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INTRODUCTION AND MANUSCRIPT ILLUMINATION

At the end of the thirteenth century, Bologna was the largest city in Italy and the fifth largest city in Europe, outranking Paris. Founded in 1098, the oldest university in Europe was located there, and for three centuries, through the fifteenth century, it witnessed a period of great prosperity – in culture and the arts, in its religious foundations, and in commerce and civic activities. In 1327, Bologna surrendered its independence as a medieval commune to the papacy; and in 1348, the Black Death wiped out as many as 30,000 people. Nevertheless, the city continued to flourish due in part to the enduring strength of its University, to which students and teachers in law flocked, and the force of its powerful merchant class. It regained importance under the enlightened, if tyrannical, rule of the prominent Bentivoglio family who took over in 1401 and governed throughout the fifteenth century.

This small exhibit of more than a dozen manuscript leaves and cuttings, illuminated manuscripts, and text manuscripts included in the stand of Les Enluminures at the Winter Antiques Show in New York brings together a group of works that animate Bolognese culture and life in the late medieval era. They witness the remarkable evolution of its visual arts and testify to the vitality of its local institutions—its famous university, its guilds, and its religious institutions.

In one of only two references to the visual arts in the *Divine Comedy*, Dante singles out manuscript illumination in Bologna. Founded on an art that was profoundly influenced by Byzantium (nos. 1,3), Bolognese book painting in the early thirteenth century increasingly demonstrated the impact of the great Giotto (c. 1267-1337), who spent some years in Bologna in the early 1330s. The illuminator Nerio quotes directly from Giotto, who appears to have been a significant influence on his work (no. 2), and other miniaturists likewise acknowledge the style of the master (no. 4). Following Nerio, one of the major Bolognese illuminators at mid-century, the Master of 1346, reveals the expressive three-dimensionality of Giotto's style (no. 6). This artist may have been formed in the workshop of the so-called "Illustratore," named for his capacities of description and narration, which culminate in the action-paced narratives of his student, Nicolò di Giacomo, who dominated Bolognese art until the end of the century (nos. 7, 8, 11). Subsequently, the Master of 1446, responsible for a splendid Dominican Hymnal once in the Robert Lehman Collection, displays a style still rooted in the vocabulary of Nicolò but receptive to the examples of contemporary painters (nos. 9, 10).

Cut from a series of Choir books made for the church of San Domenico in Bologna and from the celebrated collection of the Italian art historian, Sir John Pope-Hennessy

Nerio's signature appears in the margin of a legal codex of Justinian's Digest
(Paris, BnF MS lat. 8494, f. 4 r)



1.
Seneca Master (Primo Maestro di San Domenico)
(Bologna, active beginning 14th century)
Four roundels: *Scenes of Martyrdom* (each 70 mm. diameter)
Bologna, c. 1307-1324



2.
Nerio of Bologna
(Bologna, active c. 1300-1324)
David Offering his Soul to God in an initial "A" (275 x 185 mm.)
Bologna, c. 1310-1315

reduced

Directly linked (with 5 sister leaves) to the prestigious Gerona Master,
much influenced by Byzantine icon painting



3.
Workshop of the Gerona Master (Bologna, active c. 1280-1290)
Melchisedek (?) and two Levites in an initial "O" (125 x 115 mm.)
Bologna, c. 1290

Up-to-date on stylistic developments in nearby Bologna,
the present painter also quotes directly from Giotto's frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua



4.
Paduan Illuminator
Three Mary's at the Empty Tomb in an initial "A" (157 x 162 mm.)
Padua, c. 1350

Nunc in conspectu
 tu o domine gemitus
 compeditorum redde
 vicinis nostris septu-
 plum in sinu eorum un-
 dica sanguinem sanctorum

reduced

6.
Master of 1346 (Bologna, active c. 1330-1348)

9

Lively narrative, expressive figures, and chiaroscuro modeling characterize this late phase of the artist's career



7.
Nicolò di Giacomo (Bologna, active 1349-c. 1403)
The Last Supper in an initial "I" (80 x 160 mm.)
Bologna, c. 1380-1400

"Praise the Lord with harp, sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings/
Sing unto him a new song, play skillfully with a loud noise" (Ps. 32:2-3)



