

Le Louvre des Antiquaires
2 Place du Palais-Royal
75001 Paris (France)
tel. +33 (0)1 42 60 15 58 • fax. +33 (0)1 40 15 00 25
info@lesenluminures.com

2970 North Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, IL 60657 (USA)
tel. +773 929 5986
fax. +773 528 3976
chicago@lesenluminures.com

Du Pou-Veauce Hours (Use of Poitiers and Paris)

In Latin and French, illuminated manuscript on parchment

France, Tours, c. 1480 or just before

16 miniatures attributed to two artists in the immediate circle of Jean Fouquet and Jean Bourdichon

234 leaves, plus medieval flyleaf at end, complete, blanks cancelled after ff. 36 and 123, f. 120 is misbound and should follow f. 123 (collation: i¹², ii^{s+1}, iv⁷ (blank viii cancelled), v^{s+1}, vi¹⁰, vii-xiv^s, xv³⁺¹ [blanks iv cancelled], xviii^s, xix^{s+1}, xx-xxviii^s, xxix⁶), 13 lines, ruled in red ink (justification 61 x 43 mm.), written in dark brown ink in two sizes of a fine letter batarde, rubrics in blue, calendar in red and blue and burnished gold, capitals touched in yellow, line-fillers and versal initials throughout in liquid gold on colored grounds, 2-line initials painted in delicate designs in pink and white enclosing leaves or naturalistic flies and other insects on liquid gold grounds, a hundred and forty-eight panel borders in designs of delicate colored acanthus leaves and flowers on hairline stems infilled with black and gold dots, six large initials with full illuminated borders, the initials 4 lines high, the borders on parti-colored liquid gold grounds including flowers and birds and insects, four small miniatures with full borders, one 6-line, others 7-line, and eight three-quarter page and four full-page miniatures within borders or jeweled frames, early additions at end, rather worn and thumbled with rubbing in some illumination including first page and the full-page miniatures, edges of the wide full illuminated borders just cropped by the binder, other stains and marks and signs of use, slight worming on endleaves, mostly in reasonably good condition, Bound in 19th-century vellum over pasteboards gilt, gilt edges, in a white cloth slipcase and box made for Major Abbey. Dimensions 110 x 76 mm.

Known from several publications and with an illustrious provenance, originally probably commissioned by the nobleman François du Pou, secretary of the Duke of Brittany, this is an important and beautiful manuscript with highly inventive miniatures associated directly with the schools of Jean Fouquet and Jean Bourdichon. It has been attributed variously to these two artists or to a skilled illuminator the artist of the Bourbon-Vendôme Hours, who was intimately familiar not only with the models but also with the styles of one or both painters.

PROVENANCE

1. The illumination points to Tours as the place of origin, although the Office of the Virgin is of the Use of Poitiers and the Office of the Dead is of the Use of Paris. An early name is in a calligraphic but not very literate hand on the end flyleaf and seems to read "marguoritta le porralleau." Devoid of any heraldry or other personalizing elements from the fifteenth century, the present manuscript was certainly owned by, and probably made for, François du Pou (d'argent au lion de sable armé, lampassé et couronné d'or), who is recorded already in 1481 as ducal

secretary for Duke Francis II of Brittany. By a lettre-patente of November 4, 1492, Emperor Maximilian I awarded François du Pou, seigneur of the Manor of Kernivinen, near Hennebont (in Finistere), the "noble chevalier de Tournois du Saint-Empire-Romain." François was married (we do not know what year) to Jeanne du Pou, dame de Coetro, Kernivinen and Kercaer. He made a donation of considerable artistic interest, a large painting for the altar, to the Carmelite Convent of Hennebont in 1494. Seeking artists of high quality, the Du Pou family probably turned to the nearby Touraine for the execution of their Book of Hours. Both the Du Pou Manor (in Lignol) and the Kergal Manor (in Brandivy) still exist in Brittany.

