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Book of Hours (use of Rome) In Latin and French, decorated manuscript on parchment Southern Netherlands, c. 1400-1450

i + 86 folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, 1-86, complete (collation i^s [-7, -8, lacking two blank leaves after f. 6] ii⁶ iii-xi^s xii²), no catchwords or signatures, ruled in red ink (justification 70 x 45 mm.), written in brown ink in Gothic bookhand (textualis) on 14 lines, rubrics in red, capitals touched in yellow, 1- to 2-line initials alternating in red and blue throughout, many of the 2-line initials decorated with areas of parchment left in reserve, nine 3- to 4-line puzzle initials with penwork flourishes alternating in red and blue, black stains from pilgrims' badges on ff. 18v-19 and 37v-38, ink stain in the margin of f. 57, other stains and signs of use, tear in the margin of f. 58, a small hole on the front flyleaf, in overall good condition. Bound in the eighteenth or nineteenth(?) century using leather from an earlier binding in dark brown morocco over tan-colored leather over wooden boards, the morocco blind-tooled with a frame of triple fillets, flat spine, the earlier morocco leather is very worn and covers the boards only partially, traces of a single clasp on the front cover (now lost), leather underneath also worn, but in overall good condition. Dimensions 105 x 79 mm.

Multiple signs of use distinguish this small, modest Book of Hours, which never contained illuminations, but was nonetheless treasured by its owners over four centuries. In the fifteenth century, an owner attached two pilgrims' badges to the book, and although the badges no longer survive, their imprints witness this fascinating custom. In the sixteenth century, members of two local families inscribed obits onto the pages of the calendar. Finally in the eighteenth or nineteenth century, an owner expressed his anger on one of the margins about a dishonest person named Rollet.

PROVENANCE

1. The evidence points to the fact that this manuscript was likely made in the Southern Netherlands in the first half of the fifteenth century. The style of the script and the decorated initials support this date, as does the addition in the calendar in a later fifteenth- or sixteenth-century hand of the feast of the Presentation of the Virgin (21 November; introduced in the Roman Missal in 1472). Saint Roche (16 August), a saint venerated against the plague, was also added to the calendar later.

The evidence of the calendar suggests a general localization to the southern Netherlands or northern France, including those of Paul, the first hermit, who is celebrated on 10 January (rather than 15 January) which is common in northern regions, especially Germany (Calendoscope, Online resources), Maurus (15 January), Aldegund of Maubeuge (30 Jan), Longinus (15 Mar), Gertrude the Great (17 March), Arnoul of Metz (28 March; usually venerated on 18 July), Louis of France (25 August), Denis of Paris (9 October), Quentin of Saint-Quentin (31 October), Hubertus of Liège (3 November), and Leonard of Noblac (6 November).

The calendar and rubrics are in French, and various spellings in the local dialect that can be identified as Picard, are also evidence linking our manuscript generally to the northernmost part of France, to Hainaut in the Southern Netherlands (modern Belgium), or to the region of Brussels, where the local dialect is very close to Picard. The dialectal forms include the palatalized dental consonants pronounced with a whistling sound as in "chi" (ci) (ff. 21v), "Tierche" (terce, f. 15), "lichon" (leçon) and "Vinchant" (Vincent) in the calendar, the [ei] diphthong closing into [i] as in "orison" (oraison) in the rubric on f. 85v, and other particular local forms, such as "Jorge" (George), "Leurent" (Laurent), "Bietremieu" (Barthélemy), "Meurisce" (Maurice), "Andrieu" (André), "Ernou" (Arnoul), "Lowis" (Louis) and "Brisce" (Brice) in the calendar.

However, the liturgical use of the Hours of the Virgin and the style of the pen initials are evidence of an origin more specifically in the Southern Netherlands. The rubric to the Hours of the Virgin indicates the universal use of Rome, but the text itself reveals how it was adapted to local use. The Prime antiphon and capitulum and the None antiphon follow the texts in Roman use ("Assumpta est" "Quae est," "Pulchra es"), but the None capitulum is "Sicut cinnamomum," as found in the Netherlands (cf. Madan, Online Resources). The penwork decoration suggests localizing the making of this manuscript in southern Netherlands. We may compare, for instance, the initial on f. 19 of our manuscript with the initials on ff. 112 and 122 in British Library, MS Arundel 93, made in Ghent c. 1482-5 (see Online Resources).

2. There are dated obits of the Despaigne and the D'Assonleville families on the first flyleaf and in the calendar. The earliest obit, of Martine Despaigne, who died in 1555, is written at the top of the flyleaf and reads as follows: "Le vi^e decembre 1555 soier Martine despaigne a Rendu adieu son esprit ... la Religion des ... franciscains (?)" Below it, an obit in lighter brown ink, dated 1559, reads: "Damp Jacques despaigne a Rendu a dieu son esprit, ch(...?) de Cambron, le dyxeysme (dixième) Jour de Juin 1559 Dieu luy soit misericorde". In the calendar obits of Jeanne Despaigne dated 1598 (f. 1v), Julye Despaigne dated 1580 (f. 2), Jacques Despaigne (f. 6; date 1559 cropped in the margin), Marie Despaigne dated 1578 (f. 9v), Marie D'Assonleville dated 1586 and Martine Despaigne dated 1555 (f. 12). The D'Assonleville / D'Assonville family can be localized in Arras in Picardy in the sixteenth century.
3. The inscription "Rollet est im fripon" (Rollet is dishonest) in an eighteenth- or nineteenth-century hand in black ink in the margin of f. 49v. An initial "D." by the same hand in the margin of f. 37v, where there are also traces of a pilgrim's badge.

