

HOURS OF
HENRY VIII

HOURS OF
CHARLES OF ANGOULÊME

HOURS OF
HENRY IV OF FRANCE





HOURS OF HENRY VIII

The
Morgan
Library &
Museum

- Shelf mark: MS H.8
- Date: c. 1500
- Provenance: France
- Size: ±265 x 182 mm
- Painter: Jean Poyer
- 400 pages with 55 full-page miniatures
- Bound in red velvet with clasps
- Full colour commentary volume (236 pp.) by Roger Wieck, curator at the Morgan Library & Museum

The *Hours of Henry VIII*, Jean Poyer's masterpiece, receives its name from King Henry VIII of England, second monarch of the House of Tudor. It is documented that the manuscript belonged to a series of later English kings. For example, there is proof that between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it still belonged to the library of George III (1738-1820). **It is a lavish work of incomparable dramatic force, fit for England's most fascinating and passionate monarch.**

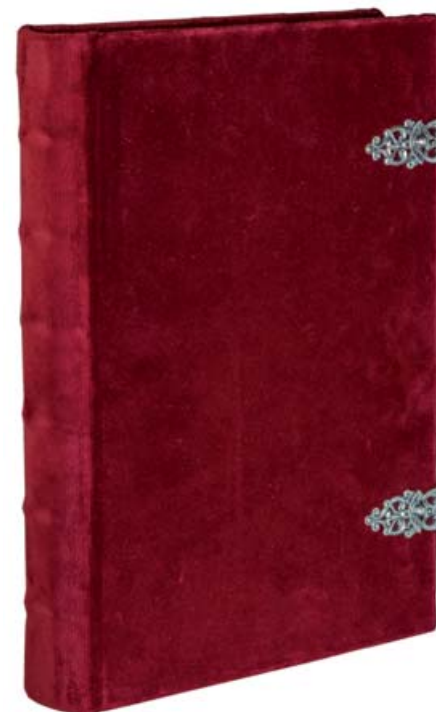
Jean Poyer's career as a painter was short, from 1483 to 1503, but he was famous for being a master colourist and a genius at composition and perspective. In the *Hours of Henry VIII*, the beauty of the Franciscan Calendar is good proof of his reputation and, among other sections as the Office of the Dead and the Hours of the Virgin, makes this manuscript a peerless treasure.

The manuscript is bound in red velvet. Its clasps contain Henry VIII's coat of arms (three fleur-de-lis quarterly 1 and 4, three lions passant guardant quarterly 2 and 3). They also contain his monogram H.8.R (*Henricus Octavus Rex*) and his famous motto, HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE (Shame on him who evil thinks).

On the manuscript's last blank leaf, there is a note supplied by George Wade (1673-1748), one of its owners:

In the Year 1723, being at Mons and hearing of This Book as the greatest Curiosity of its kind, I found it in the hands of Mons[ieu]r Charle Benoit Desmanet a Gent[lema]n of that Town, (and after his Death procured it from his Executors) he Shew'd it me with great care and precaution not Suffering me to touch it, but turn'd over the leaves with a Small pair of Silver Tongues made for that purpose, And perceiving me to Smile at this Nicety, he said with some Warmth, Sir In this manner my Ancestors for above a hundred Years past have preserved this Book from blemish and in the Perfection you now see it; He told me likewise That the Tradition of the Family was That it was formerly A Present from the Emperor Charles the Fifth to Henry the Eighth King of England, and that after his Death it was taken out of his Closet and brought into Flanders; The Painter is Unknown;

George Wade.





A lavish work
of incomparable
dramatic force



per te ihu xpe saluator mundi.
 Qui in trinitate perfecta uiuies
 regnas deus per omnia secula se-
 culorum amen. *De hi mana. oro.*



Verecote domina scia
 maria mater dei pie
 tate plenissima sum
 regis filia mater gloriosissima



