

# LES ENLUMINURES

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Prayer Book: *The manual of prayers or the prymer in Englysh and Laten*  
In Latin and English, illustrated imprint of paper  
London, July 15, 1539

4to, 186 of 196 folios, lacking ten leaves, sig. M1, M3, T4, V1, V2, V3, V4, X1, Ff3, SS2 (collation A<sup>4</sup> A(bis)<sup>4</sup> BB-DD<sup>4</sup> EE<sup>2</sup> A(ter)-M<sup>4</sup> [lacking two leaves, M1 and M3] N-S<sup>4</sup> T<sup>4</sup> [lacking one leaf, T4] [V1-4 lacking] X<sup>4</sup> [lacking one leaf, X1] Y-Z<sup>4</sup> Aa-Ii<sup>4</sup> +<sup>2</sup> Kk-Vv<sup>4</sup>), printed signatures throughout (final and sometimes third leaves in quires are unsigned), printed in red and black, running titles printed in red, red and black line fillers, simple 1- to 2-line red initials, larger decorative engraved initials, sixteen large figurative woodcuts (including three repetitions, described below), title within woodcut border (McKerrow and Ferguson, 1932, 38), sig. A1-CC2 (pp. 1-13) with repairs to outer margin, titlepage is particularly damaged, with some loss to edges, titlepage, outer margin of sig. Gg1 damaged (with an early but insufficient repair), sig. M2 with small marginal tear, sig. M2 and M3 with repairs, small rip in sig. X2, sig. A(ter)4 and B1 with ink stains, varying degrees of dirt from use, some damp-staining. Bound in a 19<sup>th</sup>- or 20<sup>th</sup> century binding reusing the leather covers of a sixteenth-century blind-tooled leather binding (presumably this volume's original binding) with a heraldic roll tool (Oldham, 1952, HE.a(10)), evidence of two clasps on this early binding (now missing), edges dyed red, rounded spine with title and date in gold, some wear at the hinges, but in good condition. Dimensions 195 x 135mm.

Produced during a critical time in the English Reformation, this Prayer Book by Bishop John Hilsey was produced at Thomas Cromwell's behest, just one year before his execution in 1540. The text is a fascinating continuation of late medieval piety as expressed in the classic bestseller, the Latin Book of Hours, altered to express the new ideas of the Protestant Reformation. The text is in English, with Latin translations relegated to the margins, and strategic changes reflect Protestant theology, including a series of explanatory prologues by Bishop Hilsey. This edition survives in only ten other surviving copies (possibly representing at least two different issues).

Our copy preserves remnants of its original binding and signs of use, including inked-out marginal annotations.

## PROVENANCE

1. Printed in London, July 15, 1539, by the printer, bookseller, and scrivener, John Wayland (c. 1508-1573; see Byrom, 1930). The volume's modern binding preserves leather covers from what is almost certainly the original binding, decorated with a heraldic roll tool used in London through the sixteenth century (Oldham, 1952, HE.a(10)) .
2. Signs of use throughout, including dirt and marginal annotations added to the treatise, "An Instruction of the Holy Sacrament" (sig. Gg-Hh); these were subsequently heavily blacked out with ink. Early annotations on the title page, identifying John, Bishop of Rochester as John Hilsey; with a longer note in ink on a square of paper pasted in lower outer margin ("John Hilsey, Bp of Rochest. Succeeded Jo. Fisher Card. An. 1536").
3. Belonged to Ampleforth Abbey Library in Yorkshire, England; their bookplate, inside front cover, with pencil annotation, "C.V.119" and ink stamp, front flyleaf, f. i; deaccessioned. Ampleforth is a Benedictine Abbey, founded in 1802.
4. Modern pencil notes, front flyleaf (recording the collation and STC number).

