

# LES ENLUMINURES

PARIS CHICAGO NEW YORK

[www.lesenluminures.com](http://www.lesenluminures.com)

**Prayer Book of Isabel de Zúñiga y Pimentel**  
**In Spanish, illuminated manuscript on parchment**  
**Spain, Castile, c. 1515-1520 (or perhaps Italy?)**  
**One miniature by an anonymous artist**

*vi + 42 + xii folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, 1-42, complete (collation i' ii-iii<sup>s</sup> iv<sup>s</sup> v-vi<sup>s</sup> vii<sup>s</sup> [includes 5 flyleaves]), horizontal catchwords, ruled in red ink (justification 103 x 60 mm.), written in black ink in a round Spanish textualis bookhand (rotunda) on 16 lines, rubrics in red, capitals touched in yellow, 1- to 2-line initials in gold on grounds alternating in red and blue, all 2-line initials are accompanied by foliage with flowers and fruit extending to the margins in bright colors and gold, ONE FULL-PAGE MINIATURE, text slightly faded on f. 2, otherwise in excellent condition. Bound in contemporary(?) black silk over pasteboards, gilt edges, silk very worn (with modern plastic protection), but otherwise in very good condition. Dimensions 159 x 103 mm.*

Manuscripts made on commission for the female nobility are significant witnesses to our understanding women and their books – ownership and readership – in medieval and Renaissance Europe. This attractive illuminated manuscript was made for Isabel de Zuñiga y Pimentel, duchess of Alba, from one of the most prominent families of the Castilian nobility. Prayer Books in Spanish (Old Castilian) are very uncommon; the exclusively Spanish contents of this manuscript, including Psalms and biblical texts, make this manuscript very rare. Beautifully illuminated throughout, it is adorned with an opening miniature by a talented artist inspired by Leonardo da Vinci.

## PROVENANCE

1. The manuscript was made for Isabel de Zúñiga y Pimentel (1460-1531), countess of Sevilla and duchess of Alba. Her name, Isabel, is included in the opening prayer on f. 1 (line 5), f. 2 (line 5) and f. 3v (lines 5-6). The coat of arms of the dukes of Alba was painted at the end of the manuscript on f. 42. Isabel married Fadrique Álvarez de Toledo y Enríquez (c. 1460-1531) in 1480. In 1488, following the death of his father, Fadrique became the second duke of Alba. The inclusion of the duke's arms suggests that it was Fadrique who commissioned the prayerbook as a gift for his wife. Given these facts, it seems most likely that this manuscript was made in Spain. Nonetheless, it is also possible that the manuscript was commissioned by Fadrique for his wife in Italy; the Castilian nobility were patrons of scribes and illuminators in Spain, and also commissioned manuscripts abroad.

The mention in the rubric on f. 13 to Pope Alexander VI (1492-1503) indicates that the manuscript was made after 1492. The miniature at the beginning of the volume suggests dating the manuscript c. 1515-1520 (see below).

2. The number "489" in brown ink on the first front flyleaf.
3. A modern label with the shelf-mark "C/u/u" on the front pastedown.

## TEXT

f. 1v, [recto blank], miniature;

ff. 2-4, [prayer], *Oracion devotissima a nuestra señor*, incipit, "Señor Dios todopoderoso padre y hijo y spiritu sancto, concede a my tu sierva Ysabel remissio de todos mis peccados ... libra a my tu sierva Isabel de todos mis peccados ... Libra a mi tu sierva Isabel de todos los males ...";

ff. 4-6, [prayer], incipit, "O Bue Jesu, o dulcissimo Jesu ...";

ff. 6-8, [prayer, the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin], incipit, "Gozate, virgen madre de Cristo ...";

ff. 8-13, [prayer], incipit, "O Dulcissimo señor Jesu Cristo, Dios verdadero ...";

ff. 13-15, [prayer sent by the Spanish Pope Alexander VI (Rodrigo de Borja) to prince Juan of Castile (the son of Queen Isabelle I of Castile, Juan, Prince of Asturias, 1478-1497)], *El papa alexandro envio esta oracion al principe don juan de castilla ...*, incipit, "Dios te salve sanctissima ...";

ff. 15-20, [prayer], incipit, Kyrie eleison ... Jesu Cristo clementissimo, señor nuestro, oye nuestra oracion ... Sancta Maria madre de Dios ruega por nosotras ...;

ff. 20-22, [prayer], incipit, "O Señor Dios, nuestro padre, piadoso dador de toda consolacion ...";

ff. 22-24v, [prayer], incipit, "A Ti confessare señor en todo mi coraçon..."; [Psalm 136], incipit, "Confessad al señor por quanto es para siempre su misericordia ...";

