan horse into Troy. A detail. *Fleur des Histoires*. Jean Mansel. Belgium. 1446-1451. Illuminated by the Master of Jean Mansel.



Figure 7. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Ms. fr. 4915, f. 44. The fall of Troy. *Historia destructionis Troiae* (History of the destruction of Troy.) Guido de Columna. France. 1448-1449. Illuminated by the Master of Jouvenel des Ursin.

As applied to Troy, the binary opposition of “one’s own” to “alien” space correlates with the “closeness” versus “openness” of the city. In the miniatures with Troy from the fifteenth century, normally the city would have been represented as closed, lying behind the ring of

³⁴ (Benoît de Sainte-Maure: vv. 3026-3032). [Troie] Poble l’ont si e vestue/ Que treis journees sans devise/ Durot e mout plus la porprise./ Mout en erent beles les rues/ E de riches maisons vestues./ Mout i aveit de biaux palez./ Si riches ne verrez ja mes.

fortifications (Fig. 1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 18, 19). It was not until the early fifteenth century that various elements of alien space are found depicted in the miniatures with Troy (Fig. 9, 10, 11).



Figure 8. Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium. Ms. 9264, f. 1. The siege of Troy. *Historia destructionis Troiae* (History of the destruction of Troy.) Guido de Columna. Mons, Belgium. 1452. Illuminated by the Master of Girart de Roussillon, identified as Jean Dreux.

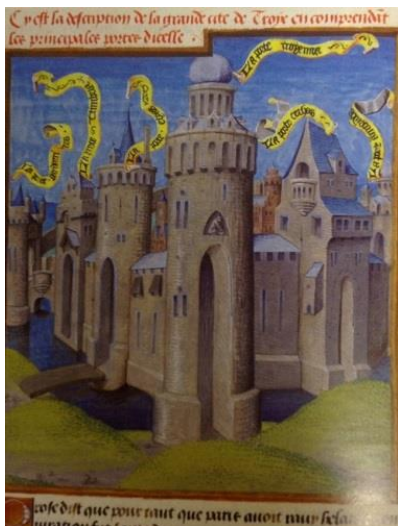


Figure 9. Saint-Petersburg, the National Library of Russia. Fr. F. v. IV. 12, f. 18. The view of Troy. *World Chronicle*. Bruges, Flanders. Second half of the 15th century. Illuminated by the Master of Edward IV.

Figure 10. Oxford, Bodleian Library. MS. Douce 331, f. 52. Criseyde leaves Troy. (Troilus and Criseyde). *Filostrato*. Boccaccio; Pierre de Beauveau (French translation). France. The third quarter of the 15th century.³⁵

Since the Trojans carried the Trojan horse into the city, all miniatures (Fig. 11, 12) have depicted its inner space, typically a medieval European market square. The viewer looks at a miniature as the inhabitant or conqueror of the space shown inside the city walls.

³⁵ <http://bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/detail/ODLodl~1~1~42121~117648:Filostrato->

Simultaneously, Troy may be seen from the outside as an “alien” space, emphasized by the helmet (Fig. 10) and tent-roofed towers (Fig. 9, 11).

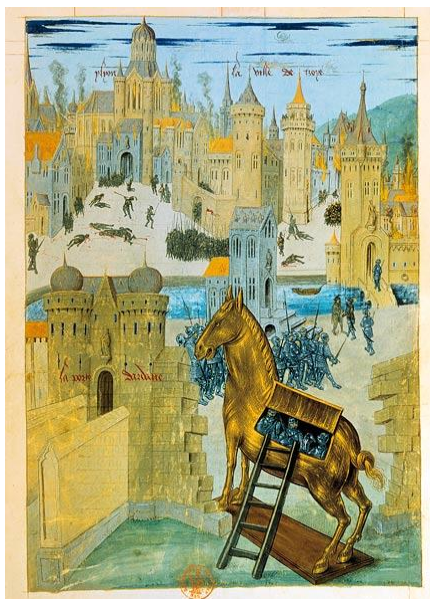


Figure 12. Oxford, Bodleian Library. MS. Douce 336, f. 56. The fall of Troy. *Miroir du Monde*. Universal history from the Creation to the Birth of Christ. Vol. I. Normandy, France. Before 1463.³⁶

Figure 11. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Ms. fr. 22552, f. 277 v. The entrance of the Trojan horse into Troy. Maître de Antoine Rolin. *Recueil des Histoires de Troie*. Raoul Le Fèvre. Customer: Grand Bailli de Hainaut, Antoine Rolin. Flanders. 1495. Illuminated by the Maître du Hiéron.

