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Book of Hours, use of the Carmelite Order In Latin and French, illuminated manuscript on parchment Northern France (Arras?), c. 1480-1500

ii (nineteenth-century paper) + 104 + ii (nineteenth-century paper) folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil in the bottom corner of leaves, 1-101 (11 bis, 93 bis, 93 ter), lacking eight leaves, six of which with miniatures (collation i¹² ii⁸ [-1, -8, lacking one leaf after f. 11bis and another after f. 17, with loss of text] iii⁸ [-1, -4, -6, lacking one leaf after f. 17, another after f. 19, and another after f. 20, with loss of text] iv¹⁰ v⁶ vi⁸ [-8, lacking one leaf after f. 45, with loss of text] vii⁴ viii⁸ [-1, lacking one leaf after f. 49, with loss of text] ix⁸ x⁸ [-1, lacking one leaf after f. 64, with loss of text] xi-xiv⁸), ruled in red ink (justification 97 x 71 mm.), written in dark brown ink in a Gothic bookhand (textualis) in single column on 16 lines, rubrics red, 1-line initials alternately in red and blue, 2-line champie initials in burnished gold on grounds divided in pink and blue, five 4-line initials alternating in burnished gold on grounds divided in pink or blue, or in pink or blue with white penwork on grounds in burnished gold, accompanied by hairline vines with painted flowers and leaves extending in the margins, TWO LARGE INITIALS, 5- and 6-line, in pink or blue with white penwork infilled with ivy-vine on burnished gold grounds, accompanied BY FULL FLORAL BORDERS decorated with blue and pink acanthus leaves, pansies, carrot flowers and daisies, framed by baguettes in burnished gold and pink (ff. 18, 21), stains and signs of use throughout, the first leaf heavily stained, tears especially on the first nine leaves and e.g. ff. 62, 65, 95, 101, otherwise in good condition. Bound in the nineteenth century in dark brown and black leather over pasteboards, flat spine decorated with strips of black leather and entitled in gilt "MANUSCRIT.," marbled endpapers and pastedowns, lacking the top of the front endpaper, spine detached from the text block revealing a strip of nineteenth-century newspaper pasted against the back of the text block, leather worn along the hinges and edges, in overall good condition. Dimensions 152 x 100 mm.

This small and precious Prayer Book was once owned by a woman, likely someone associated with the male convent of the Carmelites in Arras (perhaps a lay benefactor or a Carmelite nun from elsewhere). Carmelite Books of Hours are rare. Female Carmelite convents were founded only towards the end of the fifteenth century in France and Belgium, much later than those for men. Painted with shimmering burnished goldleaf its initials accompany rich borders ornamented with colorful flowers and acanthus leaves.

PROVENANCE

1. Textual and liturgical evidence show that this manuscript was made at the end of the fifteenth century (after 1480) for a woman following the use of the Carmelite Order in northern France, probably in Arras. The prayer to one's guardian angel on ff. 97v-98 includes the formulation "je povre pecheresse" (I, poor sinner) in the feminine form of the noun "pecheur."

The text follows the very rare liturgical use of the Carmelite Order. The calendar includes in red the important Carmelite saints: St. Elisha, prophet and disciple of Elijah (14 June), St. Angelus of Jerusalem, Carmelite friar (5 May), and St. Albert of Jerusalem, who contributed the rule for the Carmelite order (4 August; normally 7 August, "fête de dévotion"; cf. Leroquais 1934, vol. 1, p. cxi). Other Carmelite feasts in the calendar are

St. Cyril of Constantinople (6 March), St. Lazarus (17 December; included in the Carmelite liturgy in 1440), the three Marys, in red (25 May), St. Joseph, the husband of the Virgin Mary, in red (19 March) and St. Cleopas, who according to tradition was the brother of Joseph and the husband of Mary of Cleopas, the sister of the Virgin Mary (24 September; normally 25 September). The litanies include St. Elijah, the prophet venerated as the founder of the order by the Carmelites, as well as St. Cleopas, St. Edmund, St. Angelus, St. Albert, St. Joseph, and St. Cyril.

The Hours of the Virgin (ff. 21-49v) follows the liturgical use of the Carmelite Order, with Prime antiphon "Assumpta es," capitulum "Ab inicio," None antiphon "Pulchra es," and capitulum "Sicut cynamomum" (cf. Madan 1927, p. 23). The Office of the Dead (ff. 65-88v) has three lessons with responsories beginning "Credo quod," "Qui Lazarum," and "Domine quando," which correspond to Knud Ottosen's series 14-72-24, identified in manuscripts made for the Carmelite use (Ottosen, Online resources).

