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Prayerbook of Jacques de Brégilles In Latin, French, and Dutch, illuminated manuscript on parchment Southern Netherlands (Brussels?), c. 1552

83 folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, 1-83, complete (collation i⁶ ii⁸ iii¹² iv⁶ v-ix⁸ x¹¹), no signatures or catchwords, ruling in brown ink (justification 95 x 51 mm.), written mainly in dark brown ink in a handsome hybrid script (with changes in aspect, e.g. on f. 74, due to different scribes and different styles of script and perhaps different moments of intervention) in a single column on 17 lines, rubrics in red, 1-line initials in liquid gold on grounds alternating in red and blue, 2-line framed KL initials made from stripped branches on red or blue ground, 3-line initials formed of fine foliage and branches painted in liquid gold on grounds alternating in red, blue and green highlighted with liquid gold, FOUR FULL-PAGE MINIATURES, including two coats of arms, painted with rich colors and generous use of liquid gold within borders of trompe-l'œil golden picture frames, minor stains and signs of use, leaves slightly wrinkled, very small tears on the edges of some leaves, in overall excellent condition. Quarter-bound in brown morocco over wooden boards in the nineteenth century imitating a medieval binding, stamped with four floral ornaments and bands flanking the four raised bands on the spine, both covers with holes for a clasp and catch, now lost, minor signs of wear on the spine and the corners of the wooden boards, in overall excellent condition. Dimensions 135 x 88 mm.

Who owned illuminated manuscripts in the middle of the sixteenth century, long after the availability of print? This small handheld prayerbook supplies one concrete answer, since it includes the coat of arms of its original owner, Jacques de Brégilles, mayor of Brussels (and grandson of Jacques de Brégilles, the famous librarian and guardian of jewels to the dukes of Burgundy), and his wife. It is a luxurious manuscript, copied in an elegant script, with illuminated initials throughout and four miniatures. Its prayers in Latin, French, and Dutch testify to the piety and linguistic prowess of its original owner.

PROVENANCE

1. The manuscript was made for Jacques de Brégilles, knight, lord of Château, and several times treasurer (*receveur*), alderman (*échevin*), and mayor (*bourgmestre*) of Brussels during the years 1539-1562, and in 1546, *châtelain* of Vilvorde. His coat of arms is painted on f. 1v, and on his surcoat in his portrait with Saint James on f. 16v. Brégilles was the descendant of another Jacques de Brégilles (d. 1475), former librarian of Philip the Good and Charles the Bold. He was admitted to the Serroelofs lineage on June 13, 1536.

His wife, Helena Hinckaert, was the daughter of Philip IV Hinckaert, lord of Lille, who was lord of Philip II of Spain and mayor of Brussels. A framed portrait of her coat of arms held by an angel appears on f. 76v. Our manuscript was probably made around 1552, because the almanac (ff. 2v-3) begins with the year 1553, perhaps on the occasion of the couple's betrothal; they married three years later, in 1555. The calendar includes the local St. Gudula of Brussels in red (8 January).

2. Still in use in the Southern Netherlands in the eighteenth century, when the calendar was completed with additional names of saints, including local saints such as St. Dymphna of Geel (15 May) and Gertrude of Nivelles (17 March). These were probably added by relatives of Pierre van Kampen, whose obit was inscribed on January 31.
3. An eighteenth-century(?) inscription in brown ink on the back pastedown, mostly illegible: "Jan ... (?)."
4. Illegible notes in pencil on the front pastedown, possibly by modern booksellers.

TEXT

[f. 1, blank]; f. 1v, Coat of arms (see below); [f. 2, blank];

ff. 2v-3, Easter chart (or Almanac) providing the date of Easter, the Golden Number, and Dominical Letter, as well as the additional ones in leap years for each year from 1553 to 1599 (see Wieck, 2017);

ff. 3v-15, Calendar, with numerous later additions; [ff. 15v-16, blank]; f. 16v, Patron portrait (see below);

