

LES ENLUMINURES

PARIS CHICAGO NEW YORK

www.lesenluminures.com

Devote ghetiden vanden leven ende passie Jhesu Christi (Devout Hours on the Life and Passion of Jesus Christ)

In Middle Dutch, imprint on paper with 21 woodcut illustrations

Antwerp, Gerard Leeu (printer), between September 18, 1484 and July 9, 1485

i + 36 + i paper folios, watermark bisected in top margin, Gothic letter 'y' with an ascending Latin cross and tail terminating to the left in a clover (see ff. 92-93, 100-101, numerous examples in WILC for this printer, e.g. WM I 52671), modern pencil foliation in top recto corner running from 65 to 102, retained for this description, alphabetic quire signatures, incomplete (n-o^s p^{s-2} q-t^s), lacking thirteen quires of eight at front, two leaves in quire p between ff. 86 and 87 (third quire here, originally sixteenth), and one quire of eight at back, text in 24 long lines (justification 116 x 82 mm.), 21 FULL-PAGE WOODCUTS from 20 blocks (one repeating), one touched in red, majuscules touched with red, multiple two- to three-line red initials, light soiling throughout and darkening at edges (particularly top in latter half), minor damp-stain in last two quires, small worm holes in last three folios, fraying at opening edge of last quire affecting text and woodcut slightly on the final folio, final folio rebinged. Twentieth-century binding in cardboard with tan sheepskin cover, blind-tooled with single-filleted cross on front and back with double-fillet framing negative space around the cross, spine with four supports, blind stamped with title 'DEVOTE GHETIDEN' and date '1484', faintly rubbed at edges. Dimensions 155 x 110 mm.

This vernacular text is an innovative once-daily devotional practice for busy lay people in the orbit of the Devotio Moderna, a kind of substitute for a Book of Hours. One of only two surviving copies of the second edition of an incunable, it is illustrated with one of the first and most influential series of religious woodcuts from the Low Countries. This exceedingly rare partial copy features 21 thematic image-prayer pairs, along with meditations and Penitential Psalms devoted to events in the Life of Christ and to the Virgin Mary.

PROVENANCE

1. Printed in Antwerp between September 18, 1484 and July 9, 1485 by Gerard Leeu, a native of Gouda (then in the County of Holland) who had in 1484 moved his business south to the commercial capital of the Duchy of Brabant. According to Anna Dlačáková, professionals in the "creative industry" of Antwerp belonged to the guild of St Luke, of which Gerard Leeu was the first printer to join (2017, §47).

As was common in early printed works, red ink was added by hand to majuscules at the beginning of each sentence, and red initials of one to three lines were added to mark new sections in the spaces left by the printer for this purpose. As with other incunabula, including other books by this printer (Dlačáková 2020, p. 182), this was probably done by the buyer: the majuscules are generally not touched with red in the only other surviving copy (Leiden, University Library, 1498 F1). (Compare, for example, f. p4 / f. 83 in the present incunable to the image published in Dlačáková 2017, Fig. 10.)

2. There are no additional traces of early ownership or readers in the surviving folios. Minor worming in the last three folios, and the final folio's signs of wear, suggest that at least the final quires were already lacking in its previous binding; it has been imperfect for some time.
3. The present binding was added in the twentieth century. Descriptive notes in brown ink in a very small, tidy cursive hand on the inner front pastedown read: "Campbell 1115 | Devote Ghetiden. G. Leeux [*x erased*]. Gouda(?) [[^]"Antwerpen(?)" *in blue ink*] 1484 | fragment d'un incunable excessivement rare | seulement ! exemplaire (incomplet de la dernière feuille) comme | 38 (sur 152) ff. | 21 (22 différente) bois du "Second Graveur de Gouda"." On the recto of the front flyleaf is a label with '8' printed in blue ink.