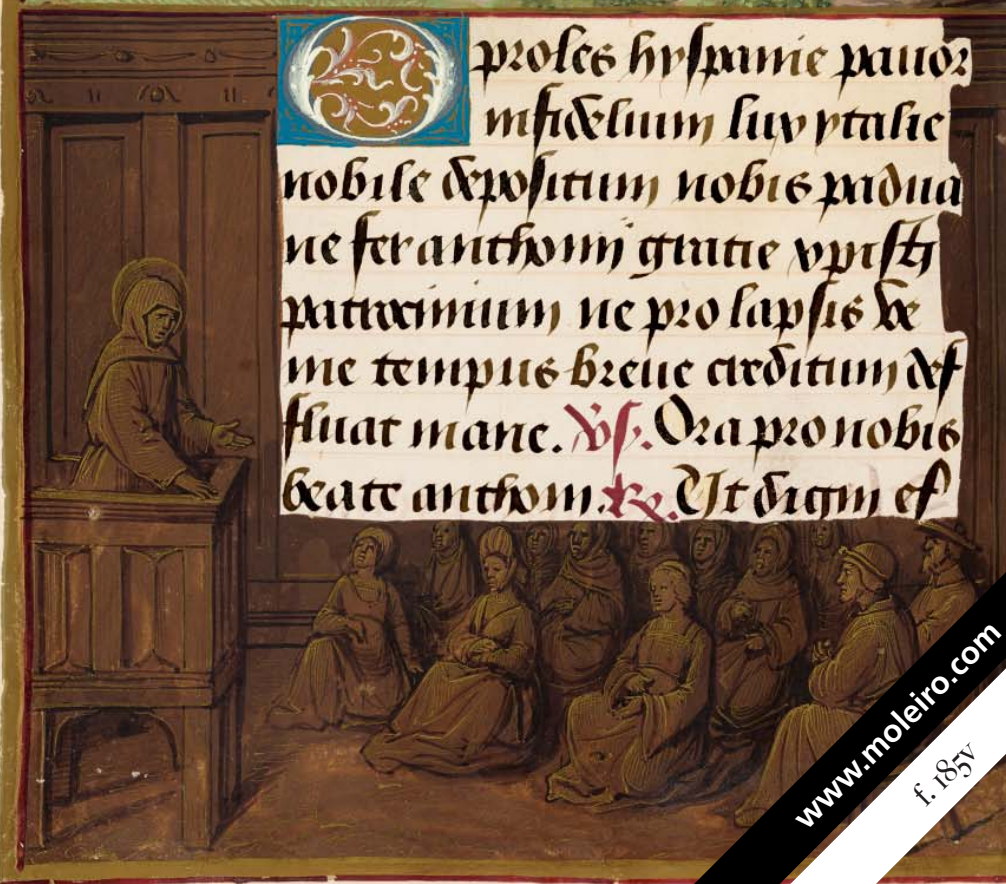


Imicus dei nicolaus po
tifficali decoratus infu
la omnibus se amabilem exhi
buit. *Vs.* Ora pro nobis beate
nicolae. *R.* Ut digni efficiamur
promissionibus xpisti. *Oro.*

Deus qui beatum nicola
um pontificem tuum i



Proles hispanie pauor
infidelium suu ytalie
nobile depositum nobis padua
ne ferant homi gratie xpisti
patricium ne pro lapsis de
me tempus breue creditum des
fluat mane. *Vs.* Ora pro nobis
beate anthoni. *R.* Ut digni ef





HOURS OF CHARLES OF ANGOULÊME

Bibliothèque nationale de France

- Shelf mark: Latin 1173
- Date: c. 1485
- Provenance: France
- Size: ± 215 x 155 mm
- Artist: Robinet Testard
- 230 pages, 38 full-page miniatures
- Crimson leather binding with gilt border
- Full-colour commentary volume by Maxence Hermant and Séverine Lepape

The audacious illuminations in this book painted for Charles of Angoulême make this manuscript the most splendid example of its prolific genre: the book of hours.

Such boldness, which could only stem from a profound intellectual understanding between the artist and the patron, extends beyond the concept of the book of hours, i.e. an instrument of personal prayer for its owner.

Perhaps the licentiousness that characterised the French court for centuries, the lack of religious inhibition of a prince as powerful as the Count of Angoulême and the scientific acumen of such a true naturalist as Robinet Testard can help explain this feat in the closing stages of the Middle Ages.

In any case, rather than an ideal instrument for personal prayer, this book was apparently an effective medium for the personal entertainment of Charles of Valois, a codex deliberately designed and manufactured to arouse his curiosity (f. 52v), distract him from worldly matters (ff. 28v and 52r), make him laugh (ff. 3r, 4v and 5r), foster his fondness for the arts (ff. 16v and 26v) and his love of the jovial pastoral life (f. 20v), and delight this avid reader of love stories (f. 2v) and books of chivalry (f. 53v) whilst still satisfying his

vanity as a prince – according to Ahuva Belkin's allegorical interpretation (f. 41v).