Figure 13. Lille, la Bibliothèque de la ville de Lille. BM Ms. 391, f. 73 v. The Wheel of Fortune. *Épître d’Othea a Hector*. Christine de Pizan. Lille, North of France (Flanders). Around 1460.³⁷

The Image of Troy through the Perspective of Real Cities: Jerusalem, Rome and Constantinople

On the basis of the analysis of the elements constituting the image of Troy as discussed above, let us bring to light the links between Troy and real cities of that time. It is also necessary to emphasize the ambivalent position of Troy in the middle ages.³⁸ On the one hand, the fall of Troy, a pagan city, suggests the idea of its frailty. The subject of temporality correlated with that of death, which was vital to the period under discussion. A number of manuscripts devoted to the

³⁶<http://bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/detail/ODLod1~1~1~42240~112900:Miroir-du-Monde--Universal-history->

³⁷ http://numerique.bibliotheque.bm-lille.fr/sdx/num/manuscrit_175/MS391_175_0073V?p=8

³⁸ Maslov (2003: 191) notably stated that, “In the case of ancient Troy the situation becomes still more complicated considering that along with the other ‘greatest cities,’ such as Jerusalem, Rome and Constantinople, in the middle ages Troy was assigned the central role in binding the past and the present, in searching for the general cultural denominator between the different epochs (in the spirit of ideas about *translatio imperii*, etc.)” We cannot but agree with the scholar’s suggestion that in both novels Troy appears as a medieval city and does not possess the originality that would allow one to perceive it as an antique city similar to ancient Athens or Rome.

Trojan cycle (Fig. 13) contained a miniature of the Wheel of Fortune. “No other age has so forcefully and continuously impressed the idea of death on the whole population as did the fifteenth century, in which the call of the *memento mori* (reminder of death) echoes throughout the whole of life. ... It seems as if the late medieval mind could see no other aspect of death than that of decay.” (Huizinga 1986: 134).³⁹ The theme of the frailty of life found its reflection in the Trojan War’s tragic outcome. On the other hand, Troy was the greatest city of antiquity, to which the majority of European kings traced their origin. In my opinion, the fact that Troy was never mentioned in the Bible could not allow medieval society to associate this city with either the *damned* or the *chosen* one.

The visual representation of Troy can be analyzed and interpreted as a mental construct, linked to Jerusalem, Constantinople and Rome. My assumption is follows P. Zumthor who, along with Rome and Constantinople, identifies Heavenly Jerusalem as one of the three mythical models which other cities might merely reproduce or contrast: “Mythical models of which all other cities anywhere in the world could be only an approximation or opposition” (Zumthor 1992: 22).⁴⁰ In our case, Troy absorbed the main features of Jerusalem, Rome and Constantinople.

For medieval masters, the political aspirations of their customers always had special relevance, connected with ideas of the revival of such traditional Christian shrines as Jerusalem and Constantinople. The parallel drawn between Troy, Jerusalem, Constantinople and Rome suggests that they are not mutually exclusive; this leads to the conclusion that Troy made reference to several cities simultaneously. In other words, Troy was represented as having a number of permanent elements, each forming the basis for drawing a number of historical and cultural analogies between Troy and other cities significant for the European cultural tradition.

³⁹ *Geen tijd heeft de doodsgedachte met zoveel nadruk voortdurend aan allen opgedrogen als de vijftende eeuw. Zonder ophouden klinkt door het leven de roep van het memento mori. ... Het is, alsof de laat-middeleeuwse geest de dood onder geen ander aspect heeft weten te zien dan enkel dat der vergankelijkheid.* [Trans. by Payton R. J. and Mammitzsch Ul.]