## TEXT

sig. A1, [title page], incipit, "The manual of prayers or the prymer in Englysh & Laten set out at length whose contentes the reader by y[e] prologe next after the kale[n]der, shal sone perceauē, and there in shall se brefly the order of the whole boke ... Set forth by Jhon by Goddes grace, & the Kynges callyng, Byshoppe of Rochester at the comaun demente of the ryghte honorable lorde Thomas Crumwell, lorde Priuie seale, Vicegerent to the Kynges hyghnes";

sig. A1 verso-A2, *John by Gods grace Bysshop of Rochester vnto the right honorable Thomas lord Crumwell ...*, incipit, "Al though that the sundry and dyuers ...; *The prologe to the Kalender, ....*;

sig. A2 verso-A(bis)4, Calendar in four columns, recording the Epistle and the Gospel readings, with a few saints days printed in red; on sig. A(bis)2 the entries for St. Lawrence and St. Katherine were obscured by printed decorative motifs;

sig. A(bis)4 verso-BB2, *The prologue to the Whole Worke*, incipit, "I haue here set forth ...";

sig. BB2-BB4 verso, Athanasian and Apostles Creed, followed by the twelve articles of the church;

sig. CC1-DD3, Gospel Readings (Matthew 1, the Incarnation; John 18, the Passion; Luke 24, the Resurrection; Mark 16, the Ascension);

sig. DD3 verso-EE2, *The seconde parte of this Manuall called prayer*, An order and forme of byddynge ..., [prayers, beginning with the Bidding prayer, followed by the Pater noster, the Ave

maria, and prayers for various times of the day; concluding with], *The abrogacion of the holy dayes* ...;

sig. EE2 recto-verso, *A preface to the Matyns and the other houres declarynge fyrst the institution of them, and for what cause they be receaved and accustomed to be sayd in the church, and amonge other Christians*, ...;

sig. A(ter)-T3 verso, Hours of the Virgin (with memories of our Lady and of the Passion following each the hours from Lauds on), beginning with Matins, sig. D, Lauds; sig. G1 verso, Prime; sig. I1 verso, The Thyrde houre; sig. L1, The Syxte houre; sig. M4, The Nynth houre, now beginning imperfectly; sig. O2 verso, The euensong; sig. S1, Complyne, now ending imperfectly;

sig. X2-Z1, [Prayer], *The xv. Ooes*, ...;

sig. Z1-Dd verso, *The vii psalmes* ...; *the xv psalmes* ... [seven Penitential Psalms followed by the fifteen Gradual Psalms];

sig. Dd3 verso-Ff2 verso, Litany (beginning with a Preface), ending imperfectly;

sig. Ff4-Ii3 verso, "An instruction of the Holy Sacrament";

sig. Ii3 verso-†1, [Prayers], *A prayer to be sayde before masse*, ...; *A prayer to be sayde at the eleuacion tyme*, ...; *A prayer to be sayd after the masse*, ...;

sig. †1-Ss3, Office for the Dead or The Dirige, beginning with an explanatory prologue to the Dirige (one leaf, sig. Ss2, now missing);

sig. Ss3-Vv4 verso, *The thyrde parte of the primer treatynge of workes*, ... [Ten Commandments, and a treatise on the duties of the different "estates" (Bishops, Elders, Rulers, Husbands, Wives, Fathers and Mothers, Children, Masters, Servants, Widows);

sig. Vv4, [colophon], "Imprinted at London in fletestrete by me John Wayland in saynt Du[n]stones parysh at the signe of the blewe Garland next to the Temple bare. In the yere of our Lorde God a. M. D. xxxix [1539] the xv daye of July. Cum priuilegio ad Imprimendum solum."

Reprinted in Burton, 1834, pp. 305-436; digital facsimiles available on the EEBS (Early English Books Online; Online Resources); contents presented in detail by Hoskins, 1901, pp. 225-233, and discussed in Butterworth, 1953, pp. 181-194; see also White, 1951, pp. 103-118; and Birchenough, 1938 (White and Birchenough not consulted for this description). USTC 503078 (Online Resources); STC (Pollard and Redgrave, 1976-1991) 16009/16009.5; English Short Title Catalogue, S109479; Hoskins, 1901, no. 143; and Luborsky and Ingram, 1998, 16009; five copies reported: Cambridge, Cambridge University Library; Cambridge, Magdalene College; Oxford, Keble College; and San Marino, Huntington Library, and Warminster, England, Longleat House. Our copy is not listed.