8.
Nicolò di Giacomo (Bologna, active 1349-c. 1403)
Monks Singing in an initial "E" (124 x 111 mm.)
Bologna, c. 1365-1380



ter ecclesia letam agē

memoria q̄ noue plē



Leata nobis

gaudia am

reducit orbita. cū spm

tus paracitus. effulsit

in discipulos. Ignis



DOMINICAN HYMNAL BY THE MASTER OF 1446

Illuminated Choir books from medieval Italian foundations are relatively rare, because the dissolution of the monasteries and the dispersal of their libraries led to the development of a brisk market in the sale of magnificently painted manuscript leaves and cuttings. Made for a Dominican foundation in Bologna, the present well-preserved and exuberantly decorated Hymnal was formerly in the Robert Lehman Collection in New York. All but one of its miniatures can be attributed to the Master of 1446, an anonymous Bolognese illuminator named after a 1446 book of the Statutes for the Hospital of Santa Maria del Baraccano in Bologna (Archivio di Stato, cod. min. Baraccano 1bis). The large, broadly rendered and brilliantly colored illuminations in the present hymnal are quintessential examples of the Master's late Gothic style, much influenced by the older generation of Nicolò di Giacomo, but increasingly also by his younger contemporary, the Lombard artist Belbello da Pavia.

Recent research places the Lehman Hymnal's date of production around 1450. A group of sister leaves closer to this date has emerged that suggest there was a companion Gradual, long ago dismembered, that formed part of the same series of Choir books.

Illuminations: Prophet, initial "C" (f. 1); Nativity, initial "V" (f. 4); Adoration of the Magi, initial "H" (f. 7v); Resurrection, initial "A" (f. 24v); Ascension, initial "E" (f. 29); Ascension, initial "B" (f. 31); Pentecost, initial "V" (f. 34); Altar Table, initial "P" (f. 37); St. Thomas Aquinas, initial "S" (f. 45v); St. Thomas Aquinas, initial "E" (f. 52v); St. Peter Martyr, initial "M" (f. 55); St. John the Baptist, initial "U" (f. 62); Sts. Peter and Paul, initial "A" (f. 65v); St. Mary Magdalene, initial "L" (f. 71v); Glorification of St. Dominic, initial "C" (f. 75v); St. Augustine, initial "M" (f. 78); St. Michael, initial "T" (f. 80v); Christ Blessing the Apostles, initial "I" (f. 83v); St. Catherine of Alexandria, initial "K" (f. 85v); and St. Catherine of Siena, initial "H" (f. 110v, underdrawing).

9.

Master of 1446 (Bologna, active second quarter of the 15th century)

Dominican Hymnal

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment, 123 ff., lacks 3 leaves (2 recently replaced), 19 miniatures, 18th/19th century half leather binding (565 x 396 mm.)

Bologna, c. 1450



An exact match with a miniature in the Dominican Hymnal confirms the attribution to the Master of 1446



10.
Master of 1446 (Bologna, active second quarter of the 15th century)
Pentecost in an initial "D" (115 x 115 mm.)
Bologna, c. 1430-40

One of a well-known group of 20 miniatures commissioned by the Archbishop of Lucca, Niccolò di Lazzaro Guinigi, for the Carthusian abbey of Santo Spirito in Lucca and once belonging to James Dennistoun and then Lord Kenneth Clark



11.
Nicolò di Giacomo (Bologna, active 1349-c. 1403)
Assumption of the Virgin in an initial "G" (185 x 185 mm.)
Bologna, c. 1394-1401