"Campbell 1115" refers to the text's catalogue number in Campbell, 1874 (p. 315), and the mention of the "Second Gouda Woodcutter" to the artist's moniker as designated by Conway, 1884 (pp. 46-50). The book's reattribution from Gouda to Antwerp by another twentieth-century hand is correct; the switch in language from French to Dutch ("Antwerpen" is the Flemish form) indicates that this book may have switched from French to Flemish or Dutch hands relatively recently.

4. Although this copy does not appear in publications concerning *Devote ghetiden*, it is noted in the *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue* (ISTC No. ih00433150) from when it last reached market in Utrecht in 1977.

TEXT

ff. 65-75, "O Onnosellam goods dat nye sonde ... stervende inden cruce Amen";

Ten short unedited prayers on events leading to the Passion of Christ, all but the first accompanied by a woodcut on the facing verso, and all but the last occupying only a single recto. Topics include: Christ's trial before Pilate (f. 65); the flagellation (f. 66); his "coronation" with the crown of thorns and purple robe (f. 67); presentation to the people (i.e., *Ecce homo*, f. 68); sentencing by Pilate (f. 69), stations of the cross (ff. 70-71); Christ receiving myrrh and wine and being disrobed before crucifixion (f. 72); nailing of Christ to the cross (f. 73); and finally the raising of the cross (ff. 74-75). Each prayer emphasizes Christ's wounds, suffering and blood.

f. 76, *Die vyfst penitency psalm uit marien souter des vrydaechs. Calpiti [capiti] Domine exaudi oracionem. "O Vrouwe verhoer myn ghebet ... totter wapen ons heren, ende dat ghebet tot allen heylighen";*

Direction to read the fifth Penitential Psalm (Ps. 101) on Friday. Rather than the biblical psalm, this version from the Marian Psalter is addressed to Mary and faces a woodcut of Mary holding the infant Christ. Followed by instructions to look for and read the seven prayers to the instruments of the Passion or *Arma Christi*, not present in this incunable, and a prayer to All Saints which was located at the now-lost beginning (Dlabačová 2017, Table 1).

ff. 77-87, *Des saterdaghes sal u ghetyde ofte oeffeninghe wesen van die ondersoekinghe uwer consciencie ende van die biecht. "Het is een goede maniere van gheesteliken menschen ... ic in dien veghenier niet langhe ende behoef te bliven. Amen";*

Unedited set of devotional instructions and prayers for Saturday, beginning with a meditative text on confession (ff. 77-80), followed by a direction to read the sixth Penitential Psalm (Ps. 129), a plaintive prayer inspired by the Psalm (ff. 80v-81v) and a prayer to the Trinity (f. 82). A series of prayers follows, each accompanied by a woodcut, on events during and immediately following the Passion, including Christ's crucifixion (f. 83), death (ff. 84-85), and the descent from the cross (f. 86), concluding with the Anastasis (f. 87). Christ's entombment, a prayer which occupied two folios, is missing (based on comparison with the Leiden incunable, see Dlabáčová 2017, Table 1).

ff. 88-92, *Hier beghint die seste penitency psalm uit marien souter diemen des saterdaechs lessen sal. Calpiti [capiti?] De profundis "O Vrouwe vanden diepen heb ic gheroepen tot dy ... in ewicheyt der ewiched etc. Amen, Leest die seven ghebeden totter wapen ons beren ende die oracie van allen heylighen;*

Instructions to read the sixth Penitential Psalm (Ps. 129); this Psalm's second use on Saturday is the version from the Marian Psalter: it is addressed to Mary, who is pictured holding the infant Christ on the verso facing the incipit. The psalm is followed by an extensive Marian litany of 100 petitions, followed by a prayer to Mary and instructions to read the prayers to the instruments of the Passion and prayer to All Saints.

ff. 93-102v, *Des sonnendaechs suldi u oeffenen ende tot u ghetyde hebben ... "U en lesten mael soe suldy dencken op ten soendach als men van allen handeliken werken ... (f. 102) O Trooster alre bedructer herten ... hier na in galileen dat is inder weigher glorien ewelic moet bescouwen Amen" [ends imperfectly].*

