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## *Pater meus agricola est*: the early years of Alexander Agricola

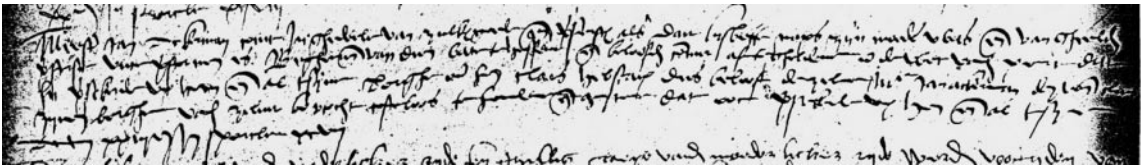
THE 15th chapter of the Gospel of St John opens with the well-known verse: 'I am the true vine, and my father is the husbandman.' Jesus explains here to his disciples that they are the branches on this vine, and that they may glorify his father, the husbandman, by bearing fruit—that is, by living and preaching the Gospel. The following essay is about a man for whom this biblical verse had a special resonance. One of his musical compositions, an instrumental piece that circulated widely in 15th-century Europe, carries the title 'My father is the husbandman', or, to quote the Biblical Latin, *pater meus agricola est*.<sup>1</sup> Anyone in this period who had heard of the famous composer Alexander Agricola, the author of this piece, would have recognized the obvious double meaning: 'My father is Agricola'.

Few, however, would have been likely to note the irony which the title must have had for the composer himself. If he could be likened to a vine, it was because he was bearing plenty of fruit as a composer, not because his father had cared for him like a proper husbandman. For Alexander was not a *true* vine: he was illegitimate. As far as he would have been able to remember, his father had lived in another part of town, and was married to a woman not his mother. It is the story of his illegitimate birth, and his early youth, that I propose to tell in the following contribution.

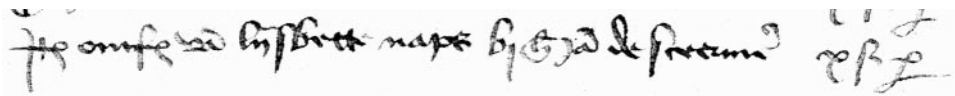
In February 1499 a woman by the name of Lijsbette Naps died in Ghent at the age of about 80. The three documents shown as illus.1–3 tell us about this. They reveal that Lijsbette left two sons, named Jan and Alexander Ackerman,

and that these were the children of a certain Heinric Ackerman. The grey box in illus.4 summarizes these blood relationships: Heinric Ackerman fathered the two boys, but he was married to a woman outside the box, Salmadrijnen Beste, with whom he seems to have had no offspring. His wife in turn was the illegitimate daughter of Joes Beste and one of his mistresses, Margriete van Lauwe. This man, Joes Beste, will play a significant part in the story that follows.

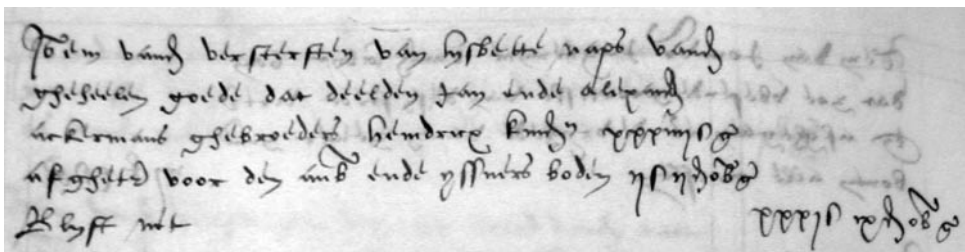
But back to the composer's mother, Lijsbette Naps. At the time of her death she had lived and worked in Ghent for at least 55 years. Throughout this period she had been active as an independent businesswoman. Her earliest-known appearance in the yearbooks of the by-law,<sup>2</sup> in January 1444, is inconspicuous. In document 2 (see appendix) a man by the name of Lievin Parijs acknowledges a debt to her of 720 Flemish groats (*groten*). This is typically the record of a business transaction. Then, as now, any businessman or woman in possession of merchandise needed to sell it quickly, even though the buyer might sometimes be short of cash. In that case the buyer was allowed to pay in instalments, and this is what Lievin Parijs promised to do. His debt was recorded in the yearbooks of the by-law, but Lievin would have received a copy of the entry, and he would have given this legal document to Lijsbette as a promissory note or formal IOU. Only then would she allow him to take possession of whatever goods she sold him. Once he had paid her back in full, which he promised to do within nine months, the paper would be returned or destroyed in his presence, and Lijsbette might



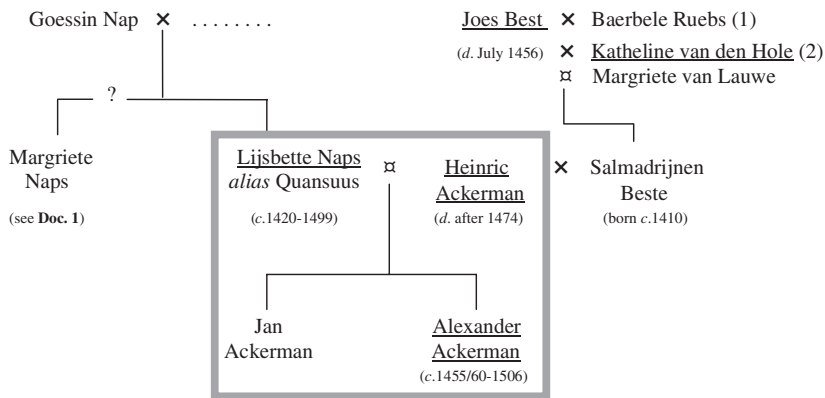
1 Master Jan Ackerman appears before the magistrates of inheritance in Ghent to register his claim to a share in the estate left by his mother Lijsbette Naps (Ghent City Archive 330.41, 1498/1499, rolle f.5v; 23 Feb 1499). Text and translation: 'Meester Jan Ackerman comt in ghedele van zulken goede ende versterfte als dair Lijsbette Naps, zijn moeder was, ende van gheelden versterfte, uute verstorven es, begheerende van dien bate theffene ende beloofden commer af te gheldene naer de wet van den port, ditte hij versekerde up hem ende al tsijne, borghe over hem Clais Helscap, dies beloofd de zelve meester Jan Ackerman den vornoemde Clais, zijnen borghen, van der zelve berecht costeloos te houdene ende quitene, dat ooc versekerende up hem ende al tsijne. Actum xxiii<sup>en</sup> in sporcle xcviij.' ('Master Jan Ackerman wishes to share in the goods and the entire inheritance left by Lijsbette Naps, his late mother, desiring to benefit from the assets and promising to honour the debts, according to the law of the *poort*, and he insured this upon himself and all his possessions, his surety being Clais Helscap, yet the same Master Jan Ackerman promises to keep the aforesaid Clais, his surety, free from all costs and to acquit him, ensuring this, too, upon himself and all his possessions. Done 23 February 1499.)



2 Accounts of the Confraternity of Our Lady up-de-Rade in the Church of St John (now Cathedral of St Bavo) (RAG, K 5228, 1498/1499, f.2v; no day or month). Lijsbette Naps has passed away, and Her Jan de Sceermer has paid her so-called *dootghelt*. Willem Obrecht, the father of Jacob Obrecht, had been a member of the same confraternity until his death in 1488. Text and translation: 'Item, ontfanghen van Lijsbette Naps, bi her Jan de Sceermer, x sc. par.' ('Item, received from Lijsbette Naps, through Her Jan de Sceermer, 10 gr.')



3 City tax over the estate of Lijsbette Naps, paid by Jan and Alexander Ackerman, sons of Heinric Ackerman (Ghent City Archive 400.34, 1498/1499, f.15v; no day or month). Jacob Obrecht had paid the same city tax after the death of his father in 1488. Text and translation: 'Item van den versterften van Lijsbette Naps, vanden gheheelen goede dat deelden Jan ende Alexander Ackermans, ghebroeders, Heindricx kinderen, xxxiii sc. gr., afghetrocken voor den anbringerh ende ysuers, boden, ij sc., ij den. vl. gr., blijft net xxxj sc., ix den. vl. gr.' ('Item, concerning the inheritance of Lijsbette Naps, over the entire estate, which was shared by Jan and Alexander Ackerman, brothers, children of Heinric, [a tax of] 408 gr., deducted for the announcer, the exuwtie officials, and the messengers 26 gr., remains net 379 [recte 382] gr.')



