

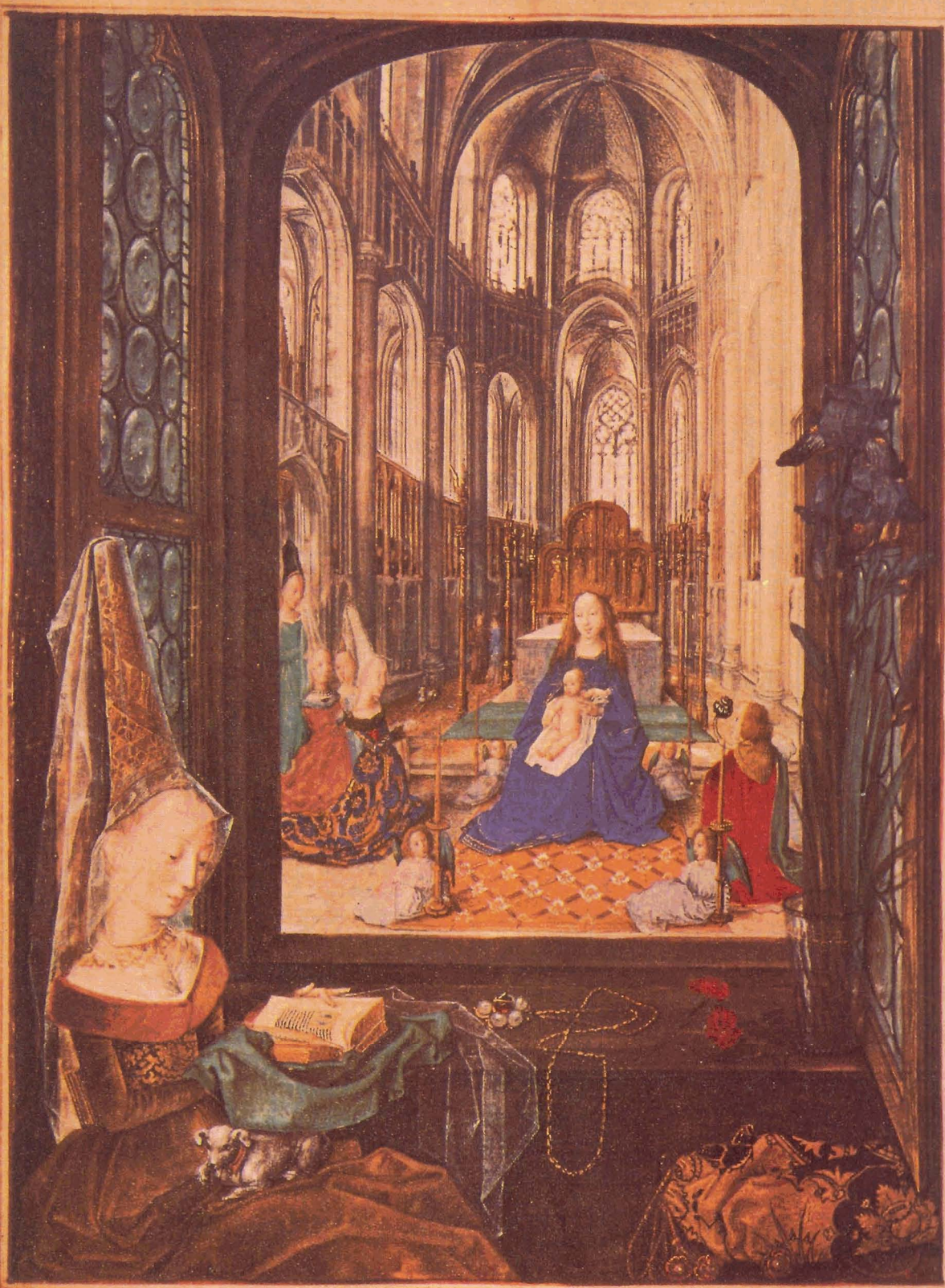
A History of Illuminated Manuscripts

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Books for Everybody

No one has ever counted up how many Books of Hours still exist. It would be possible to do (and very useful) but would require patience, as Books of Hours are now more widely scattered around the world than any other object made in the Middle Ages. Though fair numbers of them have ended up in major national libraries (something like four hundred in the British Library and well over three hundred in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris), these manuscripts have always been rather despised by serious librarians and have been enormously admired by private collectors. That is exactly why Books of Hours were made. They were not for monks or for university libraries but for ordinary people. They are small and usually prettily decorated books. They were intended to be held in the hand and admired for the delicate illumination rather than put on a library shelf and used for their text. They still appeal enormously to bibliophiles. A Book of Hours is almost the only medieval work of art which a moderately wealthy collector today can still hope to own. At least at the moment, a single leaf from a manuscript Book of Hours need be no more expensive than the book you are now reading. It is an extraordinary tribute to the energy and industry of those who produced Books of Hours that even now, five hundred years later, their manuscripts have still not quite disappeared from circulation in the bookshops. The enchanting miniatures in Books of Hours are successfully reproduced now for Christmas cards and postcards: we all take an innocent delight in the scenes of shepherds singing under the starry sky, the Flight into Egypt past fairytale castles and Tolkien-like landscapes, and in the borders of flowers and animals sparkling with gold and colour. It is a very direct appeal, and a very old one. The poet Eustache Deschamps (1346–1406) describes the bourgeois wife who feels she is not properly fitted out unless she owns a Book of Hours, beautifully made, illuminated in gold and blue (says the poem), neatly arranged

and well painted and bound in a pretty binding with gold clasps. It was the first time that any kind of book became really popular, even among people who had never owned books before. The very great appeal of Books of Hours was understood by the medieval booksellers who manufactured and sold these volumes in immense numbers.

Books of Hours today are probably most famous for their association with the names of great medieval aristocrats, like the Duc de Berry (1340–1416) and his brother Charles V (1338–80, king of France from 1364), Mary of Burgundy (1457–82), and Anne of Brittany (1477–1514), and it is certainly true that the patronage of the immensely rich nobility must have given a great boost to the fashion for owning illuminated manuscripts. It must have made a few artists very rich too. But the Duc de Berry, for example, would not have seen himself primarily as a collector of Books of Hours: he owned about three hundred manuscripts, of which only fifteen were Books of Hours, sixteen were Psalters, and eighteen were Breviaries. He also possessed at least ten castles, fifty swans, fifteen hundred dogs, a monkey, an ostrich, and a camel. It is fair to suggest that it was hardly a typical household. His greatest manuscript, the *Très Riches Heures* (now in the Musée Condé at Chantilly) is famous precisely because it is such a freak (Pls. 157–8). It is far bigger and far richer than any normal Book of Hours, and it was left unfinished when the duke died.

For the present chapter it will be more useful to leave aside the very opulent royal Books of Hours and to consider the more typical manuscripts which any well-to-do medieval family might have purchased. A Book of Hours is a compendium of different devotional texts which the owner could read in private. One learns to recognize each of the separate sections of a Book of Hours. This is quite easy to do. The core of the manuscript (usually about a third of the way through the volume) comprises the Hours of the Virgin: a standard series of prayers and psalms intended to be used in honour of the Virgin Mary at each of the canonical hours of the day. These are Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline. It is because of these that the text is called a 'Book of Hours'. Each one begins at least with a big illuminated initial and generally with a painted illustration too. They are almost always in Latin. Matins starts 'Domine labia mea aperies' ('Lord, open thou my lips') and goes on

155 Vienna, Österreichisches Nationalbibliothek MS. 1857, f. 14v; the Hours of Mary of Burgundy, Flanders, c. 1480. This miniature shows Mary of Burgundy (1457–82), daughter of Charles the Bold and wife of the Emperor Maximilian, using her Book of Hours as she sits by an open window through which one can see a chapel where Mary and her family are kneeling before the Virgin and Child.

'Et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam' ('And my mouth shall show forth thy praise' – to use the translation which is still used in Matins in the English prayerbook). All the other hours, except Compline, begin 'Deus in adiutorium meum intende' ('God make speed to save me'). Sometimes the words are abbreviated but they should always be recognizable. They occur below the miniatures on all those Christmas cards reproduced from manuscripts. Compline, which is the last hour of the day, begins 'Converte nos deus salutaris noster' ('Direct us, God of our salvation'). Each of the hours, then, consists of a very short hymn, psalms (usually three of them – such as Psalms 119 to 121 at Terce, or 122 to 124 at Sext), a brief reading or *capitulum* (chapter) and a prayer. All these are interspersed with sentences headed with 'Ant.', 'V', and 'R'. These are the antiphons, versicles, and responses and they can differ greatly from one manuscript to another.

The owner of a Book of Hours was meant to stop eight times a day and read the appropriate text, probably speaking it quietly under the breath. There are certainly some contemporary descriptions of people doing exactly this. Monks and nuns, of course, were obliged to read their Breviary the same number of times a day, and the central text of a Book of Hours is basically only a shorter and lay version of the same round of monastic prayers. Cynics will ask whether Books of Hours were really used much. We do not know the answer. Some existing manuscripts are in such fresh condition that it is difficult to imagine that they were read often, but perhaps the examples that survive are just the exceptions; possibly the ordinary copies were simply read to pieces. It sounds a great nuisance to have to go through a whole service so often in the day, but in fact you can experiment with reading a Book of Hours aloud and it takes only about three and a half minutes to mumble through one of the shorter offices.

Other fundamental texts in a Book of Hours are as follows. Manuscripts almost always open with a calendar of the Church year, listing saints' days for each month and headed with an illuminated 'KL' at the top of the page. Ordinary saints' days are usually written in black ink and special feasts are in red ink (this is the origin of the term 'red-letter day'). A pretty variation (typical of Paris and later of Rouen too) is for the saints' names to be written alternately in red and blue throughout with the important festivals written in burnished gold. Then there are sometimes short texts between the end of the calendar and the Hours of the Virgin. Often these comprise four short readings from the Gospels and two prayers to the Virgin which are known from their opening words as the 'Obsecro te' and 'O intemerata'. Following the Office of the Virgin in a Book of Hours we can expect more texts. Again these vary, according to date and region and (very probably) just how much a customer was prepared to pay. The most easily recognizable are the Penitential Psalms with a Litany, and the Office of the Dead. The Penitential Psalms are seven in number (Psalms 6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129, and 142) and are all on the theme of the sinner seeking forgiveness. The Litany is an exceedingly ancient incantation. It lists a whole series of saints' names followed by 'OR' which is 'ora pro nobis', pray for us:

Holy Mother of God	– pray for us,
Holy Virgin of Virgins	– pray for us,
St. Michael	– pray for us,
St. Gabriel	– pray for us,

and so on, including angels and archangels, apostles and evangelists, martyrs, confessors and virgins, and then pleas such as

from hardness of heart	– Good Lord deliver us,
from lightning and tempest	– Good Lord deliver us,
from sudden and unexpected death	– Good Lord deliver us.