ff. 24v-28v, [eight short prayers to God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Virgin Mary; ;the final prayer for protection against all displeasing situations], incipit, "O Rayo del sol divino claridad..."; incipit, "A Ti señor Dios padre piadoso, que nunca fuiste engendrado ..."; incipit, "O Señor, Dios piadoso padre dador de toda consolacion ..."; incipit, "O Señor, Dios nuestro, hijo de David ..."; incipit, "O Espiritu sancto, amator dulcissimo, procedente del padre y del hijo ..."; incipit, "O Virgen soberana Maria, madre de Dios ..."; incipit, "Señor Dios nuestro, humilmente te suplicamos que quieras otorgara nosotras siervas tuyas ..."; *Contra todas las cosas contrarias*, incipit, "Jesus Nazareno, rrey de los indios, ave misericordia de mi ...";

ff. 28v-30, [prayer, the Seven Joys of the Virgin], *Los vii gozos de nuestra senora*, incipit, "Gozate virgen ..."; [followed by a short prayer];

ff. 30v-38, Ten lessons on the Passion of Christ;

ff. 38-39v, [Psalm 5], incipit, "Da Señor, orejas a mis dichos, entiende me pensamiento...";

ff. 39v-42, [Psalm 35], incipit, "Listiga Señor contra mis litigadores... quiere la paz de su siervo. Y my lengua predicara tu justicia, cadaldia tu loor."

## ILLUSTRATION

One full-page miniature within a gold frame:

f. 1v, Virgin and Child with the infant Saint John the Baptist

Further research may identify the illuminator (Italian, or possibly Spanish?), who drew his inspiration mainly from Italian art, and especially Leonardo da Vinci. Compositions including the Virgin, the Child, and St. John the Baptist (based on Leonardo's *Virgin of the Rocks*, Paris, Louvre) are rare in manuscript illumination. Rather than directly copying the composition of the *Virgin of the Rocks*, our artist borrowed the gesture of St. John the Baptist pointing upwards at the Christ Child. This detail derives from Leonardo's last surviving painting, *St. John the Baptist*, painted around 1508-1519 (Paris, Louvre). This painting was widely copied by Milanese artists before it was acquired by Francis I of France; it is recorded in the manor of Cloux in the Loire Valley in 1518, where Leonardo spent the last years of his life at the invitation of the French king. The flower foliage decorating the text pages takes inspiration in northern Italian illumination, but our artist also drew from French illumination.

The illustrious Fadrique Álvarez de Toledo y Enríquez (1460-1531), the second Duke of Alba de Tormes, commissioned our manuscript for his wife, Isabel. Isabel de Zúñiga y Pimentel was the daughter of Álvaro de Zúñiga, duke of Plasencia, and Leonor de Pimentel, duchess of Arévalo, who founded the monastery of San Vicente de Ferrer in Plasencia. Isabel's husband, Fadrique, was the first cousin of King Ferdinand II of Aragon and always closely linked to the Catholic Monarchs. During the reign of King Carlos I of Spain, who in 1520 was crowned as Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, Fadrique was a member of the Council of State and accompanied the monarch to Germany, Flanders and Italy. In 1519 he was honored with the Golden Fleece and in 1520 received the Grandeza de España, the highest dignity of the Spanish nobility.

Two very fine portraits of Isabel and Fadrique, both attributed to the German painter, Christoph Amberger, are preserved today at the Palacio de Liria, the Madrid residence of the Dukes of Alba. Isabel and Fadrique had seven children; Juan, cardinal and archbishop of Burgos, and Pedro, viceroy of Naples, whose daughter, Eleanor, became Duchess of Florence by her marriage to Cosimo de Medici. Isabel's brother, the archbishop of Sevilla and cardinal, Juan de Zúñiga y Pimentel (1465-1504), was a great patron and his palace in Zalamea became "the first literary court in Castile"; he is depicted with his friend, the humanist Antonio de Nebrija in a manuscript of *Introducciones Latinae* (1486) now in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid.

At the end of the fifteenth century, the Castilian nobility commissioned important manuscripts from Spanish artists and scribes in imitation of the royal family, especially Isabella the Catholic. Fadrique's extensive library included more than 186 volumes (Táuler and Bastida, 2016). Isabel's family was also known for their love of books; her brother, Juan de Zúñiga, commissioned a manuscript of Juan de Breuil's *Le Jouvencel* in French and had a Book of Hours, begun by his great-grandfather, painted by a Castilian illuminator (both now at the Escorial; for a modern facsimile of Juan's Book of Hours, see Ruiz Asencio, 2003).

