



tunic with long
manship of the cushion
the choice of colour
translucent enamel in
small gold tiles – and in
the creases caused by
The tassels are woven
repeating motif of the
consists of a four-
elongated mandorla
garlands reminiscent

standing behind the
as a white enamelled
marks, a fashionable
that is also found as
(see cat.73 and 96).
additional attribute

of Saint George, is faced entirely with deep blue and green enamel; a red flame flickers from his open jaws. With his left hand the saint touches Charles's shoulder in a gesture of presentation. With his right hand, he raises his helmet in a sign of greeting. His armour is more elaborately worked and is ornamented with splendid lion heads. The similarity of the two men's faces allows Charles to appear as a new Saint George.

The goldsmith Gerard Loyet worked in Lille, and the sources of his inspiration are well known. The famous painting of *The Virgin with Canon Joris van der Paele* (cat.68) by Jan van Eyck shows a comparable Saint George as the canon's patron saint. Portraits of praying

donors presented by the saints for whom they are named are numerous. Saint George, the patron saint of knights who was profoundly revered by Duke Charles, is omnipresent in the iconography of Burgundy (see cat.67). The payments made to Loyet in December 1467, Charles's marriage to Margaret in July 1468, and the donation of the reliquary to Liège Cathedral on 14 February 1471, should be taken into account in dating the work.

According to the wording of the Treaty of Saint-Trond which had been imposed upon the Liégeois following the battle near Montenaken (20 October 1465), the duke of Burgundy became the 'sovereign hereditary guardian and protector' (*gardien et avoué souverain héréditaire*) of the churches and the province of Liège. Charles the Bold had thus asserted himself as protector and ruler of the 'province of Saint Lambert'. He displayed this circumstance in a symbolic and spectacular way on 30 October 1468 during the indescribable chaos of the plundering of Liège: Philippe de Commynes witnessed first-hand how the duke personally defended the 'great church of St Lambert'.

Charles wanted to reinforce publicly his newly gained status as protector of the church and the province of Liège by means of a splendid gift. At the same time, this object was to convey a message of high symbolic content: under the protective hand of Saint George, patron saint of warriors and war, Charles the Bold, armed for battle, equates himself via the similarity of facial features with the saint and kneels down before Mary and Saint Lambert, the divine patron saints of the Cathedral and the province of Liège. An extraordinary object had granted Charles sovereignty over Liège – a fragment from Saint Lambert's right hand – and from this time forward the duke was Saint Lambert's follower. Charles, who has removed his helmet and vambraces in humility, is at this very moment receiving the valuable relic from Saint Lambert himself, as a visible symbol of his appointment as vassal. Thus, the reliquary of Charles the Bold is not a gift of reconciliation. Quite the reverse, it is the symbolic expression of the power of the duke, who is being commended by Saint George and chosen by Saint Lambert to defend his church, worldly goods, and subjects by force of arms.

Even though the Liège reliquary – which was commissioned in 1467 and donated to the Cathedral in 1471 – has undergone different assessments over the course of history, the core of the message remains unchanged. While the

chroniclers from Liège tried hard to portray the work as a gift of atonement for the destruction of the city, it was precisely this lie that may have saved the work. Charles the Bold donated other votive images as symbols of his power and prestige, but only his 'golden portrait' from Liège has survived.

On the occasion of the exhibition, it was possible to restore some missing areas of the object, in particular to replace the damaged original cushion with a copy. The extant traces of the mountings and archival sources were valuable aids in this process.

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Bibliography: van der Velden 2000; Demoulin and Kupper 2002; George 2002; Eikelmann 2004; Kupper and George 2007 (with references)