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ANONYMOUS, *Chronique universelle*

In French and Latin, illuminated manuscript on vellum

[Northern France or Belgium (Picardy, Artois, or French Flanders), c. 1440-1450]

Six membranes pasted one after the other, written in brown ink in a bâtarde script with prologue in a larger gothic bookhand, mostly in two columns between four verticals, columns ruled in plummet (width of columns 100-120 mm.), rubrics in red, some text underlined in red, capitals touched in red, line endings composed of slanted pen strokes in red and brown ink, 2-line initials in alternating red and blue, 2-line high opening initials in burnished gold on pink and blue grounds with white tracery penwork, LARGE OPENING INITIAL painted in blue on a burnished gold ground with infill of rinceaux and ivy leaves (colors of pink and blue, slightly faded) with decorated border composed of two bands of hairline stems traced in black ink, burnished gold besants and colored acanthus leaves (blue, pink and green), numerous smaller roundels traced in brown ink with names in red ink linking larger text roundels to form genealogy, 29 TEXT ROUNDELS decorated circumference in patterns of blue, green, maroon, pink and yellow (diameter ranging from 8 to 5 cm.), 3 LARGER HISTORIATED ROUNDELS (diameter 130, 100, and 80 mm.) (palette of blue, green, red, maroon and shades of yellow), ONE LARGE MINIATURE SET IN AN ARCHITECTURAL FRAME (dimensions 230 x 190 mm.). Roll preserved in its original condition (small tear with small lack of parchment in the first membrane, some early parchment restorations, interesting traces of oxidization on every two membranes, probably due to method of unfolding or suspending roll for viewing). Overall dimensions of roll 3750 x 560 mm.

Unpublished copy of the *Chronique universelle* (c. 20 manuscripts known), complete, initialed by the scribe, and illuminated, this roll contains important textual features that provide evidence not only for the independent existence and early circulation of a *Bible abregée* in roll form after Peter of Poitiers's *Compendium historiae* and before the *Chronique universelle* but for the origins of the manuscript tradition of the *Chronique universelle* in Picardy instead of near the Loire Valley as was previously supposed.

PROVENANCE

1. The dialect of this biblical version of the *Chronique universelle* can be closely tied to the northern French territories with such linguistic forms as "chy," "commencement," "lignies," "a

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scripsi," "vesqui," and "chite." The style of the miniatures also suggests localization in the area of Picardy, Artois, or French Flanders, c. 1440. An unidentified scribe has signed the roll at the bottom of the fourth membrane: *Explicit le bible abregié et figure. J. F.*