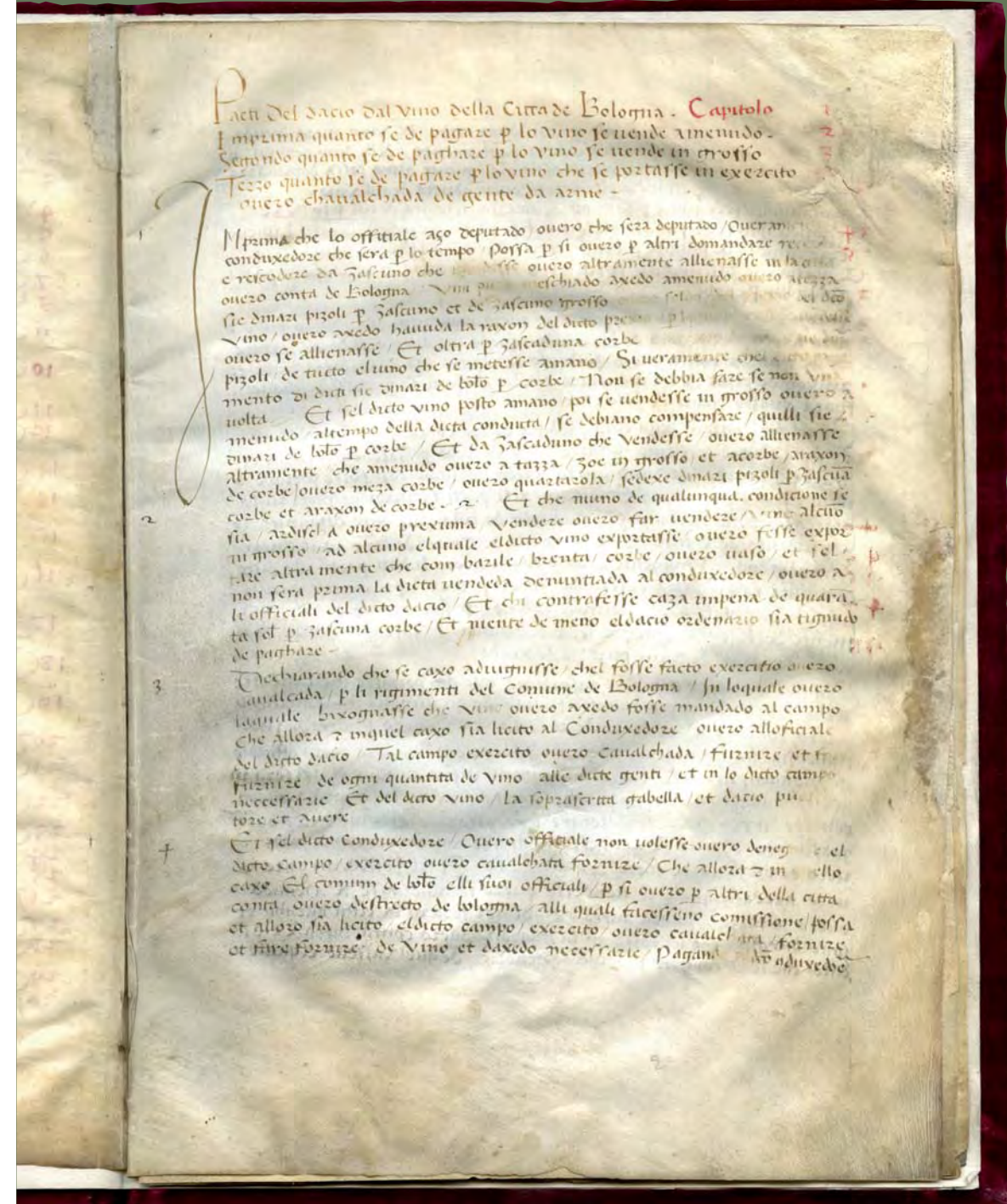


CIVIC LIFE

Bologna's merchant guilds played an important role in the political life of the commune, and each of the twenty-one guilds sponsored deluxe codices illuminated by the best artists to signal their significance (e.g., the Guild of the Tailors, no. 6; or the artist named for a manuscript of the Guild of the Carpenters, no. 5). Other works protected the rights of workers in the bustling urban environment, such as the Statutes of the Wine Trade and Transportation, written in Bolognese dialect, which controlled the activities of the barrelers (no. 12). Here we learn that, then as now, it was illegal to sell wine that had been diluted with water. And that, whereas only those over 14-years-old were entitled to drink wine, records fix consumption at an average of five liters daily per person.

Legal manuscripts constitute a major resource for the study of Bolognese university life. Gratian, the author of the Decretals, was a teaching master of canon law at the Bolognese monastic school of St. Felice, and it was there he completed his Decretals in 1140. For the next three centuries, Bolognese professors composed commentaries on his work for use in the schools, two of which are included here (nos. 14, 15). Other law codices protected the rights of the numerous students, who gathered in Bologna from all over Europe to attend its famous law school. Dedicated in 1492 to Giovanni II Bentivoglio and still preserved in its original binding, one legal commentary harks back to a famous charter composed for the university in the twelfth century under Frederick I Barbarossa (no. 13). Considered a landmark for the development of medieval universities, the original charter ensured the juridical privileges, rights, and protection of students and masters of Bologna. The commentary, extant only in this one copy, merits fuller study in the light of both the debates that animated the school of law in fifteenth-century Bologna and the interests of Bentivoglio family that ruled Bologna.