It is a very emotive text, going right back to the earliest Christian liturgy and associated with the Penitential Psalms from at least the tenth century. The fear of sudden death was a real one in the Middle Ages, plague and warfare being always imminent. One can see during the fifteenth century the development of the obsessive fascination with death, the skeletal spectre attacking indiscriminately, and with the symbols of death which remind us all of our mortality. This brings us to the Office of the Dead in a Book of Hours. It is a long section usually towards the end. It is a comparatively late element in medieval piety in that, though its origins go back to the ninth century, it hardly came into general use until the thirteenth century. The Office of the Dead comprises further psalms and readings primarily intended to be said around the bier of a dead person, but also recited daily as a reminder of one's mortality and (as some thought) as a protection against dying suddenly and unprepared.

These are some of the essential elements in a Book of Hours. The selection varies enormously, however. Many manuscripts include short rounds of Hours of the Cross and

156 (RIGHT) Chantilly, Musée Condé MS. 71, f. 8; the Hours of Etienne Chevalier, Paris, c. 1452–60.

The Book of Hours made by Jean Fouquet for Etienne Chevalier (c. 1410–74), Treasurer of France, must have been one of the finest fifteenth-century French manuscripts before it was cut up and its miniatures framed separately in the late eighteenth century. The illustration of the Nativity of Christ marked the opening of Prime in the Hours of the Virgin and shows the first line of text at the foot of the page.

157 (OVERLEAF, LEFT) Chantilly, Musée Condé MS. 1284, f. 86v; the Très Riches Heures of the Duc de Berry, Paris, c. 1413–16 and Bourges, c. 1485.

The Très Riches Heures was one of the most ambitious of all illuminated manuscripts and is the most famous surviving Book of Hours. The patron, Jean, Duc de Berry (1340–1416), and the three artists, Paul de Limbourg and his brothers, all died before the project was completed. The miniature illustrated here was designed by the Limbourgs but was executed seventy years later by the Bourges illuminator Jean Colombe who was employed by Charles, Duc de Savoie (d. 1489), a later owner of the manuscript. It shows the opening of the Office of the Dead.

158 (OVERLEAF, RIGHT) Chantilly, Musée Condé MS. 1284, detail of f. 2v; the Très Riches Heures of the Duc de Berry, Paris, c. 1413–16.

This extraordinary evocation of a winter's scene illustrates the page for February in the Calendar of the Très Riches Heures. It is certainly one of the finest paintings by the Limbourgs and among the greatest images in medieval art.





Singr. ps. d.
eta mea au
ribus perape domine.
intellige clamorem

meum
Intende voca oꝝ
nis mee. et meus et
deus meus.



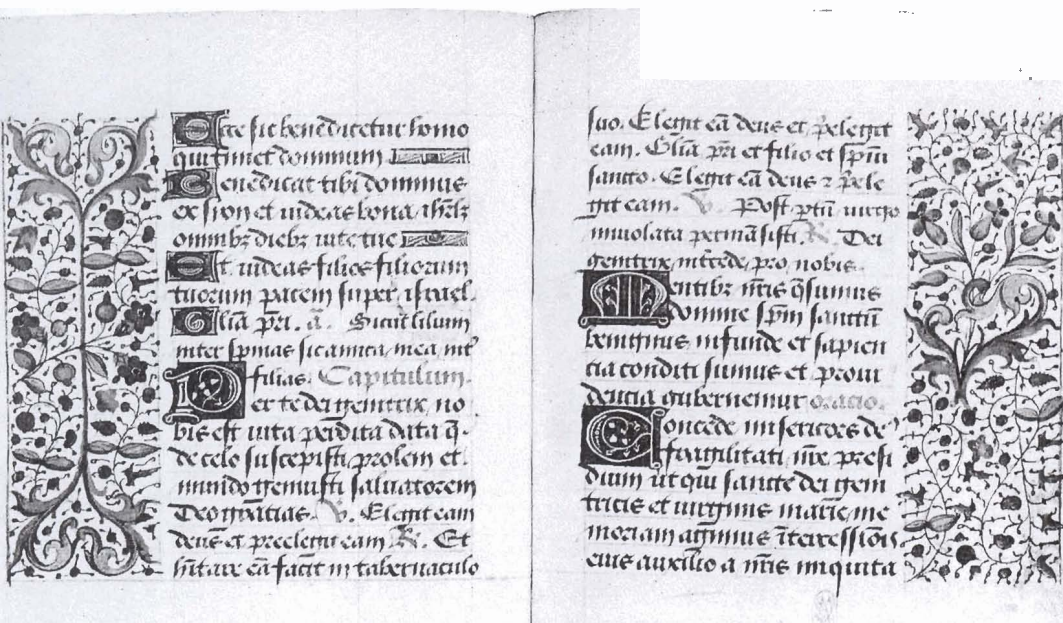
Hours of the Holy Ghost. Frequently they include prayers to particular saints, known as the Memorials (or sometimes Suffrages) of the Saints. These generally come right at the end. Other prayers may include two in French, the *Quinze Joyes* and the *Sept Requêtes*. One also finds eccentric little texts like the verses of St. Bernard, sometimes preceded by an anecdote explaining their origin. One day (the rubrics in the Book of Hours tell us) the Devil appeared to St. Bernard and boasted that he knew of seven special verses in the Psalms so efficacious that whoever recited them daily could not die in sin. St. Bernard cried, 'What are they? Tell me at once!' 'I shan't', said the Devil, 'You shall not know them.' St. Bernard then replied that he would have to recite the entire Psalter every day in order to be sure of including the seven magic verses, and the Devil, fearing that this excessive devotion would do too much good, quickly revealed the verses.

Because a Book of Hours was not an official Church service-book of any kind but a compendium largely made by secular booksellers for use at home by the laity, variations (and mistakes) abound. The makers of Books of Hours added what was required by the customer rather than by some Church authority. To the modern social historian there can be great interest in these peculiar prayers grafted on to the end of the essential Book of Hours text. St. Margaret was invoked during childbirth, St. Apollonia was called upon by sufferers from toothache (a historically minded dentist could do a fascinating survey plotting in which parts of Europe these prayers occur most), and credulous incantations and extravagant offers of thousands of years' indulgence for the use of some little prayer all have their place in coming to an understanding of lay piety in the fifteenth century. The fact is that Books of Hours were extremely popular. Families who had never owned another manuscript went out to purchase a Book of Hours. Manuscripts are sometimes crammed with added dates of domestic births and deaths and christenings, like the Victorian family Bibles. We can gauge something of the vast market for Books of Hours from the fact that when

printing was invented there were at least 760 separate printed editions of Books of Hours published between 1485 and 1530. When we think that surviving manuscript copies are even more numerous than printed versions, we realize that even more must have been produced by hand than were ever printed. It was the basic book for medieval households. Some of its texts (almost forgotten today) must have been known by heart by half Europe. We should remember too that it was from the Book of Hours that children were taught to read. Isabelle of Bavaria is known to have ordered a Book of Hours for her daughter Jeanne in 1398 and an 'A, b, c, d, des Psaumes' for her younger daughter Michelle in 1403: both girls were then about six or seven. The word 'primer', meaning a first reading book, is said to derive from the office of Prime. To the great majority of the medieval population of Europe, the first book they knew, and often the only one, must have been the Book of Hours.

It sometimes seems surprising, therefore, that there is no up-to-date edition of the text for use by students of the Middle Ages. Its cultural impact (if that is not too pompous a term for an illuminated prayerbook) was wider and deeper than that of many rare literary texts worked over and over again by modern editors. It reached people too with no other knowledge of literacy. Anyone who could be encouraged to edit the first printed edition of the Book of Hours since the sixteenth century would win the gratitude of all historians of manuscripts. The task, however, will be made immensely complicated by the number of surviving manuscripts and their endless subtle differences.

These variations should be a delight, however, to historians of books. They can help us localize and sometimes date manuscript Books of Hours. This makes the Book of Hours a particularly valuable text for the study of fifteenth-century art. Whereas a panel painting or a pottery jug or a piece of furniture, for example, could often have been made almost anywhere in Europe, a Book of Hours can sometimes be localized to the very town where it was to be used. The first thing to check is the 'Use' of the Hours of the Virgin. This is



159 London, British Library, Add. MS. 35216, ff. 62v-63r; Book of Hours, Paris, c. 1475. These pages show part of the text for None in the Hours of the Virgin. On the left are the antiphon 'Sicut lilium' and the capitulum 'Per te dei', characteristics of the Use of Paris.

a test principally of value for manuscripts made in France. We have mentioned that the psalms and readings within the Hours of the Virgin are interspersed with verses and responses. These often varied greatly according to the local custom ('Use') of a particular diocese. Exactly why they varied is difficult to understand: some really quite small towns like Théroutanne, Bayeux, and Le Mans patriotically had their own Use. There are other more general Uses such as that of Utrecht (which was normal for all the Netherlands), Sarum or Salisbury (which was used throughout England and in continental manuscripts intended for English customers), and the ubiquitous Use of Rome which occurs in all Italian Books of Hours, in most Flemish Books of Hours (this is particularly frustrating), and increasingly often in France by the end of the fifteenth century. None the less it must be the first priority of the student of a Book of Hours to identify its Use.