TEXT

Old Testament (Membranes 1 to 4): Prologue, "Ensieut chy apries le genealogie de la Bible translatié de latin en franchois qui moustre et declaire combien chascun eage a duret depuis le comencement du monde jusques a l'avenement de Jhesu Crist et conprent en brief les prophetes, les patriarches, les rois, les princes et les six preux qui ont gouverné le monde depuis Adam jusques a Jhesu Crist. Et comment les trois filz Noé peuplerent tout le monde apries le deluge. Et comment les lignies se espendirent en maintes regions. Et si demoustré et ensaigne la lignie de la benoite Vierge Marie qui s'ensieut seloncq l'abre qui se demoustré et ensaigne chy apries"; incipit (left column), "*In principio creavit deus celium et terram. C'est a dire que au comencement du monde Dieu crea le chiel et la terre...*"; rubric (right column), *Comment Adam et Eve furent mis en paradis terrestre*; incipit, "Après che Adam comme il fu fourmés et fais et eve il les mis en paradis terrestre. C'est ung lieu qui est plains de delis et de bonnes oudeurs..."; rubric (right column), *Chy parle du premier qui formast ymages, Comment Enoch fu translates en paradis terrestre*; (right column), "Comment Noé fist l'arche ou il mist de toutes bestes une paire"; (left column), "Chy parle de Cain second filz de Noé"; (left column), "Chy parle de Sem premier filz de Noé"; (right column): "Chy fine le premier eage du monde qui dura de Adam jusque a Noé"; (right column) "Chy après parle de Japhet .iii.e filz a Noé"; (right column) "Chy fine le second eage du monde qui dura de Noé jusques a Abraham .ix. xlii. Ans"; (left column) "Chy parle de le paschience de Job"; (left column) "Comment Jherusalem fu destruite"; (right column) "Chy apries fait mention de Ysaach filz Abraham"; (right column) "Chi s'ensieute (?) cilz qui furent roy d'Israel apries le roy Salmon"; (left column) "Chy fine le quart eage du monde qui dura de David jusques a le transfiguration de Babillone .iiii. iiiii[xx] et .vi. ans"; (right column) "Chy parle de Hector de Troye qui fu .iii. preu avant Jhesu Crist M. cent .lxix. ans" (in roundel: *Comment Troye fu destruite*); (right column) "Comment Samarie fu destruite"; (right column) "Chy parle de Alixandre .iiii. preu avant Jhesu Crist .ii[c] et .ix. ans"; (left column) "Chy parle du mauvais Herode qui ocist les innocens"; (right column) "Chy parle de Julle Cesar qui fu .vi. preu avant .xviii. ans"; (right column) "Chy parle de sainte Anne mere de la Vierge Marie"; (large central roundel: *Natus est Jhesus*); (large central roundel: *Crucifixus est Jhesus*); explicit, "...Et au .xl. jour fu offers au temple et au .iii. an Herodes fist decoller les Ynocens et au .xxx. an il fu baptisiés de saint Jehan Baptiste au fleuve Jourdain"; (central column) Colophon: *Explicit le bible abregié et figure. J.F.*;

New Testament (Membranes 4 to 6), rubric beginning (left column), *Chy après fait mention du nouvel testament et ausy chy dessus*; (left column) "De Marie mere Jhesus Crist"; (right column) "De Elizabeth mere saint Jehan Baptiste"; (left column) "Saint Jaque Alphe minor"; (right column) "Saint Jude"; (left column) "De saint Jehan evangeliste"; (right column) "Saint Jaque le grant";

(right column) "Saint Pol"; (left column) "De saint Pierre"; (right column) "Saint Andrieu"; (left column) "De saint Philippe"; (right column) "De saint Thomas"; (left column) "Saint Mathieu"; (right column) "De saint Bertelomieu"; (right column) "De saint Mathieu [bis] inc: *Mathias fu ung des .lxx. disciples. . .*"; (left column) "De saint Luc"; (right column) "De saint Simon"; (left column) "De saint March"; (right column) "Thimotheus"; (left column) "De saint Bernabé"; (right column) "Thithus." (text long line) "Or vous ay devisé des maistres du nouvel testament et sachiés que de quatres evangelistre [sic] Pol fist et escrpsi les epistles dont il envoya les .vii. as eglises et les aultres a ses disciples... [...] ... et chy se taist ore li compte des vies des peres de l'un et de l'autre"; (text long line; final paragraph) "Chy endroit dist encore li contes que nostre seigneur dieu vint en che siecle pour racheter l'umain linage... [...] ... Vespasien son pere et apres Noyron et cil conquist Jherusalem et occist les juifs et venga la mort Jhesu Crist. *Et sic est finis.*"

Like Peter of Poitiers's *Compendium historiae in genealogia Christi*, which served as one of the sources for the present manuscript, this roll includes an abridgment of biblical history beginning with Adam. Master of theology and Chancellor of the University of Paris from 1193 to 1205, Peter of Poitiers "invented historical trees of the Old Testament which were painted on skins" because he was "mindful of poor clerics" (i.e., attentive to the didactic use of the Bible). There has been considerable debate on the actual use of these rolls: were they used in the universities? By the nobility? In the monasteries? How were they displayed? (cf. Bogaert, Moore, Monroe, et al.). The oxidation on our roll suggests that it was displayed in hanging form on a wall.