2. There is a 16th-century inscription of Trequerne du Crossec, cadet de Kergal, who inherited the book from his mother Jeanne du Pou, dame de Coetro, Kernivinen et de Kercaire, Brittany (f. 234v).
3. By descent to the Barons of Veauce of the Bourbonnais; found in the family chateau in 1924 and sold by the Baron de Veauce in London at Sotheby's, 13 December 1965, lot 205, bought by Major Abbey.
4. Major J. R. Abbey (1894-1969), his shelfmark J. A. 7355; his sale at Sotheby's, London, 19 June 1989, lot 3029, to Tenschert.
5. J. R. Ritman, Amsterdam, Private Collection, bought from Tenschert, *Leuchtendes Mittelalters*, I, cat. 21 (1989), pp. 472-87, no. 69; his sale, London, Sotheby's, 6 June 2000, lot 38.
6. Private Collection, USA.

TEXT

ff. 1-12v, Calendar, in French, including in gold Saints Geneviève (Jan. 3), Louis (Aug. 25) and Denis (Oct. 9), patron saints of Paris;

ff. 13-22v, Gospel Sequences;

ff. 24-36v, *Obsecro te*, for male use, and *O intemerata*;

ff. 38-116, Hours of the Virgin (Use of Poitiers), mixed with the Hours of the Cross and of the Holy Ghost (f. 74), with Matins (f. 38), Lauds (f. 54v), Prime (f. 72v), Terce (f. 85), Sext (f. 91v), None (f. 98), Vespers (f. 104v) and Compline (f. 113);

ff. 118-146v, Seven Penitential Psalms (first leaf misbound as f. 121) and Litany;

ff. 148-195, Office of the Dead (Use of Paris);

ff. 195v-205v, Prayers for Christ;

ff. 205v-207v, Passion Sequence;

ff. 208v-226, Suffrages, opening with Saints Martin, James, Christopher, Sebastian, Denis, Nicolas, Claude, Cosmos, Fiacre, John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, Michael, the Apostles, the Virgins, Barbara, Agatha, Anne, Katherine, Apollonia;

ff. 226v, Added prayers, beginning "[A]vete omnes," etc.

ILLUSTRATION:

Of the sixteen miniatures, four are full-page, one is half-page and the remaining 11 are historiated initials. The subjects of the miniatures are as follow:

f. 13, St. John on Patmos, the saint writing in a book that he rests on his knee, watched by an eagle in a landscape with distant view of little towns and villages; border with heart-shaped cartouches infilled with flowers and birds;

f. 16, St. Luke, the saint shown in profile with a curly dark beard, watched by a bull as he writes in a book; border inset with diamond-shaped vignettes of flowers and birds;

f. 18v, St. Matthew, small miniature, St. Matthew writing at a desk, attended by an angel with green wings; border in diagonal stripes of decorated gold and white;

f. 21, St. Mark, small miniature, the saint with an open book on a lectern behind him, writing his Gospel watched by a lion; zigzag border with a little grey dog on a grassy hillock.

f. 23v, Virgin and Child enthroned, full-page miniature, the Virgin in a flowing blue cloak with the Christ Child wearing a little bonnet and holding an apple in her lap, two angels in delicately shaded pinky-mauve robes and matching wings holding a crown above her head as four more angels kneel behind her, in the background a heavenly host plays music and shimmers in a rainbow of multi-colored light; gold frame studded with jewels;

f. 30, Virgin in prayer, small miniature, the Virgin dressed in a blue robe delicately shaded with gold; border with birds flying through decorative leaves and flowers.

f. 37v, Annunciation, full-page miniature, the Virgin seated at a prie-dieu covered with a brocade cloth with an open prayer book from which she has turned to see Gabriel appear from the right with a staff in his hand, all set in front of a renaissance altar where seven candles stand burning; jeweled gold frame.

