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HOURS OF HENRY IV OF FRANCE

- **Shelf mark:** Latin 1171
- **Date:** Late 15th – early 16th century (?)
- **Provenance:** Paris
- **Size:** 225 × 155 mm
- **180 pages**, 60 full-page grisaille miniatures, 16 small pen-and-ink miniatures
- **Bound** in brown

This book of hours is so magnificent that its royal owner, Henry IV of France, associated himself with it by having his arms stamped on its front and back covers. Over the centuries, the manuscript was safeguarded in the royal collections, first at the Louvre Palace and then, from 1720 onwards, in the King's Library.

UNUSUAL ICONOGRAPHY

It is obvious upon opening this manuscript, that it is a unique and outstanding work, a manuscript that literally shines with a thousand lights – the least one can say about a codex whose every page of text has a gilded ground. The margins are delicately and stylishly decorated with foliate motifs. Another rare and surprising element occurring on several occasions is where the letters of the alphabet are used to fill the borders.

But these are not the only unusual elements. Unlike the custom in that pe-

riod, the large initials are painted white with purple highlights. In addition, the lavish iconographic cycle with its purple and golden highlights, consisting of more than sixty paintings inspired by the New Testament, is a rare – and remarkable – example of grisaille illumination from the turn of the 16th century. Finally, the calendar, and also the four small scenes of the Passion set inside the columns of text, are illustrated with line drawings upon a gilded ground.

To learn more about its attribution, we must rely on what the many images themselves can tell us. According to art historians, the style is very similar to that of the atelier of Jean Pichore, a prolific Parisian illuminator influenced by Jean Bourdichon and Jean Poyer. François Avril is of the opinion that one artist in this atelier has distinguishing features that can be recognised in several manuscripts including the one under study here.

A TEXT IN KEEPING WITH TRADITION

In all other respects, the 180 pages in this manuscript embody all the most traditional features of the book of hours typical of that period, i.e. a calendar, Gospel lessons, prayers to the Virgin, the Passion according to St John, the Hours of the Virgin, the Hours of the Holy Ghost, the Penitential Psalms and litanies, the Office of the Dead and the Suffrages of the Saints.

Finally, as was the norm in all books of hours dating from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the text is written in black and the headings in red. The saints' names in the calendar are written in alternating red and black ink.

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O ctobre a xxxi. iour. la lune. xxxi.

xvi	A	S	amet remy
v	b	S	amet legier
xiii	c	S	amet francos
ii	d	S	amete aure
	e	S	amet apolmaire
x	f	S	amete foy
	g	S	amet mare
xviii	A	S	amet demetre
vii	b	S	amet demis
	c	S	amet gereon
xv	d	S	amet venant
iiii	e	S	amet turian
	f	S	amet theophile
xii	g	S	amet alixte
i	A	S	amet benoist
	b	S	amet lucian
ix	c	S	amet florent
	d	S	amet lucas
xvii	e	S	amet sauunam
vi	f	S	amet capraile
	g	S	es xi. uierges
xiiii	A	S	amet mellan
iii	b	S	amet romam
	c	S	amet magloire
xi	d	S	amet cretym
	e	S	amet amant
xix	f	S	Vigile
viii	g	S	amet symon si iude
	A	S	amet faron
xvi	b	S	amet lucan
v	c	S	Vigile

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N ouembre a xxx iours. La lune. xxix.

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xiii	b	S	es trespassez
ii	c	S	amet marcel
	d	S	amet hubert
x	e	S	amet eleu
	f	S	amet lienarar
xviii	g	S	amet becculan
vii	A	S	es quatre coronnes
	b	S	amet matuam
xv	c	S	amet martin pape
iiii	d	S	amet martin
	e	S	amet Leon
xii	f	S	amet brice
i	g	S	amet ogn
	A	S	amet michele
ix	b	S	amet emond
	c	S	amet aignen
xvii	d	S	amet ande
vi	e	S	amete elizaberb
	f	S	amet ualeci
xiiii	g	S	amet columbam
iii	A	S	amete ceule
	b	S	amet clement
xi	c	S	amet grilogan
	d	S	amete katherine
xix	e	S	amete geneuesue
viii	f	S	amet vital
	g	S	amet lm
xvi	A	S	Vigile
v	b	S	amet andre