⁴⁰ *Modèles mythiques, dont les autres villes à travers le monde ne peuvent être que l'approximation ou le contraire.*

In the middle ages, any city was perceived through the Bible, since without this reference it was difficult for a mental image to be adopted by culture (Le Goff 1985: 225-238). Therefore, the biblical cities, among which Jerusalem held the most prominent place, played a key role in the way a city was perceived.⁴¹ A study of the iconography of Troy in comparison with other culturally significant cities reveals the special role that Jerusalem played in the creation of the image of Troy. One might wonder why Jerusalem was particularly influential. First, Jerusalem was the object of depiction for medieval illustrators more often than other cities, since most books of that period were religious. Hence the tradition of representing Jerusalem was well established. Second, miniature painters worked in the scriptoria creating illuminated books with the images of Jerusalem and Troy. Both religious (Jerusalem) and secular (Troy) subjects were created by miniature painters within the same space. It is therefore possible to assume the influence of the tradition of Jerusalem's image on the image of Troy.

Troy appears before our eyes as a strongly fortified medieval European city, with a big building decorated with gothic buttresses (Fig. 8, 11). We see the combination of a temple and the Trojan fortress (Fig. 1, 5, 6, 8, 11), which was occasionally depicted as a temple. Thus, Troy is represented as a European city by borrowing some elements from real western European architecture.

From the abovementioned elements of the iconography of the image of Troy, it is the temple that makes reference to the image of Jerusalem due to its outward appearance. In the miniatures with Jerusalem the gothic temple is represented as well: here on the left side. But how can we explain the presence of a domed building that dominates the city at the top of some miniatures with Troy? In such miniatures as *Praying King David*, *Crucifixion* (Fig. 14), *Resurrection*, or *View of the Holy City* with Jerusalem as the scene of action, we easily find the depiction of the big domed temple in the background (Fig. 15, 16).

⁴¹ For the tradition of Jerusalem's depiction in Franco-Flemish miniatures, see Robin (1986: 33-50).

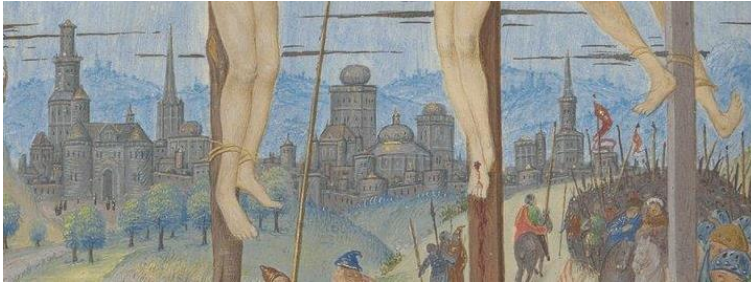


Figure 14. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Arsenal Library. Ms. fr. 1185, f. 198 v. Book of Hours. A detail. France, 15th century.

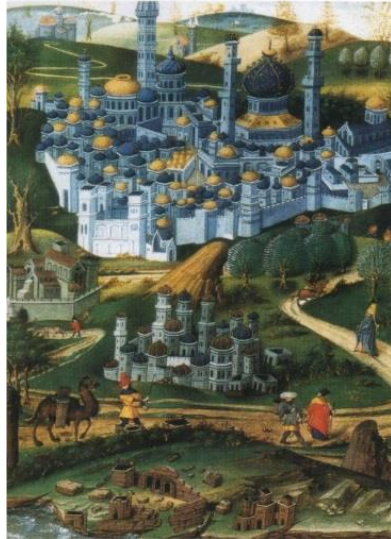


Figure 15. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Ms. fr. 9087, f. 85 v. View of Jerusalem and its surroundings. *The Travels of Bertrandon de la Brocquière*. Flanders. 1457.⁴²



Figure 16. London, The British Library Board ©. Ms. Ergerton 1070, f.5. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. *Hours of René d'Anjou*. France. 1410-1476. Illuminated by Barthélemy d'Eyck.