#### 4 Family and blood relationships of Alexander Agricola

give him a quittance. Then he was free of debt, and the record in the yearbooks was no longer of any significance—except, of course, to us today.

In the course of her long career, Lijsbette sold goods on these terms numerous times. Another early example is document 3. At any time in her life, therefore, she would have had a pile of such IOUs (or legal copies, as they were called), presumably locked up along with cash in a little treasure chest at home. These IOUs were the 15th-century equivalent of paper money, in the sense that they could change hands. I can pay you in cash, but I can also give the equivalent in IOUs for you to collect. Occasionally the records reveal the nature of the goods: in one case it is linen, in another it is wood. Lijsbette, in other words, was a trader in bulky merchandise, typically the stuff that needed to be shipped on the waterways of medieval Flanders. With only one exception, to be discussed later, she never owed anyone any money herself: this is one of several indications that Agricola's mother was very well off.

Lijsbette's business career was extremely successful, and comparatively uneventful. She never married, and we never learn of any relatives in Ghent—with the possible exception of a Margriete Naps in document 1. So Lijsbette must have settled in the town from elsewhere, and in fact she never was to become a legal citizen. The one major turning point in her life was the involvement of a certain Heinric Ackerman. He, too, turns up in the year

books of the by-law from the early 1440s, as we can tell from document 4. Yet this is never to conduct business on his own behalf. Heinric invariably appears as a steward, an administrator who represents the interests of others. As far as I have been able to tell, he had no business interests or financial assets of his own. A good part of his career was spent finding wealthy citizens whom he could serve in this capacity—largely because he never managed to secure the continued trust of those he already did serve. Heinric, unlike Lijsbette, came from a wealthy patrician family of ancient Ghent stock. But although I have found no document that specifically says so, all the indications are that he was illegitimate, and hence stood to inherit nothing from his family.

Heinric first turns up in the service of Joes Beste, a wealthy Ghent merchant and patrician, who owned massive landed estates outside the town, and who was actively involved in the town's politics. Heinric's work as steward for Joes involved weighty responsibilities: he collected debts, rents, dues, and revenues, paid off sellers and lenders, and effectively managed Joes's money as his own until the day that he should render account to his master. Initially Joes Beste was extremely satisfied with Heinric's work: in document 7, dated July 1448, he ratified the account submitted to him by his steward, and in fact welcomed him as a new member of his household. Heinric had married Beste's illegitimate daughter Salmadrijnen,

and Joes gave the newly wed couple a house to live in. He also rewarded Heinric with IOUs amounting to the vast sum of nearly 36,000 Flemish groats—money which Heinric could now collect as his own.

Clearly Joes Beste trusted Heinric as though he were his own son. Yet if the responsibilities of a steward involved trust, they also, and for that very reason, carried the risk of abuse. It was easy enough, for a man like Heinric, to fiddle the figures, so to speak, and to withhold corroborating documents on the assumption that no trusting master would insist on seeing these. By January 1450, two years after Heinric's marriage, Joes Beste seems to have suspected that his steward was not altogether trustworthy. Document 8 shows that he refused to ratify Heinric's account over the preceding year until he had seen all the corroborating paperwork. Heinric, for his part, refused to show that paperwork until Joes ratified the account. The whole matter was therefore submitted to the arbitration of the magistrates of the by-law. By medieval standards this conflict represented a complete breakdown of what ought to have been a relationship of trust between master and servant. Naturally, the blame in this case fell squarely on the servant, Heinric, who had undoubtedly tried to defraud his master. After this we never see Heinric in Joes Beste's service again, and the only contact between them would take the form of endless litigation.

Joes Beste lived in the same street as Lijsbette Naps, the Burgstraat, and in fact the two merchants must have done business with one another. This is expressly confirmed by document 9, which dates from May 1455, about a year before Joes's death. If, in the course of these business dealings, the subject of Heinric Ackerman ever came up, we need not doubt that Joes had little good to say about him, and probably warned Lijsbette never to do business with this unreliable fellow. Yet, as Joshua Rifkin has recently demonstrated, Lijsbette around this very time was to give birth to Alexander, Heinric's son.<sup>3</sup> The composer's probable birthdate is in the late 1450s, probably about 1457 or 1458. So, if Joes Beste had warned her, as seems likely, those warnings evidently proved to no avail.

Meanwhile, Heinric himself had found other sources of income. In the early 1450s one of his nearest blood relatives, a young girl by the name of Nannekin Ackermans, lost both her parents. The magistrates of inheritance at Ghent needed to appoint a legal guardian to feed her and house her, and to manage the extensive property and possessions that she had inherited. This was just the job for Heinric, and he duly volunteered. We do not know what kind of substitute parent he was for Nannekin. But when in October 1456 the time finally came for him to render account to her family, he seems to have resorted to his old accounting tricks, as is clear from document no.11. Heinric claimed that Nannekin's estate was nearly 400 groats in debt, which he had allegedly paid out of his own pocket, and that he had spent almost as much on miscellaneous business, including the writing of letters and legal documents, and various travels outside Ghent. His services evidently did not come cheap. Nannekin's family must have known Heinric only too well, however, for they refused to pay him back the 750 groats, and said that 240—less than one-third of the sum—was more than enough. Any honourable guardian would have protested: 'What? you want me to lose more than 500 groats on my tireless efforts on behalf of this orphan?' But Heinric's more revealing response was: 'Very well, I'll settle for 240.' It sounds as if he was still making a handsome profit on Nannekin's misfortune.

If he was so easily satisfied, it may have been because Heinric had in any case already found his next victim. This is shown by document no.10, from February 1456. His former master, Joes Beste, was now about 70 years old, and must have been afflicted with the illness that would kill him five months later. Joes's wife, Kateline vanden Hole, saw herself faced with the daunting task of managing her husband's affairs for the first time in her life. She urgently and desperately needed a steward. Now, who turned up like a bad penny? It was none other than Heinric Ackerman, whom we suddenly find selling off wood cut from Joes Beste's estate in the village of Nazareth, and who even has the temerity to cite the ailing merchant as his surety. He could now act as Kateline's steward

without any trouble: Joes was sick, and it would only be a matter of time before he finally died. When he did, in July 1456, Heinric began to act officially as Kateline's steward and servant, managing the massive and bitterly contested estate all by himself, and apparently without any meaningful oversight.

At this point Heinric's dealings become so complex and contradictory that I can only briefly summarize them here. For example, document 14 shows that he got in touch with one of Joes Beste's illegitimate sons, Artuer Beste, to whom he had lent 1,440 groats. He offered to recover that sum, along with several debts, from what was owed to Artuer from the estate of his late father. Once again his services did not come cheap: Artuer agreed to let Heinric have 20 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively, of two large sums from Joes Beste's estate, if he managed to recover these for Artuer. In itself such hefty legal fees are already unusual enough. What is even more unusual—indeed, outrageous—is that Heinric was at this time managing that very estate, so that recovering Artuer's money could not have been much trouble at all. By modern standards, we are dealing with a flagrant conflict of interest. Yet this is not all. Document 16 shows that Heinric himself had been suing, and would continue to sue, the estate in connection with his own wife Salmadrijnen—so that he actually acted on behalf of two opposing litigants at the same time, one of whom just happened to be himself. Undoubtedly he handled these conflicting interests to his own considerable financial advantage. This was bound to arouse the suspicion of other inheritors. Heinric evidently wanted no interference in his handling of the estate, and refused to show anyone anything. So at one point, in January 1458, those inheritors, as a group, went to the magistrates to force Heinric to hand over all the legal papers, receipts, and documents, on pain of imprisonment and a huge fine. They succeeded, as we can see in document 15. It is a situation which by now begins to look uncannily familiar, and which undoubtedly got Heinric into considerable trouble. After all, he was merely a steward and servant, yet he conducted these affairs as

though the estate were his own. It was time for him to find a new victim.