ff. 17-39, [Prayers to Christ in Latin], incipit, "O benignissime domine Ihesu Christe respicere digneris super me..."; "Obsecro te benignissime domine Ihesu Christe..."; "Ego tibi gratias domine Ihesu Christe..." [to be said before an image of a Crucifixion]; "Conditor celi et terre Rex..." [to be said before an image of "Salvatoris Dei nostri"]; *Oratio de singulis Articulis passionis domini nostri Ihesu christi*, "Ave Ihesu splendor paterne..."; *Oratio venerabilis Bede presbiteri de septem verbis ultimis in Cruce pendentis*, "O Domine Ihesu Christe qui septem verba die ultimo vite tue in cruce pendens dixisti"; *Oratio Sancti Augustini a Spiritu sancto ei revelata*, "Deus propitius esto mihi peccatori..."; "Domine deus de deo lumen de lumine..."; *Alia gratiarum actio ad Deum Mane quando surgis devote dicenda*, "Gratias ago tibi domine sancte..."; *Oratio devotissima dicenda dormitorio*, "O Jesu dulcissime Jesu pater dilectissime..."; *Sequitur Oratio devotissima ante sacram Communionem dicenda*. Incipit, "O pyssime Jesu scio et plenissime fateor..."; "Omnipotens et misericors deus ecce accedo ad sacramentum..."; "Domine non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum..."; *Alia devotissima oratio post perceptionem Venerabilis sacramenti devoto Corde dicenda*, "Anima Christi sanctifica me..."; "O bone Jesu, dulcis Jesu..."; "O dulcissime et amantissime Ihesu..."; "Pax domini nostri Ihesu..."; *Commendatio ad Deum et sanctam trinitatem pro bona custodia et bono fine singulis diebus dicenda*, "Benedicat me imperialis..."; "Jesus nazarenus Rex judiorum titulus triumphalis...";

ff. 39v-44, [Prayers to the Virgin in Latin], incipit, "O domina glorie, o regina leticie, o fons pietatis..."; "Ave sanctissima maria, mater dei..."; "Te deprecor intissimam, pyssimam, misericordissimam..."; "Ave Rosa sine spinis..."; "Ave Maria, ancilla sancte trinitatis..."; "Stabat mater dolorosa...";

ff. 44v-46v, [Collect prayers in Latin], incipit, "Interveniant pro nobis quesumus domine Ihesu..."; "Spes anime mee post deum virgo maria..."; "Sub tuum presidium..."; "Protege domine famulos tuos...";

ff. 46v-50v, [Prayers in Latin to be said during and after Holy Communion], incipit, "Ave verum corpus christi..."; "Ave caro christi..."; "Salve lux mundi..."; "Sanguis tuus domine..."; "Domine Ihesu christe fili dei vivi qui hanc sacratissimam carnem..."; "O domine Ihesu christe fili dei vivi crucifixe propter hominem...";

ff. 50-57, [Prayers to the Virgin and saints in Latin; to the Virgin], "O domina dulcissima visceribus..."; [all apostles], "Peteeve beatissime apostolorum..."; [St. Sebastian], "O magne fidei sanctissime sebastiane..."; "Omnipotens sempiterne deus..."; [St. Francis], "Celorum candor splenduit..."; [St. Anne], "Ave maria gratia plena dominus tecum...benedicta sit sancta anna..."; "Deus qui beate anne..."; "Puro corde et ore confiteor..."; [St. Anthony], "Da patris Anthonii meritis...";

ff. 57-75, [Prayers to God the Father and Christ in French (rubrics in Latin)], incipit, "Beau sire dieu qui estes la vraye lumiere..."; "Vray dieu et mon dieu qui fistes le ciel et la terre..."; "Mon dieu, mon seigneur et maitre, Je te rendz graces et louenge et mercye humblement..."; "Mon benoist dieu, Je croy de coeur et confesse de bouche tout ce que saincte eglise croit et tient de vous..."; "Sire dieu tout puissant, tout voyant, toutes choses cognoissant..."; "Mon benoist dieu Je vous rendz graces et vous mercye de ce que vous m'avez garde de mal..."; "Otresdoulz seigneur Jhesu, donne moy grace ..."; "Dieu de Justice, dieu de misericorde..."; "O toy souverain dieu..."; "Dieu le pere qui creez le ciel et la terre de riens me benisse, la paix de nostre seigneur Jesu christe..."; "Benoit Jhesus en grant tristesse tu as en croix...";

[ff. 75v-76, blank]; f. 76v, Miniature (see below);

ff. 77-78, [One prayer in Dutch], "Compt tot ons schepper heylich gheest...";

ff. 78-83v, [Two prayers in French], "O seigneur dieu augmente en nous la foy, l'esperence et la charite..."; "O pere celeste, je vous offre le tres doulx enfantement de votre filz...et a jamais ung sacrifice acceptable. Amen."