Liturgical evidence allows us to date the manuscript. The feast of St. Joseph was added to the Carmelite liturgy in 1480 (cf. Leroquais 1934, vol. 1, pp. cxi-cxii), indicating that our manuscript was made after this date. The calendar also includes the octave of Epiphany (13 January), as well as Faustinus and Jovita (15 February), both feasts added to the Carmelite liturgy in 1478, as well as St. Gertrude (17 March), added in 1480.

Evidence of the language and liturgy supports an origin in Arras. Various spellings of the rubrics and prayers in Picard orthography indicate that the manuscript was made in northern France or the Hainaut in the southern Netherlands (today Belgium), including Tournai, Mons, Lille, Douai, Artois, Amiens, Béthune, Roubaix, Calais, Saint-Omer, Lens, Cambrai, Dunkerque, and Valenciennes, where the Picard language was spoken (e.g. "Chi sont.." f. 93bis verso, "merchi" f. 100). The inclusion of St. Honoratus, bishop of Amiens (14 May), also suggests that the manuscript was made for use in the region of Picardy, where the city of Arras is located. The inclusion and emphasis of two feasts celebrating St. Vedast of Arras in red (6 February with St. Amand of Maastricht, and 1 October with St. Remi) in the calendar suggest that the manuscript was intended for use in Arras. This origin is supported by the later provenance of this manuscript, since it was still in Arras in the nineteenth century. (See below for further discussion about the origin of the manuscript).

2. Belonged to Hyppolyte Renard, a high administrator for the city of Arras and a committee member of Arras city library, *chevalier de la légion d'honneur, membre de la commission de la bibliothèque de la Ville d'Arras, ancien adjoint au maire d'Arras*; his bookplate, front pastedown the bookplate. Renard's library was sold on January 15, 1879, and the following days in Paris (see the catalogue by Adophe Labitte, libraire de la Bibliothèque Nationale, 1878).

TEXT

ff. 1-11bis, Calendar, including, in addition the feasts mentioned above, feasts of St. Aubin, bishop of Angers (in red, 1 March), St. Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux (in red, 20 August), St. Medard, bishop of Noyon (8 June), St. Edmund of East Anglia (20 November), and St. Eligius, bishop of Noyon (1 December);

ff. 12-16, Gospel extracts, lacking one leaf in the beginning of quire, probably with an opening miniature of St. John;

ff. 16v-17v, Passion according to St. John, with the prayer "Deus, qui manus tuas ...";

ff. 18-19v, Hours of the Holy Spirit, lacking the opening miniature (probably depicting Pentecost), beginning with a rubric in French, *S'ensu(i)vent les heures du benoit saint espir [sic]*, and ending imperfectly; lacking Vespers and Compline;

ff. 20r-v, Hours of the Cross, lacking the opening miniature (almost certainly of the Crucifixion), as well as Matins and Prime in the beginning of text and Compline at the end of text;

ff. 21-49v, Hours of the Virgin, use of the Carmelite Order, lacking the opening miniature (almost certainly the Annunciation), beginning with a rubric in French, *Les heures de nostre dame*; ending imperfectly; ff. 21-35, Matins and Lauds; ff. 35-38v, Prime; ff. 38v-41, Terce; ff. 41-43v, Sext; ff. 43v-45v, None, ending imperfectly; ff. 46-47v, Vespers, beginning imperfectly; ff. 47v-49, Compline, ending imperfectly;

ff. 50-64v, Penitential Psalms, lacking the opening miniature (probably of King David); followed by litanies (beginning on f. 58), including Saints Eligius, Edmund, Benedict, Bernard, Hilarion, Albert, Hubert, Cyril, Francis, Dominic, and Louis;

ff. 65-88v, Office of the Dead, use of the Carmelite Order; lacking the opening miniature (probably illustrating Job);

ff. 88v-98, Prayers in Latin and French: *Avete omnes anime fideles, Domine Ihesu Christe salus et liberatio, s'ensuy le cymbole de la foy laquel est tres bonne à dire Quicumque vult salus esse ...*; to the Holy Trinity, incipit, "O noble et sainte triniteit et inseparable uniteit ..." (Sonet 1461); to the five wounds of Christ, *Por la plaie de vostre dyestre main* (Sonet 1687); *Chi sont iiii maniere d'offrande a Dieule pere mult bone et de grande valeur*, "O pere tres haut je vous faict offrande de la magistude multitude ..." (Sonet 1467); when receiving the Eucharist, *Une bonne orison que l'ons doit dire quant ons vuet rechivoir le Saint sacrement*, incipit, "O tres souverain Dieu aujourdui je desier rechivoir ..." (Sonet 1585); after taking the Eucharist, *Oraison tres bonne a dire por rendre grasce apres chi qui arat rechut le Saint Sacrement del auteil*, incipit, "Je vous rens grasce tres doulx Ihesu Christ grasce soit a votre haulte patreniteit ..." (Sonet 924); to the Virgin Mary, incipit, "O dame de gloire o royne de joie, O fontaine de pitie et de misericorde ..." (Sonet 1307); and to one's guardian angel, incipit, "O tres sains angele de Dieu a cuy je povre pecheresse ...";