And so, there she was: a single woman in her forties, with no husband or family in Ghent to protect her, no citizenship from which to derive rights or privileges, but with a thriving business and considerable financial assets. Her name was Lijsbette Naps, and Heinric Ackerman must have met her in his capacity as steward of Joes Beste's estate: it was through him, for example, that she had to recover the money lent to Joes in document 9. But far more interesting is document 12, in which Lijsbette and Heinric are mentioned virtually in one breath. In February 1457, about half a year after Joes's death, it was again decided to have trees cut on his estates at Nazareth, presumably in order to pay off debts. Although the cutting could not be done until three months later, when the weather would be more clement, it was important to find a paying buyer immediately. Lijsbette Naps had the cash, and was willing to pay in advance, for what was promised to be an enormous quantity of wood. Heinric, as steward, must have made the arrangements with her. Yet it is clear from the document that Lijsbette was exceptionally wary: unlike the wood buyer in document 10, she insisted on concluding the deal directly with Joes Beste's widow, not the steward. She paid the money to Kateline vanden Hole herself, and the latter acknowledged receipt before the magistrates, as if Heinric could not be trusted with such a large sum of cash. Naturally, though, it was the steward who had to see to it that the wood was delivered properly and on time. But how to be sure that he would? The document, uniquely among the thousands of business contracts that I have seen, is replete with stipulations and provisos that could only have been entered at the express urging of Lijsbette (see document 12 for the full text):

without any fraud, which wood the aforesaid Lady Kateline has promised to deliver well and reliably to the aforesaid Lijsbette, without seeking or pretending any postponement, default, or malice therein, within the month of May, without any further delays, now in this year of 1457 . . . and in the event that Kateline were not to make the aforesaid delivery to Lijsbette . . . and the



some Lijsbette were to experience any default [then she can recover her money from Kateline or her steward Heinric Ackerman] . . . [and they will not invoke] their privileges in this city or otherwise in any manner contrary to this legal deed . . . [indeed] the aforementioned Lijsbette must be indemnified against the taxes of this city without any cost or expense on her part.

It sounds from all this as if Lijsbette was not just half expecting to be defrauded by Heinric, but that she regarded it as a virtual certainty, at least if she did not take proper legal precautions.

The irony, of course, is that around this very time, Lijsbette either conceived or bore the children of the man whom she so distrusted, and evidently despised. In terms of our story, there is an obvious and gaping hiatus here: something must have happened, but there are no documents to tell us what it was. These two human beings, who apparently knew each other only superficially, conceived two boys, perhaps twins. But the question that will forever remain unanswered is how, and why: we do not know whether there was mutual love or attraction, whether they both consented, or whether something more disturbing had happened. Certainly Lijsbette was without a family in Ghent to seek retribution or compensation if she were violated, and without the civic protection to which she would have been entitled if she were a citizen. And so we must entertain at least the possibility that Heinric intentionally violated her in order to force Lijsbette into becoming his mistress, or perhaps into marrying him—in which case all her assets would effectively become his. Conceivably this could have happened just when he was setting up the sale of wood, in February 1457, and presumably visited Lijsbette at her home in the Burgstraat.

This hiatus in the story will last for more than 14 years—14 years in which there is no indication that Lijsbette, for all her many business activities, had anything to do with Heinric Ackerman. Certainly she did not marry him. The only sign of any possible connection is in documents 18 and 21: at different times, and independently, Lijsbette and Heinric appointed a certain Lievin Dam to represent their legal and business interests in Ghent during anticipated journeys abroad. I have

no information about this Lievin Dam, but since he was trusted by both, it is perhaps possible to see him as a go-between, at least if one were needed. In any case, it is only in July 1471 that we find Heinric and Lijsbette having dealings directly with one another. Document 25 shows that Heinric paid off Lijsbette for certain debts, and he is mentioned here as ‘the father of her children’. Clearly he had no problem about acknowledging paternity, nor perhaps about accepting at least some token financial responsibility. What he gave her on this occasion—three 15-year-old ‘I owe yous’—was probably all he had to offer at this point. In the end, none of his efforts to get rich quick appears to have paid off. It seems significant that the last document to mention Heinric, three years later in 1474 (and I am now referring to document 26), reveals that he had just been imprisoned in Ouderborch castle, known today as the Gravensteen. We do not know what the charges were, though it may be possible to find out from archives in Brussels or Lille. In any case, it seems a fitting end to what looks like a less than respectable documented career.

Respectability is what Lijsbette Naps was able to secure for herself, and to pass on to her two sons, despite the stigma of single motherhood in a very sexist society. In 1464 she bought a house for Jan, Alexander and herself in one of the most upmarket streets of Ghent: living directly opposite the choir of St John’s (today the Cathedral of St Bavo), her sons would now grow up next-door to a Chamber of Rhetoric, and in a block of houses in which several parish priests were living. Lijsbette herself became a member of the Confraternity of Our Lady in St John’s. By the 1480s, two decades later, she would regularly worship in the confraternity chapel together with another member, a man who at that time lived only a few hundred metres away from her: Willem Obrecht, father of the composer Jacob. It is tantalizing to imagine the two proud parents comparing the respective careers and achievements of their sons, on their way to or from the Saturday Mass of Our Lady.

I mentioned earlier that, with one exception, Lijsbette never owed anyone any money: she could pay for everything in cash. That exception comes in December 1467. In document 24 she

acknowledges a debt to the so-called Cotidiane of the parish church of St Nicholas. The Cotidiane was a specifically musical institution, responsible for maintaining the daily services in the nave of the church, and for paying the salaries of the singers who participated. Obviously Lijsbette could not have purchased anything that needed to be paid in instalments. The amount of money she owed to the Cotidiane would have purchased at least two houses in the centre of Ghent. Perhaps she had meant to give this large sum as a charitable donation, for the increase of God's service. But she did not actually live in the parish of St Nicholas, and it would have made more sense for her to contribute in this way to the Cotidiane of St John's, her own parish church. Besides, one wonders why she would have agreed to have such a donation recorded as a debt, when she could simply have waited until the money became available. Clearly the Cotidiane and Lijsbette had agreed on something. One part of this contract or agreement is missing, but I suspect that the Cotidiane agreed to render services, perhaps for a period of many years. Those services, in all probability, had to do with the musical training, and perhaps the boarding, of her two sons, of whom Alexander was by now about ten years old. Her son Jan was almost certainly the Johannes Agricola who turns up as a singer in 's-Hertogenbosch from the mid-1480s, where documents helpfully specify that he came from Ghent. Johannes Agricola may well be the composer of the middle-Dutch song *Dat ic mijn lijden aldus helen moet*, and perhaps the father of the *cantore* Alessandro Agricola who turns up at Mantua in 1522. Both Jan and Alexander, I suggest, received their earliest musical training in the parish church of St Nicholas.

*Pater meus agricola est*: the special resonance of this title will by now be obvious. Heinric Ackerman was not a proper husbandman, nor a proper husband, nor even a biological father to be particularly proud of. If anyone deserved a musical tribute from Alexander, it was his mother Lijsbette Naps, who gave her sons a better start in life than they had reason to expect. One would like to think that upon her death in February 1499, Alexander saw fit to compose for her the equivalent of Obrecht's moving lament to his father Willem,

*Mille quingentis*. But even without such a musical gesture, the documents in Ghent have revealed enough for us to admire this formidable lady, who showed her sons how to take care of their interests when nobody else does.

## Appendix

### Document 1

12 Sep 1436

Lisbette van Lemberghe blijft [up] dat van haer ne vanden haren etc. *Margriete Naps* ende int ghelike beloofte Margriete Lisbetten binnen xiiij nachten. Actum xij die septembris. (Ghent City Archive 330.21, 1436/7, rolle f.1r)

Lisbette van Lemberghe and Margriete Naps to be reconciled after a conflict.

### Document 2

15 Jan 1444

Kenlic etc. dat Lieuin Parijs fs. Jans commen es etc., ende bekent etc. *Lijsbetten Naps* iij lb. gr. goeder scult te betaelne te Bamesse eerstcommende, versekert etc. Actum xv<sup>den</sup> januarij anno xliij. (Ghent City Archive 301.37, 1443/4, f.126r)

Lieuin Parijs fs. Jans owes 720 gr. to Lijsbette Naps, to be paid back on 1 October 1444.