I assume that the temple in the miniatures depicting the Trojan cycle emerged under the influence of the tradition of representing

Figure 17. The Dome of The Rock in Jerusalem. Photo source: Wikipedia.

⁴² Nachama (1996: 51).

Jerusalem's temple.⁴³ In the miniatures with Troy, it is the domed building that dominates the city (Fig. 18, 19).



Figure 18. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Ms. fr. 2685, f. 98. Arrival Paris and Helen in Troy. *Chronique d'histoire ancienne (La Bouquechardière)*. Vol. I-II. Customer: Charles VII and Jean de Courcy. France. Between 1457 and 1461. Illuminated by Maître Échevin de Rouen.

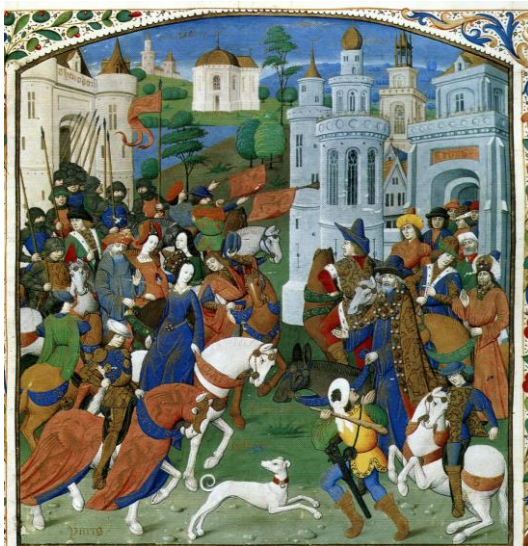


Figure 19. Saint-Petersburg, the National Library of Russia. Fr. F. v. IV. 13/1, f. 85. Priam meets Paris and Helen at the gates of Troy. Detail. *Chronique d'histoire ancienne (La Bouquechardière)*. Jean de Courcy. France. 1470. Illuminated by Master of François de Tour.⁴⁴

⁴³ The monument of the Dome of the Rock (*Qubbat As-Sakhrāh*) (Fig. 17) was erected in 687-691 by Caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan of the Umayyad dynasty. Byzantine masters from Constantinople were invited to construct it, as people in the east were not able to build a cross-domed basilica. The temple has a rare octagonal form, which for a long time did not have any equivalent. It should be noted that later the same form was reproduced in both the Christian and Muslim traditions with rare occurrence. For more details see Grabar (2006).

⁴⁴ Elagina (2009: 160).

In Jerusalem was the monument of the Dome of the Rock (*Qubbat As-Sakhrah*) on the Temple Mount (Fig. 17), which in Western Europe was long mistaken for the Temple of Solomon, namely the Temple of Jerusalem (Krinsky 1970, Pinson 1996). It is important to note that while there are variations in the proportions and colors of the temple in the miniatures, the octagonal form of the temple remains invariable, thus linking it with Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock.

The second city with which to compare Troy is Rome, the papal city, which combined the religious and political branches of power and embodied the idea of the Christian empire. Troy was associated with Rome, since it was Romulus, a descendant of the Trojan hero Aeneas, who founded Rome. The foundation of Rome was regarded as New Troy, thus bringing the Trojan Kingdom to Italian soil. Following the other European dynasties, the Italian ones insisted on tracing their genealogy back to the Trojan kings, whom they considered to have founded Venice⁴⁵ (by Antenor) and Carthago (by Dido and Aeneas). As a result, miniatures depicting Rome are found side by side with the Trojan cycle in the illuminated books, and completing it with the acts of Aeneas. The illuminated images of Rome do not contain any specifically Roman permanent elements that would identify the city (Fig. 3, 20, 21).⁴⁶ In most cases Rome was represented as a strongly fortified medieval European city, occasionally with oriental style towers (Fig. 21). In some cases a large domed building is represented (Fig. 3), each time differently shaped, and therefore not identifiable with a specific building.

⁴⁵ It was not until the thirteenth century that St. Mark in Venice replaced the Trojan myth (Das 2004: 98).

