



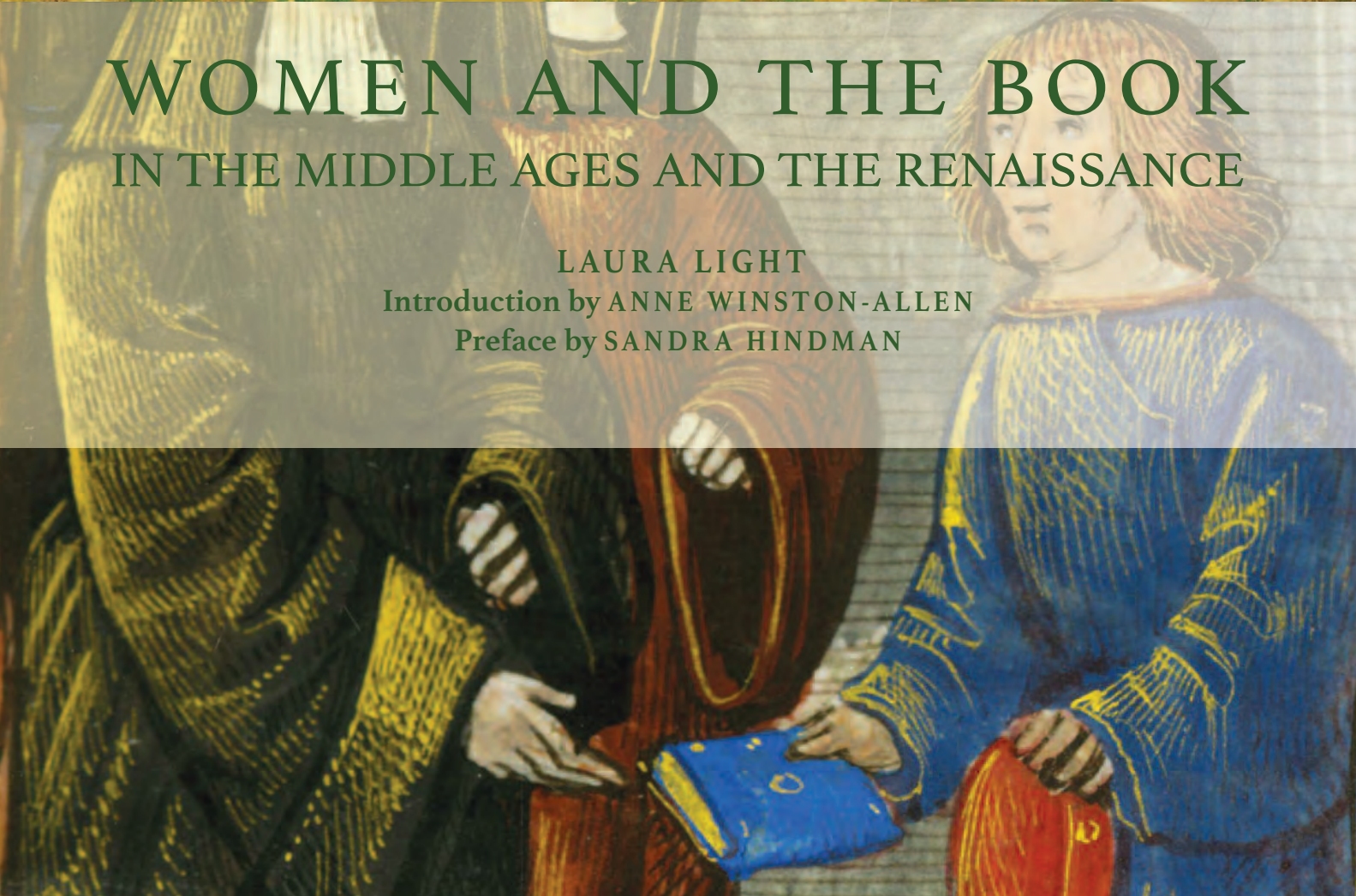
WOMEN AND THE BOOK

IN THE MIDDLE AGES AND THE RENAISSANCE

LAURA LIGHT

Introduction by ANNE WINSTON-ALLEN

Preface by SANDRA HINDMAN



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PREFACE: A PERSONAL GLIMPSE



PEOPLE WHO WENT TO UNIVERSITY IN THE 1960S DID NOT STUDY "WOMEN AND THE BOOK."

Classic surveys of medieval manuscripts available then (e.g., Mitchell, 1965) rarely mentioned the role of women – not as authors, as artists, as scribes, as readers, and as agents. Moreover there were few women professors of medieval art and history teaching another perspective. As a young undergraduate at the University of Chicago I studied medieval art history with two distinguished women medievalists (Professors Eleanor Simmons Greenhill, died 2009, and Marian Card Donnelly, died 1999), but despite this to my recollection gender never came up. Even Books of Hours – now regarded as a quintessential book for women at the end of the Middle Ages – belonged to a man's world. A lot has changed.

WHEREAS ONCE IT WAS RELATIVELY EASY TO READ ALL THE RELEVANT SCHOLARLY LITERATURE

on the history of women in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, now, five decades later, it is a daunting undertaking. It is almost as audacious in 2015 to propose a catalogue on "women and the book," as it would be to write one on "men and the book." Almost but not quite. Kathryn Smith (2013) among others (see also Joan Scott, 1986, 2010) has raised the question of whether a "gendered" approach is still useful and appropriate. Her answer is "yes." I agree. Women have yet to be fully integrated into our historical perspective, and medieval manuscripts are still seen with a gender

bias as objects created by (and for) men, rather than as artifacts made by people. Any one of the topics raised here in this catalogue of thirty-six manuscripts could be the subject of an exhibition on its own or, in some cases, a monographic study. But by addressing the subject in this very broad way, we hope that useful new directions will emerge that will help shape our thoughts about women and their relationship with books as seen through the lens of manuscripts as material artifacts.