### Document 3

4 Sep 1445

Katheline sGraets bekent *Lijsbette Naps* de somme van xxxiiij sc. gr. goeder scult te betaelne, deen heelt te Bamesse eerstcommende, ende dander heelt tSente Mertensmesse al eerstcommende, versekert etc. Actum iiiij<sup>ta</sup> septembris anno xlv. (Ghent City Archive 301.38, 1445/6, f.6r)

Katheline sGraets owes 408 gr. to Lijsbette Naps, to be paid back on 1 October and 11 November 1445.

### Document 4

23 Nov 1445

*Heinderijc Ackerman* bekent meester Boudin de Vos, hoeghbailliu van Ghent, de somme van xxxij sc. gr. te betaelne, deen heelt te Dertiene Daghe, ende dander heelt te Vastenuonde, beede eerstcommende, ende dit ouer zekere compositie jeghen hem ghemaect ouer ende in de name van Lieuin de Beste, versekert etc. Actum xxij

nouembris anno xlv. (Ghent City Archive 301.38, 1445/6, f.51r)

Heindric Ackerman undertakes to pay 384 gr. to Boudin de Vos, chief bailiff of Ghent, in a settlement made on behalf of Lievin Beste; repayment on 6 January and 8 March 1446.

#### Document 5

20 Oct 1446

*Lisbette Naps* stelt Danneele Crusaert omme ouer haer binnen Ghend in forma belouende etc. Actum xx<sup>den</sup> octobris anno xlvj. (Ghent City Archive 301.39, 1446/7, f.36v)

Danneele Crusaert appointed to take care of Lijsbette Naps's affairs during her absence.

#### Document 6

15 Dec 1447

*Lisbette Naps* stelt Claeise Barnage omme ouer haer binnen Ghend in forma belouende etc. Actum xv<sup>den</sup> decembris anno xlvj. (Ghent City Archive 301.39, 1447/8, f.62v)

Claeise Barnage appointed to take care of Lijsbette Naps's affairs during her absence.

#### Document 7

2 Jul 1448

Kenlic etc. dat *Joes Best* commen es etc., kende dat als van zulker handelighen, bewinde, ende gouuernemente als *Heinric Ackerman* vuer hem ghehadt ende ghedaen heeft, zekeren termijn gheduerende, in ontfanghe, verandwerdene, vutgheuene, ende andersins, de vornoemde *Heinric* hem goede loyale rekeninghe, bewijs, ende vulle betalinghe ghedaen heeft, ende heeft hem quite ghescolden van al dies hij hem zoude moghen heesschen ter causen van dien ende andersins ende allen anderen dies quitanche behouf metten rechte.

Bouen desen heeft de selue *Joes* den vornoemden *Heinric* wettich upghedreghen ende ouerghegheuen alsulke sommen van penninghen als de naeruolghende persoenen bij copien ende andersins hem sculdich zijn, te wetene: [1] twee copien sprekende up *Janne Wauters*, deen copie behelsene xxxiiij lb. gr., ende dander copie iij lb., iiij sc. gr.; [2] item, eene copie sprekende up *Thomaes* van den *Veevile* alias de *Proost* inhaudende xxxvj lb. gr.; [3] item, eene copie up *Jan Ghouaert* van huusse inhaudende xij lb. gr.; [4] item, x lb. gr. in minderinghe van den copien die spreect up *Joes* de *Clerc* twalef jaer lanc

duerende; [5] item, eene copie sprekende up *Janne Vla-mijn*c thuusse inhaudende vij sc., ix den. gr.; [6] item, zulke scult als *Pieter Mortier* sculdich es den seluen *Joes* draghende xxxij lb. gr.; [7] item, een copie sprekende up de kinderen van der *Mersch* van *Lijvin* ende huer borghen inhaudende xxiiij lb. gr.; omme den vorscreuen *Heinric* alle de vorscreuen sculden te hebbene, heffene, innene, ende ontfaende, ende behoudene als zijn proper goed, zonder den seluen *Joes* of yement anders eenich recht meer daer an te hebbene hebbene [*sic*], hoelne, of vermetene; ende dat in verghelde van dies de vorscreuen *Joes* den vornoemden *Heinric* tachter ende sculdich was, bouen den vorscreuen rekeninghen, van dienste, huweliken, belemen, giften, ende toesegghene met *Salmadrinen*, scorscreuen *Joes* natuerlike dochter, des selues *Heinric*xs wijf, ende andersins van dies *Heinric* voer hem betaelt ende verandwort hadde.

Voert kent de selue *Joes* den vornoemden *Heinric* ende zinen wiue toegheleyt ende ghegheuen hebbende thuus daer *Heinric* inne woont, staende in de *Cruus* strate metten ghelaghen etc., omme dat te hebbene ende behoudene als zijn proper goed, zonder den vorscreuen *Joes* meer rechts te vermetene, ommer wel verstaende hadde de vorscreuen *Heinric* eenich ghebrec van den vornoemden sculden ende huuse vorscreuen, ende hem yement van dien eenich ompasement of onghebruuc doen wilde, so belooft de selue *Joes* hem tselue ghebrec te waranderen ende intestane, duechdelic ende zonder fraude, versekert etc. waert ghestaen ende ghelegghen es binnen Ghend of daer buten. Actum ij<sup>den</sup> julij anno xlvij<sup>o</sup>. (Ghent City Archive 301.39, 1447/8, f.144r)

*Joes Beste* has ratified the account rendered to him by his steward *Heinric Ackerman*. / He gives *Heinric* a total of 35,601 gr. in debts owed to him by various individuals. / All this in repayment of the balance of *Heinric*'s account, as well as of the expenses made, and the gifts promised, in connection with *Heinric*'s marriage to *Salmadrinen Beste*, illegitimate daughter of *Joes*. / *Joes* also gives *Heinric* and *Salmadrinen* the house in the *Cruus Strate* (today *Lange Kruisstraat*) in which they are living at present.

#### Document 8

30 Jan 1450

*Scepenen* etc. wijsden *Joose* den *Beste* te scriuene jeghen de rekeninghe die *Heinric Ackerman* ghedaen ende hem ouerghegheuen heeft, vanden handelinghe, maintenance, ende beleede bij hem gheadt van svorscreuen *Joes* goede, ende dat binnen xij<sup>ten</sup> eerstcommende; ende dat de vornoemde *Heinric* binnen derdendaghe overlegghen sal den vornoemden *Joese* alsulke brieuen, tsaerteren, ende



munimenten als hij onder hem heeft, den vorscreuen Joes toebehorende, also als die niet ancleuen der giften of opdracht die de vorscreuen Joes voormaels ghedaen mach hebben den vornoemden Heinric of zinen wiue, den vorscreuen Heinric behoudende de copie van allen den vorscreuen brieuen ende munimenten up dat hem ghelieft. Actum xxx<sup>a</sup> januarij anno xlix. (Ghent City Archive 301.40, 1449/50, f.66v)

The magistrates order Joes Beste to respond, within two weeks, to the account rendered to him by Heinric Ackerman. They order Heinric to hand over to Joes, within three days, all the legal papers and documents pertaining to the latter's affairs.

#### Document 9

29 May 1455

Kenlic etc. dat Joes Best commen es etc. ende bekent sculdich zijnde *Lijsbette Naps* de somme van vier lb. gr. gheuallens ghelts van gheleenden ghelde ende die te betaelne als de voorscreuen *Lijsbette* niet langher verbeyden en wille, versekert etc. Actum xxix<sup>a</sup> maij anno lv. (Ghent City Archive 301.43, 1454/5, f.114r)

Joes Beste borrows 960 gr. from *Lijsbette Naps*, to be paid whenever she wants her money back.

#### Document 10

6 Feb 1456

Kenlic zij etc. dat *Heinric Ackerman* commen etc., ende heeft vercocht Woutren vanden Clijnen xlviij<sup>c</sup> fasselen houts taelgie, van vij ende van viij [palmen], haghehout de moere eeken, ende dit te leuerne binnen den maent van meye eerstcommende, tscipsboorden de Leye tAstene of te Wijpernaerde, ende dit omme eene zekere somme van penninghen daer af hem de vornoemde Heinric kent vernoucht ende wel betaelt, ende schelt de voorscreuen Woutren daer af quite, versekert etc., ende hier vooren staet boorghe *Joos Best*. Actum vj febuarij anno lv. (Ghent City Archive 301.43, 1455/6, f.70v)

Heinric Ackerman sells 4,800 bundles of wood to Woutre vanden Clijnen, to be delivered in May. Joes Beste is named as surety.