In addition, it is significant that the folios most likely to inspire devotion, such as those in the biblical cycle of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ, are not solely the work of Robinet: they are based on a series of twelve prints by Israhel van Meckenem (I.M) which Testard coloured using his characteristic and magnificent pallet.

The fact that Robinet Testard chose not to paint the holy of holies of this book of hours himself and preferred to incorporate work by other painters (Jean Bourdichon) or printmakers (Israhel van Meckenem) should be interpreted not as a desire to appropriate the artistry of others but rather as an indication of the artist's intellectual uprightness and refusal to compromise his own principles by portraying scenes with which he could not, as a naturalist, fully empathise.

Furthermore, the addition of extraneous secular elements – including daily (ff. 4v and 20v), mythological (f. 41v) and chivalrous (f. 53v) motifs – plus the lengthy Passover narrative in the vernacular (ff. 60r - 115v) in a book which is by definition entirely or predominantly Latin, all emphasises how original this manuscript is in comparison

with the usual conventions of books of this genre.

It would only be a slight exaggeration to describe this codex as an extraordinary artistic melting pot that almost undermines and desecrates the religious intent of the book of hours. This manuscript is an antithesis of the book of hours, in short, an anti-book of hours.

Three of its illuminations are particularly captivating: the lively pastoral dance in the Annunciation to the Shepherds with consummate naturalism above all in the traits and movements of the male figures; the mysterious scene of the Death of the Centaur and his rider, the Wild Woman, with its mythological tones and two allegorical interpretations: ethical (the struggle between good and evil) and political (the death of Louis XI, "the spider king", and his daughter Madame Anne of Beaujeu); and the legendary scene of the prince, St George of Cappadocia and the Queen of Lydia, an illustration ideal for a book of chivalry but completely out of place in a book of hours.



A totally original
and unorthodox
book of hours

februarius hz dies xxv. Luna xxix. Et quando
est bisextus hz dies xxix. Luna xxx.

Februarii **B**ugide virg.
Purificatio bte marie.

Blash epi et mris.

Agathe virg et mris.

Appolonie virg.
Scolastice virg.

Marth. **V**alentini mris.

Juliane virg et mris.

Sol in pisce.

Cathedra sa petri.

Mathie apli.

Translatio sa augustini.



Augustus hz dies xxxi. Luna xxix.

Augusti **A**dunada sa petri.
Stephi ppe et mris.
Inucnao sa stephi.

Sae marie de mris.
Transfiguratio dni.
Donati epi.

Laurentij mris.
Tiburtij et susanne mris.

Ipoliti sociorgz er?
Septembus.
Assumpcio bte marie.
Annunziati conf.

Ludouia conf epi.
Bernardi abb.

