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Book of Hours (use of Rome)

In Latin and French, illuminated manuscript on parchment

Northern France, likely Paris, c. 1495-1500

13 large and 16 small miniatures attributed to the Master of Jean d'Albret perhaps with the Master of the Paris Entries

125 leaves, complete (collation i-ii⁶, iii-ix⁸ x⁶, xi-xv⁸, xvi⁹, xvii²), written on 21 long lines, in a neat and attractive literary Gothic script in dark brown ink between 2 vertical and 22 horizontal lines ruled in dark pink (justification 107 x 63 mm.), calendar written in blue, red, and brown ink, rubrics in blue, capitals washed with yellow, one-line initials in liquid gold on alternating grounds of light red, dark red, or blue, similar line endings included branches or twigs in liquid gold, two- and three-line initials in white and mauve on liquid gold grounds infilled with sprigs of colored flowers or fruit, 29 full borders consisting of sprays of flowers or fruit and blue-and-gold scrolling acanthus on grounds of liquid gold or natural parchment, some inhabited by birds and grotesques, others with particolored divided or broadly scrolling grounds, 13 large and 16 small miniatures (some slight abrasion or flaking, mostly insignificant, dampstain to the borders of the last 6 leaves. Bound in 18th century French mottled calf, spine in six compartments gilt, title on spine "HEURES" gilt, green silk ribbon bookmark (slight wear to extremities of covers, but insignificant), in a red cloth slipcase. Dimensions 176 x 116 mm.

This is a classic Book of Hours typical of the Paris book trade. It is illustrated with a full cycle of miniatures made by a Parisian painter responsible for both manuscripts and printed books. Our artist—or his team of decorators—also shows a flair for margins of unusual variety and inventiveness, some with hearts, losengers, and geometric formations, often with grotesques. The miniatures themselves display the artist's familiarity with mainstream painting of the period, and the script is more literary than liturgical with attractive blue rubrics.

PROVENANCE

Although there is little textual information to aid in the localization of this manuscript, the manuscripts was most likely produced in Paris on stylistic grounds. There is, however, the translation of St. Martin of Tours in the calendar, but most of the other feasts are for Paris.

London, Christies, 2 June 1999, lot 41;

Estate of Richard Estes, California.

TEXT

ff. 1-12v, Calendar, with feasts for every day, mostly for Paris, major feast days in blue, the others alternating in brown and red (Translation of St. Martin, July 4, Tours);

ff. 13-17, Gospel Sequences;

ff. 17v- 20, *Obsecro te* in the masculine form;

ff. 20-21v, *O intemerata* in masculine form;

ff. 22-68v, Hours of the Virgin (use of Rome), with Matins (ff. 22-29); Lauds (ff. 29v-37; Prime (ff. 37v-40v); Terce (ff. 41-43v); Sext (ff. 44-46v); None (ff. 47-49v); Vespers (ff. 50-54v); Compline (ff. 55-68v);

ff. 69-71, Short Hours of the Cross;

f. 71v, blank;

ff. 72-74, Short Hours of the Holy Spirit;

ff. 75-89v, Seven Penitential Psalms and Litany (no special saints in the litanies);

ff. 90-120, Office of the Dead (Use of Rome);

ff. 120-125v, Suffrages, including the Holy Trinity and Saints Michael (f. 120v), John the Baptist (f. 121), John the Evangelist (f. 121v), Peter and Paul (f. 121v), Sebastian (f. 122), Nicholas (f. 122v), Anthony (f. 123), Anne (f. 123v), Mary Magdalene (f. 124), Catherine (f. 124v), and Barbara (f. 125).

ILLUSTRATION

There are 13 large miniatures and 16 small miniatures, all with richly illuminated borders, as follows:

f. 13, St. John on Patmos;

f. 14, St. Matthew with an angel (small miniatures [incorrectly prefacing the text of Luke];

f. 15, St. Luke with an ox (small miniature) [incorrectly prefacing the text of Matthew];

f. 16v, St. Mark with a lion (small miniature);

f. 17v, Virgin and Child in glory (small miniature);

f. 20, Pieta (small miniature);

f. 22, Annunciation;