#### Document 11

4 Oct 1456

Kenlic etc. dat up den vierden dach van october int jaer xiiij<sup>c</sup> .lvj. int scependom Meester Philips Sersanders, Her Christiaens vander Gracht, ende huer ghesellen, so waren

gheordineert ende ghedeputeert vuten ghemeen gheselscepe vanden seluen scepenen Her Christiaenen vande Gracht vornoemt, Her Heinric Baert, ende Her Symoen van Leeuwe, omme te anhoorne de rekeninghe, verclaringhe, ende bewijs die *Heinric Ackerman* als voocht vander vaderliker ziden van Nannekine Ackermans Cornelisdochter, die hij hadde bij Margriete sBrunen zinen wettichen wiue was, versochten ende begheerden te doene, ende oec dede voor scepenen vornoemt, ter presencien ende bij zine van Lieuin Ryneer als voocht vander moederlike zide, Her Christiaen vander Gracht vornoemt, Her Joost vander Eecken, Janne den Brune, Christoffelse van Nechem, de wedewe Clais vanden Bossche [i.e. Agneeze Ackermans], Arende de Rudder, ende Jacop den Smet, als maghen ende vrienden vander vorscreuen weese, van alder handlinghe, gouuernemente, ende beleede die de vorscreuen Heinric in zinen persoene alleene ghehadt hadde vander vorscreuen weese goede, in ontfanghe, in vtgheue, of anderssins, zint den x<sup>sten</sup> dach van November int jaer xiiij<sup>c</sup> liij lestleden, doe hij metgaders Janne Vlieghe—die als voocht gheweest vander moederlike ziden vander vornoemden weese intghelike rekeninghe ende bewijs ghedaen heeft van zinen ontfanghe ende utgheue ten vorscreuen daghe, jaer, ende scependome, deselue rekeninghe gheapprobeert zijnde, ende dapprobacie van dien gheregistreert staende in xiiij<sup>o</sup>ste blat vanden boucke des jeghewoordighs scepenbancs—voocht bedeech vander vorscreuen weesen, ende ditte toot den xx<sup>sten</sup> daghe van septembre lestleden in dit jaer xiiij<sup>c</sup> lvj.

Bynnen welken vornoemden termine de vorscreuen Heinric Ackerman rekende ende bewijsde dat hij ontfanen hadde vander vorscreuen weese goede van pachte, renten, vercopinghe van catteylen, ende der weese rechte van dorenscepe van Janne vander Linden, also ver als daer af vercocht es ende anderssins deen noch ander, de somme van xxxviij lb., v sc., x den. gr. viij den. par. Ende daer jeghen bewijsde de vorscreuen voocht inder name vander vorscreuen weese uutghegheuen ende betaelt hebbende binnen der vorscreuen termine van dootghelden, lijfrenten, landcheynse, cleedinghen, ende habituacien, omme de weese vander weese tafle ende houdensse van costen ghedaen, omme der weesen goed beter te bestedene van rente, rekene, ende der copen vanden bewerp ende de wettich copie vander weesen state van goede, metgaders ende hier inne begrepen alle de dachuaerden die de voocht ghedaen heeft buten der stede treckende, omme der weesen sake ende goed te besorghen, en de x lib par. die te pencioene vtghegheuen zijn Jacoppe Hillebrant na duutwijzen vander wettichen copie ghedaen den xij<sup>en</sup> dach van laumaent anno liij<sup>o</sup>, ende anderssins in

diuerssche manieren al ter orbuieren vander vorscreuen weese, int gheeel de somme van xxxix lb., xvij sc., vij den. gr. vij den. par.

Aldus daer af ghetrocken tvorscreuen gheel ontanc, bleec claer dat de vornoemde Heinric meer vutghegheuen dan ontfanghen hadde de somme van xxxj sc., vij den. gr. xj den. par. Ende bouen dien noch xxiiij sc. gr. die de vorscreuen Heindric naer tverclaers van zier rekeninghe heesch van ziner vorscreuen rekeninghe te gaderne, ordinerne, ende scriuene, metgaders de copie van dien, ende van vele meer ander diuersschen scriftueren ende brieuen die hij seide te vele diuersschen stonden ghemaect ende ghescreuen hebbende ter cause ende inde name vander vorscreuen weese, dat was tsamen ij lb., xv sc., viij den. gr. xj den. par., die de weese hem ten slote van zine rekeninghe tachter bleef;

uuterlic hem danof ghedraghende in de ordonnantie van scepenen die ouer de vorscreuen rekenighe ghedeputeert waren, ende in dordinantien van maghen ende vrienden, bij also dat hemlieden dochte dat hij met min sculdich was tevreden te zine, alsoot dede specialic van zinen dachuaerden ende scriftueren, danof metter vorscreuen Heinderic zo verre ghesproken was, sonderlijke vanden vorscreuen slote van zier rekeninghen, als dat hij bij onderwijsene wel ghepait was ende consenteerde tevreden te zine met xx sc. gr. te hebbene als meer utghegheuen hebbende dan ontfanghen zonder meer, ende mids dien was tslot van ziner vorscreuen rekeninghe gheordineert, also instane niet jeghenstaende wat voeren verclaert es, te weten verstaende dat vander vorscreuen x lb. gr. die Jacop Hillebrant tanderen tiden versekerde den vorscreuen Heinric niet toe en behoort . . . Jan Vlieghe dander vooght gheweest heeft, danof in zine rekeninghe verclaers ghedaen ende bewijs alsoet behoort in zijne applicacie inhoudt, ende bouen desen blijft de vorscreuen weese ghecocht ende ghelest in alzulke percheelen van baten ende commeren als begrepen zijn in een papieren rolleken dat de vorscreuen Heinric ouergaf, ende themwaerts heeft gheteekent metten handteeken van den sen . . . date, dese approbatie mede gheteekent es, te weten Jans van . . . also al dat vorscreuen es bet ende vulkommen waer blijkt bider vorscreuen rekeninghe daer elc percheel van ontfanghe, bewijse, ende vutgheueene inne verclaert es.

Welke vornoemde rekeninghe aldus ghehoort biden vornoemden iij ghedeputeerden scepenen, ende daer uppe trelaen van maghen ende vrienden bouen, wart bij scepenen ghemenelic verhaelt, gheprobeert, ende ghesententeert te zine ghescede ende van werdden inde manieren vorscreuen. Dit was ghedaen ten daghe, maende, jare, ende int scependom bouen eerst ghenoomt. (Ghent City Archive 330.27, 1456/7, f.14r)

Heinric Ackerman renders account of the receipts and expenses made on behalf of Nannekin Ackermans, the underage orphan whose guardian he has been from 10 November 1453 to 20 September 1456. His account is subject to the ratification of the magistrates of inheritance and of the relatives and neighbours of Nannekin. / Receipts amount to a total of 9,190.67 gr. / Expenses amount to a total of 9571.58 gr. / The balance is 380.9 gr. Heinric also claims other miscellaneous expenses, including travel away from Ghent and the writing of letters and legal documents, amounting to a total of 372 gr. The total balance to be repaid to Heinric amounts to 752.9 gr. / Nannekin's relatives do not agree, especially with regard to the expenses for travel and the writing of letters and legal documents, and they insist that he content himself with 240 gr., less than a third of what he had claimed in his account. / After the magistrates discuss this with Heinric, he accepts their objections, and settles for the 240 gr. / Heinric's account is ratified.

