

LES ENLUMINURES, LTD

2970 North Lake Shore Drive 11B
Chicago, Illinois 60657

tel 1-773-979-5986
fax 1-773528-3976

Les Enluminures

Le Louvre des Antiquaires
2, Place du Palais-Royal
34, allée Riesener
75001 Paris

tél : 33 1 42 60 15 58
fax : 33 1 42 15 00 25

Miroir d'Humilité, including JEAN MIÉLOT, trans., ANONYMOUS, *Miroir de l'humaine salvation*, DENYS THE CARTHUSIAN [or JACQUES DE GRUYTRODE], *Miroir de l'âme pécheresse*, and DENYS THE CARTHUSIAN, *Traité des quatre dernières choses*
In French, manuscript on paper
[Northern France or the Low Countries, c. 1485-90]

[viii] + 260 folios, complete (i8, ii-xx12, xxi7 [8-1], xxii8 [12- 4], xxiii3 [12-9], xxiv2 [8-6]), folios missing are all blank after end of text (no loss of text), watermarks close to Briquet "fleur" n° 6322 and "armoiries - trois fleurs-de-lys" n° 1753: respectively Bar-le-Duc (c. 1486) and Nancy (c. 1484), written in brown ink in a clear bâtarde script, on 29 to 30 long lines (justification 180 x 120 mm), frame for text ruled in dry point quire signatures, catchwords, catchwords for the binder such as "premier cayer" (f. 12v) etc., chapter titles underlined in red, space set aside for illustrations but never executed, numerous initials touched in yellow, 2-line high initials in red or blue, 3-line parti-colored initials of red and blue, 3 to 4-line high illuminated initials marking the major textual divisions in burnished gold on pink and blue grounds with white tracery decoration (ff. 5, 8v, 191, 207v). Bound in CONTEMPORARY DARK CALF over wooden boards, on both covers double frame of quadruple blind-stamped fillets, inner rectangles divided into triangles by diagonal quadruple fillets, with at all points of intersection a small flower, and at corners of outer frames two stamps (lion on upper board, monkey on bottom board), spine sewn on 5 thongs, binding in excellent condition (see similar bindings in Goldschmidt, II, no. 26 and Culot, II, p. 42-43, both from Louvain). Dimensions 310 x 210 mm.

Copies of three of Jean Miélot's translations brought together as a "Mirror of Humility" in the only manuscript known of this compilation. In fresh condition with wide margins and in its original binding, this manuscript offers important evidence not only for the transmission of Miélot's texts but also for the popularity of a particular type of late medieval spiritual model addressed to the devout laity, a manuel through which man's self-knowledge as a humble sinner is mirrored as a route to salvation.

PROVENANCE

1. Copied in northern France or the Low Countries, c. 1485-90. The three texts are translations by Jean Miélot (died 1472), author, scribe, and publisher active in Lille for the Burgundian court. The fact that Miélot's translations did not have a wide circulation argues in favor of their production near the area of his principal activity. The binding certainly seems to originate in Louvain, based on its close comparison with two bindings assigned to this center (and datable c. 1485 and c. 1490 respectively), which further supports our hypothesis of origin. A closely related manuscript (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 739) is also localized in northern France. Perhaps the paper which bears watermarks from eastern France–Nancy, Bar-le-Duc, Strasbourg—was imported.
2. Sixteenth-century ex-libris copied on last leaf of last quire: "Pierre de Folleville. Qui le trouverast, le raportera, de bon vin [aura]" (f. 260v) ("Whoever finds this and brings it back, will be rewarded with good wine").

TEXT

ff. 1-5, *Probeme du livre present lequel proeme enseigne que c'est de vertu puis enseigne la matiere du livre*;

ff. 5-8, *Probeme du livre qui traicte sur la matiere du livre*; incipit: "Si comme dist monseigneur Saint Augustin, les euvres de vertus sont en aucunes gens ordonnees a volutez...";

ff. 8v-9v, *Du temps de l'incarnacion de Nostre Doulz Sauveur Jhesus Crist*; incipit: "ui bien se mire, bien se voit" explicit: "...pour delivrer humaine lignié du pouvoir du deable et pour la restituer en son heritage de paradis"

ff. 9v-190v, Pseudo-Ludolphus of Saxony, *Miroir de l'humaine salvation* [French translation of the *Speculum humane salvationis*]: title underlined: *Cy commence la premiere partie de ce present livre et parle premierement de la conception de Nostre Seigneur et du proces qui estoit entre Dieu, homme et Deable avant l'incarnacion*; incipit: "Tantost apres ce que la glorieuse Vierge Marie fu espousee a Joseph...";

ff. 191-207, Denys the Carthusian or Jacques de Gruytrode, *Miroir de l'âme pécheresse* [French translation of the *Speculum aureum anime peccatricis*]: title underlined: *Cy commence la seconde partie de ce present livre. Et parle tout premierement en general de la vieulté de condicion humaine*; incipit: "Or convient pour la seconde partie de ce present traité enseigner comme est vile la condicion de nature humaine afin que par la congnoissance de nostre condicion nous ayons matiere propre et cause souffisante pour nous humilier...";

ff. 207v-245v, Denys the Carthusian, *Traité des quatre dernières choses* [French translation of the *Cordiale de quattuor novissimis*]: title underlined: *Cy commence la tierce partie de ce present livre. Et parle tout premierement de la noblesse de la creacion de l'ame humaine par nature et de sa dignité et de sa*

puissance ; incipit: "Maintenant pour la tierce partie de ce traité convient declairier comment une chacune personne pour trouver matiere de soy humilier doit souvent penser et mectre devant les yeulx de sa contemplacion quatre choses principalement. C'est assavoir les choses de dedens nous, celles de dehors nous, les choses de dessoux nous et celles de dessus nous..."; explicit: "A laquelle joye nous donne a parvenir le Pere et le Filz et le Saint Esperit. Amen. Explicit."