⁴⁶ The exceptions are the miniatures with depictions of maps. In creating them, artists sought to achieve a resemblance to the main architectural objects of great value. A vivid example is "A Map of Rome" by the Limbourg brothers (Ms.65, f. 141. *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*. 1411-1416. Chantilly, Musée Condé).



Figure 20. Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium. Ms. 10475, f. 97. The Romans who were besieged in the Capitol by Gauls, sent an envoy to Marcus Furius Camillus. *Stratagemas*. Sextus Julius Frontinus. Bruges, Flanders. 1471.



Figure 21. Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium. Ms. 9005, f. 189 v. Emperor kneeling before the Pope at the gates of Rome. *De Civitate Dei*. Augustinus Aurelius. 1420-1435. Illuminated by Guillbert de Metz.

Constantinople was another dream city for medieval Europeans. The description of Constantinople's opulence was a commonplace in literature, in both historical works and novels. It was thought that two-thirds of the world's wealth was concentrated in that city.

“At the beginning of the thirteenth century there was a great impact in the field of urban (or city) imagery for Latin Christians. The ideal city, which Christian Latins did not find in either any modest nascent towns, or in the ruined ancient Rome, or in the Jewish Jerusalem, suddenly revealed itself in all its splendor to their eyes. It was Constantinople, which was conquered in 1204 by the Crusaders during the Fourth crusade. Reality meets fiction.” (Le Goff 1985: 241).⁴⁷

Constantinople seemed an ideal, financially prosperous city whose culture depended on economic development.

⁴⁷ *Au début du XIIIe siècle se produit pour les chrétiens latins un choc extraordinaire dans le domaine de l'imagerie urbaine. La ville idéale qu'ils n'avaient trouvée ni dans les modestes cités naissantes, ni dans la Rome antique et la Jérusalem juive ruinées s'offre soudain à leurs yeux éblouis: c'est Constantinople, conquise en 1204 par les croisés de la quatrième Croisade. La réalité rejoint la fiction.*

Since the end of the fourteenth century the Turks had been considered descendants of the ancient Trojans. Along with “*Turcus*” the Turks were referred to as “*Teucus*” in Latin. It was the word “*Teucris*” that Virgil used for the Trojans in his “*Aeneid*” (Spencer 1952). The fifteenth century witnessed the influx of Greek scientists to Venice from the Ottoman Empire, which resulted in the prevalence of the Greek language in Europe. After 1453, writers started equating the modern Greeks of Byzantium with the ancient Greek Achaeans. In other words, Turks became connected with the ancient Trojans, while Greeks from fifteenth-century Constantinople became connected with the ancient Greeks. Consequently, by capturing Constantinople the Turks took revenge on the Greeks for the Trojans’ defeat.

In “*History*,” a text devoted to the Byzantine conquest by the Ottoman empire, the Greek historian and politician Michael Critobulus (1410-1470) gives the following description of the arrival of the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II (1432-1481) at Troy: “he viewed its ruins and the remains of the ancient city of Troy, its size and its position...in addition, he spoke of the tombs of the heroes, of Achilles, of Ajax, and of the others, whom he called ‘blessed’ because of their lasting fame and deeds, and because they were praised by the poet Homer. It is known that he nodded his head and said: ‘After the passage of so many years, God appointed me to be the avenger of this city of its inhabitants’” (Philippides and Hanak 2011:211). It is important to note that the Greek historian admires Mehmed II and looks upon the power of the Ottoman Turks as divine providence. It is curious that the European poems narrating the capture of Constantinople increasingly used quotations and subjects related to Troy’s plunder (The Rape of Hecuba, for example), borrowed from Homer and Virgil (Philippides and Hanak 2011: 200-204).

One might also consider the possible allusion to the Hagia Sofia in Constantinople, as this building is famous for its dome. This idea was suggested by Sherer (1963: 14), but I find her comparison of the form of the dome in a miniature from the Trojan cycle with that of the Hagia Sofia in Constantinople not entirely satisfactory. If we look at depictions of Constantinople in Franco-Flemish illumination (Fig. 23, 24), in most cases we do not find any specific element that

could be identified with the Hagia Sofia. Constantinople looks like a typical medieval city with a Gothic style church (Fig. 24), retaining some elements from oriental architecture (Fig. 23).⁴⁸ There are no miniatures in which Constantinople has any resemblance to the real city, with the exception of maps of the city both before 1453 and after its capture.⁴⁹ Thus, I assume that this allusion to the Temple, which proved to be true for Jerusalem and Troy—namely the Dome of the Rock—is not relevant to Constantinople’s Hagia Sofia.