TEXT

ff. 1-12v, Calendar in French;

ff. 13-17v, Hours of the Cross, with rubrics in French, for example, *Les heures de la sainte croix, ymne, Comme dessus a matines Tierche, Comme dessus Mydy, Comme dessus none, Comme dessus vespre, Comme dessus compli(n)e, Comme dessus Recomendation*, and so forth;

[f. 18, blank]; f. 18v, originally blank, with a Marian prayer added in the fifteenth century, incipit, "(A)ve sanctissima Maria, mater Dei, regina celi, porta paradisi ..."; [the space provided for an initial is blank];

ff. 19-85v, Hours of the Virgin, use of Rome in the Netherlands (see Provenance), with rubrics in French, *Les heures de nostre damme a l'usage de Rome et cetera, Ces psalmes chi qui s'ensievent avoecques les antiennes se doiennent dire. Le dimence le lundi et le Joedi., Le mardi et le vendredi, Le mercredi et le samedi, En l'avend on dist ou lieu de, le ij^e lichon, and so forth; ff. 19-39v, Matins; ff. 39v-52v, Lauds; ff. 53-57, Prime; ff. 57-60v, Terce; ff. 60v-63v, Sext; ff. 63v-66v, None; ff. 67-74, Vespers; ff. 74-77v, Compline, followed by the variant readings for the Hours of the Virgin during Advent, rubrics in French, *Comme dessus a matines A vespre du premiere samedi de l'avend jusqu'a le vegille du noel on fait l'office de nostre damme ainsi comme il s'ensieut. Le samedi devant le premiere dimenche de l'avend A vespre a laudes et a les heures on dist les antiens qui s'ensievent, Tout aultre chose se dient comme devant l'avend depuis la nativite nostre seigneur jusqu'a le purification on dist les antiens qui s'ensievent a vespre a laudes et a les heures du jour, etc.*, ending with the rubric, ... *Et se dist cest orison a toutes les heures depuis le pasque jusqu'a l'ascention cest antien qui s'ensieut se dist ave beata Maria et a Nunc dimittis. Antienne, and the Marian antiphon Regina caeli, incipit, "Regina celi, letare, alleluya... ora pro nobis alleluya"; [f. 86r-v, ruled, otherwise blank].**

Books of Hours, the most popular type of manuscript in Western Europe in the late Middle Ages, contain a collection of devotional texts meant to be used throughout the day for private prayer. Several features of this Book of Hours set it apart from most other contemporary examples. First, it contains only the Hours of the Virgin and the short Hours of the Cross, leaving out other texts often included in Books of Hours including the Gospel extracts, Penitential Psalms, Litanies, Office of the Dead, and the Marian prayers *Obsecro te* and *O intemerata*. The text of this manuscript is, however, complete, and its abbreviated contents was a deliberate decision on the part of the scribe and/or the patron who commissioned the manuscript. (Note that the leaves removed from the first quire were excised before the scribe began copying; it was intended as a quire of six leaves.) The fact that all the rubrics are in French, rather than in Latin, also tells us something about the original owner of this book. For instance, the sixth Hour of Sext, which was recited at noon, is indicated in rubrics by "Mydy"/"Midy" (midi, "noon"). Books of Hours are often said to have been essentially picture books, and indeed, most of them are illustrated with a series of devotional miniatures. This manuscript, in contrast, never contained miniatures, and may have been owned by people of more modest means.

One of the most exciting traces of manuscript use is the evidence of pilgrims' badges. In our manuscript there were two pilgrims' badges, one circular badge with a cross attached to the top of the outer margin of f. 18v, and another representing an unidentified figure within a frame at the top of the outer margin of f. 37v. The first badge was attached to the page with the added prayer to the Virgin Mary, preceding the Hours of the Virgin. The prayer and badge were likely added at the same time. The second badge was added to the page on which begins the popular *Te Deum* hymn, chanted at the end of Matins. Sewing holes through which the badges were attached can be observed on these pages. The lead-tin alloy pilgrims' badges left imprints with faint outlines of the designs of the badges to the pages on which they were attached, and on the facing pages there are off-sets (without the design visible).

Pilgrims' badges were sold at popular pilgrimage destinations, and travelers wore them as souvenirs and protective talismans. By the second half of the fifteenth century, it seems to have become a common practice to sew them onto pages of Books of Hours, especially in northern France and southern Netherlands. The badges reminded the reader of their spiritual voyage to the sacred sites and relics. They were touched, kissed, and kept safe within the pages. They prolonged their owners' contact with the associated relics and were believed to offer protection. Hanneke Van Asperen has listed 81 manuscripts with traces of metal badges, either imprints or sewing holes (Van Asperen, 2010, p. 286). Other important recent studies on pilgrims' badges include Foster-Campbell, 2011, Van Asperen, 2018 and von Bredow-Klaus, 2003. Our book is an important addition to the group of manuscripts providing evidence of this late medieval practice of devotion.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Kunera (database of badges), Radboud Universiteit, Nijmegen
<http://www.kunera.nl>

Calendoscope, IRHT-CNRS, Paris
<http://calendoscope.irht.cnrs.fr/>

Arras, Bibliothèque municipale MS 367 (BVMM, IRHT-CNRS, Paris)
<https://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/mirador/index.php?manifest=https://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/iiif/24778/manifest>

F. Madan, "Hours of the Virgin Mary" (Tests for Localization)
<http://manuscripts.org.uk/chd.dk/use/madantest.html>

Emily Rundle, "Badges of Devotion"
https://www.textmanuscripts.com/blog/entry/4_17_badges_of_devotion

British Library, MS Arundel 93
<https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=1653&CollID=20&NStart=93>

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