

**The Katherina Hours (Use of Rome)**

**In Latin and French, illuminated manuscript on parchment**

**France, Tours, c. 1485-90**

**1 full-page miniature, 8 large miniatures, and 21 small miniatures by the Master of Jean Charpentier**

96 leaves, 6 blank, lacking single leaves after ff. 13 and 17, and 2 leaves each after ff. 37 and 43, else complete, gatherings mostly of 8 leaves (excepting i-ii<sup>6</sup>, xiv<sup>2</sup>), catchwords (one including a penwork profile), written in dark brown ink in a very fine slightly sloping Gothic bâtarde script, on 22 long lines, calendar in red and blue and black, rubrics in red, line fillers and one- and two-line initials throughout in delicate designs in liquid gold on red-brown and blue grounds, 21 small miniatures with three-quarter illuminated borders, the miniatures 7- to 10-line, mostly 8-line, two of them historiated initials (ff. 82 and 87v), the borders painted in designs of colored acanthus leaves and flowers and fruit on parti-colored liquid gold grounds, including dragons, birds, grotesques, hybrid creatures, etc., 9 very large or full-page miniatures, with full borders in gently arched compartments usually with a large initial and 4 lines of text below the miniature, the first with the opening words of text painted into the lower frame, (inconsequential spots and small smudges in the margins, else in extremely fresh condition with wide generous margins). Bound in English red morocco gilt, c. 1700, triple paneled and decorated with roll tools and flowers, spine in compartments gilt with title "HORES.MSS." marbled endleaves, (upper cover abraded, wear with loss at head and foot of spine), housed in a late Victorian, probably English, c. 1870-80 box of rosewood imitating a book with a binding à la cathédrale, showing standing saints on each side, lined in red velvet, inlaid on each side with a Gothic Revival design in ivory, sycamore, and fruitwood, lock defective. Dimensions 213 x 152 mm.

This is the largest, most homogeneous, and perhaps the most highly finished Book of Hours by the Master of Jean Charpentier, a close follower of Jean Fouquet in Tours and an artist who often collaborated with Jean Bourdichon. It includes a large number of miniatures for a relatively short manuscript, giving the impression of being a truly picture book. In unusually fresh condition, the manuscript was custom-made for a woman named Katherina, whose name appears several times. Could she be Catherine Le Camus, the wife of Jean Charpentier, for whom the Master is named?

**PROVENANCE**

1. Made for a woman called Katherina (Catherine) who is named in prayers on ff. 82 and 88v. St. Catherine is also the first of the female saints in the Suffrages on ff. 93-93v. The artist, the Master of Jean Charpentier, worked in Tours and most of the outdoor scenes, although generic, may be located on the banks of the Loire.

2. A note in pencil, presumably written in 1824 calculates its date and age "executed in the reign of Henry the Seventh year 1485--about 339 years old."

3. E.U. Manning; given to Ruth M. Manning on 30 June 1937.

4. Deposited on loan to the Fisher Library, University of Sydney 1981-1987, their manuscript number "RB Add. Ms.59" in pencil on the verso of the upper flyleaf (published by Manion and Vine, 1984, no. 81, pp. 202-03); sold London, Sotheby's, 23 June 1987, lot 113.

5. Private North American Collection.

## TEXT

ff. 1-6v, Calendar in Latin and French, ff.1-6v;

ff. 7-10, Gospel Sequences;

ff. 11-12, ruled blanks;

ff. 13-43v, Office of the Virgin, use of Rome, Matins (lacking one leaf after f.13 and end) (f.13); Lauds (lacking opening) (f. 18); Prime (f. 23v); Terce (f. 26); Sext (f. 29); None (f. 31v), Vespers, (f. 34); Compline (lacking two leaves with opening) (f. 38); with variants for the days of the week (f. 39);

f. 44, Hours of the Cross (lacking two leaves with all but last verse);

ff. 44v-46v, Hours of the Holy Spirit;

ff. 47-56v, Seven Penitential Psalms and litanies;

