

Printed Book of Hours (Use of Paris)

In Latin and French

**Paris, [Printed by Ulrich Gering and Berthold Rembolt for Simon Vostre], [8 September 1498]
16 large metalcuts and 29 small metalcuts by the Master of Anne of Brittany**

96 ff., small in-4° format, unnumbered, complete (signatures: π^4 , b-m^s, n⁴), up to 26 long lines to a page, ruled in red (ruled space: 190 x 113 mm), Gothic textura type, printed in red and black, with red initials and rubrics throughout. Bound in a nineteenth-century imitation binding of gold-tooled tanned morocco over pasteboard, grolieresque interlace design of black morocco onlays, with ornamental open tools also of black morocco onlays, frame of gilt frieze, lettered central cartouches on upper and lower boards respectively "Heures à l'usage de Paris" and "Simon Vostre, 1498", morocco doublures gilt filets on board edges and turn-ins, gilt edges [signed binding by Capé (1806-1867)], overall in pristine condition. Black chagrin slipcase. Dimensions 216 x 149 mm.

This is an extremely rare incunable Book of Hours, with only three known copies recorded, used as a primer by children to learn how to read. It is illustrated with a selection of cuts taken from the second set of metalcuts used by Simon Vostre and based on designs by the Master of Anne of Brittany. These cuts were amply used to illustrate the famous Books of Hours commercialized by Simon Vostre in the last decade of the fifteenth century.

PROVENANCE

1. Printed in Paris by the proto-typographers of Paris Ulrich Gering and Bertold Rembolt for Simon Vostre, bookseller and printer in Paris. Simon Vostre is mentioned on the title page of the present book (there is no colophon). The book contains an Almanac for the years 1498-1508[for this edition see Bohatta, 238; Lacombe, 63; CIBN, H-204; Proctor, 8308; BMC, VIII, 30; Goff, H- 354; Pellechet, 5878 (5865)]
2. Charles-Louis de Bourbon, comte de Villafranca (1799-1883), his armorial bookplate pasted on verso of marbled paper second flyleaf, no. 354 in his catalogue (not in A. Alès, 1878, since the catalogue of the library of Charles-Louis de Bourbon ends with entry no.: the present book is thus a later acquisition).
3. Robert, duc de Bourbon-Parme (1848-1907), son of the above-mentioned Charles-Louis.
4. Unidentified French bookseller's catalogue entry, pasted on the before-last flyleaf.

TEXT

f. π 1, Title, "Ces presentes Heures a l'usage de Paris // sont toutes au long sans rien requerir, et // furent achevées le VIII jour de septembre, // l'an mil CCCC. IIII. XX. et XVIII, pour Simon // Vostre, librarire, demourant à Paris, en la // rue Neuve Nostre Dame, à l'enseigne Saint Je//han l'evangeliste";

f. π 1v, Almanac for 11 years, 1498-1508;

ff. π 2-4v, Calendar, in red and black, use of Paris, with each page containing two months in parallel columns (in red, Geneviève (3 Jan.); Saint Michel (29 Sept.); Saint Denis (9 Oct.));

ff. b-b2, Prayers, including *Pater Noster*; *Ave Maria*; *Credo*; *Benedicte Dominus*;

ff. b2v-c1, Gospel Sequences;

ff. c1v-f6, Hours of the Virgin, use of Paris;

ff. f6v-g1, Hours of the Cross;

ff. g1v-g4, Hours of the Holy Spirit;

ff. g4v-h1v, Penitential Psalms;

ff. h1v-h4v, Kyrie and Litany;

ff. h5-k8, Office of the Dead, use of Paris;

ff. k8v-m3v, Suffrages;

ff. m3v-m5v, Various Prayers, including Prayers when attending Mass, Prayers for different occasions;

ff. m5v-m6v, Seven Prayers of Saint Gregory;

ff. m6v-m8v, Prayers in French;

ff. m8v-n4v, Prayers to the Virgin Mary.

Simon Vostre (fl. 1486-1518) printed and published in Paris at the sign of Saint John the Evangelist on the rue Neuve Nostre-Dame, the "new street" leading to the great cathedral. The rue Neuve served as the center of the commercial book trade from its beginnings through the appearance of print. Simon's wife Geneviève Le Pelletier came from a family which is recorded in the Paris book trade since 1368, and Vostre's shop on the rue Neuve belonged to her father, the book-binder Jean Le Pelletier.

Renowned for his printed and sometimes hand-colored Books of Hours, Simon Vostre externalized his production and associated himself with a number of printers and typographers who printed the books he then commercialized. This is the case of Philippe Pigouchet, whose production covers a period of about 35 years and who executed a large number of *Horae* for Vostre, or the present associated printers, Ulrich Gering (died in 1510) and Berthold Rembolt (died in 1518). Gering and Rembolt printed for Vostre a Missal for the Use of Paris in 1497, using some of the same metalcuts found in the present *Horae* (see Illustration below; see Goff, M-681; Weale, p. 112).

Ulrich Gering is often referred to as the "proto-typographer" of Paris, the first printer to print in Paris, from 1470 until 1508. He died in 1510. Gering first came to Paris in 1469 with two associates Friburger and Crantz, with whom he founded the first printing press "In Parisiorum Sorbonna." The three associates left the Sorbonne in 1473 and set up shop "In sole aureo, in vico sancti Jacobi" (Au soleil d'or, rue Saint-Jacques). Towards the end of his career, Gering associated himself to Berthold Rembolt, again rue de Sorbonne (see Claudin, *Histoire de l'imprimerie*, I, pp. 17-117).