f. 56v, Visitation, arch-topped miniature, half-length figures of the Virgin and St. Elizabeth, with their robes delicately shaded with gold, clasping hands in a landscape with a gabled house; gold and white border in decorative diagonal bands;

f. 77v, Nativity, arch-topped miniature, half-length figure of the Virgin with her fair hair showing from under her head-dress, Joseph and the ox and the ass gathered around the Child as four

shepherds appear in the corner, all set under a rough wattle stable roof; border divided into alternately gold and white squares infilled with flowers, leaves, birds and a snail;

f. 87, Annunciation of the Shepherds, arch-topped miniature, the scene set at night, with the angel appearing to the Shepherds with his message and illuminating their unturned faces and the darkened landscape with golden light; border with zigzag partitions with two brightly plumed birds.

f. 94v, Adoration of the Magi, arch-topped miniature, half-length figure of a king with a long white beard presenting his gift of gold to be inspected by the Christ Child who sits on the Virgin's lap, as another reaches to remove his own crown in homage; border inset with golden scrolls with flowers and birds.

f. 101r, Presentation in the Temple, arch-topped miniature, half-length figure of Simeon gently holding the Child in his hands under a red canopy as the Virgin kneels and prays; border with roundels infilled with flowers and birds on gold grounds.

f. 107v, Flight into Egypt, arch-topped miniature, half-length figures of Joseph carrying the Child in his arms through a wooded landscape accompanied by two followers and the Virgin who offers the baby an apple; zigzag border in alternate gold and white.

f. 116, Coronation of the Virgin, arch-topped miniature, half-length figure of the Virgin receiving a crown from Christ dressed in rich gold robes and attended by three angels in front of a throne covered with a pink cloth; border inset with cusped vignettes of flowers and birds.

f. 120v, David and Goliath, full-page miniature, David holding up Goliath's head in victory, as it drips blood onto David's sling, the giant's body lying dead on the ground, the scene watched by an enormous ranked army with spears in the foreground of a hazy panoramic landscape stretching into far distance over a shimmering plain with little mountains and towns; frame in gold inset with jewels;

f. 151v, Triumph of Death, full-page miniature, Death shown as an emaciated corpse carrying a scythe, two arrow-like spears and a skull, standing victorious in a landscape littered with corpses and bones and with figures of the living being inexorably drawn towards him over a plain from a distant walled town and a horizon of hazy blue mountains; jeweled gold frame;

Although the history of attribution of this finely painted Book of Hours is confusing if not contradictory, the manuscript nevertheless emerges as an extremely important work closely tied to the artistic careers of two of the greatest French painters, Jean Fouquet (died c. 1480) and Jean Bourdichon (c. 1457-1520/21).

When the Book of Hours first became publicly known in 1965, Andreas Mayor, cataloguing the Abbey manuscripts, described the wonderful miniature of the Triumph of Death as apparently "unique not only in the oeuvre of Fouquet and his school but in the whole of fifteenth-century French painting." In 1989, when Heribert Tenschert bought the manuscript and had it catalogued by Eberhard König (*Leuchtendes Mittelalter*, Katalog XXI, 1989, no. 69), Professor König, drawing on

Mayor's earlier assertion, suggested that the four full-page miniatures might be by Jean Fouquet himself, a claim of dazzling importance. Madame Reynaud placed these miniatures instead in what she called "le rayonnement de Fouquet" (or Fouquet's immediate influence), and she identified the present work as by the hand of the Hours of Francois de Bourbon-Vendôme (Paris, Bibl. de L'Arsenal, MS 417), produced in the immediate circle of Fouquet (Avril and Reynaud, 1992-93, p. 150). Reynaud puzzled over who this artist of the Bourbon-Vendôme Hours might be, speculating that the manuscript dates a little too late for Fouquet himself and wondering if the hand could be one of his sons, Louis or François. In this, she affirmed the direct heritage of Fouquet.