All texts are translations attributed to Jean Miélot, who was an author, scribe, and translator at the Burgundian court of Philip the Good. His first translation, that of the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, was written as a spiritual guide for Philip the Good in 1448-49 (Brussels, Bibl. Royale, MS 9249-50). From 1449 to 1454, he was attached to the ducal court, and during this period many manuscripts were executed under his direction in Brussels. In recognition of Miélot's services, Philip appointed him secretary in 1454, and he also became from that date Canon of the Church of St.-Pierre in Lille, where he remained until his death in 1472. According to Delaissé, he oversaw an *officine* or "publishing house" in Lille (Delaissé, 1967). Three types of manuscripts characterize the production there: modest *maquettes* on paper (called *minutes*) in his own hand, with attractive calligraphy but without illustrations; manuscripts on paper with watercolors by Jean Le Tavernier; and more luxurious copies, probably commissions, with miniatures attributed to Le Tavernier.

Among Miélot's many translations are saints lives, such as the lives of Catherine of Alexander and of Saint Fursy; secular texts such as Guillaume Adam's *Avis pour faire le passage d'outre-mer* and *Le Débat de noblesse*; and devotional works such as the three texts included in the present manuscript, among others. Few of his works are edited; of the texts in the present manuscript there is a critical editions only of the *Speculum humanae salvationis* (Lutz and Perdrizet, 1907-09). Only *Les Quatre Denieres Choses* exists in an incunable edition published in Bruges by Caxton c. 1475 (it was subsequently translated into English and became the first book printed in England by Caxton, as *Cordiale, or Four Last Things*, 24 March 1479).

The compilation presented in our manuscript is carefully contrived and is not merely a stringing together of three of Miélot's devotional texts. They are introduced by a sort of double prologue (text unidentified and unique ?) that logically ties together the themes presented in each text as a spiritual guide leading to virtue, according to Saint Augustine. The first work, the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, teaches the Conception of Christ and the trials between God, man, and the devil before the Incarnation. The second work, the *Miroir de l'âme pécheresse*, teaches the vileness of the human condition and how man can possess the self-knowledge to achieve humility. And the third work, the *Traité des quatre dernieres choses*, teaches the actual means by which man can gain humility by recognizing four things—those things in us, outside us, below us (Hell), and above us (Paradise).

Although our compilation appears to be unique, we have discovered one manuscript in Paris to which it is closely related. The Paris *Mirouer d'Humilité* (BnF, fr. 739, ff. 25-48) omits the *Miroir de l'humaine salvation* and includes only the other two of the three texts contained in our manuscript in the same order but with some textual variants, including different explicits (BnF, fr. 739, f. 48: "Encore a ce propos, Dieu par sa justice donne aucune fois tres grans graces... Car lors seront passees en la balance de justice toute quelconque et grandes et petites, toutes pensees, toutes parolles et toutes operacions. Et ne sera plus nulle quelconque dilacion de temps ains ora chascun a celle heure terrible et juste jugement. Dieu par sa grace le nous doit tel oir que nous puissions parvenir a sa sainte gloire de paradis. Amen." Our manuscript, f. 245v: "Et que par ta sainte verité, je puisse prendre et acquerre ce que tu promectz. Et que je puisse entrer en la joye de mon Seigneur et de mon Dieu, a laquelle joye nous doit parvenir, le Pere, le Filz et le Saint Esperit").

Geneviève Hasenohr has studied the phenomenon of the "mirror of humility" as a new type of spiritual exercise in the later Middle Ages, specifically circumscribing the ideas to c. 1480-90 (1988, esp. pp. 277-87). Most of them derive ultimately from the *Speculum peccatoris* of Pseudo-Augustine (PL, 40, 1845, cols. 983-992). These texts represent attempts to render more concrete for the lay audience the sensations of sin, penitence, humility. Like the related *danse macabre*, they teach how to live well in order to die well. Like the Book of Hours that during the same period transformed the monastic Daily Office into a lay practice, the mirrors of humility adapt monastic asceticism for the general population. The three texts included here are not translations from the earlier Church Fathers but rather adaptations of contemporary authors (Denys the Carthusian, d. 1471; Jacques de Gruytrude, d. 1475; the anonymous *Speculum humanae salvationis*, c. 1324). That two of the three texts originate in a Carthusian milieu underscores their connection with the house of Burgundy, sponsor of the celebrated Chartreuse of Champmol in Dijon, and purveyor there of strict Carthusian ideals of religiosity.

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On-line resources:

William Caxton

<http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/exhibns/printing/>