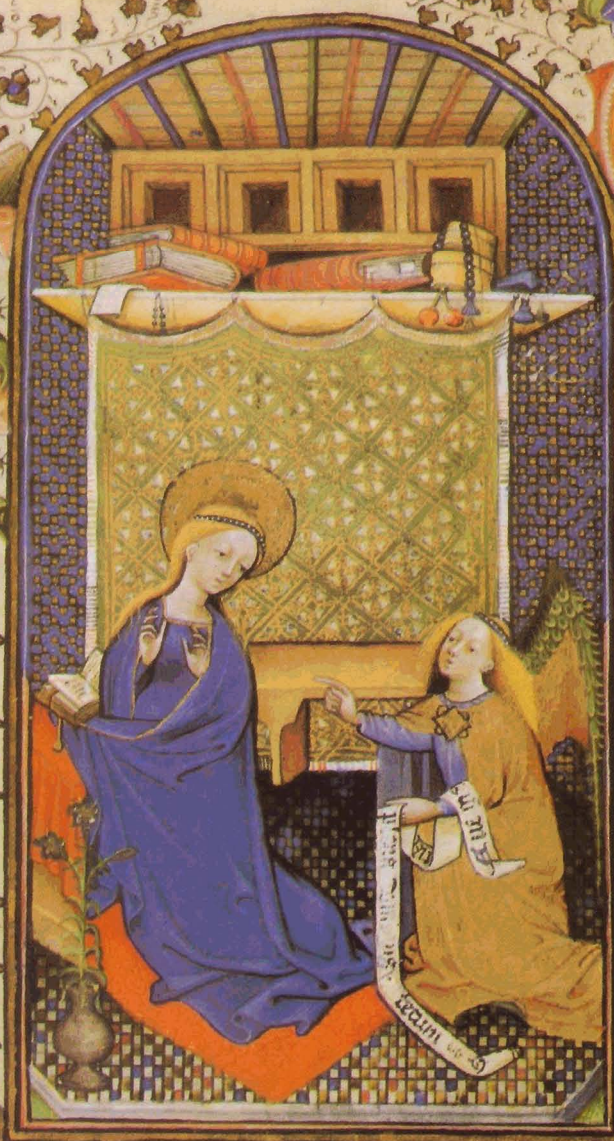
The simplest method is to look for the offices of Prime and None in the Hours of the Virgin. If the book has miniatures, these are the ones illustrated with the Nativity and the Presentation in the Temple. Then turn to the end of the office and locate the *capitulum*, which is a short reading of several lines and ought to be marked 'c' or 'cap'. Just before this, perhaps in smaller script, will be an antiphon indicated with 'a' or 'ant' (Pl. 159). Note down the antiphon and *capitulum* both for Prime and for None. The most common variations are shown in the table.

Be fairly careful. There can be deceptive exceptions. B. L. Add. MS. 35218 is of the Use of Besançon but the manuscript is signed and dated in Barcelona in Spain. B. N. MS. lat. 1425 is of the Use of Limoges but the scribe explicitly claims that he made it in Paris in 1449. Sometimes scribes must have copied their exemplars without really noticing the antiphons. One can imagine too a merchant from Besançon (for example) visiting a bookshop in Paris to order a Book of Hours to take back to his home town. The big workshops in Rouen were evidently able to supply manuscripts of the Use of Coutances, Lisieux, Evreux, and elsewhere in Normandy

as well as of the Use of Rouen itself. Flemish workshops had a long-standing tradition of making books to sell to the English merchants in Bruges: they made Books of Hours of the Use of Sarum and marked them 'secundum usum Anglie' (according to English use). None the less, it is useful (and quite fun) to delve into antiphons and to come up, like a conjurer, with a really obscure local use.

Now turn to the calendar at the beginning. This indicates the saints commemorated on particular days of the year and was useful both for Church observance and for writing the date on documents (which are likely to be dated on the Eve of Michaelmas, for instance, or the Feast of St. Martin, rather than 28 September or 11 November). Look for local saints singled out in red (Pl. 161). If your Book of Hours is of the Use of Paris and the patron saint of Paris, St. Geneviève, is in red or gold on 3 January, then almost certainly the manuscript is Parisian. If you think it may be from Rouen, check for St. Romanus singled out in red on 23 October; the calendar may also include other Rouen feasts such as the Translation of St. Romanus on 17 June, and SS. Ouen, Austrebert, and Wandrille. For Ghent and Bruges, try SS. Bavo (1 October) and Donatian (14 October); for Tours, try St. Gatian (18 December) as well as St. Martin (11 November); for Florence, try St. Zenobius (25 May); and for Venice, try the Dedication of St. Mark (8 October). The Litany and Memorials are also worth looking at. There may be invocations of local saints there too. Both the calendar and the Litany may provide clues for dating a manuscript, especially if they include saints who were not canonized until the fifteenth century. St. Nicholas of Tolentino (10 September) became a saint in 1446, St. Vincent Ferrer (5 April) in 1455, St. Osmund (4 December) in 1457, and St. Bonaventura (14 July) in 1482. An especially useful name is St. Bernardinus of Siena, who died in 1444 and was canonized in 1450. His cult spread very quickly, and when a determined owner assures you that his Book of Hours is fourteenth century, look at 20 May in the calendar; if Bernardinus is there, the book cannot be older than the mid-fifteenth century.

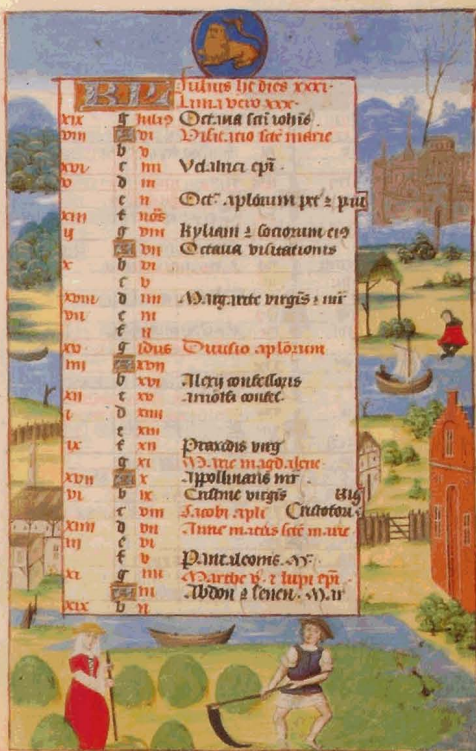
PRIME		NONE		
<i>antiphon</i>	<i>capitulum</i>	<i>antiphon</i>	<i>capitulum</i>	
Assumpta es ...	Quae est ...	Pulchra es ...	In plateis ...	USE OF ROME
Benedicta tu ...	Felix namque ...	Sicut lilium ...	Per te dei ...	USE OF PARIS
Maria virgo ...	Per te dei ...	Pulchra es ...	Et radicavi ...	USE OF ROUEN
O admirabile ...	In omnibus ...	Germinavit ...	Et radicavi ...	USE OF SARUM
Ecce tu pulchra ...	Ego quasi ...	Fons hortorum ...	Et radicavi ...	USE OF BESANÇON
O admirabile ...	Virgo verbo ...	Ecce Maria ...	Et radicavi ...	USE OF POITIERS
Doe du ontsprekeliken ...	Van aen beghin ...	Siet Maria ...	Ic bin verhoget ...	USE OF UTRECHT



160 (LEFT)
London, Sotheby's,
3 July, 1984, lot 89,
f. 7v; Book of Hours,
Flanders, c. 1430–50.
This miniature from the
opening of Matins is in
the style of the Master of
Guillebert de Mets, a
southern Netherlandish
artist who is possibly to
be identified with Jean de
Pestivien. It shows the
Annunciation. The
Virgin herself has been
reading a Book of Hours
and has other
manuscripts on a high
shelf by the ceiling.

161 (RIGHT,
ABOVE) London,
Sotheby's,
10 December 1980,
lot 102, ff. 3v–4r; the
Hours of Nicolas von
Firmian, probably
Flanders, c. 1500.
This manuscript was
made for a Tyrolese
nobleman Nicolas von
Firmian (d. 1510) and
was probably illuminated
in Bruges. The
illustrated Calendar
shows the nobility riding
out in June and the
peasants mowing
grass in July.

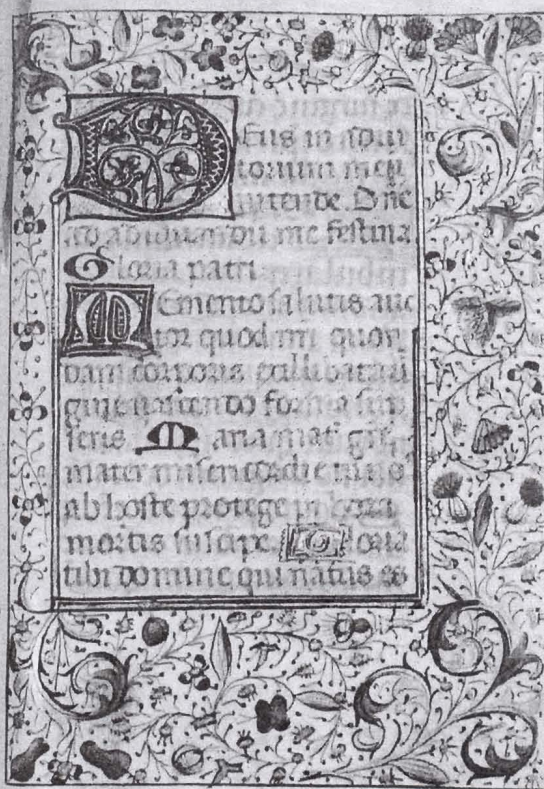
162 (RIGHT,
BELOW) London,
Victoria and Albert
Museum
MS.L. 39–1981,
ff. 21v–22r; Book of
Hours, Bruges,
c. 1520.
This manuscript is in the
style of Simon Bening,
the best-known Bruges
illuminator of the early
sixteenth century
(pl. 164), and shows
here the opening of the
Office of the Dead.



Using these tests for dating and localizing Books of Hours and aided by the more usual techniques of script and decoration, the history of Books of Hours can be plotted from surviving manuscripts. There are a few thirteenth-century copies from England, France, and Flanders. They are generally very small manuscripts, rather like the little Psalters of the period which were intended to be slipped in the pocket or carried at the waist. Fourteenth-century Books of Hours exist in reasonable numbers for France and England, and some are expensively illuminated manuscripts like the charming Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux, queen of France, painted in Paris about 1325 and now in the Cloisters Museum in New York. We have already seen how Paris had an organized book trade around its university from the thirteenth century and we must certainly ascribe to Paris many of the best-known Books of Hours of the period of Jean, Duc de Berry. The *Très Belles Heures* of the Duc de Berry was begun about 1382, and his *Petites Heures* dates from about 1388. Both are Parisian manuscripts. By about 1400 a great many Books of Hours were being written and illuminated in Paris. Probably for the first time books were being produced in quantity for sale. The generation of about 1400 to 1420 was the greatest for the manufacture of Books of Hours of the Use of Paris. They are often of lovely quality (Pl. 166). In the meantime we start to find some of the earliest Italian Books of Hours. There

is in Adelaide, Australia, a delightful little Perugian Book of Hours of about 1375. The first Books of Hours that can be attributed to London date from the late fourteenth century. Flanders too began to make Books of Hours commercially, followed in the early fifteenth century by the Netherlands. These are usually rather uninspired and provincial-looking manuscripts: the greatest Netherlandish illuminators still moved to Paris to practise their trade. Artists like the Limbourg brothers and the Boucicaut Master came to Paris from the north to the centre of the book trade. The principal business for most of them must have been Books of Hours.

