

## Book of Hours (Use of Rome)

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment

France, Lyons, c. 1495-1510

With 11 full-page, 28 small, and 1 half-page miniatures by Guillaume II Le Roy

187 + ii leaves (collation: i-ii<sup>6</sup>, iii<sup>8</sup>, iv-ix<sup>8</sup>, x<sup>2</sup>, xi-xiii<sup>8</sup>, xiv<sup>2</sup>, xv<sup>8</sup> [originally 8 + i, now lacking vi], xvi<sup>7</sup> [of 8, lacking i], xvii-xxv<sup>8</sup>, 26<sup>8</sup> [v-vii blank, viii pastedown], lacking two leaves probably with miniatures), later foliation ff. 1-195, followed here, includes two paper guards and omits ff. 55, 65, 97, 102, 106-7, 128, vertical catchwords on final versos of each gathering, written on 18 long lines in brown ink in a Gothic lettre bâtarde between two verticals and 19 horizontals ruled in red (justification 108 x 66 mm.), rubrics in red, one-line decorated initials in liquid gold on alternate grounds of blue and red, similar line-endings, two- to three-line initials and two five-line initials with blue or red staves with white decoration on liquid gold grounds with infills of flowers, a panel border on every page with blue and gold acanthus scrolls and sprays of flowers and fruit on variously divided fields of liquid gold or parchment inhabited with birds, creatures and grotesques, one half-page and 28 small miniatures and 11 full-page miniatures in architectural frames of camaïeu d'or inscribed with the opening words, on marbled grounds of purple, red or green, some losses of pigment, for example, drapery of the angel on f. 25 and the outer borders or incipits on some miniatures, occasional smudging, including the background of the suffrage miniature on f. 178v, small tear at inner lower margin of f. 56, upper half of textblock split at f. 86). Bound in old red velvet (raised bands on spine rubbed), housed in a 20<sup>th</sup>-century morocco-backed cloth box. Dimensions 215 x 142 mm.

This handsome, richly illuminated Book of Hours is by Guillaume II Le Roy or Guillaume Le Roy the Younger, the son or nephew of the first printer established in Lyons. Well documented in the archives, Guillaume painted many secular manuscripts for local humanists and members of the royal circle, and he also designed woodcuts for which he was named the "Master of Nombril." In excellent condition, this Book of Hours with its brightly colored pictures and striking simulated porphyry borders is one of his best and most unusual works of the genre.

## PROVENANCE

1. The style of illumination securely places the origin of this Book of Hours in Lyons, where the illuminator, Guillaume II Le Roy or Guillaume Le Roy the Younger, was active from c. 1485 to 1528. The full calendar is for widespread use, although of note is St Annemundus, bishop of Lyons (28 September).
2. Jean-Baptiste Dessaignes: an inscription on the front endleaf, "Ex bibliotheca Ioan. Bapt. Dessaignes MDCLXI" and a note in the calendar on 29 October records the date of his birth, 1630.

3. Sale, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, Ader Picard Tajan, 21 June 1985, lot 10.

4. Private North American Collection.

## TEXT

ff. 1-12v, Calendar;

ff. 13-19, Gospel Sequences;

ff. 19-22v, *Obsecro te*;

ff. 22v-24v, *O Intemerata*;

ff. 25-87, Hours of the Virgin, use of Rome, Matins (f. 25), Lauds (f. 44), Prime (f. 56), Terce (f. 60v), Sext (f. 66), None (f. 70), Vespers (f. 74v), Compline (f. 82), with variants for the liturgical year, ff. 87v-96v;

ff. 98-101, Short Hours of the Cross;

ff. 103-105, Short Hours of the Holy Spirit (lacking opening);

ff. 108-127, Seven Penitential Psalms (lacking opening) and Litany;

ff. 128v-169, Office of the Dead, use of Rome;

ff. 169v-192, Suffrages, including the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, the Holy Spirit, St. Veronica, St. Michael the Archangel, St. John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist, Sts. Peter and Paul, St. James the Great, St. Stephen, St. Laurence, St. Christopher, St. Nicolas, St. Claude, St. Anthony hermit, St. Anne, St. Mary Magdalene, St. Catherine, St. Margaret, St. Barbara, St. Apollonia.

## ILLUSTRATION

Full-page miniatures are as follows:

f. 13, Saint John on Patmos;

f. 25, Annunciation, within architectural frame incorporating fictive sculptures showing scenes from the life of the Virgin;

f. 44, Visitation;

f. 56, Nativity;

f. 60v, Annunciation to the Shepherds;

f. 66, Adoration of the Magi;  
f. 70, Presentation in the Temple;  
f. 74v, Flight into Egypt;  
f. 82, Coronation of the Virgin;  
f. 98, Crucifixion;  
f. 128v, Job on the Dungheap