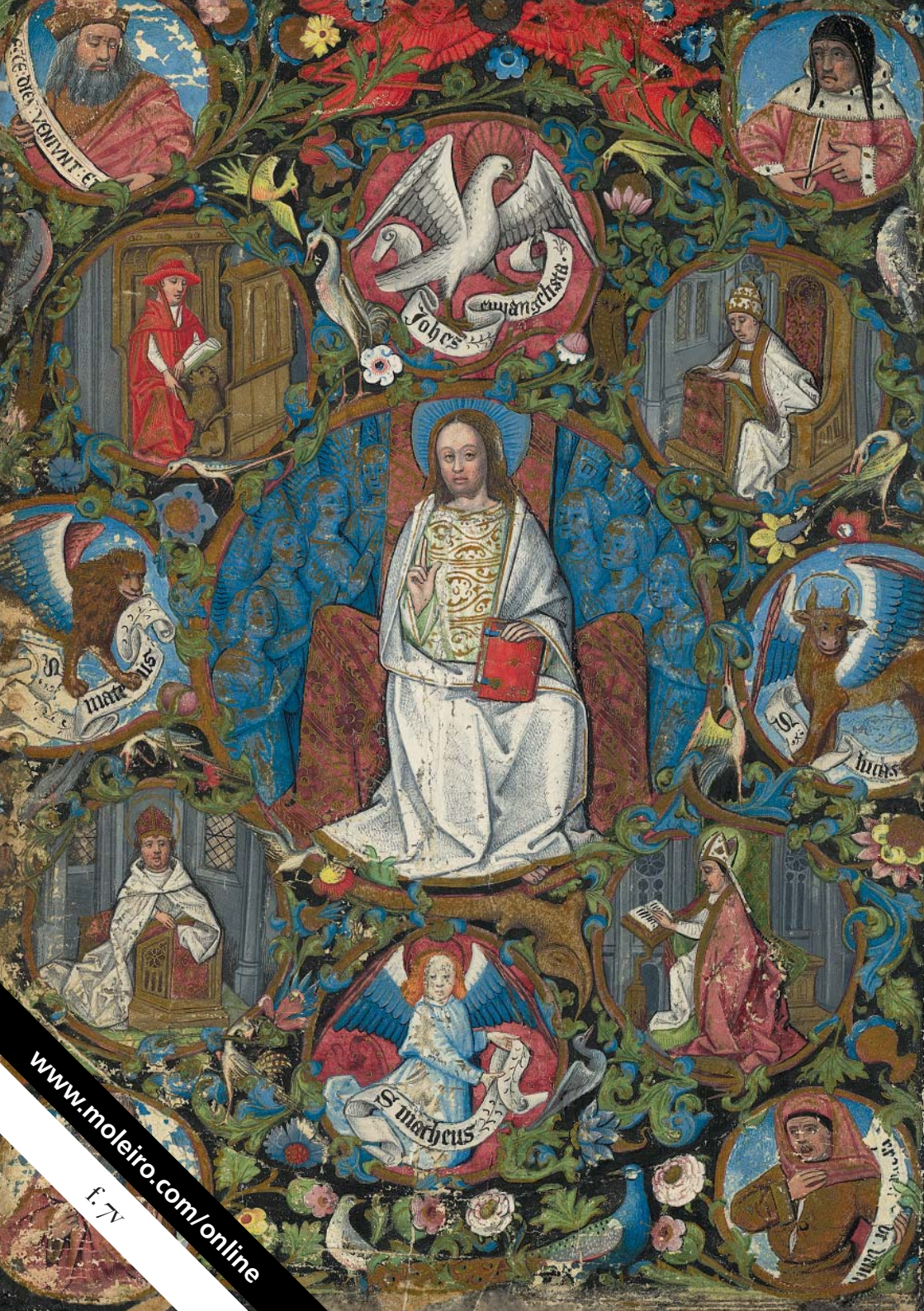
Sol in virgine.

Ott sa marie.

Bartholomei apli.
Ludouia regis francie.