Sadly (from the point of view of art, anyway), politics intervened. The English invaded and defeated the French at the battle of Agincourt in 1415. Their prisoners included Jean de Boucicaut, marshal of France, and owner of one of the finest of all Books of Hours. Paris was already torn by the civil war between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians, which lasted until the assassination of John the Fearless, duke of Burgundy, in 1419. A year later the English armies of Henry V entered Paris. This seems to have marked the end of the first great period of the production of Parisian Books of Hours. It is extraordinary how difficult it becomes to localize manuscripts in Paris between about 1420 and the mid-century. The social disturbance caused by civil war and foreign occupation must have been terrible. Hungry people





163 (LEFT) Germany, private collection, Book of Hours, ff. 85v–86r; Flanders (probably Bruges), 1466.

This Book of Hours, written in the round Italianate script suited to the taste of southern European clients, is dated 1466. The pages here mark the opening of None in the Hours of the Virgin.

164 (ABOVE) New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, RLC.191; self-portrait of Simon Bening (1483–1561)

This tiny portrait of Bening at the age of 75 shows the great artist working by the window of his house in Bruges.

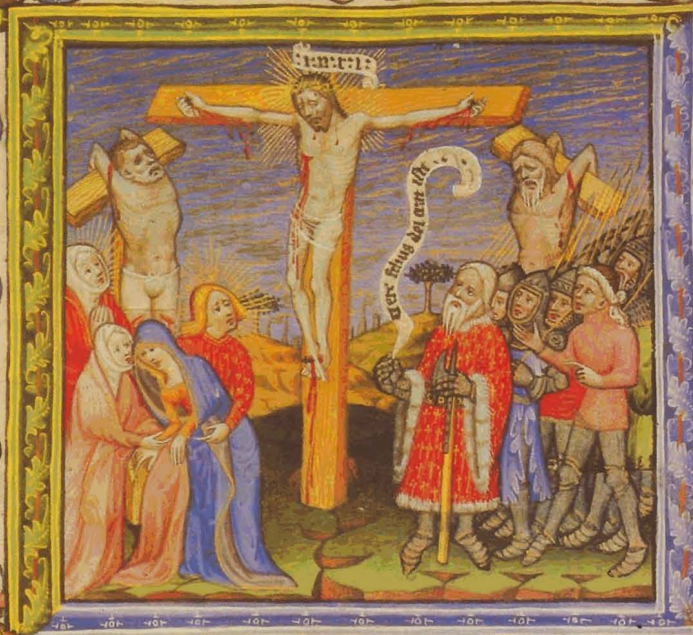
do not buy books. Only one outstanding illuminator stayed on in Paris, the so-called Bedford Master who takes his name from a Breviary and a Book of Hours associated with the English regent of France, the Duke of Bedford, brother of Henry V (Pl. 172). It really seems as though all the scribes and illuminators fled to the provinces. Certainly the fashion for owning Books of Hours spread right over France in the middle third of the fifteenth century. We can ascribe Books of Hours to Amiens, Rouen, Rennes, Nantes, Angers, Tours, Bourges, Dijon, Besançon, Troyes, Rheims, and elsewhere in a huge circle around Paris. An enormous number of manuscripts were made – not necessarily expensive ones, but capitalizing on a vast market for books. In certain provincial cities, such as Rouen and Tours, the trade in Books of Hours was so successful that it continued to flourish even after the

middle of the fifteenth century when other illuminators drifted back to the capital.

An independent tradition of manuscript production in Flanders was in the meantime moving rapidly into the making of Books of Hours. They were not just for local customers, but (with typical Belgian business acumen) for export as well. After the Treaty of Arras in 1435, the dukes of Burgundy were able to move the seat of their vast dominions to Flanders, and some great illuminators worked for the Burgundian court in Lille, Tournai, Valenciennes, and elsewhere. Ducal patronage attracted the personnel of the book trade, as it had in Paris in the late fourteenth century. The market towns of Ghent and Bruges were ready when the last duke of Burgundy died in 1477. These essentially bourgeois towns, unburdened by warring local princes, became world centres for Books of Hours. Many were made for sale to England; in fact, probably just about the majority of surviving fifteenth-century Books of Hours of the Use of Sarum give away their true origin by featuring saints such as St. Donatian of Bruges in the calendar. Books of Hours were being made in Bruges for the Italian market as early as 1466 if one can judge from a hitherto unpublished example of the Use of Rome dated in that year and written in a rounded Italian script (Pl. 163). Another, in the Newberry Library in Chicago (MS. 39) is probably not much later; it is in a Spanish script and several rubrics are in Catalan. The style of illumination is so typical of Bruges that it seems certain to have been made there, perhaps by a Catalan scribe, for sale to Spanish visitors. By 1500 the art of manuscript illustration in Ghent and Bruges was second to none in Europe (Pls. 161 and 162). The Flemish Books of Hours were especially famous for their realistic borders looking as though flowers had actually fallen onto the pages (Pls. 182 and 183), and for their delicate miniatures with marvellous landscapes. Simon Bening, the best-known Bruges painter of Books of Hours (Pl. 162), was praised in his own time as the greatest Flemish artist for painting trees and far distances. The customers evidently adored these jewel-like manuscripts.

Books of Hours were made elsewhere in Europe too. German examples are curiously rare (Austrians like Nicolas von Firmian and Franz Thurn und Taxis, postmaster in the Tyrol, ordered theirs from Flanders), but Spanish and Portuguese Books of Hours exist. Italian examples are numerous, usually small books without elaborate decoration. English Books of Hours might have been even more common if they had not been discarded at the Reformation. Dutch Books of Hours are very numerous especially from the later fifteenth century. They can be particularly fascinating because the text was usually translated into the Dutch language, and the miniatures have biblical scenes set in a homely atmosphere with tiled floors and crowded domestic interiors filled with the paraphernalia of the sitting rooms of the bourgeois families who first owned the manuscripts.

Very few Books of Hours are signed by their makers. Most of these are either very early or very late. A Book of Hours in Leningrad was written by Gilles Mauleon, monk of St. Denis, for Jeanne of Burgundy in 1317. Another in Châlons-sur-Marne was made for a local musician there by J.



Deus in adiutorium me
um intende. **D**omine
ad adiuuandum me
festina. **G**loria patri. **S**icut erat.

Tu creator sp̄s **imp̄ius**
mentes tuorum visita
imple superna gratia q̄
tu creasti pectora. **M**emento salutis



165 (LEFT) London, Estate of the late Major J. R. Abbey, JA.7398, f.43v; the Hours of Margaret, Duchess of Clarence, London, c.1430. The first owner of this little-known English royal Book of Hours was Margaret (d.1439), widow of Thomas, Duke of Clarence (1388–1421), brother of King Henry V and of John, Duke of Bedford, and Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester.

166 (ABOVE) Oxford, Bodleian Library MS.Douce 144, f.131r; Book of Hours, Paris, 1408 (1407, old style).

The colophon of this manuscript is dated in the year that the bridges of Paris fell (pl.170). The miniature here, which is in the style of the Boucicaut Master, is from the Memorials to the Saints and shows St. Paul on the road to Damascus.



167 London, British Library, Add.ms.58280, ff. 10v-11; Book of Hours, England, 1474. *This tiny English Book of Hours, illustrated here life size, is signed by the scribe Roger Pynchebek and is dated 1474. It was given to the British Library in 1974.*

168 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale ms.lat. 1169, f. 42r; Book of Hours, probably Besançon, early fifteenth century. *This home-made little manuscript is signed on several pages by the scribe Alan with the information that his wife illuminated it.*



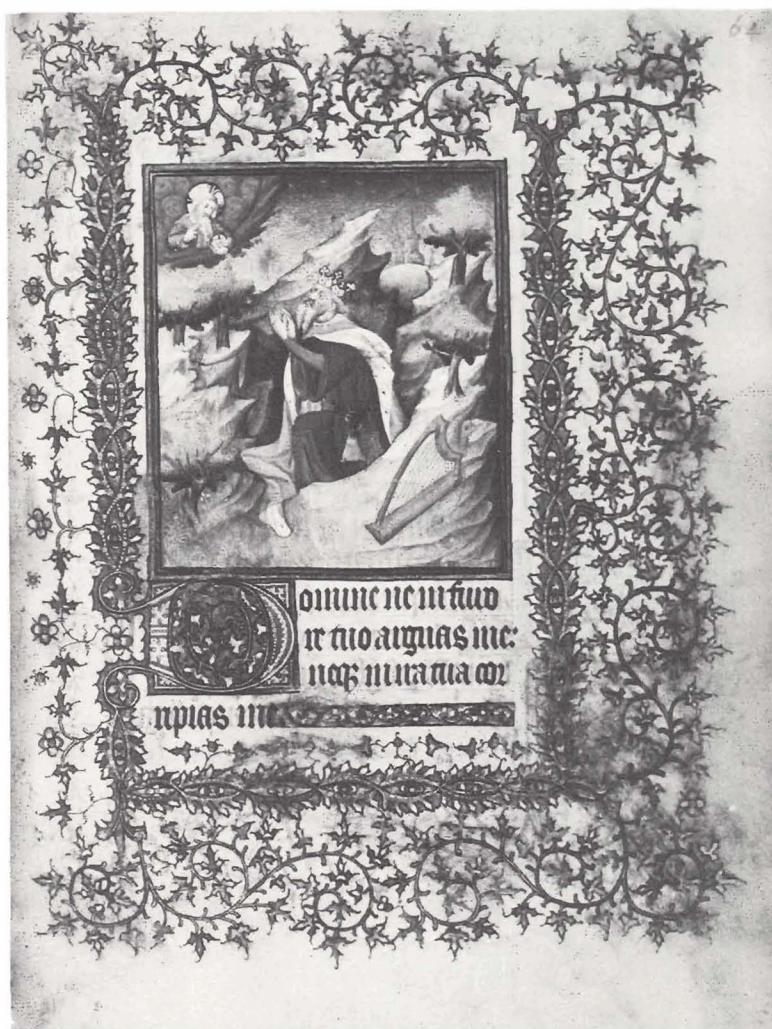
Bruni in 1537. A copy of about 1410 is signed by the scribe Alan with the information that his wife illuminated the book (B.N. ms.lat.1169; Pl.168). It is a rather roughly made manuscript of the Use of Besançon, and it is possible that this was not a commercial partnership but simply that Alan and his wife could not afford to buy a manuscript and so made one themselves. Arsenal MS.286 is a beautifully illuminated Book of Hours made in 1444 by a monk Jean Mouret for his own use. There is an English book of 1464 written and signed by William Fairfax, who says that the manuscript is to be passed to his son and heir and to his descendants forever. Jehan de Luc made a Book of Hours for his wife in 1524 (The Hague, Mus. Meerman. w.10.F.33). All these are rather peculiar manuscripts. Most people wanting a Book of Hours probably went to a bookshop.