Unpublished and possibly unique copy of the Statutes and recommendations regulating the wine trade and transportation in 15th century Bologna



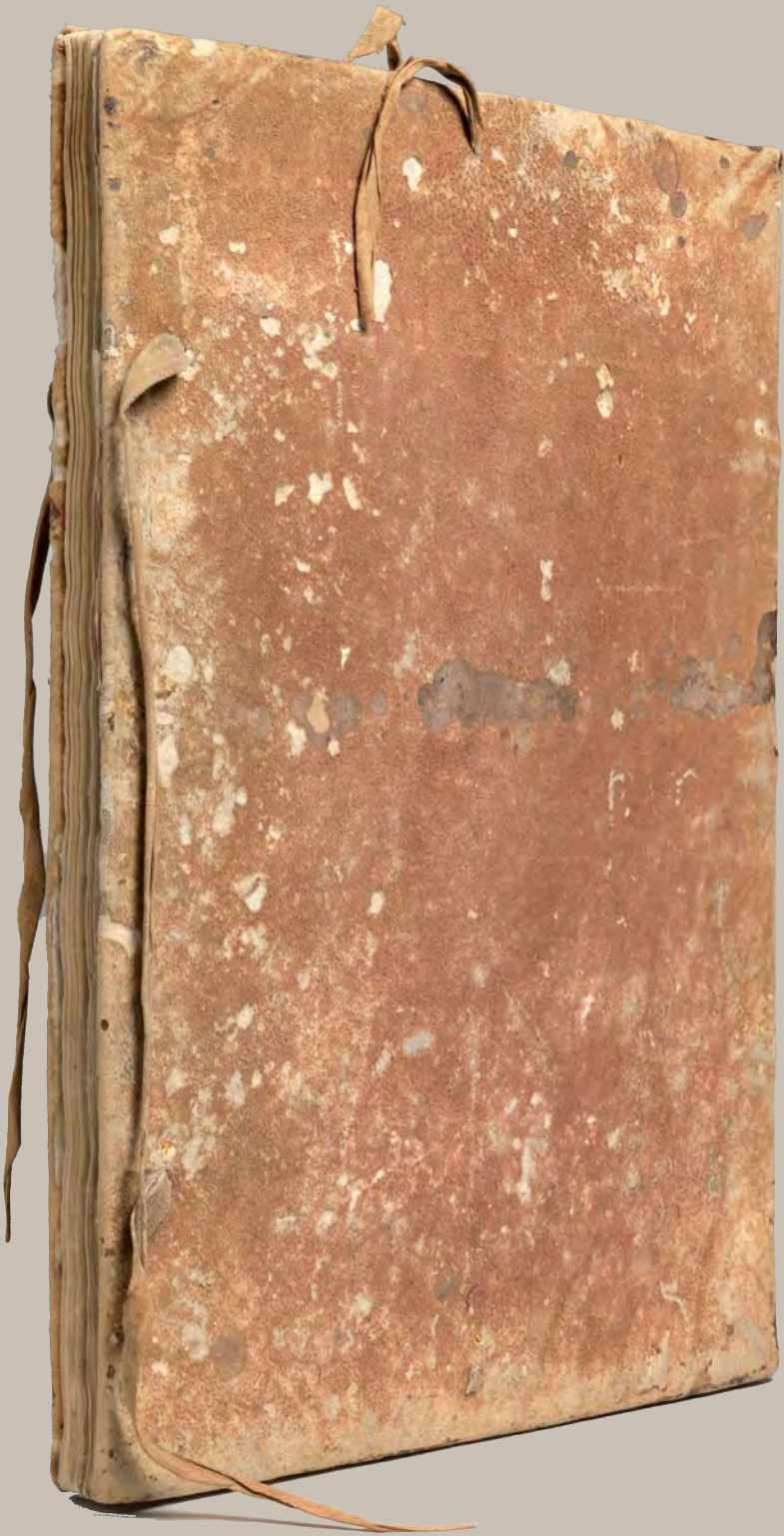
12.