The four full-page miniatures show very close links with the work of Jean Fouquet, both in iconography and in the technique of spatial depth conveyed by vertical planes set one behind the other and sunlit yellowish green alternating with cloudy purple. It is very distinctive and hauntingly effective. The miniatures are set within jeweled frames similar to that of the Fouquet school miniature sold in London, Sotheby's, 14 July 1981, lot 44, afterwards H. P. Kraus, cat 165 (1983), no. 17. The compositions of the Coronation of the Virgin and the Annunciation occur in Fouquet's miniatures in the Hours of Diane de Croy, now in the Ruskin Museum, Sheffield, and in the Hours of Jean Robertet in the Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M. 834 (Plummer, *Last Flowering*, pl. 42a). The miniature of David and Goliath is closely paralleled in the Hours of Philippe de Commines, ascribed both to Colombe and to Fouquet himself.

Professor König attributed the historiated initials in the book to the young Jean Bourdichon, and they do appear to present the apparently first known occurrence of half-length figures in a narrative, often considered Bourdichon's invention and certainly much utilized and perfected in his later work. Other Books of Hours of c. 1480 to which Bourdichon contributed are Morgan MS M. 96 (Plummer, *Last Flowering*, pl. 61a) and Newberry Library MS. 47. The figure of Joseph holding the Child in the Flight into Egypt has an exact parallel in the Newberry manuscript (H. Kessler, *French and Flemish illuminated Manuscripts from Chicago Collections*, no. 19. pl.), and it occurs again in Mazarine MS 507. The solemn half-length Adoration of the Magi can be matched with Bourdichon's work in Tours MS 190 and Vatican MS Lat. 3731 (Limousin, pls. 92 and 104); E. König, *Das Vatikanische Studienbuch Jean Bourdichons*, 1984), and reversed in the Hours of Henry VII (J. Backhouse in *Renaissance Painting in Manuscripts*, Getty Museum, 1983, p. 163, fig. 21b). If König's view is to be accepted, then the present manuscript is of great importance as representing the very beginning of Bourdichon's career, painted when he was probably no older than about 23 or 25 years and already an artist of the first rank. He was later to become court painter to four successive Kings of France, and helped with the decorations for the Field of the Cloth of Gold. The only other specimen of Bourdichon's early painting on the market in recent years is the single miniature of the Annunciation, c. 1485-90, which was lot 153 in the Béhague sale in Sotheby's, Monaco, 5 December 1987, and afterwards in *Medieval and Renaissance Miniature Painting*, Ferrini and Fogg, 1988, pp. 60-1, no. 30. It should be noted that for Reynaud, these miniatures instead belong to the Fouquet-like hand of the Bourbon-Vendôme Hours, who is probably not the young Bourdichon.

Recently, Avril, in his brief discussion of the Veauce Hours (his nomenclature for the manuscript), refined Mme. Reynaud's arguments. For Avril, our illuminator is neither Fouquet nor Bourdichon; rather he is a contemporary of the young Bourdichon, but "less cold" than the latter. This artist, the Master of the Arsenal Hours according to Avril, is "intimately [and directly] tied to Fouquet"

and not only from models that he could have acquired indirectly from the master. Professor König, however, stands behind the attributions he proposed in 1989 to the elder Jean Fouquet and the young Jean Bourdichon.

LITERATURE

Avril, François and N. Reynaud. *Les manuscrits à peintures en France, 1440-1520*, Paris, Flammarion, 1993, p.151.

Avril, François. *Jean Fouquet Peintre et enlumineur du XVe siècle*, Paris, BnF, 2003, pp. 345-349.

Plummer, John with the assistance of Gregory Clark. *The Last Flowering: French Painting in Manuscripts, 1420-1530*, New York and Oxford, The Pierpont Morgan Library and Oxford University Press, 1982.

ONLINE RESOURCES:

Paris, BnF, Exhibition on Jean Fouquet

<http://expositions.bnf.fr/fouquet/index.htm>