To the trained eye, the present *Horae* present a most unusual layout, very different from the traditional layout found in most printed Books of Hours of the period. This Book of Hours was printed to teach children to read. It is a practical, not a luxury volume. Printed on paper, instead of the more expensive vellum, the type is unusually large and legible. Secondary texts are often made smaller as if to emphasize in a didactic manner their subordinate role. Decorative line-fillers have been eliminated. At the beginning of the book is a series of prayers—such as the Our Father, Hail Mary and Apostles' Creed—that medieval children were taught to memorize. In the present imprint Simon Vostre chose to use metalcuts from his other more expensive and lavish editions, but here the images lie askew on the page and are not included in the usual framing borders (see Wieck, 1997, no. 42, p. 28; Wieck, 2003, pp. 1629-1639). Books of Hours often fulfilled a clearly pedagogical function. Children most often learned how to read in customary "adult" Books of Hours or in Primers. In the present early imprint—as in a few other manuscript examples such as two Baltimore codices studied by Wieck (2003)—the presence of an unusual suite of prayers clearly indicates that they served a pedagogical use, as once memorized, these prayers were unnecessary in a Book of Hours for adults. On teaching medieval children to read, see in particular N. Orme, 2001, pp. 237-272; and D. Alexandre-Bidon, 1989, pp. 953-992.

This is an extremely rare book, found in only three other institutional collections. These are Paris, BnF, Réserve, B-2939; London, British Library, IB 40690 and New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, PML 19604 [ChL 1504].

ILLUSTRATION

The present *Horae* are illustrated with 16 large metalcuts and 29 small metalcuts.

Large metalcuts:

f. b1, Church in Heaven and Earth;

f. b2v, John Boiled in Oil;

f. b5, Betrayal of Judas;
f. c1v, Annunciation;
f. d3v, Visitation;
f. d8, Nativity;
f. e3, Shepherds in the Fields;
f. e5, Adoration of the Magi;
f. e7, Presentation in the Temple;
f. f1, Flight into Egypt;
f. f4, Death of the Virgin;
f. f6v, Crucifixion;
f. g1v, Pentecost;
f. g4v, David and Bathsheba;
f. h5, Last Judgment;
f. k8v, Church in Heaven and Earth [same metalcut as f. b1];

Small metalcuts:
f. b3, Saint Luke;
f. b3v, Saint Matthew;
f. b4v, Saint Mark;
f. 11v, Pentecost; Veronica and the Holy Shroud;
f. 12, Pietà;
f. 13v, Virgin and Child;
f. 14v, Crucifixion;
f. 15v, Saint Michael; Saint John the Baptist;

f. 16, Saint John the Evangelist; Saints Peter and Paul;

f. 16v, Saint James;

f. 17, Saint Stephan;

f. 17v, Saint Lawrence; Saint Christopher;

f. 18, Saint Sebastian;

f. m1, Saint Nicholas; Saint Claude;

f. m1v, Saint Anthony;

f. m2, Saint Anne; Saint Mary Magdalene;

f. m2v, Saint Katherine; Saint Margaret;

f. m3, Saint Apollonia;

f. m3v, Saint Geneviève;

f. m7, Mass of Saint Gregory (larger cut, 87 x 59 mm);

f. m7v, Christ blessing;

f. m8v, Annunciation.

The metalcuts used in the present *Horae* are referred to as the “second set” of cuts, amply used in editions printed by Pigouchet for Simon Vostre. It was presumably in 1496 that first appeared the second set of cuts distinguished by their larger size (as opposed to the more archaic first set) and the introduction of ogee arches elaborately ornamented. These cuts were amply copied and favored by Pigouchet’s rivals. The original cuts of Pigouchet’s second set were used by Gering and Rembolt in their *Missale* of 1497, December 24, printed for none other than Vostre: “Thus, by the cuts being used by different printers at intermediate dates, it would appear that the blocks really belonged to the publisher (Vostre) and not to the printer” (H. Davies, *Catalogue of a Collection of Early French Books in the Library of C. Fairfax Murray*, London, 1961, p. 266; for a Table of Illustrations in the *Horae* of Pigouchet and Vostre, see p. 289; for a description of the successive editions of Pigouchet/Vostre Hours, see H. Tenschert no. 12 and following).

The Apocalypse Master (Jean d’Ypres? fl. in Paris, c. 1480-1510) provided the designs for the famous Apocalypse Rose of the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris ordered by the French king Charles VIII (reigned 1483-1498). This artist is alternatively named the Master of the Très petites Heures d’Anne de Bretagne after one of his manuscripts (Paris, BnF, MS n.a.l. 3120) or the Master of the Hunt of the Unicorn after designs of tapestries (New York, Cloisters). The Apocalypse Master

played an important role in the production of printed Books of Hours, which flourished during the last quarter of the fifteenth century. He provided many series of designs to illustrate numerous editions, designs that are also found in his oeuvre of manuscripts. Typically his figures are quite stocky and spaces are carefully constructed with numerous Gothic architectural elements. The Apocalypse Master might have been the eldest son of the Coëtivy master, a certain Jean d'Ypres, registered in Paris as a *maître-juré* (on the Maître d'Anne de Bretagne or the Master of the Apocalypse Rose and his designs for metalcuts, see Avril and Reynaud, 1993, no. 147, pp. 268-270; H. Tenschert and I. Nettekoven, 2003, pp. 122-128).

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