We know something about the bookshops in Paris from the documents of the university book trade there. Many are recorded in the rue Neuve-Notre-Dame opposite the Cathedral of Notre-Dame and it was probably from there that many people would have ordered a Book of Hours around 1400. A very rich collector, like the Duc de Berry, doubtless put his commissions in the hands of a big agent like Jacques Rapondi, a member of a great family of international brokers and merchants originally from Lucca in Tuscany. The Duc de Berry probably never entered a bookshop, and his scribes and illuminators were paid members of his household. Most people went to shops, however. One of these was owned by Pierre Portier, recorded as one of the university stationers in 1376 and still in business in 1409. In November 1397 he received 64 shillings from Isabelle of Bavaria for writing eight vellum quires for a Book of Hours (this works out, in fact, at a shilling a leaf) and a further 54 shillings 'pour avoir nettoyé, blanchy, corrigé, reffourni, doré, relié et mis à point lesdictes heures'. Thus there were two separate accounts, one for writing out the book, and the other for cleaning and whitening the vellum before writing, correcting the text afterwards, filling it in, applying the gold, binding, and finishing off the new book. Pierre Portier no doubt subcontracted out the writing of the text and had to supply the vellum and to bind it up afterwards. If there had been miniatures too he might have had to take the leaves to yet another craftsman. Some professional scribes and illuminators are recorded as living on the left bank in the rue des Enlumineurs (now rue Boutebrie).

It is very rare for Parisian Books of Hours to contain exact information about when they were made, and it is only by historical deduction that we can date major manuscripts like the Hours of Charles the Noble to around 1405 or the *Belles Heures* of the Duc de Berry to around 1409. Two Books of Hours, however, contain very interesting dated colophons. The first is Bodleian MS.Douce 144 (Pl.166) which has the inscription on f.271 that it was made and completed in the year 1407 when the bridges of Paris fell (Pl.170). The second manuscript was formerly in the Chester Beatty collection (w.ms.103) and its miniatures are now dispersed among several libraries including Princeton University, the University of North Carolina (Pl.169), and the Barber Institute in Birmingham. It is written by the same scribe as the Douce

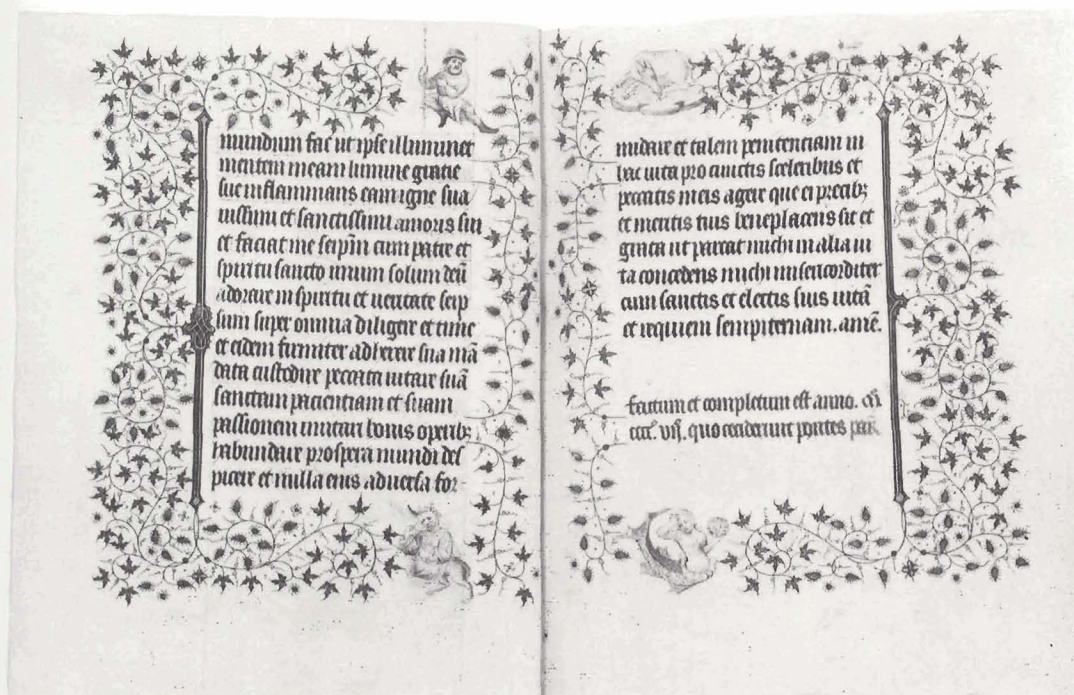
manuscript and had an inscription on f. 158v that it was made in the year 1408 when the bridges of Paris fell. The three bridges of Paris were swept away by floods between 29 and 31 January 1408 (they called this 1407 in the Bodleian volume as the year was still reckoned as beginning on 25 March). Obviously the event was of great importance to the makers of these two Books of Hours. One wonders if the bookseller's stall was on the bridge, perhaps the Petit Pont which joined the Ile de la Cité to the left bank and the student quarter. We know that the bridges included the covered shops of merchants, money changers, drapers, smiths, and other craftsmen, and one can see the Petit Pont built up with houses in miniatures of Paris such as that on a Book of Hours in the Rylands Library in Manchester (MS. lat. 164, f. 254r; Pl. 174) or on the leaf from the Hours of Etienne Chevalier in the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

Both the Books of Hours of 1408 have miniatures by more than one illuminator. The two distinct styles in the Bodleian volume have led art historians to ascribe it to the Boucicaut Master or a close follower and to an artist whose style is very like the early work of the Bedford Master. These are the two big names in Parisian manuscript painting in the early fifteenth century (Pls. 171–2). There is circumstantial evidence for identifying these two artists with Jacques Coene (who is documented in Paris from 1398 to 1404) and perhaps Jean Haincelin (who seems to be documented in Paris from 1403



169 (RIGHT) Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina, The Ackland Art Museum, Ackland Fund, 69.7.2; single miniature from a Book of Hours, Paris, 1408.

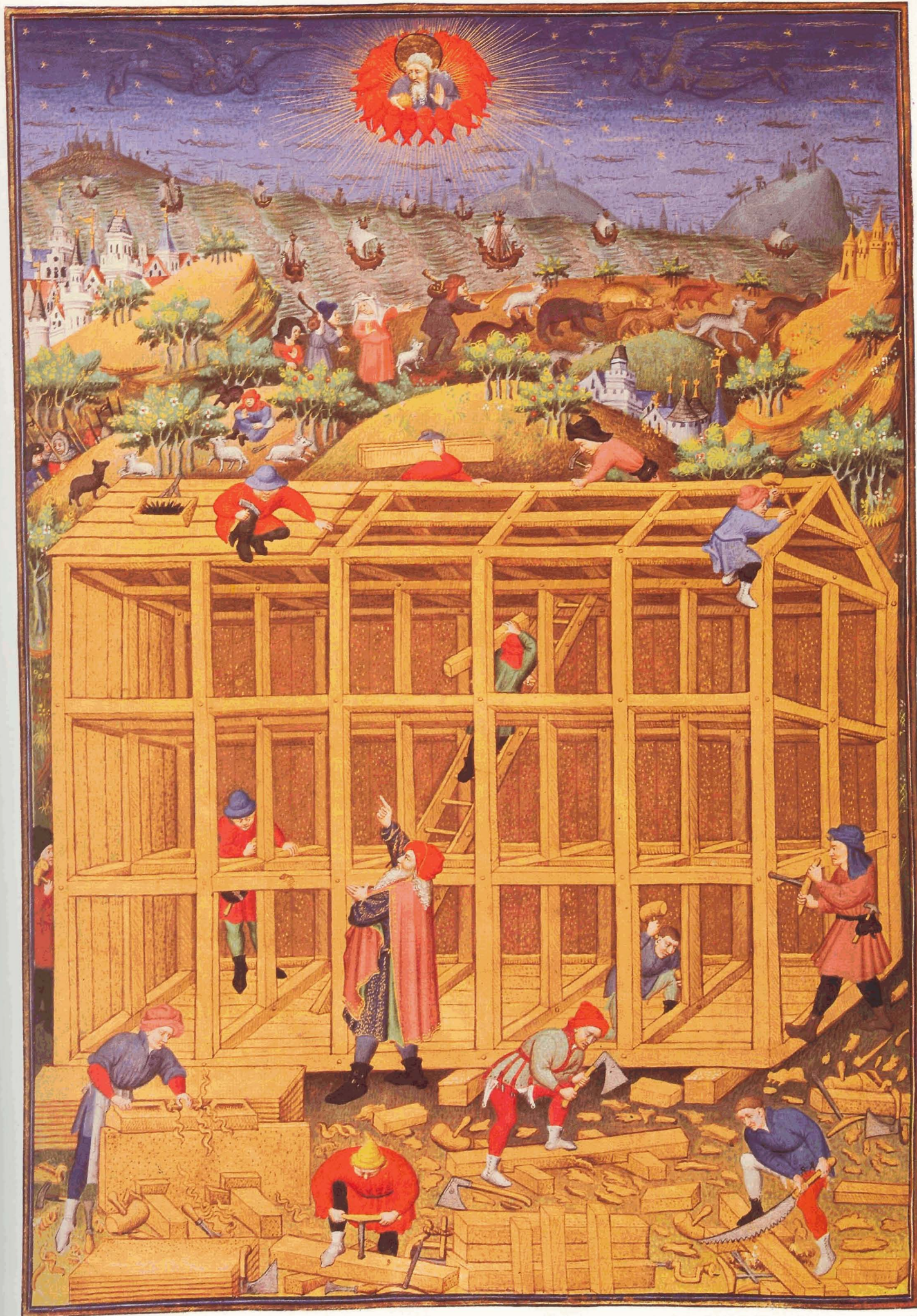
This miniature of King David, marking the opening of the Penitential Psalms, was formerly f. 64r in Chester Beatty W. MS. 103. Like Bodleian MS. Douce 144 (Pls. 166 and 170), it is dated in the year that the bridges of Paris fell.



170 (LEFT) Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Douce 144, ff. 26v–27r; Book of Hours, Paris, 1408 (1407, old style).