Figure 23. Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium. Ms. 9066, f. 160 v. Emperor Constantine presenting relics to Charlemagne before leaving the last of Constantinople. *Chronicles of antiquity and the conquest of Charlemagne.* David Aubert. Flanders. 1458-1460.

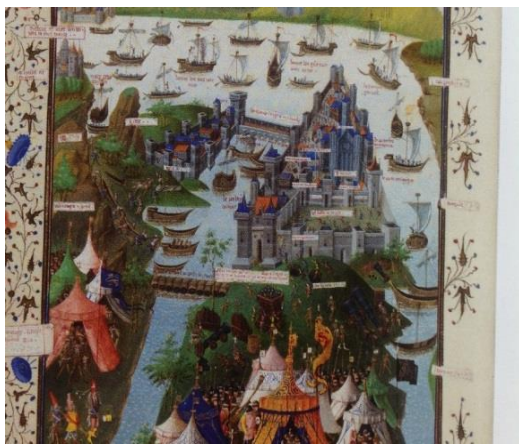


Figure 24. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Ms. fr. 9087, f. 207 v. Constantinople. *The Travels of Bertrandon de la Brocquière.* Flanders. 1457.

It is important to note the ambivalent position of both Troy and Constantinople. On the one hand, neither city was Catholic, which means that they were regarded as unfaithful and alien by Western Europe. Troy was a pagan city, while Constantinople was Orthodox. It was this very fact that granted the West the right to venture on a crusade in 1204, and compelled the West to

⁴⁸ As for comparing the miniatures with the images of Troy to those with Constantinople, I plan to follow the example of Avril’s study in which he examined the history of manuscripts from Naples belonging to Charles V and Jean de Berry, as well as the personalities of the patrons and the miniatures’ relation. The author concluded that first (Royal 20. D. I. f. 26 v. London, the British National Library) influenced the second (Ms. fr. 301. f. 25. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France) (Avril 1969: 305).

⁴⁹ For more details on maps of Constantinople and their iconography see Manners (1997:73-87).

consider the Greeks' refusal of the union as the main reason for the fall of the Byzantine Empire. On the other hand, Troy and Constantinople were the cities of great ancestors. Constantinople was the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, which was no less significant for the justification of the barbarous kings' right to rule than the European dynasties' connection to the Trojan heroes.

To summarize, we can draw some conclusions about the perception and representation of Troy. Let us return to the miniature with the capture of Troy (Fig. 11). The artist painted Troy as a medieval European city, using architectural details (e.g. temple) in the gothic style. Troy is represented with tent-roofed towers on its gates, typical for constructing exotic spaces such as Constantinople, and with a small sculpture of a saint above the gates, which demonstrates the transition of a sacred motif to the secular area of chivalry tales. In this miniature with the destruction of the city, Troy is represented as an open medieval European space with elements from non-European architecture on the border of the city.

Conclusion

The ambivalent perception of Troy found its reflection in miniatures. As noted, Troy was represented as medieval European city space viewed as "one's own," and belonging to European history, yet a number of elements such as the tent-roofed towers mark it as "alien," emphasizing the pagan or the exotic component of the image. However, Troy was the great city of antiquity that was never mentioned in the Bible. Any other city was perceived by medieval people in terms of such biblical cities as Jerusalem or Rome, and Troy claimed to resemble them as well. Finally, the Turks' Trojan descent suggested by the Byzantine historians allows for an analogy with Constantinople. Thus, the medieval man who wrote or read a novel about Troy, who made a program for miniatures or created a miniature with a Trojan War episode, or who looked at such

a miniature, perceived Troy as his “own” strongly fortified medieval European city of great ancestors, yet with emphasis on the pagan or the exotic components of its image.

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