Prayer Books composed entirely in Spanish (Old Castilian) like our manuscript are rare. One other example with extensive Spanish prayers is the Book of Hours in which the Latin text is found side by side with a translation into Spanish, now Uppsala, Universitetsbibliotek, MS C 514 (illuminated in Spain by a follower of Bernardino de Canderroa; see Anderson-Schmitt,

Hallberg, and Hedlund, 1992; we are grateful to Josefina Planas for her expertise). Most other examples of prayers in Spanish are found in Latin manuscripts with only a few vernacular prayers. Prayers in Spanish were at times censured by the Inquisition as being unorthodox, and Books of Hours in Spanish were officially banned by the *Index of Prohibited Books* published in Valladolid in 1559 (Online Resources), explaining the rarity of these manuscripts today, since many must have been destroyed.

The attitude towards translations of the Bible into Spanish varied over the course of the Middle Ages. But in 1492, with the approval of the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella (who were crowned king and queen of Castile and Aragon in 1479), the Inquisition banned translations. This edict was observed only partially; in particular, the crown and the nobility were largely exempt from it (as were officially sanctioned translations of liturgical readings from the Bible). This 1492 ban on translations, which coincided with the expulsion of Jews by Ferdinand, however, may in part explain the history of the Bible now known as the Alba Bible (Madrid, Palacio de Liria, MS 86). This Old Testament translation into Spanish was completed in 1430, but then disappeared sometime after 1492. In 1624, we know it was in the Palacio de Liria, the residence of the Alba family (they received permission from the Inquisition at that time to keep it in their library; see Francomano, 2011, pp. 326-327). It is tempting to speculate that it was in the Palacio de Liria all that time, acquired by Fadrique Álvarez de Toledo y Enríquez and Isabel de Zúñiga y Pimentel, who kept it hidden, as they presumably may have done with our Prayer Book.

## LITERATURE

Anderson-Schmitt, M., H. Hallberg and M. Hedlund. *Mittelalterliche Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Uppsala: Katalog über die C-Sammlung: Bd 5.C 401-550*, Acta Bibliothecae R. Universitatis Upsaliensis, 26, 5, Stockholm, 1992, pp. 277-278.

Bordona, J. D. *Manuscritos con pinturas*, 2 vols, Avila, Madrid, 1933.

Deutscher, Thomas B, and Peter G. Bietenholz. *Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995, vol. 1, pp. 37-38 (Fadrique Alvarez de Toledo).

Docampo, Javier. "La importación de manuscritos iluminados y su influencia en la miniatura de la Península Ibérica: 1470-1570," in *La miniatura medieval en la Península Ibérica*, ed. Joaquín Yarza Luaces, Murcia, Nausicaa, 2007, pp. 177-233.

Francomano, Emily. "Castilian Vernacular Bibles in Iberia, c. 1250-1500," in Susan Boynton and Diane Reilly, eds. *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, New York, 2011, pp. 315-337.

González-Doria, F. *Diccionario heráldico y nobiliario de los Reinos de España*, Madrid, 2000.

Kamen, Henry. *The Duke of Alba*, pp. 2-3 (on Fadrique)

Menéndez y Pidal, R. *Historia de España*, vol. XV, *Los Trastámaras de Castilla y Aragón en el siglo XV*, Madrid, 1986.

Menéndez y Pidal, R. *Historia de España*, vol. XVII:1, *La España de los Reyes Católicos*, Madrid, 1983.

Mulas, P. L. "15. Initiale H. La Vierge, l'Enfant, saint Jean Baptiste et un ange," Teresa d'Urso, Pier Luigi Mulas, Patricia Stirnemann, Gennaro Toscano, *Enluminures italiennes: chefs-d'œuvre du Musée Conde*, Paris, 2000, pp. 59-60.

Ruiz Asencio, J. M. *Libro de Horas de los Zúñiga*, Madrid, 2003.

Sobre, J. and L. Bosch, *The Artistic Splendor of the Spanish Kingdoms: The Art of Fifteenth-century Spain*, Boston, 1996.

Táuler, Álvaro Bustos, and Rebeca Sanmartín Bastida. "Fadrique Álvarez De Toledo, II Duque De Alba Y Su Inventario De Libros (1531): Una Biblioteca Patrimonial," *Revista General De Información Y Documentación* 26, no. 1 (2016).

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Fadrique Álvarez de Toledo y Enríquez

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fadrique\\_%C3%81lvarez\\_de\\_Toledo,\\_2nd\\_Duke\\_of\\_Alba](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fadrique_%C3%81lvarez_de_Toledo,_2nd_Duke_of_Alba)

House of Zúñiga

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House\\_of\\_Z%C3%BA%C3%B1iga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_of_Z%C3%BA%C3%B1iga)

López de Haro, A. *Nobiliario Genealógico de los Reyes y Títulos de España*, Madrid, 1622:

[https://archive.org/details/bub\\_gb\\_AKr0u4RvQr0C](https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_AKr0u4RvQr0C)

"Spanish Books of Hours," SMU, Bridwell Library

<https://www.smu.edu/Bridwell/SpecialCollectionsandArchives/Exhibitions/WelcomeAdditions/Devotion/SpanishBookOfHours>

TM 1182