#### Document 12

17 Feb 1457

Kenlic zij etc. dat joncvrouwe *Katheline vanden Hole*, wedewe van *Joes Besten*, commen es etc. kende ende lijdde dat zoe vercocht heeft *Lijsbetten Naps*, haer sellefs wijf zijnde, veertiendusentich fassael houts, ront ende gheclouen eecken, taelge van deuse, van vij ende viij palmen, goed louelic goed, alsoot van haer goede te Steene inde prochie van Nazaret commen ende vallen sal, sonder eenighe fraude, welc hout de vornoemde joncvrouwe *Katheline* beloofte heeft der vorscreuen *Lijsbetten* wel ende duechdelic te leuerne, zonder eenighe vutstellen, fauten, of malicie daer inne te zouckenne ofte voort te stellenne, binnen der maent van meye, sonder eenich vertier langher, nu int jaer xiiij<sup>c</sup> ende lvij eerstcommende, ende datte up de Leye te Gampelaert tseeps boorde, dewelke de vornoemde joncvrouwe *Katheline* beloofte, bekent, ende versekert heeft up hare ende up althare, ende voort es borghe ouer haer ende voor al *Heindric Ackerman*, haer procuruer ende dienare, ende wart bij alsoe dat zoe de vornoemde leuringhe niet en dade der vornoemde *Lijsbetten* inder manieren vorscreuen, ende de selue *Lijsbette* enich ghebrec hadde, zo heeft de vornoemde joncvrouwe ghesententeert dat zoe tgebrec van dien sal moghen innen, verhalen, ende verreeken ande vornoemde joncvrouwe *Katheline*, an haer goet zo waer dat ghelegghen of rustende es binnen Ghend of daer buten, ofte an haren vorscreuen borghe, bij zulcken weghe bij rechte alsser toe dienen ende behooren zullen, hemlieden in dit cas ontvaender, sonder hemlieden ter contrarien van deser wettelicker kennessen yet te gheholpene ofte te bestuwenne met haerlieder vrijehede van deser

stede oft andersins in eenigher manieren. Desen coop es ghedaen omme eene zekere somme van ghelde danof haer de vornoemde joncvrouwe Katheline kende siinde wel betaelt, vernoucht, ende al vergolden van Lijsbetten vornoemt, ende heeft der seluen Lisbetten wettelic danof quite ghescolden teeuwelicken daghen, ende de vornoemde Lijsbette moet ghevrijt hebben vanden quelote van deser stede sonder haren cost of last. Actum xvij februarj anno lvj, int scependom meester Clais Triest, rudder, her Jans van Siccleers, ende hueren ghesellen, etc. (Ghent City Archive 301.44, 1456/7, f.66r)

Be it known, etc., that lady Kateline vanden Hole, widow of Joes Best, has come etc., stated and declared that she has sold to Lijsbette Naps, her own woman, 14,000 bundles of wood, round and cut oak, incised with hallmark, of seven or eight palms [about 30 inches], good quality merchandise, as it will be cut at her estate at Steene in the parish of Nazaret, *without any fraud*, which wood the aforesaid lady Kateline has promised to deliver *well and reliably* to the aforesaid Lijsbette, *without seeking or pretending any postponement, default, or malice therein*, within the month of May, *without any further delays*, now in the year of 1457, and this on the Leie river at Gampelaert, shipped on board, which the aforesaid lady Kateline has promised, declared, and guaranteed on her and all her [possessions], and further is her surety for her and for everything Heinric Ackerman, her steward and servant, and *in the event that she were not to make the aforesaid delivery to Lijsbette in the aforesaid manner, and the same Lijsbette were to experience any default*, the lady has consented that [Lijsbette] may collect, recover, and seize from the aforesaid lady Kateline, from her estate wherever it is situated within or outside Ghent, or from her aforesaid surety [Heinric Ackerman], in such lawful manner as will serve and pertain to this end, they being answerable in this case, *without their being aided or protected by their privileges in this city or otherwise in any manner contrary to this legal deed*. This transaction was done for a sum of money with which the aforesaid lady Kateline declared to be well paid, contented, and requited by the aforesaid Lijsbette, and she has legally acquitted Lijsbette of this [sum] for all eternity, and *the aforesaid Lijsbette must be indemnified against the taxes of this city without any cost or expense on her part*. Done 17 February 1457, in the magistrateship of Master Clais Triest, knight, Her Jan van Siccleer, and their companions, etc.

#### Document 13

17 Nov 1457

Kenlic zij etc. dat *Lijsbette Naps* commen es etc., kende dat zoe ghehadt ende ontfanghen heeft van Jacoppe Breydel, ouer hem ende ouer zine medeghedelen als gheel hoer

vander versterften van *Joose Best*, de somme van xij sc., vij den. gr., ende dit van de vulle betalinghe vanden heelt van drie ponden gr. die de vorscreuen Joos Best tsine ouerlijdene hare tachter ende sculdich bleef, ende dit midts der betalinghe vander seluer heelt die de houderigghe vanden seluen Joos ouer tvorscreuen hoir ghedaen heeft, der vorscreuen Lijsbetten up de wettiche copie die daer af es ghedaen den xxix<sup>sten</sup> dach van meye anno lv int scependom Her Pieters SerSimoens etc., fl. cxiii<sup>o</sup> [document 9], ende heeft de vorscreuen Jacop ouer hem ende inde name als bouen daer af wel ende wettich quite ghescolden ende schelt quite teeuwelicken daghen. Actum xvij nouembris anno lvij. (Ghent City Archive 301.44, 1457/8, f.25r)

Lijsbette Naps is repaid 151 gr. of the money she had lent to the late Joes Beste (see document 9).

#### Document 14

8 Mar 1457

Kenlic zij allen lieden dat vut dien dat *Heinric Ackerman*, als borghe voor Artuere Best Joes natuerlijken zone, betaelt heeft Jan vanden Oeu[er]acker, Janne Boterman, ende andren, mids dat hij Artuere gheleent heeft toter somme van vj lb. gr. alsoe Artuer kende etc., zo eest dat de zelue Artuer commen es voor scepenen ende heeft wettich in sijn stede ghestelt ende machtich ghemaecht den vornoemden Heinric, omme ende inden name van hem te bedinghene, tachteruolghene, up theffene, ende tontfane de somme van xx lb. gr., die hem Joes Best zijn vader wijlen ordonneerde ende gaf in voornen van huweliker voorwaarden te heffene naer zijn lijf, alsoe de wettiche copie dier af es mencioen macht, hem vulle macht gheuende jeghen de weduwe ende thoyr vanden vornoemden Joes der af te doene in heesschene, in verandwoordene, in appointeren, in quitsceldinghen, of andersins datter toebehooren zal ghedaen te zijne, ende al datter de vornoemde Aertuer present zijnde zelue af doen zoude moghen, van welken xx lb. gr. tproces ghehendt wesende de voorscreuen Heinric betaelt zijn sal van zijnen vornoemden gheleenden vj lb. gr., ende bouen dien sal hij hebben ouer zijnen dienst ende aerbeit van desen gheuolghen iiiij lb. gr., comt te gader x lb. gr., ende dander x lb. gr. sullen commen ten profijte vanden vornoemden Aertuere.

Voort heeft hem de zelue Aertuer als vornoemt vulle macht ghegheuen inden name van hem te bedinghene ende tontfane de somme van xxxvj lb. gr., die de vornoemde Aertuer heesschende es den steerhuuse vanden vornoemden Joes, voor daudenessen van hem ende zijne wiue, die de vornoemde Joes in huweliker voorwaarden

beloofde vier jaer te houdene of neghen pond gr. tsiaers daer vooren te gheue, also de voorscreuen wettiche copie oec mencioen maecht, dies sal de voornoemde Heinric ouer tveruolch van desen hebben up dat hij veruolcht ende mer anderen saken die de voorscreuen Aertuer den voorscreuen steerhuuse heesschende es, de somme van xij ponden gr., ende dander xxiii lb. gr. sullen oec commen te Aertuers proffijte, belouende was bij Heindericke in alle desen saken ghedaen sal weerden te houdene van weerdden. Actum ix<sup>a</sup> dach maercij anno lvj. (Ghent City Archive 330.27, 1456/7, f.82v)

Heinric Ackerman has advanced 1,440 gr. on behalf of Artuer Beste, bastard son of Joes Beste. In repayment, Artuer empowers him to recover 4,800 gr. owed to Artuer by the estate of the late Joes Beste, and to keep for himself the 1,440 gr. he had lent, as well as 960 gr. for his troubles. / Heinric is also empowered to recover 8,640 gr. owed to Artuer by the estate of Joes Beste, and to keep for himself 2,880 gr. (one-third of that sum) in payment for his troubles.