- f. 29v, Visitation;
- f. 37v, Nativity;
- f. 41, Annunciation to the Shepherds;
- f. 44, Adoration of the Magi;
- f. 47, Presentation in the Temple;
- f. 50, Flight into Egypt;
- f. 55, Coronation of the Virgin;
- f. 69, Crucifixion;
- f. 72, Pentecost;
- f. 75, Bathsheba bathing nude observed by David;
- f. 90, Job on his Dungheap;
- f. 120, Trinity (small miniature);
- f. 120, St. Michael (small miniature);
- f. 121, St. John the Baptist (small miniature);
- f. 121v, St. John the Evangelist (small miniature);
- f. 122, St. Sebastian (small miniature);
- f. 122v, St. Nicolas (small miniature);
- f. 123, St. Anthony (small miniature);
- f. 124, St. Anne (small miniature);
- f. 124v, St. Mary Magdalene (small miniature);
- f. 125, St. Barbara (small miniature);

Isabelle Delaunay identified the painter responsible for the illumination as the Master of Jean d'Albret, who was active in Paris from c. 1490 to c. 1510 and who produced a prodigious number of volumes, both printed ones and manuscripts (2000, vol. II, pp. 28-31). The artist's eponym derives

from two incunables destined for Jean d'Albret: Raoul Le Fevre's *Le recueil des histories troiennes*, c. 1494 (copy in New York, PML 515 CHL NoF1541; cf. Winn, 1997, pp. 198-99, 349, figs. 5) and Sebastian Brant, *La nef des fous*, Paris, A Bocard for J. Philippe and G. de Marnef, 1497 (copy in Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Inc. 4114, 20; cf. Winn, 1997, p. 198, fig. 4, 26). John III (1469-1516), or Jean d'Albret, became King of Navarre through his marriage to Catherine, Countess of Foix, who reigned as Queen of Navarre from 1483. Through his alliance with Catherine, he also acquired the territories of Foix and Béarn. The kingdom of Navarre was lost to Ferdinand of Aragon in 1512. Members of the d'Albret family were important patrons of the arts around 1500.

The Master of Jean d'Albret worked extensively for the Parisian printer Antoine Vérard on both secular and religious volumes. His two eponymous productions are secular, as is a splendid copy of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini's *Euralius et Lucrece*, Paris, Antoine Vérard, c. 1493 (London, BL IB 41145; cf. Winn, 1997, fig. 3.2, p. 90). For Vérard as well he painted deluxe personalized Books of Hours, such as the *Grandes Heures Royales* for Anne de Beaujeu, August 20, 1490 (Private Collection; cf. Winn, 1997, p. 195, fig. 4.25), as well as an *Horae* destined for Charles of Angoulême, c. 1492 (New York, PML 127775; cf. Winn, 1997, p. 159, fig. 4.12). Among his manuscripts are the Hours of Jean de Launay, procurer of the Parliament of Paris (?) in the Walters Art Museum (W. 448; cf. Randall, 1992, cat. 198) and a Book of Hours for an unknown patron and now in Carpentras (Bib. mun., MS 54), on which he collaborated with another Parisian painter of the same period, the Master of Etienne Poncher. Among the distinctive features of his style are the triangular shapes of his faces, with their brown or black hair, highlighted in gold, and the particular painterly treatment of the trees in pale green on black grounds. His style is sometimes difficult to differentiate from that of the Master of the Paris Entrées. Among his patrons, in addition to Jean d'Albret, were the Angevin family Baraton and the Duke of Lorraine. He seems to have inspired the confidence not only of the best publishers of the day but high-ranking families with money to spend on their illuminated books.

The miniature of David and Bathsheba is especially close to Morgan M. 618 (see Plummer, 1972, no. 117, and the gigantic shepherd in the miniature of the Adoration of the Shepherds is closely related to one in Morgan M. 338, attributed to a follower of Jean Poyet (see Plummer, 1972, no. 115). So too is the white-bearded king in the Adoration of the Magi similar to the same figure in the Adoration of the Magi in Poyet's Hours of Henry VIII (see Wieck et al., 2000, fol. 61v, p. 104). If indeed the present manuscript is by an artist familiar with Poyet's work, at least with models of certain of his figures, it probably dates in the very last decade of the fifteenth century, c. 1485. Poyet's activity in Tours can be circumscribed between c. 1465 and 1498. In our manuscript, as in many by this master, the borders are highly inventive, often divided into multi-colored geometric compartments formed by lozenges, hearts, or triangles.

LITERATURE

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Wieck, Roger et al. *The Hours of Henry VIII. A Renaissance Masterpiece by Jean Poyet*, New York, George Braziller and the Pierpont Morgan Library, 2000.

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