Some of the prayers in this manuscript are also found in a manuscript reported by Jean Sonet in the private Branchon collection (Eghezée, Namur; cf. Sonet, 1956); see also the notice by the section Romane at the Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes in Paris, a research department that actively documents all unique examples of medieval texts in French (Jonas, Online Resources).

ff. 98-100, Suffrages of St. Michael, the Virgin Mary ("Je te salus tres sainte mere, de la mere nostre seigneur"), St. Nicholas, St. Catherine, St. Barbara, and All Saints;

ff. 100-101v, Prayers: to God the Father ("Sire Dieu je vos prie merci de tous les pechies"); for the dedication of a church (*Item quant il est la dedicace en aulcune eglise vos deveis dire*, "Je vos requier doulx sire ..."); and a prayer attached to an indulgence of 2000 years of pardon ("O passio magna o de profunda vulnera").

The Carmelite Order was never widespread in Europe, and thus Carmelite manuscripts of any type are exceedingly rare. There is not a single Carmelite Book of Hours recorded in Victor Leroquais' magisterial survey of Books of Hours in French libraries (Leroquais, 1927). One Carmelite Book of Hours in the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, New Zealand was described by Christopher de Hamel (De Hamel, 1971). Another Carmelite Book of Hours, possibly made in Paris for a German Carmelite friar, was sold at Sotheby's on 5 December 2006 (lot 46) to the North American Province of the present Carmelite Order. Another Book of Hours made in Rouen around 1500 for a couple of the Manneville and Catteville families (thus not for the Carmelite order) includes a miniature painted by Robert Boyvin illustrating St. Elijah on Mount Carmel (Christie's, 27-28 June 2006, lot 125). A small number of additional Carmelite manuscripts have appeared on the market, including a Breviary from the Carmelites of Semur-en-Auxois, sold at Sotheby's on 6 December 2016, lot 29, a devotional compendium sold at Sotheby's on 5 July 2011, lot 96, a fifteenth-century Breviary sold at Christie's on 2 December 1987, lot 170, and a sixteenth-century Prayer Book sold at the Bloomsbury Auctions on 9 December 2015, lot 120.

The Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was founded in the mid-twelfth century by a group of hermits who established themselves on Mount Carmel in the Holy Land. In the Bible, Elijah confronts the false prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. The rule was established by the local patriarch, St. Albert of Jerusalem, while he was in office in 1206-1214. The founders claimed a continuity going back to the prophet Elijah and other Old Testament prophets and hermits on Carmel, and the order included the Virgin Mary among its members. The Carmelite order was a mystical and contemplative order requiring extreme asceticism and total solitude of its members. In Europe, Carmelite houses were established in the Netherlands, southern France, Italy, especially Sicily, Spain, Cyprus, with some houses also found in England. Jean Soreth, General Prior of Carmelite Order from 1451 to 1471, founded with Françoise d'Amboise (1427-1485) the first Carmelite convent for women in France, *Les Trois Maries* in Vannes (Brittany) in 1463.

The text in our manuscript allows us to conclude that it was made for use in Arras, where it remained until the nineteenth century. A Carmelite convent for men was established in the faubourg of St.-Sauveur near Arras under the protection of the counts of Arras in 1263. War obliged the monks to move inside the city walls of Arras in the fifteenth century, first on rue du Baudmont from 1414, and then on rue St.-Jean-en-Ronville from 1479. A new church was built in 1497 with gifts from François Doresmieulx, abbot of St-Eloy, and Jacques Lemaire, abbot of Cercamp, among other benefactors. However, there were no female convents for Carmelites in Arras, or indeed anywhere in France apart from Vannes, at the time this manuscript was made. Perhaps it was made for a lay woman, possibly a benefactor of the Carmelite convent in Arras, or as a gift for a Carmelite nun, associated in some way with the convent in Arras.

The excellent study by Anne Margreet As-Vijvers of the manuscripts made at the Carmelite convent of Our Lady in Bruges has shown that these manuscripts are painted in a very conservative style (As-Vijvers, 2013). Our manuscript, which must date after c. 1480 based on liturgical evidence, is similarly conservative with decoration that might otherwise suggest a date as early as the 1470s.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Ottosen (Office of the Dead)

<https://www.cantusplanus.de/databases/Ottosen/Ottosenseries.php>

Jonas, IRHT, Paris, Vente Alde du 24 mai 2023, lot n° 20

https://jonas.irht.cnrs.fr/consulter/manuscrit/detail_manuscrit.php?projet=83719

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