ff. 57-80v, Office of the Dead, use of Rome;

f. 81, ruled blank;

ff. 82v-84v, Prayers, *Deus qui voluisti* and *Obsecro te* (feminine forms);

ff. 85-86, ruled blanks;

ff. 87-95v, Suffrages, including Saints Michael, f. 87; Stephen, f. 87v; Sebastian, f. 87v; Christopher, f. 88v; Andrew, f. 89v; Claude, f. 89v; Martin, f. 90; Nicolas, f. 91; Benedict, f. 91v; ruled blanks, ff. 92-92v; Catherine, f. 93; Barbara, f. 93v; Margaret, f. 94; Genevieve, f. 94v; Apollonia, f. 95; Mary Magdalene, f. 95v; ruled blanks, ff. 96-96v.

## ILLUSTRATION

The subjects of the full-page and large miniatures are as follows:

f. 13, Annunciation;  
f. 23v, Nativity;  
f. 26, Annunciation to the Shepherds;  
f. 29, Adoration of the Magi;  
f. 31v, Circumcision;  
f. 34, Death of the Virgin;  
f. 44v, Pentecost;  
f. 47, David and Bathsheba;  
f. 57, Job on the Dungheap.

The subjects of the small miniatures and historiated initials are as follows:

f. 7, St. John on Patmos with the eagle;  
f. 8, St. Luke with winged ox;  
f. 8v, St. Matthew with the angel;  
f. 9v, St. Mark with winged lion;  
f. 82, Christ, wearing the crown of thorns and with wounded hands, blessing;  
f. 82v, Pietà;  
f. 87, St. Michael fighting the Devil;  
f. 87v, St. Stephen;  
f. 88v, St. Christopher;  
f. 89v, St. Andrew;  
f. 89v, St. Claude;  
f. 90v, St. Martin;  
f. 91, St. Nicolas and the three children;

f. 91v, St. Benedict;

f. 93, St. Catherine;

f. 93v, St. Barbara;

f. 94, St. Margaret;

f. 94v, St. Geneviève;

f. 95, St Apollonia;

f. 95v, Penitent Mary Magdalene;

This beautiful Book of Hours is a fine example of the mature work of the Master of the Hours of Jean Charpentier, a follower of Jean Fouquet active in Tours and neighboring regions of the Loire Valley from 1475 to 1490. His eponymous manuscript (Angers, BM, MS 2048) was commissioned by Jean Charpentier (d. 1505), notary and secretary of King Charles VIII (1483-1498). The anonymous master's artistic identity was first established by François Avril (1979, p. 331), but his oeuvre and his style has been much refined in later years. Plummer divided his work between two miniaturists, named after Books of Hours in the Morgan Library, the Master of Morgan 96 and the Master of Morgan 366 (1982, pp. 44-46). Reynaud suggested, however, that the stylistic similarity of the works indicates that they were produced in the same workshop, and she assigned them to a single artistic personality (in Avril and Reynaud, 1993, pp. 388-89). It was Reynaud who first christened the artist the Master of Jean Charpentier after his best documented work.

The artist specialized in Books of Hours, and quite a few can now be assembled around his name (see Yvard, 2006-2007, note 36). In addition to the eponymous manuscript, the following manuscripts are noteworthy: London, British Library, Harley MS 2863, for Philippe de Commynes (see the Online Catalogue); Syracuse, Bibl. Alagoniana, Prez. X (Yvard, p. 6); Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, WMs 89 (Yvard, 2006-2007); New York, Morgan Library and Museum, MSS M.96 and M.366 (Plummer, 1982, pp. 42-46); Paris, BnF, MS lat. 1202; and Poitiers, BM, MS 55 (334); and Paris, Bibl. de l'Arsenal, MS 561. Other known patrons include Jean Juvenel des Ursins Le Jeune, a member of one of the most prestigious Tours families (Morgan M.366) and Guillaume de Clugny, bishop of Poitiers from 1477 to 1480. Whereas many of the Books of Hours are for the use of Tours, the workshop seems to have worked for a much wider geographic area, from Anjou to Poitou and Marche. The Chester Beatty manuscript is the only one for Rouen use and extends the clientele of the workshop to Normandy.