Statutes regulating the Wine Trade and Transportation of Wine in Bologna

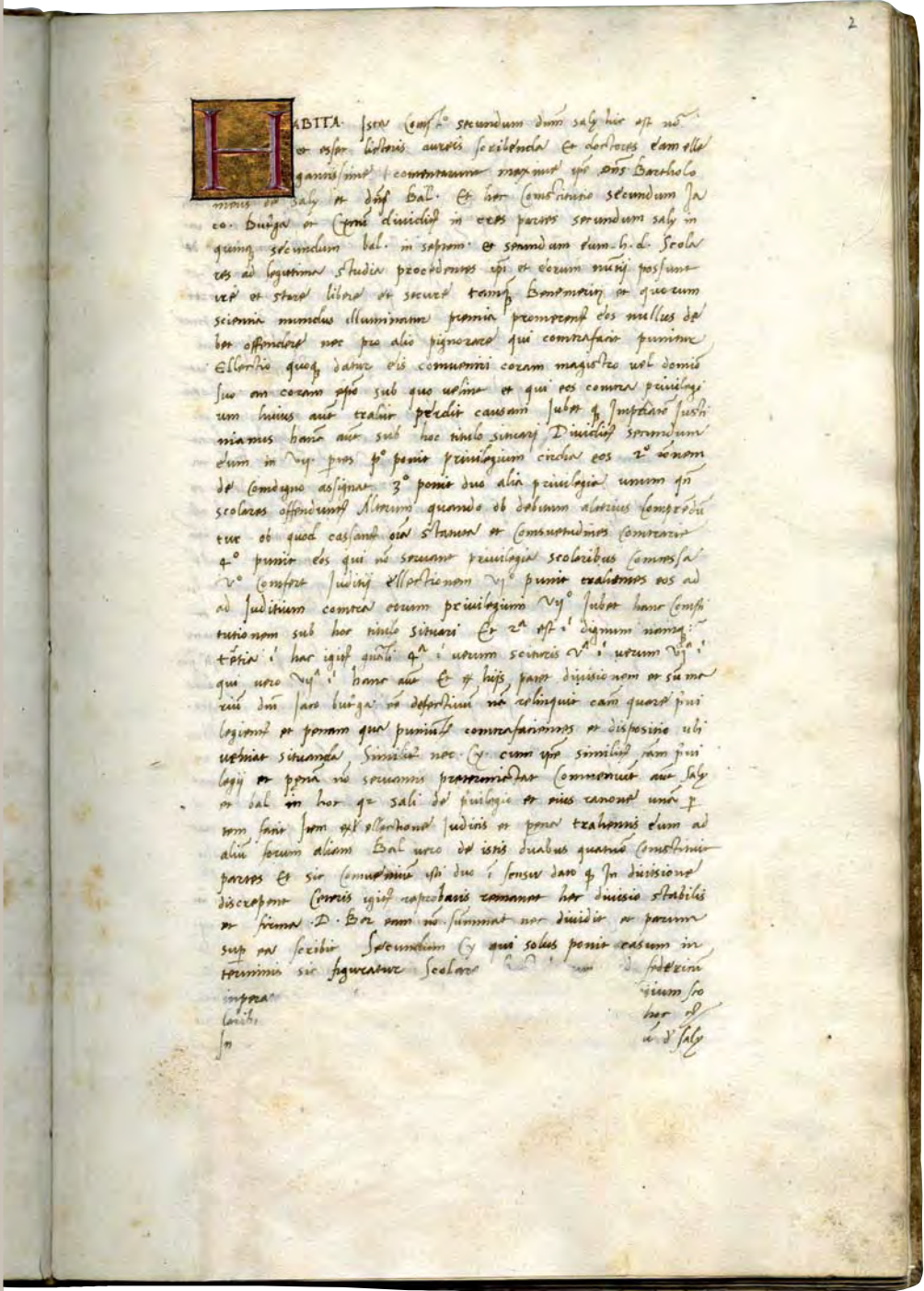
In Italian (Bolognese dialect), manuscript on parchment, 12 ff., complete, modern binding (290 x 210 mm.)

Bologna, after 1416, c. 1450

A landmark for the development of medieval universities, the Constitution ensured juridical privileges, rights, and protection for students and masters of Bologna



reduced



reduced

13.
Bartolomeus Bologninus, Commentary on the Imperial Constitution
"Authenca Constitutione Habita"

In Latin, decorated manuscript on paper, 42 ff., complete, original binding (314 x 214 mm.)
Bologna, dated 12 January 1492

One of many commentaries on Gratian's Decretals, this one by a Professor of the University of Bologna and signed by a Bolognese scribe

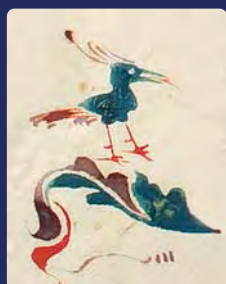


14. Dominicus de Sancto Geminiano, Commentary on Book I of Gratian's Decretals
In Latin, decorated manuscript on paper, 270 ff., complete, 19th century binding (430 x 295 mm.)
Northern Italy (Emilia?), signed and dated 1460 by Odmettino di Jacopo di Bologna

By an active canonist teaching in Bologna and Padua and full of contemporary reader's notes:
"Do ancient books structure faith," "Against singing popular songs during fairs,"
and "it is licit for a husband to tie up his wife, if necessary"



15. Johannes Nicoletus de Imola, Commentary of on Book II of Gratian's Decretals
In Latin, illustrated manuscript on paper, 332 ff., complete, one large miniature, 3 historiated initials, 18th-century binding (424 x 287 mm.)
Italy, Padua or Bologna, c. 1431-1447



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LES ENLUMINES PARIS AND CHICAGO

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