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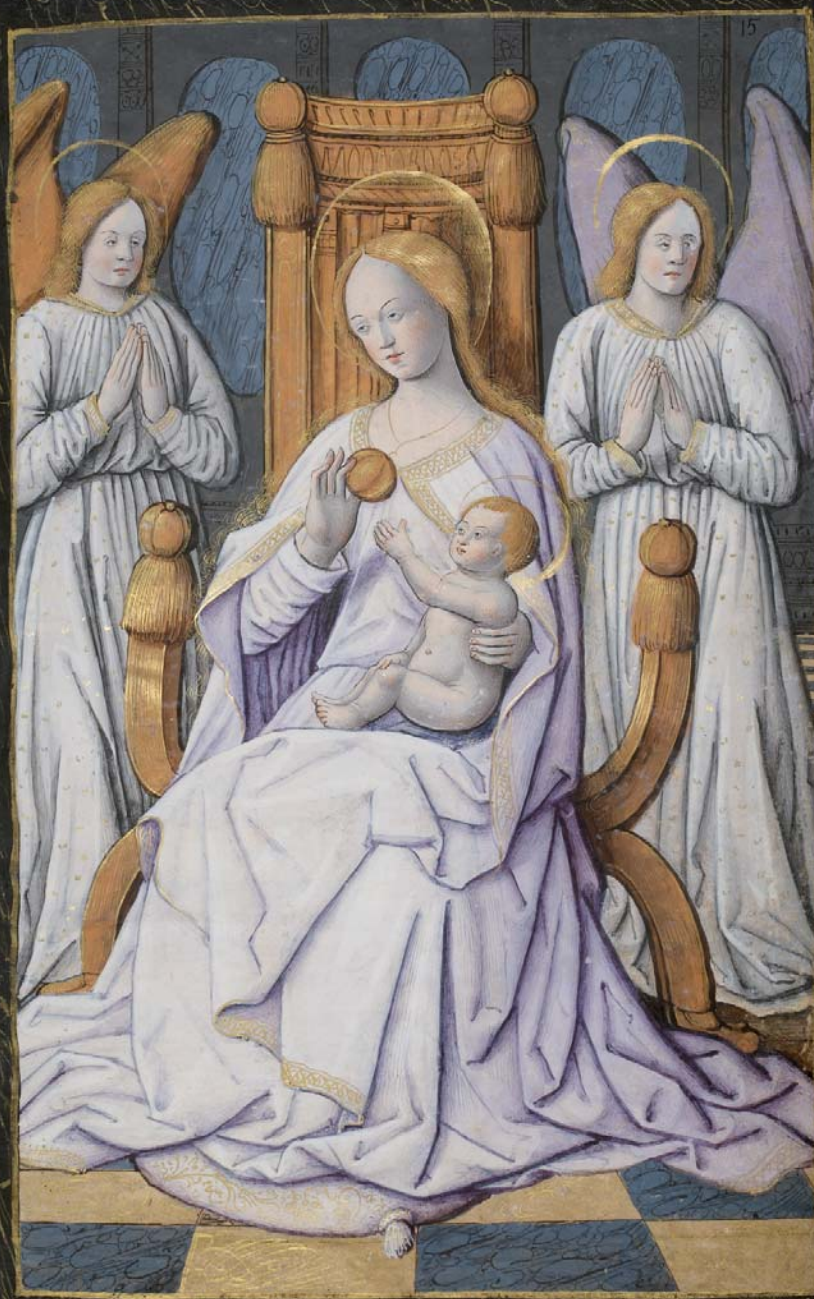
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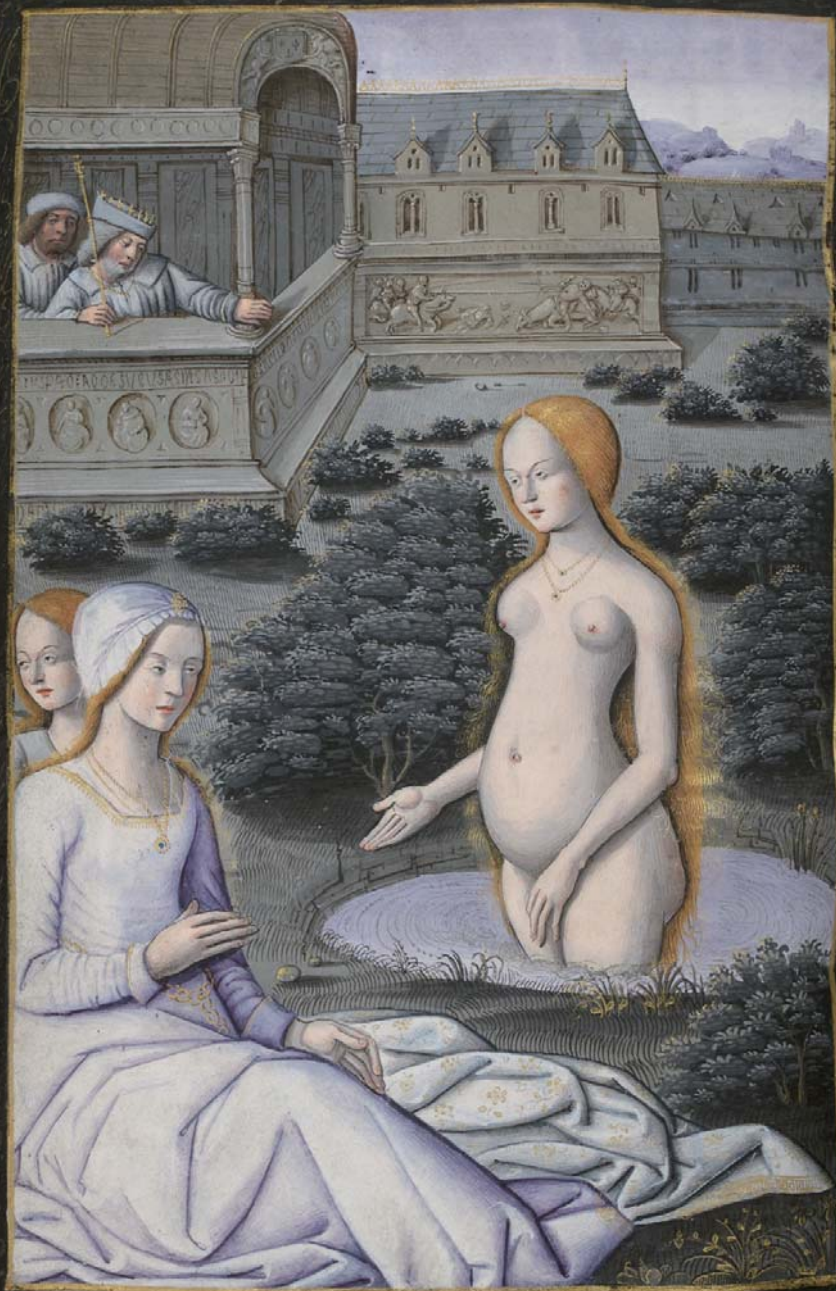