#### Document 15

30 Jan 1458

Scepenen wizen *Heinric Ackerman*, als wettelic machtich voor de wedewe van Joes Best, dat hij achteruolghende den voorghewijsden vonnesse dat hij kende tanderen tiden hier af hem ghewijst zijnde, bringhen onder scepenen alle de briuen, charteren, copien, munimenten, ende gheschriften toebehorende ende ancleuende den sterfhuuse vanden voorscreuen Joes, binnen viij daghen eerstcommende, of dat hij binnen den seluen tide trecke int sammans ende daer niet vut ende steede zonder tconsent van uij scepenen, up de boete van lx lb. par. Ende dit ten fine dat svorscreuen Joes hoir ende elc dier ancleeft daer af hebbe, datter elc af sculdich werdt te hebbene, metten rechte. Actum xxx<sup>a</sup> januarij anno lvij<sup>o</sup>. (Ghent City Archive 330.28, 1457/8, f.41r)

The magistrates of inheritance order Heinric Ackerman to hand over to them, within eight days, all legal papers and documents pertaining to the effects of Joes Beste, on pain of imprisonment and a fine of 1,200 gr. on release.

#### Document 16

9 Nov 1458

Scepenen naer de handelinghe die voor hemlieden was ter cause van der somme van tien lb. gr. die *Heinric Ackerman* heesch Lieuin van Lede, als machtich ouer zeker hoor van Joes Best, ouer deen heelt van twintich lb. gr. die Joes Best eerste wijf, danof de selue Joes alleene bleef in baten ende in commer, vortijts gaf in testamente zijnen

dochter svorscreuen Heinrics wijf, de welke somme de voorscreuen Lieuin maynteneerde biden vornoemden Heinric gheheescht ende begrepen zijnde int proces al noch hanghende bij gheschriften voor scepenen vander kueren in Ghend, tusschen den voorscreuen wilen Joes Best ouer een ziden ende den voorscreuen Heinric ouer ander, van al dies zij elc ander heesschende waren, dies vermet legghende, zo dadt de vornoemde Heinric loochenen wilde ende weerde hem mids dien hiet tandwoorden, wijsden, naer tontbieden daer af ghedaen biden voorscreuen Heinric, den vornoemden Lieuin [te] betoghene zijn vornoemde vermet binnen viij daghen eerstcommende een ouer al, of dan de vornoemde Heinric te verandwoorden te zinen voorscreuen heeschene, mids oec dat den voorscreuen Lieuin tandren tiden tghelike vonnesse eens ghewijst es gheweest dat hij niet vulcommen en heeft. Actum ix<sup>den</sup> dach nouembris anno lvij. (Ghent City Archive 330.28, 1458/9, f.7r)

Heinric Ackerman seeks payment of 2,400 gr. from the estate of Joes Beste, this sum having been bequeathed to Salmadrijnen by the first wife of Joes Beste. Lievin claims that this sum is already at issue in the ongoing legal proceedings between Heinric and the estate of Joes Beste. Heinric denies this. / The magistrates order Lievin to either prove his claim or pay the 2,400 gr.

#### Document 17

9 Nov 1458

Scepenen naer de handelinghe die voor hemlieden was ter cause vander somme van xvij lb. gr. die *Heinric Ackerman*, bij vertute van zekeren opdracht hem ghedaen van Aertuer Best, heesch Lieuin van Lede, als wettich machtich ouer zeker hoir van Joes Besten svorscreuen Artuers vader was, ouer deen heelt van xxxvj lb. gr., die hij seide dat tsterfhuus vanden seluen Joes den vornoemden Artuer sculdich es, ter causen vander houdensse van vier jaeren die de vornoemde Joes voortijts beloofde te doene den voorscreuen Aertuer ende zinen wiue, naer tverclaers van eenen wetteliken kennessen die hij daerof betooghde ghepassert bij scepenen vander kueren in Ghend, wijsden omme hier in behoort te procederne alvoren den vornoemden Lieuin van Lede betooch te doene, wat houensse, hoe vele, hoe langhe, ende van wiet de voorscreuen Joes ter cause vanden voorscreuen beloften ghehadt heeft, binnen xiiij<sup>ten</sup> eerstcommende. Ende dat ghedaen, elken dan voort staende in zinen goeden rechte, zonder dies met desen vonnessen yet gheproindicyert of vermerdet te zine. Actum ix<sup>a</sup> dach nouembris anno lvij<sup>o</sup> (Ghent City Archive 330.28, 1458/1459, f.7v)

Heinric Ackerman, acting on behalf of Artuer Beste (see document 14), seeks payment of half of 8,540 gr. from the estate of Joes Beste. / Magistrates order him to pursue this in formal litigation.

#### Document 18

20 Nov 1460

Kenlic dat *Lijsbette Naps* haer selfs wijf stelt in haer stede *Lieuin Dam* in Ghent in forma. Actum xx<sup>a</sup> nouembris anno lx<sup>o</sup>. (Ghent City Archive 301.46, 1460/61, f.25v)

Lievin Dam appointed to take care of *Lijsbette Naps*'s affairs during her absence.

#### Document 19

16 May 1461

Kenlic zij dat *Lijsbette Naps* commen es etc., heeft mach-tich ghemaect Janne vanden Abeele binnen Ghend per totum. Actum v may anno lxj. (Ghent City Archive 301.46, 1460/61, f.91v)

Janne vanden Abeele appointed to take care of *Lijsbette Naps*'s affairs during her absence.

#### Document 20

8 Mar 1462

Als van den ansprake die Margriete sPuits, als moeder ende vooght van haren kinderen die zoe hadde bij Joesse Struuen haren man was, dede te wette *Heinric Ackerman*, als procuruer van den houdere van Joesse Best, omme hem bedwonghen te hebbene dat zij zuueren, quiten, ende ontlasten souden zulken gront van erue als de selue procuruer vuter name van den vorscreuen houdere voortijts vercocht heeft Janne Spigghen, doe vooght wesende van den vornoemden weesen ende ter seluer weesen behouf, van xviiij den par. siaers erflic die up den seluen gront beuonden zijn meer dan de rente daermede de vornoemde procuruer den seluen gront vercochte, naer tuudwijsen eener cedula gheteeckend met scorscreuen procuruer handteeken, die zij betoochden ende oec van der renten voor tselue vercoopen gheuallen, hem anseghende dat hijt also tanderen tijden belooft hadde, dies vermet legghende up dat de vornoemde procuruer loochenen wilde, so waest dat scepenen naer de kennesse hier toe ghedaen bij den vornoemden procuruer, ende oec naer dat zij ghesien ende gheuiseert hadden de vornoemde cedulle, wijsden den vorscreuen procuruer dat hij hem de gront bij hem vercocht zo vorscreuen es zuuere, quite, ende ontlaste van den vorscreuen xviiij den. par. siaers erflic, dien meer upbeuonden ziin dan

daermede dat hijne vercochte, naer tuudwijsen etc., metgaders de vorscreuen gheuallen rente binnen xiiiij<sup>ten</sup> eerstcommende, liet hijt scepenen souden wet up hem doen. Actum viij<sup>a</sup> dach marcij anno lxj<sup>o</sup>. (Ghent City Archive 330.29, 1461/2, f.73r)

Margriete sPuits complains about ground sold by Heinric Ackerman on behalf of the widow of Joes Beste: there is a hereditary rent of 1.5 gr. due every year, of which Heinric had made no mention when he sold the ground. / Heinric refuses to pay the rent for them. / The magistrates order Heinric to pay the rent.

#### Document 21

18 Dec 1462

*Heinric Ackerman* heeft in zine stede ghestelt *Lieuin Dam* binnen Ghend in forma. Actum xviiij decembris anno lxij. (Ghent City Archive 301.47, 1462/3, f.32r)

Lievin Dam will represent Heinric Ackerman during his absence.