The colophon from the manuscript illustrated in Pl. 166 says that it was made and completed in 1407 when the bridges of Paris fell. The bridges over the Seine were swept away by floods on 29–31 January 1408. The scribe is using the archaic dating whereby the year was thought of as ending on 31 March, and so the Book of Hours must have been made in February or March that year. The same scribe wrote Chester Beatty W. MS. 103 (Pl. 169) after 1 April since he dates that colophon 1408.





to 1448). Their styles of illumination are quite distinct: the Boucicaut Master paints tall, haughty, aristocratic figures in beautiful clear colours: the Bedford Master depicts shorter, more human figures with snub noses. They are the most famous artists among many anonymous painters who worked on Books of Hours and who have been given such names as the Egerton Master, the Troyes Master, the Master of the Brussels Initials, and the Master of the Harvard Hannibal. Because Parisian miniatures are so outstanding, it is too easy to suppose that each painter had a studio there (like a Renaissance artist in Italy) and Books of Hours are often given attributions such as 'workshop of the Egerton Master'.

171 (PREVIOUS PAGE, LEFT) Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André MS.2, f.90v; the Hours of the Maréchal de Boucicaut, Paris, c.1405-8.

The Boucicaut Master, perhaps to be identified with the artist Jacques Coene, takes his name from the huge Book of Hours made for Jean de Boucicaut (d.1421), Marshal of France, who was taken prisoner by the English at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415.

172 (PREVIOUS PAGE, RIGHT) London, British Library, Add.MS.18850, f.15v; the Bedford Hours, Paris, c.1423.

The Bedford Master, the second great Parisian illuminator (possibly identifiable with Jean Haincelin), is named from his work in this Book of Hours and a later Breviary (BN, MS.lat.17294) associated with John of

Perhaps one tends to think of the Boucicaut and Bedford styles as representing two rival operations. Their collaboration in a single Book of Hours in 1408, for example, is very puzzling to art historians. Probably the truth was very different. The client probably went to the bookshop on the Petit Pont or perhaps in the rue Neuve-Notre-Dame and explained what he wanted. It is possible (but not probable) that the keeper of the shop had some unbound gatherings in stock. The customer would discuss which texts he wanted added to the basic core of the Book of Hours. He would perhaps choose a script from a sheet of sample handwritings like the fascinating one dated 1447, now in The Hague

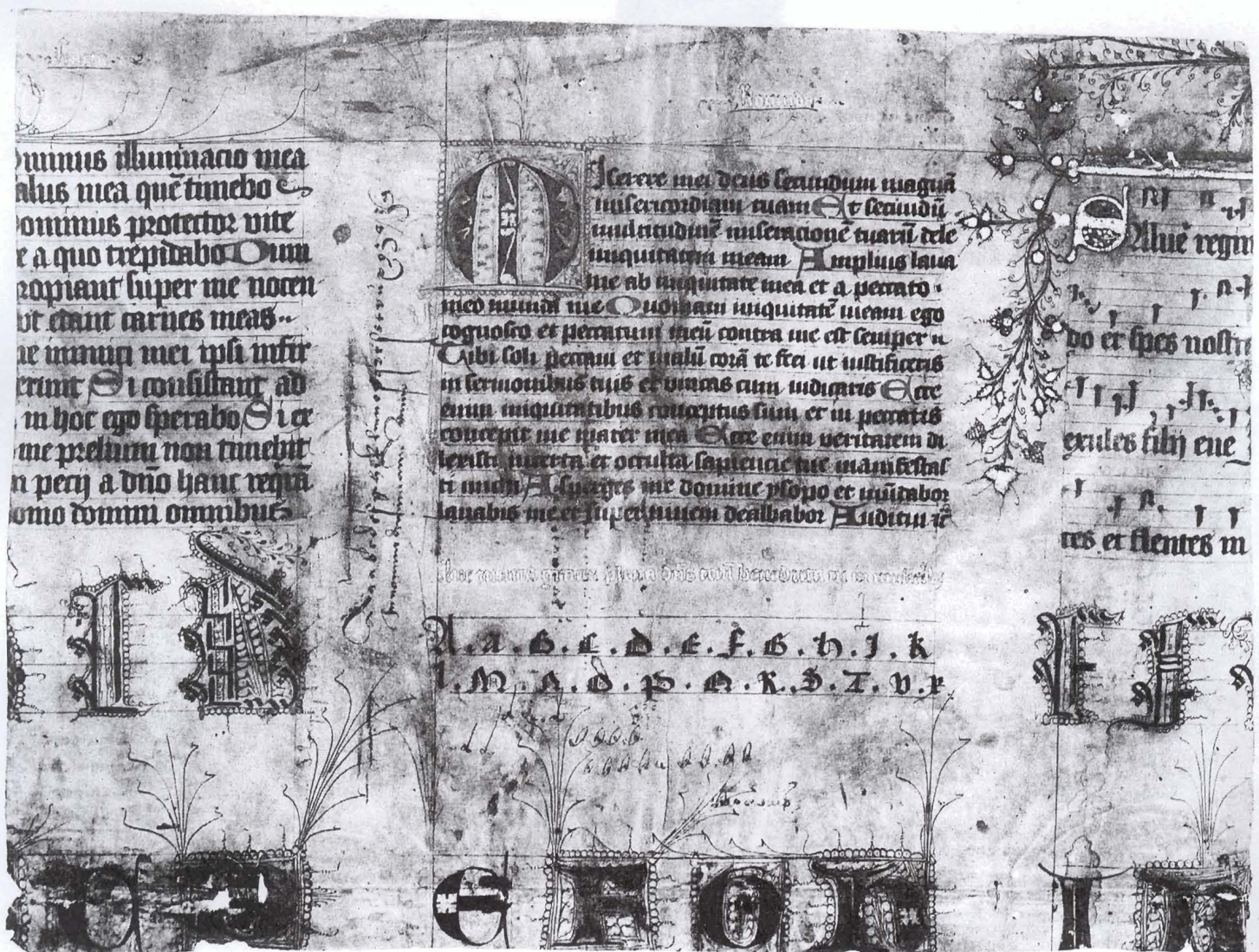
Lancaster, Duke of Bedford (1389-1435), brother of Henry V and Regent of France during its occupation by the English.

173 (BELOW) The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 76.D.45, 4a; scribe's specimen sheet written by Hermannus Strepel, of Münster, in 1447.

From a pattern such as this, exhibited in a bookshop, a customer could select a script when commissioning a manuscript.

174 (RIGHT) Manchester, John Rylands Library, Lat.MS.164, f.254r; Book of Hours, Paris, c.1430.

The bridges and houses of Paris appear in this miniature of St. Geneviève, patron saint of Paris, painted in the style of the Bedford Master.





De sancte genetrice
 felix ancilla dei nos
 pondere pressos ex onera i fel
 sos mordacibus erue culpis



175 New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 358, ff. 169v-170r; Book of Hours, France (perhaps Provence), c. 1440-50. This manuscript was abandoned unfinished. The illuminators have sketched in the designs for borders and have supplied the gold first so that the process of burnishing it would not smudge the painting.

On the right-hand page they have begun to paint in the colours. Since f. 169v is the last page of a gathering (note the catchword 'ne derelin'), the illuminators were no doubt working on each quite separately.

(MS. 76.D.45; Pl. 173). Sometimes the bookshop owner may also have been a scribe (as stationers like Raoulet d'Orléans and Jean l'Avenant certainly were) but he was not the artist. It was only after the client had left that they set about making the Book of Hours. Some quires were sent out to one illuminator and some to another (Pl. 175). With a little imagination one can visualize the bookseller's apprentice hurrying across the street with several gatherings for the Boucicaut Master to paint, and dropping off a few further up the road at the house of the Bedford Master, and leaving the less important leaves with the assistant who worked for the Master of the Coronation of the Virgin. Some weeks later, when these

were done, the bookshop collected up the separate sections, paid the artists, tidied up and bound the leaves (we have seen Pierre Portier doing this in 1397), and then presented the book to the customer, with an invoice. The image is fanciful, but there is no other way to explain the apparently enormous output of some artists and the bizarre collaboration of different painters in an otherwise unified Book of Hours.

Understanding what was going on in the artist's house is even more difficult. The Boucicaut Master, whose style is in the main miniatures of both the Books of Hours dated 1408, takes his name from a vast and lovely Book of Hours with forty-four miniatures made about 1405-08 for the Maréchal

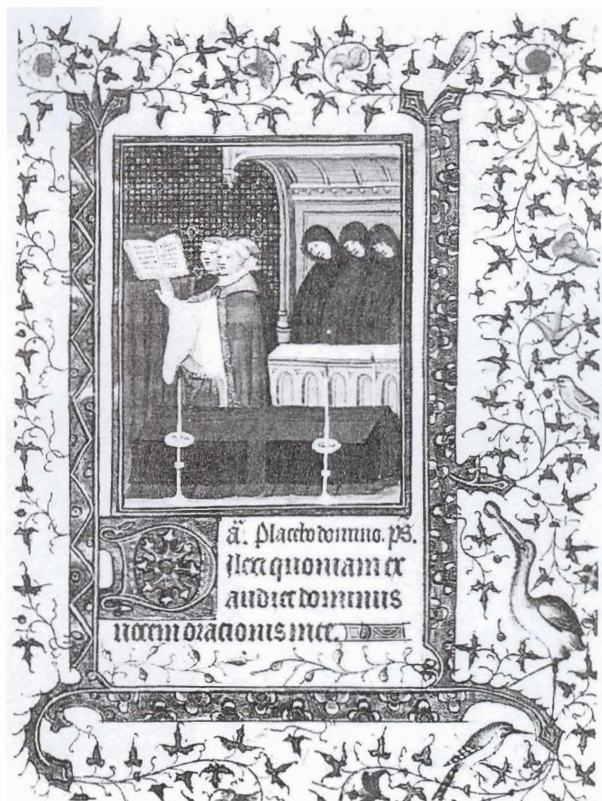
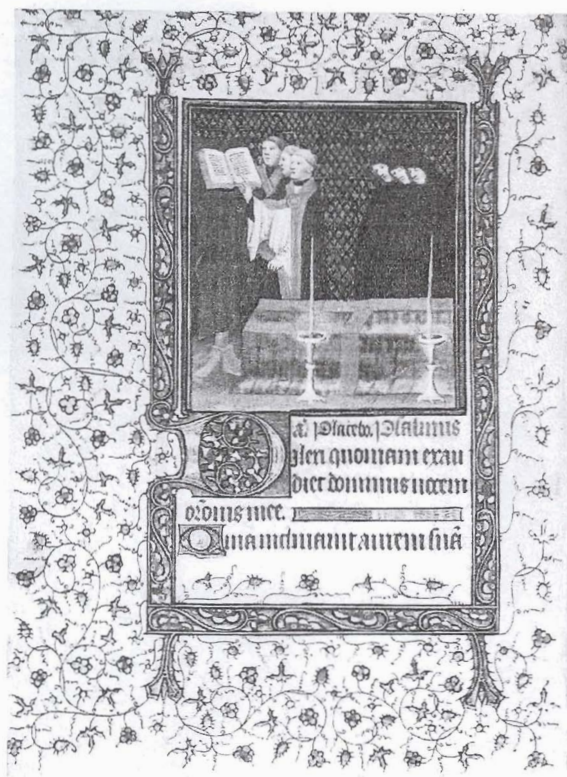
de Boucicaut (Musée Jacquemart, André, MS.2; Pl.171). The artist himself was no doubt called upon to paint such a grand manuscript with his own hand. Altogether, however, more than thirty other Books of Hours have been ascribed to the same workshop, all between about 1405 and 1420 (Pls.176 and 177). If one adds together the number of miniatures in each, the total is not far off seven hundred. To add in too the richly illustrated secular texts in the style of the Boucicaut Master (texts like the *Bible Historiale* with over a hundred miniatures each) the grand total of surviving miniatures ascribed to the circle of the Boucicaut Master in a space of only about fifteen years is just over eighteen hundred. That is more than a hundred paintings a year, judged merely from those that happen to survive.