Unedited prayers for Sunday. The first reflects on salvation and the attributes of heaven and those who populate it, facing a woodcut of Christ enthroned. In heaven, for example, it is always summer without winter, and everyone is always cheerful and happy (f. 94). The seventh Penitential Psalm (Ps. 142, f. 96v) and a prayer pleading for spiritual guidance follows. Concludes with three prayers: to the Trinity (f. 100), on the Resurrection (f. 101, facing a woodcut showing the same), and on the three Marys discovering Christ's empty tomb (f. 102, with a corresponding woodcut). Ending imperfectly on f. 102v, the final folio features a woodcut of Christ holding a shovel, appearing to Mary Magdalene in the garden after his resurrection. This would have corresponded to its accompanying, but now lost, prayer.

ILLUSTRATION

Twenty-one full-page contemporary woodcuts in black ink, from twenty blocks (of an original seventy-one) by the "Second Gouda Woodcutter" (see Conway, 1884, pp. 46-50; Kok, 2013, no. 74). Scholars have demonstrated that this series was made for the *Devote ghetiden*, they were subsequently used by both Leeu and other printers in different contexts. All are printed on verso and correspond to the text on the facing recto. The topics illustrated are as follows:

f. 65v, Flagellation of Christ;

f. 66v, Christ is crowned with thorns;

f. 67v, Stripped of his clothes, Christ is presented to bystanders with crown of thorns and robe;

- f. 68v, Christ is brought before Pilate, who washes his hands;
- f. 69v, Christ carries the cross;
- f. 70v, St Veronica displays the shroud impressed with Christ's face;
- f. 71v, Christ is stripped bare;
- f. 72v, Christ is bound and nailed to the cross;
- f. 73v, The cross is raised;
- f. 75v, Mary with infant Christ standing on a crescent moon in a floral paneled frame;
- f. 76v, Man, hat in hand, confesses to a priest in church;
- f. 82v, Crucifixion with Mary and John flanking the cross;
- f. 83v, Christ dies, having been stuck with a long spear;
- f. 85v, Descent from the Cross;
- f. 86v, Anastasis, or harrowing of hell (with hellfire touched in red ink);
- f. 87v, Mary with infant Christ standing on a crescent moon in a floral paneled frame (repeated);
- f. 92v, Christ enthroned in heaven, surrounded by angels, with Moses and St. Peter above;
- f. 99v, God the Father enthroned, holding the crucified Christ with the Holy Spirit standing atop the cross;
- f. 100v, Resurrection, Christ emerges from the tomb (a sarcophagus) among sleeping soldiers;
- f. 101v, The three Marys and an angel at the empty tomb;
- f. 102v, The resurrected Christ appears to Mary Magdalen in a garden, holding a shovel (*Noli me tangere*).

Devote ghetiden vanden leven ende passie Jhesu Christi (Devout Hours on the Life and Passion of Jesus Christ) is a series of affective meditations and a prayer cycle intended for the daily devotions of late fifteenth-century Dutch and Flemish laypeople (Dlabačová, 2017, §5). Its author remains unknown. This is a copy of the second edition of the *Devote ghetiden*: the first was printed about a year earlier in Leeu's Gouda workshop, just prior to his relocation to Antwerp in 1484 (Dlabačová, 2017, §1). In addition to the text, Leeu reused the woodcuts he had made for his first edition, which are identified by Dlabačová as "one [of] the first and most influential series of woodcuts with a religious character cut in the Low Countries" (2017, §2).

The full text of *Devote ghetiden* included “sets” of devotional material for each day of the week; this partial copy holds most of the material for Friday, all for Saturday, and about half for Sunday. In contrast with the prayers in Books of Hours, these devotions were not tied to the traditional canonical hours, but were intended to more easily fit into the busy days of lay people. The author’s prologue states: “Because in general people who live in the world and participate in the active life spend a lot of time bustling about their livelihood, trade, or business, for which reason they do not have the time or the strength to keep the seven hours [i.e., the canonical hours] every day. Therefore, here are set out seven short hours for the whole week where each day has its specific [act of] remorse, specific penitential prayer and specific prayers and hours” (Dlabačová, 2017).