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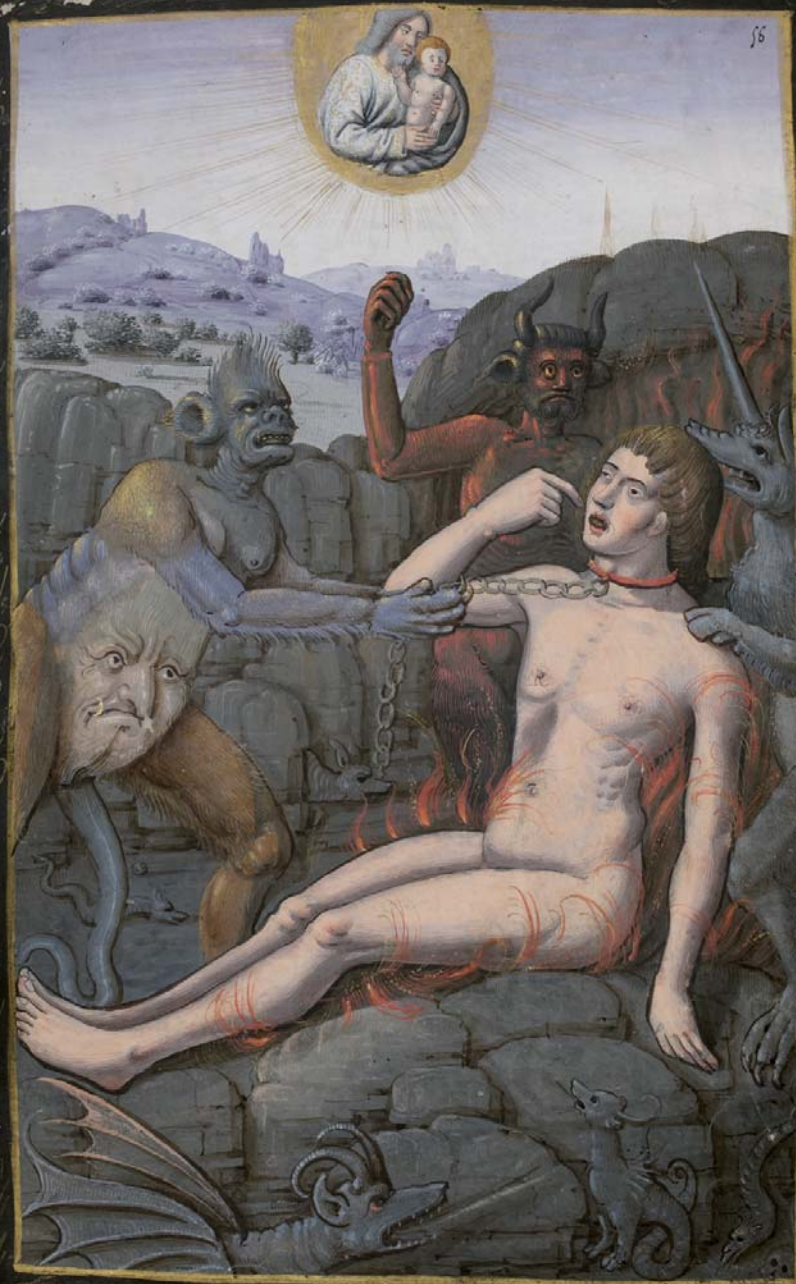
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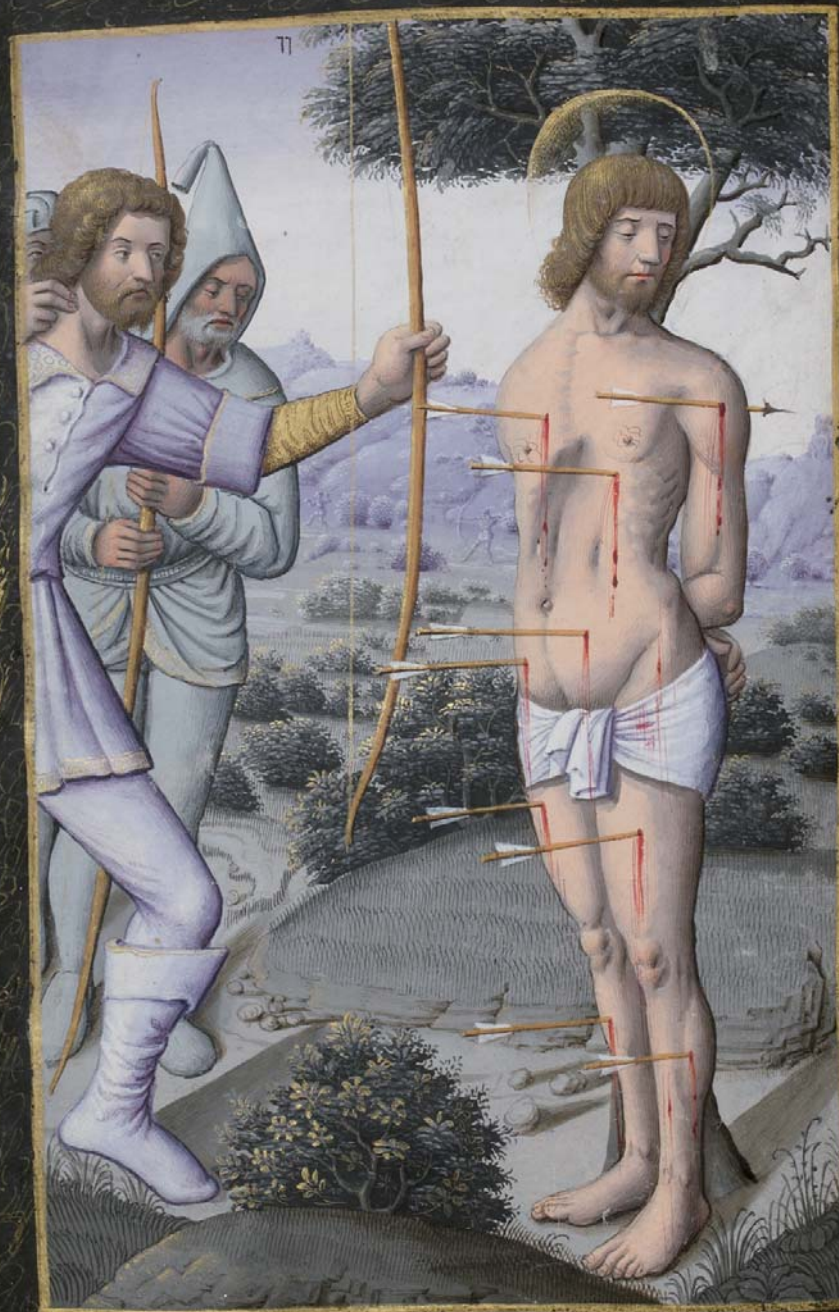
DE SANCTA FACIES



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DE SANCTO EUPHORO



DE SANCTO SEBASTIO MARTIRE



DE SANCTA MARIA MAGDALENA



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DE SANCTA MARIA STRETA