Half-page miniature:

f. 169v, Trinity

Small miniatures

f. 15, St. Luke;  
f. 16v, St. Matthew;  
F. 18, St. Mark;  
f. 19, Virgin and Child;  
f. 22v, Pietà;  
f. 171v, God the Father;  
f. 172, Ecce Homo;  
f. 173, Pentecost;  
f. 173v, St. Veronica;  
f. 175, Crucifixion;  
f. 177, St. Michael Archangel  
f. 177v, St. John the Baptist;  
f. 178v, St. John the Evangelist;

f. 179, Sts. Peter and Paul;  
f. 179v, St. James the Greater;  
f. 181, St. Stephen;  
f. 181v, St. Laurence;  
f. 182v, St. Christopher;  
f. 184, St. Sebastian;  
f. 185, St. Nicolas;  
f. 185v, St. Claude of Besançon;  
f. 187, St. Anthony;  
f. 187v, St. Anne teaching the Virgin to read;  
f. 188v, St. Mary Magdalene;  
f. 189, St. Catherine;  
f. 189v, St. Margaret;  
f. 190v, St. Barbara;  
f. 191v, St. Apollonia.

This striking manuscript was illuminated by Guillaume II Le Roy, one of the most prolific and sought-after Lyonnais artists of his day. Guillaume, often identified as "flammand" or "peintre," is recorded in the city archives from 1493 to 1528. He was the son or nephew of Guillaume Le Roy of Liège, who in 1473 became the first printer to practice in Lyons. The linking of the name with an oeuvre resulted from the recognition that the documented career of Guillaume II corresponded to the dates of editions printed in Lyons with woodcuts attributed, until then, to a Maître au Nombril, so named because of a peculiar vertical line drawn from the navel to the pube on most of his nudes. It was on the basis of the style of these woodcuts that illuminated manuscripts were also attributed to the artist.

At the time of Guillaume II Le Roy's activity, Lyons was the third capital of the realm and the artist undertook numerous commissions from the courts of Kings Louis XII and Francis I (see Avril and Reynaud, 1993, p. 357; and Burin, 2001). A series of literary manuscripts show that throughout the first quarter of the sixteenth century, when prominent authors and humanists visited Lyons and the court, it was to Le Roy that they turned to illustrate their work. His artistry is found for example, in

Johann von Morsheim's *Chronique des Rois de France* written for Louis XII in 1503 (Paris, BnF, MS all. 84), in Michel Nagonius's celebratory poem, *Prognostichon Hierosolymitanum* in honor of Pope Julius II (Vatican City, BAV, Vat. Lat. 1682) and in three manuscripts by his eminent contemporary, the humanist Pierre Sala (Paris, BnF, MSS fr. 584, 10420; and Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. 2618; see Avril and Reynaud, 1993, no. 205, p. 364-65; and Burin, 2001, cat. 134). To these three manuscripts for Sala, we can add another, previously unknown, by the artist (Les Enluminures, Cat. 15, no. 17).

Avril claimed that Guillaume II Le Roy rarely painted Books of Hours and liturgical manuscripts but specialized instead in secular works popular with local humanists and the court; he cited the present manuscript as the only Book of Hours attributed to the artist (Avril and Reynaud, 2003, p. 363). Burin has assembled quite a substantial oeuvre for the artist; she identified some thirty manuscripts by him, along with six other manuscripts on which he collaborated, three single leaves, and three printed books. Among these are nine Books of Hours, which nevertheless still take a back seat to the large number of interesting and unusual secular texts.

This richly illuminated and handsome Book of Hours, with its lavish use of gold throughout, bears all the hallmarks of Le Roy's style. Large, heavy figure types with wide faces dominate each miniature. The colorful palette used for the drapery typically includes bright enamel-like reds and blues. The figures stand out against distant landscapes with tiny towns perched on hilltops and rendered in soft blue tones. The miniature of St John on Patmos in particular shows the artist's characteristic treatment of mid-grounds with mounds covered in dense clumps of trees and scattered tufts of vegetation, all painted in broad brushstrokes. Classicizing gold architectural frames inhabited with putti, typical of Lyonnais illumination and familiar from the workshop of the earlier illuminator Guillaume Lambert, surround each full-page miniature. All are placed on simulated porphyry grounds of green, red, grey or purple, to striking effect. The delightfully rich and varied borders on every page can be attributed to Le Roy himself. Full of invention, they contain carefully drawn naturalistic flowers, fruit, birds, frogs, grasshoppers and grotesques placed upon variously shaped grounds of liquid gold.

Our manuscript compares well with one of his masterpieces, an *Horae* purchased by the city of Lyons in 1995 (London, Sotheby's 20 June 1995, lot 117; now Lyons, BM, MS 6881; see Burin, cat. 101, pp. 219-222). However, the camaïeu d'or borders in the present manuscript are highly original and quite unlike those more traditional acanthus and floral borders that decorate the Lyons manuscript. Our Annunciation is similar to a large single leaf of the same subject from an unidentified parent manuscript (see Les Enluminures, Cat. 5, no. 19). Burin included the present manuscript in her catalogue and study of the artist (2001, p. 33, and 212-3, no. 95).

## LITERATURE

Avril, F., and N. Reynaud. *Les manuscrits à peintures en France, 1480-1520*, Paris, 1993, pp. 357-63, citing the present manuscript.

Burin, E. *Manuscript Illumination in Lyons 1473-1530*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2001, no. 95, pp. 212-213, and 33-37, citing the present manuscript.