In the USTC and ESTC there is a second record of STC 16009, presumably a variant (USTC 518463; ESTC S93591), which is known in five additional copies (Oxford, Bodleian Library; Chicago, Newberry Library; Los Angeles, UCLA Library; and two copies in Washington DC at the Folger Library). The problem of the number of issues or variants of STC 16009 seems rather inadequately explored (and we may note that the collations listed in the relevant entries in the USTC and ESTC are expressed in a misleading manner (see Butterworth, 1953, instead), and that the number of leaves recorded in these sources seem to be incorrect.

This edition was printed at least twice, possibly three times; our copy mentions Psalm 51 at the top of sig. D1, but the title page reads "& the Kynges callyng," a variant that does not appear to be described in the literature. Other copies lack the mention of Psalm 51 and include a title page reading, like ours, with "& the Kynges callyng." Butterworth recorded this as an earlier imprint and noted that the corrected imprint includes the mention of Psalm 51 (as our volume does) and corrects the title page to "at the Kynges callyng" (emphasis mine; Butterworth states both imprints have the same collation, agreeing with our volume, but he lists the number of folios as 296, which is an error for 196; Butterworth, 1953, p. 184).

## ILLUSTRATION

This book is printed in red and black, with printed running titles (in red), and with decorative wood or metalcut initials. The important texts are illustrated with woodcuts, departing from the traditional iconography from Latin Books of Hours with a new emphasis on the Passion of Christ (see Luborsky and Ingram, 1998, 16009, pp. 518-520). Two woodcuts are now missing from our volume (sig. M1 verso and Ff3 verso). The woodcuts are set about the text, most occupying half or more of the page. This book makes copious use of small red and black decorative motifs, which appear as line-fillers, but also as borders to the figurative woodcuts, most of which also have narrow panel borders.

Subjects as follows:

sig. A1, Title page (Renaissance border; McKerrow and Ferguson, 1932, no. 38);

sig. BB2, small woodcut of St. Helen (Creed);

sig. A(ter)1, Annunciation (flanked by narrow panel borders);

sig. D1, Visitation (Lauds, almost full page);

sig. F3 verso, Crucifixion (almost full page);

sig. G1 verso, Arrest of Christ (Prime);

sig. H3, Christ before Caiaphas;

sig. I1 verso, Mocking of Christ (Terce);

sig. K3, Christ carrying the Cross;

sig. L1, Christ is nailed to the Cross (Sext);

sig. N4, Crucifixion (repetition);

sig. O2 verso, the Descent from the Cross (Evensong);

sig. K3, the Descent from the Cross (repeated);

sig. S1, the Entombment (Compline);

sig. T2, the Entombment (repeated);

sig. Z2, David and Bathsheba (Penitential psalms; smaller woodcut);

sig. Kk1, Death attacking a man (Office of the Dead; Dirige; smaller woodcut).

The text of this English Prayer Book or Primer consists of a substantial part of the traditional text of the Book of Hours in English, with the Latin text in the margins, together with newly composed prayers and explanatory prefaces, many of them by the author, Bishop John Hilsey (d. 1539)—these are only in English (and were of course not found in traditional Books of Hours). Printed Books of Hours have a long tradition; the first examples were printed in France in the later fifteenth century and were followed by many hundreds of editions in the sixteenth century. At least 120 editions of Latin Books of Hours were printed in England between the printing of the first Book of Hours by Caxton in the late fifteenth century and the 1530s, when the first Protestant Prayer Books appear (Duffy, 2006, p. 121).