Interesting is the frequent collaboration of the Master of Jean Charpentier with Jean Bourdichon, active in Tours from the early 1480s to his death in 1521. They collaborated on the Chester Beatty manuscript, cited above; on New York, Morgan Library, M.96; and on Poitiers, BM, MS 55 (334).

The harmonious palette of luminous gold and opaque blue, red, green and mauve, solid, poised

figures with prominent round heads modeled by deep shadows, and their swathes of voluminous drapery highlighted in gold, as seen in the dress of the Virgin that envelopes the *prie-dieu* in the Annunciation, are characteristic of the Master of Jean Charpentier's illuminations. His compositions and layouts show the influence of Jean Fouquet. For example, the positioning of the figures of Gabriel and the Virgin in an interior on either side of a window beyond which lies a garden fenced with trellises recalls Fouquet's Annunciation in the Hours of Jean Robertet (New York, Morgan Library, MS M.834, f. 29). This composition, in which the dress of the Virgin forms the drape of the *prie-dieu*, is a favorite of the Master. It occurs also in his eponymous manuscript in Angers (f. 24), in a manuscript in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin with whom he collaborated with three other illuminators including Jean Bourdichon (WMs 89, f. 35; see Yvard, 2006-2007, p. 44); and in the Syracuse Hours. Larger in size than the other versions, the version in the Katherina Hours is perhaps the most successful of the four, because of the marbled foreground, landscape background, and highly articulated architecture. His painting style, however, is closer to the Master of Adelaide of Savoy (also known as the Master of Poitiers 30), who was active in Angers and Poitiers between c.1450 and 1470 (see Avril and Reynaud, 1993, pp. 123-6, 288).

In addition to the Annunciation, the eponymous manuscript shares other models, stylistic features, and ornament with the present manuscript, although their formats are distinctly different. MS 2048 is a tall, wallet-sized volume, whereas the present manuscript is an ample quarto volume with generous margins. Might it be possible that the two manuscripts were made for husband and wife, the Angers codex for Jean Charpentier and the present book for Catherine Le Camus (Katherina?), from an important family in Angers, whom he married in 1485, the same year his own book dates. Although changes in use are not uncommon (the feminine use for the *Obsecro te*, for example), as occurs in the present manuscript, it is highly unusual for Books of Hours to have inserted the names of the donors in their prayers, as this one does on two separate occasions. Even if the manuscript may, on stylistic grounds, date later than the Hours of Jean Charpentier itself, closer to c. 1490, the hypothesis that it was made for Catherine remains an intriguing one.

## LITERATURE

Avril, F. and N. Reynaud, *Les manuscrits à peintures en France 1440-1520*, 1993, pp. 288-90, this manuscript mentioned at its Sydney location on pp. 289-90.

Avril, F. "Manuscrits à peintures d'origine français à la Bibliothèque nationale de Vienne," *Bulletin monumental* 134 (1976), pp. 329-38.

Manion, M. M. and V. F. Vine, *Medieval and Renaissance Illuminated Manuscripts in Australian Collections*, 1984, no 81, this manuscript on pp. 202-3, pl. 44 in color and figs. 229-34.

Plummer, J. and G. Clark, *The Last Flowering: French Painting in Manuscript, 1420-1530*, 1982, pp. 44-6, this manuscript mentioned as the Australian Horae on p. 45;

Yvard, C. "Un livre d'heures inédit du XVe siècle à la Chester Beatty Library de Dublin," *Art de l'enluminure* 19 (Dec. 2006-Feb. 2007), pp. 2-64, this manuscript on p. [32] n. 36.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

On Angers, BM MS 2048  
[www.enluminures.culture.fr](http://www.enluminures.culture.fr)

On British Library, Harley MS 2863  
<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/results.asp?AttribID=170>