The only way they can have achieved this kind of output must have been with pattern sheets which were designed by the master and which could be copied out at great speed. One sees remarkably similar miniatures from one manuscript to the next. Sometimes pictures are the same but exactly in reverse, suggesting that designs were copied on tracing paper (which was called *carta lustra*) and applied back to front. There must have been model sheets for all the standard scenes required in a Book of Hours: the Annunciation at Matins, the Visitation at Lauds, the Nativity of Christ at Prime, the Annunciation to the Shepherds at Terce, the Adoration of the Magi at Sext, the Presentation in the Temple at None, the

Flight into Egypt at Vespers, and the Coronation of the Virgin at Compline. Sometimes figures from one composition were used for another: the calendar miniature of courting couples in April could provide a pretty girl with a garland to accompany the shepherds in their vigil at Terce, and the sower in October could be transferred to the background of the Flight into Egypt at Vespers. The source of some of these compositions can occasionally be traced back to known paintings. The Limbourg brothers adapted a Florentine fresco by Taddeo Gaddi for one of their miniatures in the *Très Riches Heures*, for example. Another less well-known instance occurs in Books of Hours produced according to patterns of the Bedford Master. One of the most splendid portraits by Jan van Eyck, now in the Louvre, shows the French chancellor Nicolas Rolin (1376-1462) kneeling before the Virgin and Child (Pl.178). In the background, seen over the rampart and battlements of a castle, is a marvellous distant view of a winding river and a bridge with people hurrying across and (if one peers closely) a castle on an island and little rowing boats and a landing-stage. It was painted about 1435-37. The view is now famous as one of the earliest examples of landscape painting. The Bedford Master must have admired it too, perhaps in Rolin's house where the original was probably kept until it was bequeathed to the church at Autun. The same landscape was copied almost exactly, even to the little boats and the

176-177 London, Sotheby's, 26 October 1948, lot 436, single leaf, and Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale MS. 11051, f. 138r; Books of Hours, Paris, c. 1410-15.

These miniatures from the *Office of the Dead* are derived from the same model. They are both from Books of Hours in the style of the Boucicaut Master.





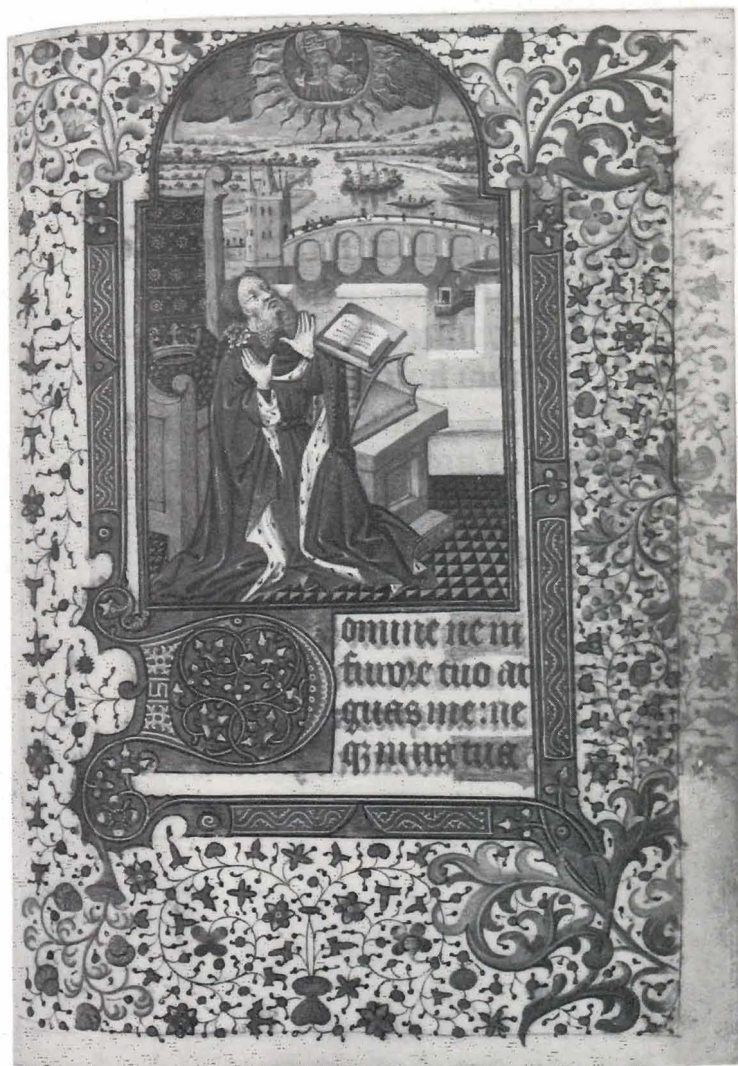
178 Paris, Musée du Louvre, Jan van Eyck, portrait of Nicholas Rolin kneeling by his Book of Hours and adoring the Virgin and Child, c. 1435-7.

179 (RIGHT) Detail
of pl. 178.



180-181 (BELOW) Malibu,
The J. Paul Getty Museum
MS. Ludwig XI.6, f. 100r, and
London, Sotheby's, 13 June
1983, lot 11, f. 105r; Book of
Hours, Paris, c. 1440-50.

*The backgrounds of these
miniatures in Books of Hours in
the late style of the Bedford
Master are derived from the Rolin
portrait. The kneeling figure of
Rolin himself has been replaced by
that of King David and the subject
now illustrates the Penitential
Psalms.*



bends in the river, into the backgrounds of several Bedford Master miniatures such as the former Marquess of Bute MS.93, f.105r (Pl.181) and the mid-fifteenth-century Hours of Jean Dunois in the British Library (Yates Thompson MS.3, f.162r). It was adapted slightly for Bedford miniatures such as Getty Museum, MS.Ludwig 1x.6, f.100r, where the fortified bridge has contracted into part of a castle (Pl.180). The scene gets gradually transformed in other manuscripts into the usual view from the palace of King David in the miniature to illustrate the Penitential Psalms in northern France and then in Flanders. The battlements stay on but the river becomes a lake and then a courtyard (still with little people hurrying to and fro) in the Ghent/Bruges Books of Hours of the sixteenth century (Pl.185). The Bedford Master's sketch of a detail in a portrait that had interested him was transformed remarkably over a hundred years as one illuminator after another duplicated and adapted the original pattern.

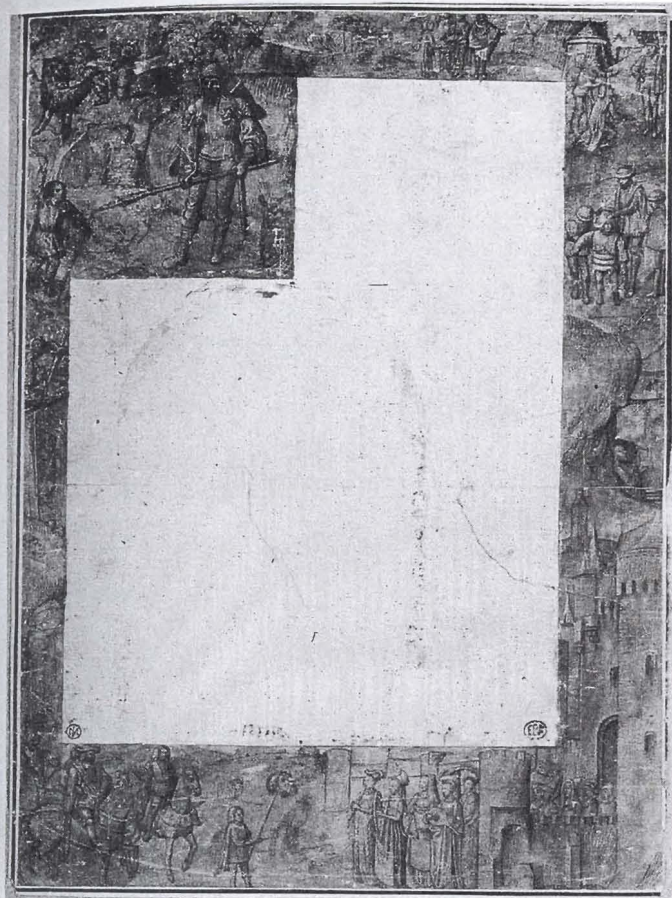
182-183 London, Sir John Soane's Museum MS.4, f.23v; and London, British Library, Add.MS.35313, f.31r; Books of Hours. Ghent or Bruges, c.1500.