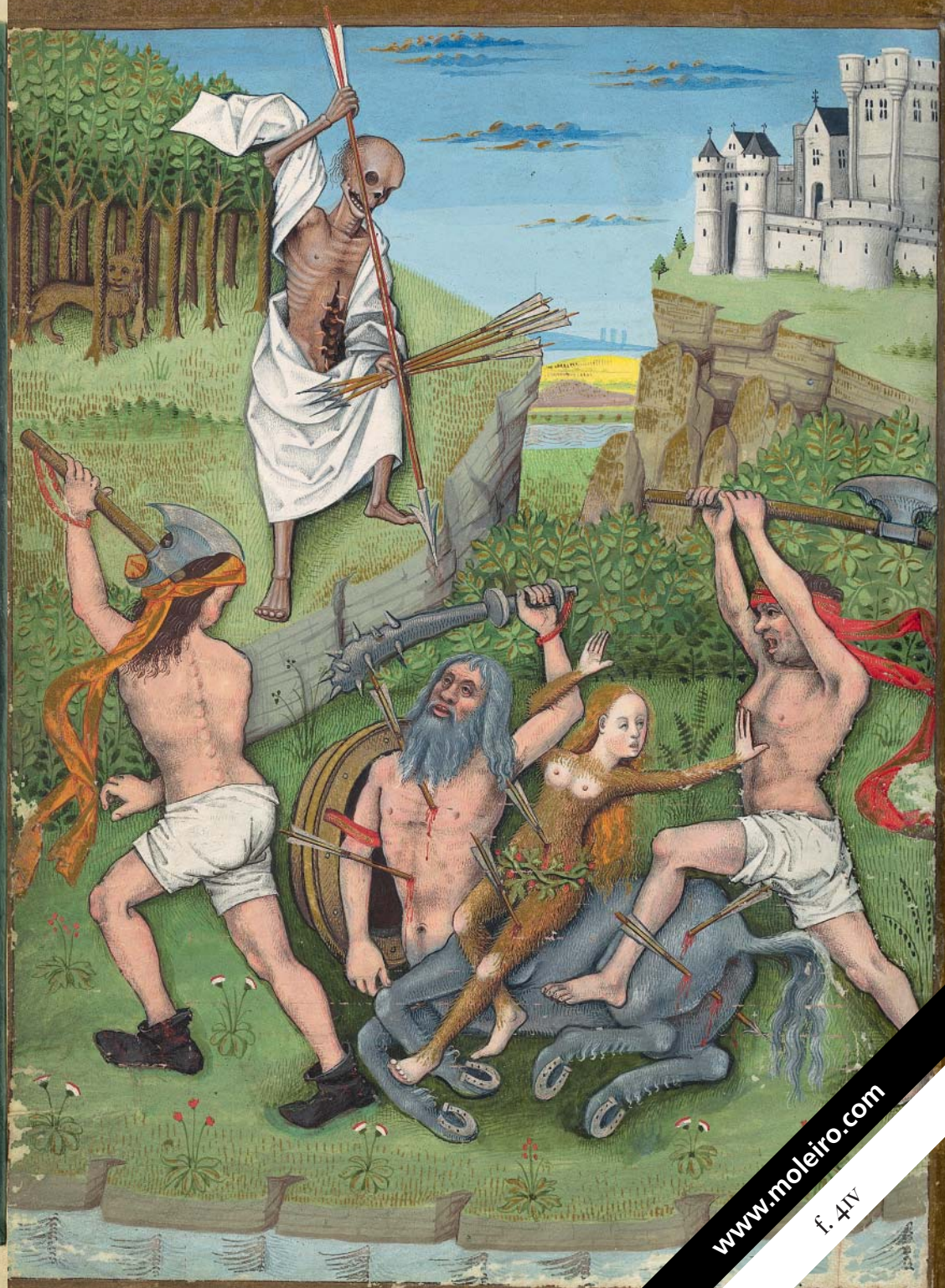
Augustin epi.
Decolatio sa iohis bpte.