#### Document 22

21 Feb 1464

Kenlic etc. dat *Lijsbette Naps*, haers selfs wijf zijnde, heeft vercocht wel ende redelic Daneel Mammins een huus staende achter de derde ordene, de selue Daneel daer neffens ghehuust, met allen den ghelaghen ende aysementen diere toebehoeren, van vooren toot achtere, ende met xviiij gr. tsiaers erflic daer vute gaende te landcheinse, desen coop es ghedaen omme de somme van sesse ponden gr., te betaelen xx sc. gr. ghereet, ende tsoerplus te Kerssauonde eerstcommende, versekert etc. Actum xxj februarij anno lxij. (Ghent City Archive 301.47, 1463/4, f.67r)

*Lijsbette Naps* sells a house in Ghent to Daneel Mammins, for the sum of 1,440 gr.

#### Document 23

9 Jul 1464

Kenlic dat *Lijsbette Naps* vercocht heeft Janne Goethals Janszone tAssenede een behuusede stede, ende es een steen goet vrij van tholne al Vlaendren duer, ghestaen ende gheleghen tAssenede ande caetsiet [?], dwelke wijlen toehoorde Joosse Dickelen, dat de vornoemde *Lijsbette* wesende wettich af was bij den wet van Assenede, van zeker somme van penninghen die haer de vorscreuen Joos tachter was ten date, met allen den plaetsen, ghelaghen, ende aysementen dier toehoren ernaest naghehuust, sonder enighe commer daer vute gaende,



staende ten dienst van minen gheduchten heeren, desen coop es ghedaen omme de somme van iij lb. gr., danof Lijsbette kende ontfanghen hebbende te wetene x sc., ende tsurplus te betaelne te wetene x sc. gr. tSente Jansmesse anno lxxv sc., ende also voore telken Sent Jansmesse x sc. toter vuller betalinghe, versekert up hem etc., borghe ouer hem Joos Goethals zinen broeder up de . . . Lijsbette staen te huerer liue up dat zoe ghebrec hadde wede zoe volghende welk up hueren principael oft borghe. Actum ix<sup>n</sup> julij anno lxxiiij<sup>o</sup>. (Ghent City Archive 301.47, 1463/4, f.117r)

Lijsbette Naps sells a house in Assenede to Janne Goethals, for the sum of 720 gr.

#### Document 24

15 Dec 1467

Kenlic zij etc. dat *Lisbette Naps* commen es etc. kende ende lide dat zo tachter ende sculdich es her Janne van Heersele, presbytre, als ontfanger vanden cotidiane van Sente Niclaus keerke, ende ter cotidiane behouf, de somme van x lb. gr. goeden scult, te betalene deen heelt tAlfvastene ende dander heelt tSent Jansmesse, beede eerstcommende, of commende gheel tsente Jansmesse onbegrepen. Versekert up hem etc. Actum xv<sup>a</sup> dach decembris anno lxxvj. (Ghent City Archive 301.49, 1467/8, f.28v)

Be it known, etc., that Lijsbette Naps has come etc. stated and declared that she owes Her Janne van Heersele, priest, as receiver of the cotidiane of the Church of Saint Nicholas, and for the sake of the cotidiane, the sum of 2,400 gr., one half to be paid on the next 27 March, and the other on the next 24 June, or the whole on 24 June without fail. Guaranteed on him [i.e. her] etc. Done 15 December 1467.

#### Document 25

23 Jul 1471

Kenlic etc. dat *Heinric Ackerman* commen etc., kende ende lijde dat hij in betalinghe van zekeren sommen van penninghen die hij sculdich es *Lijsbette Naps*, siner kinderen moeder, der seluen Lijsbetten wel ende wettich upghedreghen ende ouerghegeuen heeft,

[1] eene wettiche copie sprekende van Goeris vanden Haghe behelsende iij lb., vj sc. gr., in daten den viij dach van sporkele anno lvij, int scependom her Pieter SerSimoens, her Pieter Beys, etc., folio liiij; [2] voort eene andere wettiche copie sprekende van Lodewijc vanden Noenackere bedraghende xxxvj sc. gr., ghedaen den ij<sup>en</sup> dach van sporkle anno lvj, int scependom van Clais Triest, rudder, her Jans van Sycleer, folio lvij; [3] ende

eene cedulle van Jan Boterman dOude van xvij sc. gr., ghezeghelt svorscreuen Jans zeghele in daten den xv<sup>en</sup> dach van Wedemaent anno lvij;

alle welke sommen van penninghen de vornoemde Heynric Ackerman betaelt heeft als bescaedt borghe vor Artuer Best, al so de vorscreuen copien ende cedullen daer af te vullen mensioen makende, omme de vornoemde Lijsbetten dese vornoemde sculden ende sommen van penninghen te hebbene, heffene, innene, ende tontfane, in recompensacien ende verghelde vanden scult die de vorscreuen Heinric haer tachter es, te haren vrijen propren goed, up de houderijen vanden vornoemde Arturen Best ende andersins, alsoet behoren sal, de vorscreuen Lijsbette ter causen van desen quamelic ende vulcommelic macht gheuende. Actum xxiiij Julij anno lxxj. (Ghent City Archive 301.51, 1470/71, f.133v)

[Be it] known, etc., that Heinric Ackerman has come, etc., stated and declared that he has given and assigned, well and lawfully, in repayment of certain sums of money which he owes Lijsbette Naps, the mother of his children,

[1] a legal deed of Goeris vanden Haghe concerning 792 gr., dated 8 February 1458, in the magistrateship of Her Pieter SerSimoens, Her Pieter Beys, etc., [Ghent City Archive 301.44, 1457/8], f.54; [2] further another legal deed, of Lodewijc vanden Noenackere concerning 432 gr., done on 2 February 1457, in the magistrateship of Clais Triest, knight, Her Jan van Sycleer, [Ghent City Archive 301.44, 1456/7], f.58; [3] and a document of Jan Boterman senior concerning 216 gr., sealed with the seal of the aforesaid Jan, dated 15 June 1457;

all of which sums the aforesaid Heinric Ackerman has paid as kin surety for Artuer Beste, of which the aforesaid deed and documents make full mention, in order that the aforesaid Lijsbette can have, collect, recover, and receive, in recuperation and repayment of the debt which the aforesaid Heinric owes to her, for her free property, from the keeping of the aforesaid Arturen Beste and otherwise, as it is proper, granting the aforesaid Lijsbette proper and full power in connection with this. Done on 23 July 1471.

#### Document 26

9 Aug 1474

Kenlic etc. dat *Heinric Hackerman* commen etc., ende heeft wettich upghedreghen ende ouerghegeuen Baudin Quistebouc, onderbaillu van Ghendt indesen tijt, eene cedulle die behelst ende inhoudt de somme van x sc., iiij den. gr., die de zelue Baudin den vornoemden Heinricke leende doe hij gheuanghen was bijden dieneeren vander Ouderborch, ten versoucke van meester Lieuin vanden Hole, rudder, omme tinsende van dien te innene,

upheffende, ende ontfaene tzine vrije propre goude, hem daer inne vulle macht gheuende. Actum ix augusti anno lxxiii<sup>o</sup>. (Ghent City Archive 301.52, 1473/4, f.140r)

[Be it] known, etc., that Heinric Ackerman has come, etc., and has lawfully given and assigned to Baudin Quistebouc, under-bailiff of Ghent at the present time,

a document concerning the sum of 124 gr., which the same Baudin had lent to the aforementioned Heinric at the request of Master Lievin vanden Hole, knight, when [Heinric] was imprisoned with the officials of the Ouderborch, to collect, recover, and receive this as his free property, granting him full power in this regard. Done on 9 August 1474.

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1 Edition in Alexander Agricola, *Opera omnia*, ed. E. R. Lerner, CMM, xxii/1–5 (1961–70), v, p.107.

2 The magistrates of the by-law (*scepenen vander kuere*) registered financial and legal transactions between Ghent citizens, foundations and endowments, decisions made by the city magistrates, and passed and recorded verdicts in civil lawsuits. Their massive yearbooks are kept as series 301 in the city archive of Ghent. Similarly voluminous yearbooks were produced by the magistrates of inheritance (*scepenen van ghedeele*), who dealt with inheritance matters; these yearbooks are kept as series 330 in the city archive.

3 J. Rifkin, 'Alexander Agricola and Cambrai: a postscript', *Tijdschrift van de Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis*, liv (2004), pp.21–8.



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