These miniatures, illustrating the opening of Compline, are in the style of the Master of James IV of Scotland, a Flemish artist whose miniatures

Too little information survives on exactly how illuminators kept and copied these patterns. It is important to break away from the modern notion that an artist should strive for originality and that a creator has a kind of monopoly on his own designs. A medieval artist was expected to work according to a specific formula, and this must often have meant using designs and compositions with a familiar precedent. In fact, the genius of a medieval illuminator is reflected in the skill with which he could execute an established subject. Careful adherence to an artistic tradition was required of an artist, as a violinist today is praised for following his score with consummate skill, or as a medieval author often begins a great work of literature by explaining or claiming that he is retelling an old story. A customer would expect a particular subject, especially in a book as naturally conservative as a prayerbook. Illuminators must have borrowed patterns from each other. There was probably a lot of knocking on doors in the rue des Enlumineurs. This

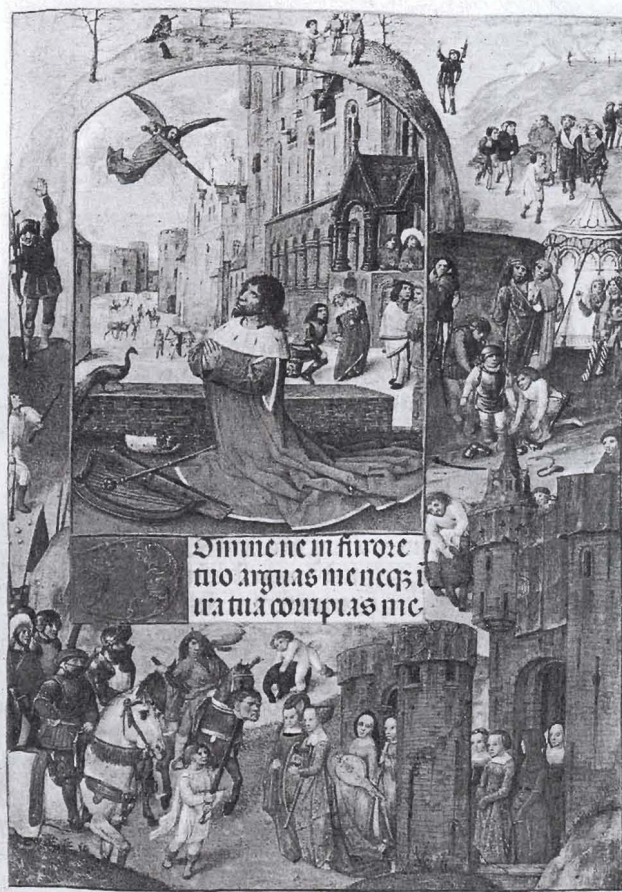
are often duplicated almost exactly from one manuscript to the next. The script, however, is quite different, the rounded writing on the left following the fashion of southern Europe (as in pl.163) and that on the right being in accordance with northern taste.





184 Paris, École des Beaux Arts, M. 2235; pattern sheet showing scenes from the story of David and Goliath, early sixteenth century.

185 (RIGHT) Malibu, The J. Paul Getty Museum MS. Ludwig IX. 18, f. 166r; the Spinola Hours, Ghent or Bruges, early sixteenth century.

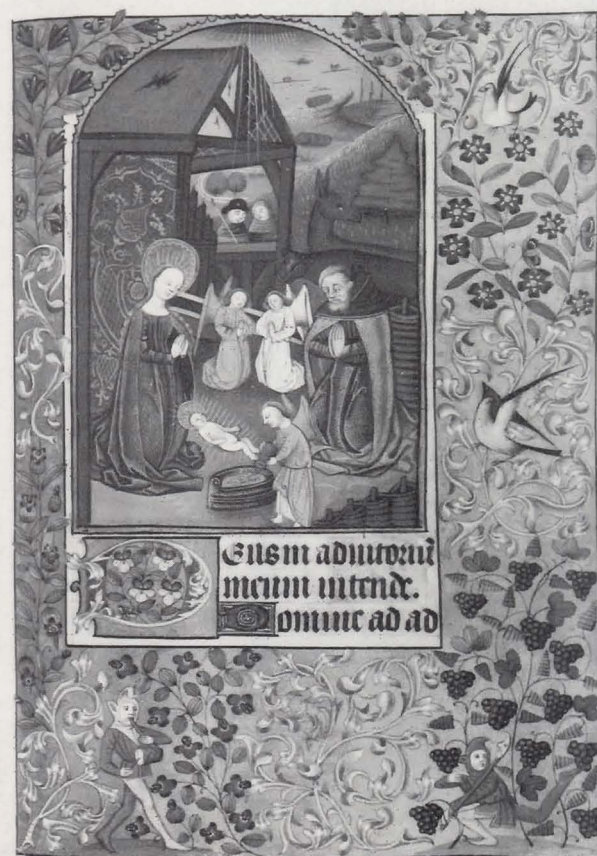
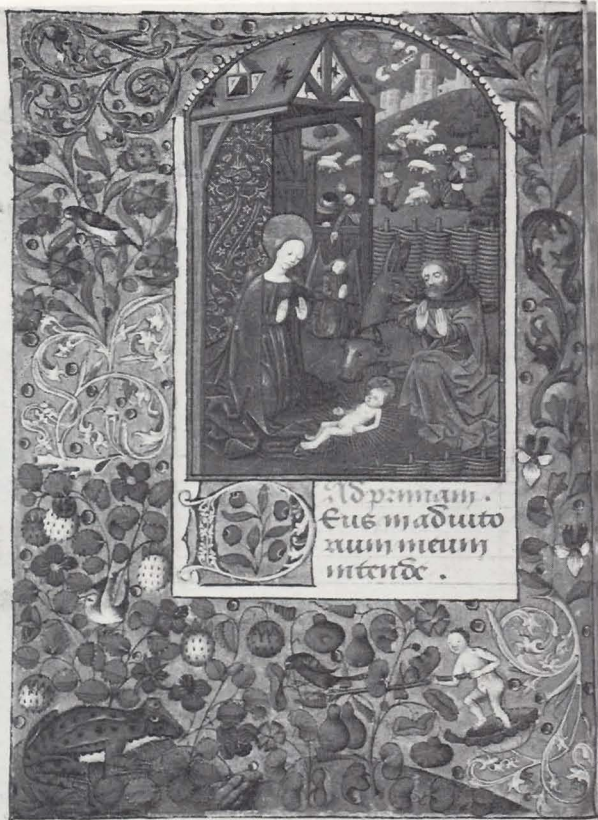


The marginal scenes are derived from a pattern sheet such as that shown in pl. 184. The scene of David in the centre derives ultimately, and through many stages of transmogrification, from the Bedford design illustrated in pls. 180–181, and there are faint echoes from the Rolin portrait itself in the distant double tower in the far left, the tiny hurrying horsemen, and the low wall behind the kneeling figure of David.

practice of reusing old designs extended far beyond Paris. Artists took their experience with them, like the Fastolf Master who left the capital about 1420 and apparently moved to Rouen and by about 1440 seems to have been in London. If he did not travel himself, his models certainly did. Thus general Bedford designs occur in Books of Hours made far from their place of origin. Three compositions from the Boucicaut Hours are repeated in Morgan M. 161, a Book of Hours probably made in Tours around 1465. One architectural border in a Lyons Book of Hours of about 1480–90 (Sotheby's, 13 July 1977, lot 76, f. 19r) is copied from a pattern used in the Hours of Isabella Stuart of about 1417–18 and repeated in the Rohan Hours of about 1420 (Fitzwilliam Museum MS. 62, f. 141v, and B.N. MS. lat. 9471, f. 94v). The calendar of the *Très Riches Heures* entered the pattern-books of the Ghent/Bruges illuminators of the early sixteenth century and recurs in the Grimani Breviary and in the December miniature by Simon Bening in B. L. Add. MS. 18855, f. 108v. Many Rouen Books of Hours of the 1460s to 1480s mirror each other so exactly that one must visualize some kind of produc-

tion line to multiply almost identical illuminations at great speed (Pls. 186–9). We find the same in Paris in the last quarter of the century. The most extreme instances of duplicating miniatures are in the Ghent/Bruges Books of Hours of around 1500. Manuscripts like the Hours of James IV, the Spitzer Hours, the Spinola Hours, the Hours of Eleanor of Portugal, a fine Book of Hours in the Sir John Soane's Museum, and a whole shelf of lesser Flemish manuscripts all have miniatures and borders which must have been reproduced from almost identical patterns (Pls. 182–3). What may be one of these actual model sheets is now in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris (Pl. 184): it shows a typical high-quality Flemish border with scenes from the life of David (this is to illustrate the Penitential Psalms) and versions of it reappear in the Spinola Hours (Pl. 185) and elsewhere. Clearly, the public appetite for Books of Hours was so huge that the mass multiplication of miniatures was regarded as quite ethical, being the only way to meet the demand.

If the evidence of the bulk production of miniatures tends to undermine our image of the artists as the original geniuses



186-189 (LEFT) Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal MS. 562, f. 41v; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS. lat. 13277, f. 49r; Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Douce 253, f. 50r; and Waddesdon Manor, National Trust, MS. 12, f. 49r; all miniatures for Prime in Books of Hours, Rouen, c. 1470.

190 (RIGHT) Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. nouv. acq. lat. 3117, f. 41v; Book of Hours, central France (probably Lyons), c. 1485.
The jagged landscape background and the square-cut faceted architectural border are distinctive features of the Lyons manuscripts in the style of Guillaume Lambert.

that we once thought, we must remember that it was not the artist who designed the book. He was merely a subcontractor in the business. It was the keeper of the bookshop who dealt with the public and who invested money (and therefore responsibility) in the manufacture of Books of Hours. The sending out of written leaves to be illuminated was only part of the business of assembling and selling manuscripts. In Flanders the two operations were so clearly distinct that very many miniatures for Books of Hours were actually painted on separate single leaves, blank on the back, that could be made miles away and only afterwards purchased by the bookseller and bound into Books of Hours. If you peer into the sewing of a Ghent/Bruges Book of Hours you can easily see how the miniatures have been pasted in by wrapping the stub around the back of the quire.

Occasionally we can pick up isolated details about these bookshops. One in Lyons was perhaps owned by Guillaume Lambert as there is a Book of Hours (Quaritch catalogue, 1931, no. 47) with an inscription saying it was written in Lambert's house by the gate in 1484, and there is a Missal still in Lyons (MS. 516) which Guillaume Lambert wrote in 1466. The illumination of the Book of Hours belongs to a well-defined group of central French manuscripts with characteristic prismatic architectural borders, and no doubt Lambert or his agents sent the manuscript out to be painted by the Lyons artists. His house was near the gate (*'près le portail'*) which may be a city gate, a good place for trade, or the great triple door of Lyons Cathedral. In Rouen the bookshops were certainly around the cathedral, as they had been in Paris, and the courtyard by the north door of Rouen Cathedral is still called the *Portail des Libraires*, a name already in use by 1479. We know the names of some booksellers who rented their shops from the cathedral in Rouen: different members of the Coquet and Boyvin families, for instance, were in the bookselling business there throughout much of the fifteenth century. We should be looking to these kind of people to understand the manufacture and marketing of such vast numbers of Books of Hours. The



customer paid a lot of money and a Book of Hours was specially made for him. The customer paid less money and bought a little one ready-made or a second-hand copy. So appealing were these manuscripts that every moderately well-to-do person in Europe in the fifteenth century seems to have walked out of some bookshop with a Book of Hours under his or her arm. One owner of an English Book of Hours, now privately owned in Denmark, was so proud of his new manuscript that he wrote on the flyleaf: 'He that stelles thes boke he shal be hanked upon on hoke behend the kechen dor.' In the little domestic world of the owner, to hang a thief on the hook behind the kitchen door was the most awful threat imaginable. The Book of Hours was a very precious possession in that household. It was probably their only book.