The text of this roll corresponds not with that of Peter of Poitiers, however, but with that of *Chronique universelle d'Orléans*, a historical compilation beginning with Creation and continuing through the Popes and emperors of Rome and the kings of France and England. In her study of the manuscript tradition of this roll chronicle, which is much rarer than that of Peter of Poitiers, Nathalie Hurel has identified twenty rolls virtually identical to the present manuscript, that is, set up in columns with miniatures and roundels constructing a genealogical tree (see Hurel, 1992, and 1994, p. 311; also Klapisch-Zuber, 2000, pp. 146-47). One-third of the corpus consists of fragmentary rolls. She traced the text to a codex compiled by Jennelot, the secretary of Philip, the duke of Burgundy, around 1400, who claims to have based his text in turn on the work Jean d'Udine composed for the Order of the Friars Minor in the year 1340 (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 17001). The *Chronique Universelle d'Orléans* is written after 1457, because it includes continuations that bring it up to that date. Sources cited in the text of the *Chronique universelle* include, in addition to the Bible, Flavius Josephus, Orosius, Vincent of Beauvais, and Peter of Poitiers.

Two textual distinctions separate our previously unknown copy from those in Hurel's textually coherent group. First, its prologue deviates from the standard prologue and does not include

the date 1457, which, coupled with the style of the miniatures, gives reason to believe that this roll predates the others in Hurel's group. Second, our roll, including only the biblical portion of the chronicle, presents an independent version of the chronicle ending with the conquest of Jerusalem and the death of Christ. The language of the explicit and the colophon make clear, however, that this is a complete text ("Here ends the abridged and illustrated Bible").

These differences have important ramifications for the scholarship to date on the *Chronique universelle*. Hurel speculated, based on the text in the *Chronique universelle*, that it derives ultimately from two independent roll traditions, one biblical and the other historical. Our manuscript, offers evidence for the independent existence of a *Bible abrégée* in roll form—that is a French version derived from Peter of Poitiers--that was incorporated into the *Chronique universelle* but continued to circulate independently of it. Hurel was unable to uncover evidence that would have permit a localization of the text, and she proposed that the rolls originated in the region of the Loire Valley, southwest of Paris. However, with its indisputably Picard dialect, our manuscript points instead to a localization of the tradition in the northern regions, especially Picardy.

ILLUSTRATION

The decoration of the roll is composed of four major historiated miniatures, described below.

1. Miniature: Fall of Man in an elaborate architectural frame, depicting Eve who accepts the apple from the Serpent, an unrolled scroll with Eve's words, in red "Ne forte moriamur"; the Serpent's scroll reads, "Scés tu pour quoy Dieus vous a deffendu que vous ne mengiés des pomes du pomier." [Membrane 1]. It is interesting to note that the serpent speaks in the vulgar French, whereas Eve speaks in Latin;
2. Roundel: Adam delves and Eve spins [Placed between membranes 1 and 2; diameter 130 mm.];
3. Roundel: Diagram of Jerusalem; scroll reads, in red "Habitatio regis et sacerdotum" [Membrane 3; diameter 100 mm.];
4. Roundel: Instruments of the Passion resting on the Golgotha; text placed in the center reads, "Crucifixus est Jhesus" [Membrane 4; diameter 80 mm.].

In addition the genealogical sequence which unfolds vertically is punctuated by a variety of "text roundels," whose circumferences are decorated with triangular / sun-like motifs, in which headings are inscribed, such as: "Comment Sedecias ot les yeux crevés"; "Comment Julles Chesar fu occis en son pallais," etc. These decorated text roundels are linked to other "simple" text roundels (traced in ink) by means of vertical lines traced in red, forming the genealogical

tree and sequence of historical events. The organization of these genealogical medallions corresponds with that in the manuscripts of the *Chronique universelle* studied by Hurel.

Our cycle of miniatures, limited like the text to biblical history, is more restricted than that described by Hurel, an observation which also confirms an earlier date. Nevertheless, the sequence presents a coherent narrative, beginning with the Fall of Man and ending with a promise of salvation.

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