

Reconsidering the Reception of Hugo van der Goes in France: Jean and Pierre Changuet

Auteur

Elliot ADAM

Ancien Membre

Docteur

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This paper reconsiders the early reception of Hugo van der Goes in France in the 1480s. It enlightens another aspect of the phenomenon, parallel to the curial path of his famous pupil Jean Hey from Autun to Lyon and Moulins, through a case study of Jean and Pierre Changuet, the leading painters in Dijon and Avignon at the time. Firstly, we will define the variety of Goesian echoes that can be surmised in the large altarpieces painted by Jean Changuet in Avignon and in the manuscripts illuminated by his brother Pierre in Dijon. These painters, each in their own field, demonstrate a clear interest in Hugo's monumental and expressive ambition that may account for part of their success. This debt is not so much technical as it is stylistic. In Jean's case, the turbaned male figures of the Three Prophets in the Louvre for instance, with their hallucinatory gaze, are strongly reminiscent of the saints in the Portinari altarpiece or in the Death of the Virgin. On Pierre's side, his late books of hours clearly integrate the new layout developed in Hugo's circle with the Huth and Emerson-White Hours, whilst referring to a certain number of paintings by Goes and Hey. It is thus tempting to recall that "Jennin Bourgnongnon" and "Pierre Bourgnongnon" were two of the three Burgundian painters recruited in 1468 for the ducal wedding in Bruges. Secondly, this awareness of Hugo's art allows us to reflect upon the insertion of these painters into a professional network formed by the master's heirs in Southern Europe, between Italy, France, and Spain – this "koiné gantoise" according to Michel Laclotte's thoughtful expression. In this regard, it may not be a mere coincidence that in 1492 the painter Juan de Nalda, a Spaniard close to Pedro Berruguete, was recruited in Jean Changuet's studio in Avignon. Nalda collaborated with Berruguete upon his return from Urbino, where the latter had precisely succeeded the painter Justus of Ghent, a close friend of Hugo, in the commission of the Studiolo of Urbino.

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