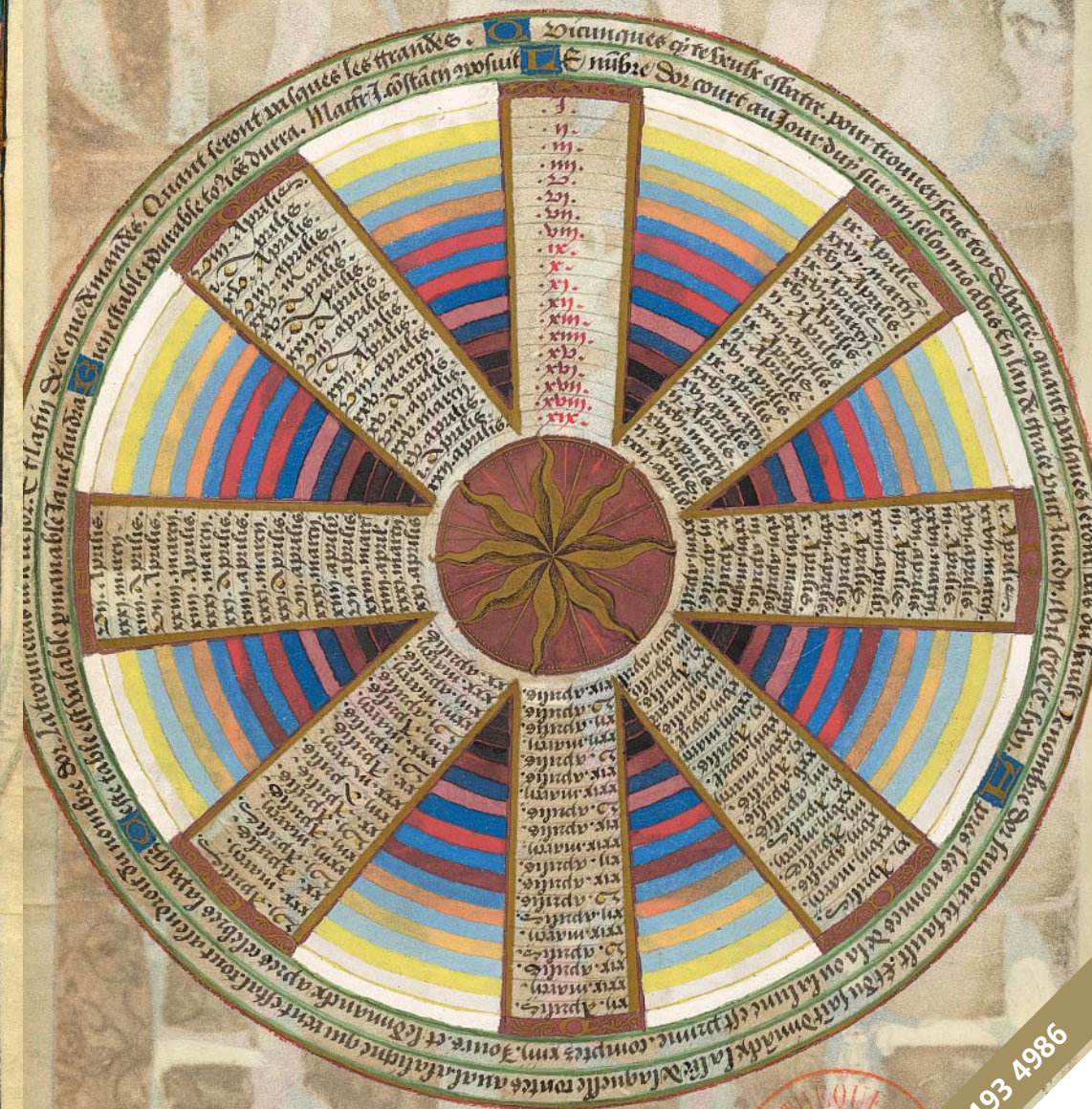


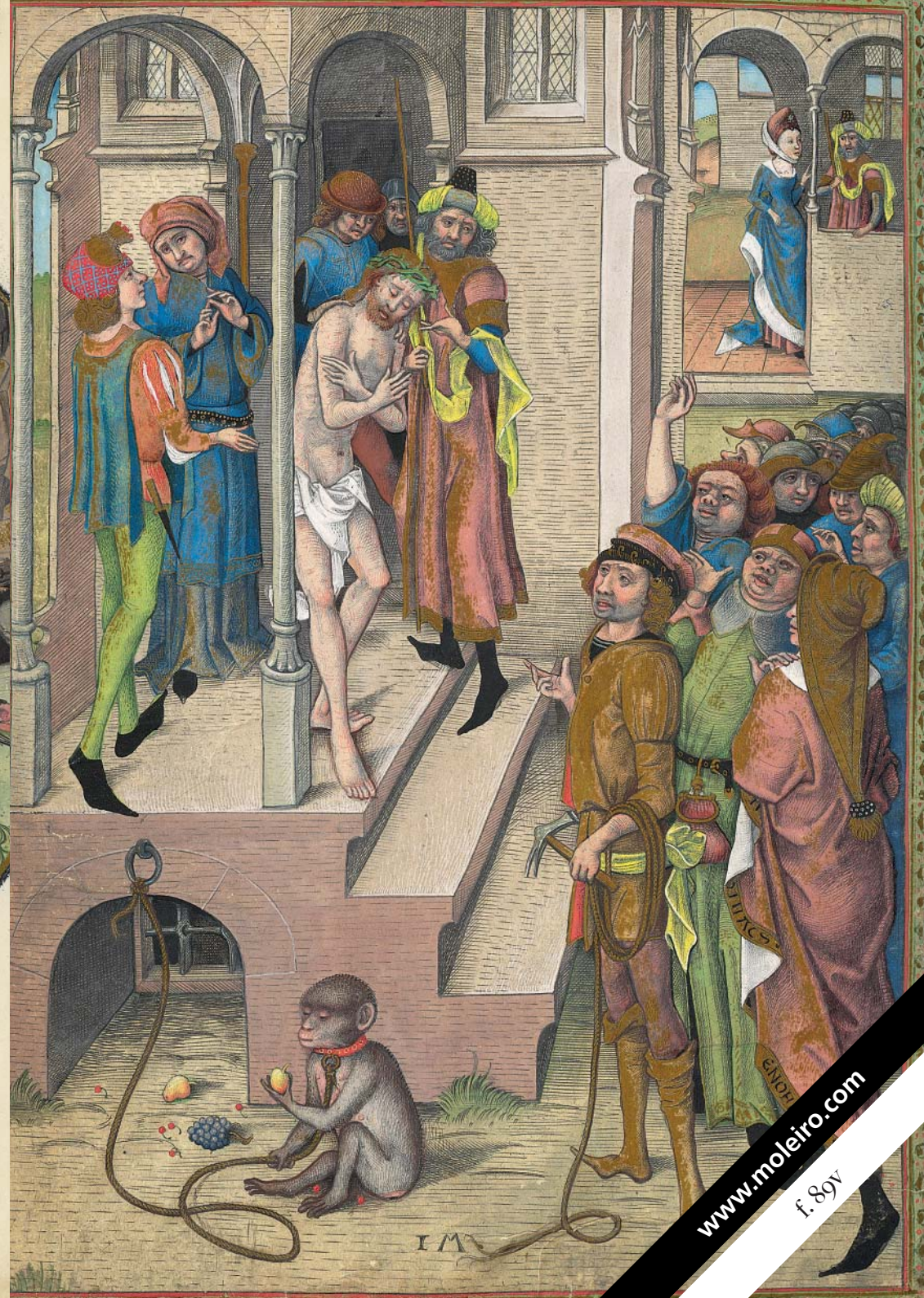




IN FORTIORI MEU INTENTOE









HOURS OF HENRY IV OF FRANCE

Bibliothèque
nationale de
France

- Shelf mark: Latin 1171
- Date: Late 15th – early 16th century (?)
- Size: 225 × 155mm
- 90 folios, 60 full-page grisaille miniatures, 16 small pen-and-ink miniatures
- Bound in Morocco leather
- Full-colour commentary volume

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 foliage 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 period, 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 ninety folia 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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lat. 1171.

A truly dazzling
book of hours

† ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQR

XXII	O	ctobre a xxxi iour la lune a xxi
xvi	A	S amet remy
v	b	S amet legat
xiii	c	S amet francos
ii	d	S amet auro
	e	S amet apolinaire
x	f	S amede foy