The Protestant Reformation arrived relatively late in England. The story of Henry VIII's desire to end his first marriage to marry Anne Boleyn in 1533 has been told many times. A definite break with Rome was ushered in by the 1534 Act of Supremacy that made Henry head of the Church in England. Two key figures of the English Reformation had a part in the creation of the Prayer Book offered here: Thomas Cromwell (d. 1540), who was appointed royal vicegerent in 1534; and John Hilsey (d. 1539), a Dominican, who became bishop of Rochester after John Fisher, the previous bishop, was executed together with Thomas More in the summer of 1534 for refusing to take an oath to support the king as the new head of the church.

The break from Rome did not mean immediate changes in religious practice and teaching, and in general people who wanted to introduce Protestant ideas into the English church had a difficult time during Henry VIII's reign. But from the mid-1530s, Cromwell and other reformers used the lay Prayer Book, the "Primer" (the volume we call a Book of Hours in Latin) as instruments of reform; this is certainly evident in the *The Manual of Prayers or the Primer in Englysh and Laten* of 1539 compiled by Bishop Hilsey at the prompting of Cromwell, which, as Duffy succinctly characterized it, "showed ... the desire of the reformed party to harness traditional materials of the primer to a reformed message" (Duffy, 2005, p. 444). Hilsey introduced many changes to the traditional texts, in particular to the "Dirige" or the Office of the Dead, most saints from the calendar, the litany includes only biblical saints, and invocations of Mary are mostly absent. Additions include numerous instructional prefaces throughout explaining various aspects of the prayers included and a long treatise on the Sacrament of the Mass (Duffy, 2006,

pp. 147-148; and 2005, pp. 444-447). Hilsey's *Manual* was superseded by the King's Primer of 1545, a book that went much farther in the Protestant direction.

Henry VIII may have wobbled in terms of Protestant doctrine but does seem to have been convinced by the need for a Bible in English that could be understood by everyone. Hilsey's Prayer Book should be seen in the context of the history of the earliest English printed Bibles. Tyndale's New Testament (1525) and Coverdale's Bible (1535) were both printed on the Continent; the first Bible in English printed in London dates from July 1535. The famous "Great Bible" of Henry VIII, which was to be placed in every parish church throughout England, appeared in 1539, the year our volume was printed (Poleg, 2020, pp. 82-151).

## LITERATURE

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

ESTC (English Short Title Catalogue), S109479

This resource is currently unavailable; it was consulted at this temporary site,  
[estc.printprobability.org/?prod%5Bquery%5D=The manual of prayers or the prymer](http://estc.printprobability.org/?prod%5Bquery%5D=The+manual+of+prayers+or+the+prymer)

USTC (Universal Short Title Catalogue), 503078

<https://www.ustc.ac.uk/editions/503078>, listing five copies not including this one, and four digital copies

USTC, 518463

[USTC - Edition - No. 518463](#), listing five copies, not including this one, and one digital copy

Detailed description and transcription of this book,

[Item Information | The manuall of prayers, or the prymer in Englyshe set out at lengthe, whose contentes the reader by the prologe next after the kalendar, shal sone perceave and there in shal se brefly the order of the whole boke. Set forth by Ihon late bysshope of Rochester at the co\[m\]aundement the ryght honorable Lorde Thomas Cro\[m\]wel, Lorde Priuie seale Uicegerent to the Kynges hyghnes. | Early English Books Online 2 | University of Michigan Library Digital Collections \(umich.edu\)](#)

Early English Books Online (digitized copy; imperfect)

[The manual of prayers, or the prymer in Englysh & Laten. ... 1539 : Liturgies-Latin Rite-Hours and Primers-Salisbury and Reformed. : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

Glenn Gunhouse, A Hypertext Book of Hours (English and Latin)

[Hypertext Book of Hours, Home Page \(medievalist.net\)](#)

Ronald Bayne, "John Hilsey," Dictionary of National Biography 26 (1885-1900)

[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Dictionary\\_of\\_National\\_Biography,\\_1885-1900/Hilsey,\\_John](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Dictionary_of_National_Biography,_1885-1900/Hilsey,_John)

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