ILLUSTRATION

f. 1v, Coat of arms of Jacques de Brégilles, with his motto "s'y je puis";

f. 16v, Jacques de Brégilles kneeling in prayer before the scene of a Crucifixion painted on the facing page; Brégilles wears an armor and a surcoat with his arms and is presented by his patron saint, St. James; God the Father appears blessing him in the sky, above a hilly landscape;

f. 17, Crucifixion with the Virgin Mary and St. John, in a hilly landscape;

f. 76v, Angel presenting the coat of arms of Helena Hinckaert, the wife of Jacques de Brégilles.

The manuscript was illuminated by an anonymous artist from Southern Netherlands, possibly working in Brussels. The angel suspending the coat of arms of Helena Hinckaert uses as a model the miniature painted by Hubert Cailleau (Valenciennes) in the Book of Hours of Marguerite Crohin, made, like our manuscript, in 1552 (Los Angeles, Getty Museum, Ms. 23, f. 13; see Online Resources), or a similar model. Illuminated manuscripts painted as late as the mid-sixteenth century are much rarer than those dating from before 1520, providing us invaluable

art historical knowledge.

Jacques de Brégilles (d. 1475), the librarian and *garde de joyaux* of the dukes of Burgundy, Philippe the Good and Charles the Bold, was the grandfather of Jacques who owned our manuscript. The office of the senior Jacques de Bréguilles (Jacot de Bresil in the contemporary chronicles) went as far as to supervise the making of manuscripts for the dukes of Burgundy. At least three books of hours are known to have been made for the senior Jacques de Bréguilles: one illuminated around 1460 by at least three different artists, including Willem Vrelant (London, British Library, Yates Thompson 4), one that includes the name of his son, Jean de Bréguilles (Brussels, Bibl. Roy. MS II 4996), and one sold in 1993 by Les Enluminures now also in Brussels Bibl. Roy. MS IV 1309 (Catalogue 2, 1993, no. 9; see Online Resources, TM 234). The family came from Brégille, a village near Besançon, but due to his charge, the senior Jacques de Bréguilles resided mostly in the Burgundian Netherlands, where he died, in his house in Brussels in 1475 (Paviot 1995, p. 317). The senior Jacques de Bréguilles had six children with his wife Claire Le Villain: Jean (b. 1450), Isabelle (b. 1452), Gérard (b. 1454), Philippote (b. 1458), a second Isabelle (b. 1460), and Jeanne (b. 1462); the births of his children were noted on the first leaves of his book of Hours, Les Enluminures, TM 234 (cf. Pavot, 1995, p. 314). His namesake Jacques, for whom our prayerbook was made, was his grandson, the son of the eldest son, Jean (cf. Pavot, 1995, p. 319). Claire Le Villain and the daughters stayed in Burgundy, where they turned towards the French royal court. Jean de Bréguilles installed himself in Brussels, where his sons also held prestigious charges: Philippe as the first *écuyer* of Margaret of Austria, Louis, *amman* of Brussels in 1578, and Jacques, several times treasurer, alderman and mayor of Brussels, as mentioned above.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Hours of Jacques de Bréguilles, Les Enluminures TM 234; now BR MS IV 1309

<https://www.textmanuscripts.com/medieval/jacques-bregilles-books-hours-60522>

<https://opac.kbr.be/LIBRARY/doc/SYRACUSE/17443797>

Hours of Marguerite Crohin, Los Angeles, Getty Museum, Ms. 23, f. 13
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arms_of_Marguerite_Crohin_-
_Google_Art_Project.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arms_of_Marguerite_Crohin_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)

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