	g	S amet mare
xviii	A	S amet demetri
vii	b	S amet demis
	c	S amet gervais
xv	d	S amet venant
iiii	e	S amet turtan
	f	S amet theophile
xii	g	S amet alixte
i	A	S amet benoit
	b	S amet bonan
ix	c	S amet florent
	d	S amet lucas
xvii	e	S amet sauimam
vi	f	S amet eustache
	g	Les xi ^{mes} uerges
xiiii	A	S amet mallan
iii	b	S amet romam
	c	S amet magloue
xi	d	S amet crei pm
	e	S amet amant
xix	f	V igile
viii	g	S amet symon & iude
	A	S amet saron
xvi	b	S amet lucan
v	c	V igile

† ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQR







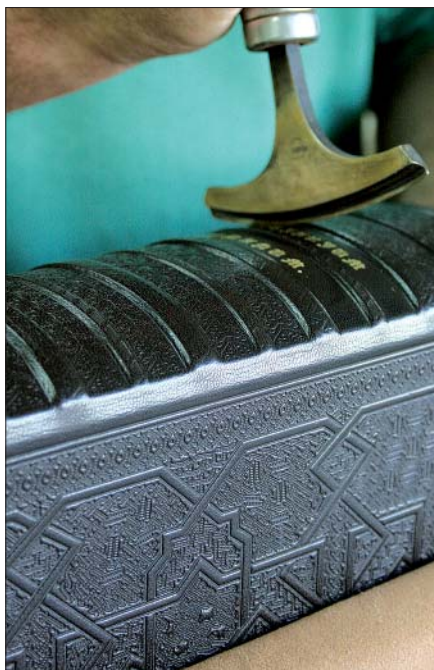
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Todo ello según el acta autorizada por mí, el 12 de marzo de dos mil diez, número 649 de mi protocolo.

The foregoing is pursuant to document 649 in my records which I authenticated on March 12th of the year two thousand and ten.

Lugo, 23 de marzo 2010.

Lugo, March 23rd, 2010.



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