Each day’s meditations begins with a Penitential Psalm followed by prayers focused on events from the life of Christ. Nearly all prayers, beginning on the recto, are matched with an accompanying woodcut on the facing verso. As described by Dlabačová, the prayers follow a specific formula: “the votary addresses the Godhead or Christ [...], speaks words of gratitude, and then reads a brief description of the event, which is also shown by the image. The votary then moves on to make a request – always connected to the spiritual model provided by the description of the event” (2017, §21). The Penitential Psalm is then mirrored with its version from the Marian Psalter. Attributed to St. Bonaventure in the thirteenth century, each Psalm begins similarly to its biblical counterpart, but is instead addressed to the Virgin. The Marian Psalter was a mainstay within the late-medieval cult of Mary, and together with Marian litanies (as found in this incunable) laid the foundation of the Rosary (Winston-Allen 1997, pp. 15-16).

There were at least five editions of *Devote ghetiden*, which survive in a combined total of seven other copies (only one in the USA), each of which lacks at least one folio. Only the first and second editions were printed by Gerard Leeu (see Dlabačová, 2020, pp. 182-83). There are additionally seven manuscripts, all produced after the first printed edition and containing various parts of the *Devote ghetiden*, mostly in combination with other texts (Dlabačová, 2017, §30-32). Remarkably, this is one of only two surviving copies of the second edition: the other, a nearly complete copy, is now Leiden, University Library, 1498 F1. This exceptionally rare incunable is a noteworthy artifact of lay devotional culture and its imagery in the commercial heart of late medieval Northern Europe. Its novel use of extensive (and historically important) woodcuts illustrates the growing practice of visualization in late-medieval prayer and the ways in which the printed book – a more affordable alternative to the manuscript – used media like woodcuts to increase its charm and prestige.

LITERATURE

Campbell, M.F.A.G. *Annales de la typographie Neerlandaise au XV^e siècle*, Vol. 1. The Hague, 1874, available at https://books.google.nl/books?id=7R46PzooF1oC&source=gbs_navlinks_s.

Conway, William Martin. *The Woodcutters of the Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century: In Three Parts*. Cambridge, 1884.

Dlabačová, Anna. “Religious Practice and Experimental Book Production: Text and Image in an Alternative Layman’s “Book of Hours” in Print and Manuscript,” *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 9.2 (2017), available online at <https://jhna.org/articles/religious-practice-experimental-book-production-text-image-alternative-laymans-book-of-hours/>.

Dlabačová, Anna. "Illustrated Incunabula as Material Objects: The Case of the *Devout Hours on the Life and Passion of Jesus Christ*," in *Inwardness, Individualization, and Religious Agency in the Late Medieval Low Countries: Studies in the Devotio Moderna and its Contexts*, eds. R. Hofman, C. Caspers, P. Nissen, M. van Dijk, and J. Oosterman, Turnhout, 2020.

Kok, Ina. *Woodcuts in Incunabula printed in the Low Countries. Vol. III: Illustrations, Woodcut Numbers 1-79*. Hes & De Graaf, 2013.

St. Bonaventure. *The Psalter of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, trans. by J. H. Wallishauser, 1841.

Winston-Allen, Anne. *Stories of the Rose: The Making of the Rosary in the Middle Ages*, University Park, PA, 1997.

ONLINE RESOURCES

"Horae [Dutch] Devote getijden van het leven Ons Heren [ISTC No. ih00433150]," *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue*

<https://data.cerl.org/istc/ih00433150>.

St. Bonaventure, *Psalter of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. EWTN

<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/psalter-of-the-bvm-12537>.

St. Bonaventure, *The Psalter of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, trans. by J. H. Wallishauser, 1841. Available as an e-Book via E-Saint Library, 2010

<https://tinyurl.com/4h3x23b8>.

Watermarks in Incunabula printed in the Low Countries (WILC)

<https://watermark.kb.nl/>.

TM 1141