WHAT I WANT TO DO IN THIS SHORT PREFACE IS TO CHART THE COURSE OF SCHOLARSHIP

on women and the book in very general terms partly against the background of the feminist movement, without which the topic "women and the book" would not exist. Second Wave Feminism began with the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) that emerged out of the social and political activism that swept through campuses especially in America but also in Western Europe in the late 1960s. (First Wave Feminism terminated with the Suffragette Movement that gave women the right to vote in 1920). Scholarship on women and the book lagged only a bit behind. Again if I may be permitted an autobiographical aside Fresh from my women's group and the completion of my dissertation in London, I accepted my first academic position at The Johns Hopkins University to begin in the Fall of 1973, excited partly because I would be teaching in the same city where Dorothy Miner was Keeper of Manuscripts at the Walters Art Gallery. I greatly admired Dorothy, whom I had met during my graduate research, and I looked forward to getting to know her better, while I naturally hoped that the superb collection of medieval manuscripts at the Walters would provide fodder for my own teaching. Alas, Dorothy Miner died on May 15, 1973. But, her landmark essay "Anastaise and Her Sisters" was published as a keepsake booklet of the Baltimore Bibliophiles in 1974. I believe the historiography of medieval women and the book begins here. This short essay, a "footnote" as Dorothy called it to an exhibition held in 1972 called "Old Mistresses – Women Artists of the Past," surveyed a selection of women illuminators from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries, concluding with Anastaise, an illuminator praised by the author-scribe Christine de Pizan. The article was also a beacon for my own early research.

RIDING ON THE WAVE OF THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT, THE 1970S SAW THE EARLIEST

forays into the field of "women and the book." During these years at Hopkins I came to know another medievalist from the Baltimore-Washington area, Claire Richter Sherman, also a specialist on manuscripts. Claire's article on "The Queen in Charles V's Coronation Book" became a touchstone for studies on "feminist" medieval iconography and deserves rereading to this day for its merits. Relying on both text and image and sensitive to the historical context, she meticulously analyzed a famous

manuscript made for King Charles V of France in the light of the differing status and functions of king and queen, Jeanne de Bourbon. It is a surprise to see the date of publication was as early as 1977. In the same decade the journal *Feminist Studies* began its run (volume 1 in 1972), although it rarely included essays on medieval topics. And, even if it was not a work of academic scholarship, Marina Warner's *Alone of All Her Sex* on the Virgin Mary published in 1976 was a must-read for most medievalists. Those who read it could never again view Marian iconography in quite the same way.

RESEARCH ON "WOMEN AND THE BOOK" CONDUCTED IN THE 1980S BUILT ON THE SEMINAL contributions of people like Dorothy Miner and Claire Sherman. By 1987-1988 when I co-taught "Women in Medieval Literature and Art" with Barbara Newman at Northwestern University, we were able to assign Peter Dronke's excellent survey on medieval women writers (1984), as well as draw on our own recently published research, hers on the German nun-mystic-composer Hildegard of Bingen of the twelfth century (1987) and mine on the first professional woman writer and scribe Christine de Pizan of the early fifteenth century (1986).

WHEREAS SECOND WAVE FEMINISM SET OUT TO REDISCOVER THE ACTIVE ROLES WOMEN played in the past – Anastaise, Jeanne de Bourbon, Hildegard of Bingen, Christine de Pizan – it is much more difficult to generalize about the veritable deluge of scholarship that accompanied Third Wave Feminism of the 1990s and into the first decade of the new millennium. During these years, most of the topics mentioned above on women as authors, artists, scribes, readers, and agents received abundant attention, deepening our understanding of just how active medieval women were. There is Hamburger's classic study on the practices of nuns as women artists (1997), as well as admirable research on nuns as writers-readers-owners by the author of our introduction, Anne Winston-Allen (1997, 2004, and her excellent website on women artists). McCash took the study of women's patronage a big step forward (1996), and Babcock's exhibition showed just how a careful examination of manuscripts as material objects could uncover useful data on women as book owners (2005). Research on Books of Hours established this genre firmly in the context of women as patrons and readers, and even as mothers who taught their children to read (Bennett, 1996, Caviness, 1993, Smith, 2003, Cullum and Goldberg, 2000). Third Wave Feminism is also noteworthy for its social awareness of race and sexual orientation: here Camille and Rifkin's collection of essays on gay and queer studies (2001) and Brown's remarkably early micro-history of lesbian nuns (1986) are worth signaling. This brief survey of decades of research is of course woefully incomplete; it touches merely on a few of my personal highlights.

THE PRESENT BOOK – THE FIFTH IN THE SERIES OF CATALOGUES ON TEXT MANUSCRIPTS –

focuses closely on a carefully chosen group of medieval manuscripts to enrich still further our understanding of the roles women played through the lens of actual books owned by lay women and nuns (Sections I and II) and books women wrote (Section III). A selection of books written by men for or about women (Section IV) completes our overview. All these case studies offer insight into how women fit (or do not fit) into the society of their day, whether as printers taking over the family business from their husbands (Charlotte Guillard's printed Psalter, no. 11), as collectors establishing inventories of their artistic belongings (Valentine Visconti's inventory of tapestries, no. 26), or as book owners intent on leaving personal traces of their life (Francoise Fortin's Book of Hours, no. 2). New additions to the oeuvre of women artists are included, a Hymnal by the illuminator-scribe Elsbeth Töpplin in a wonderful original binding (probably also by the hand of a woman) (no. 7), and a charming Psalter from the Abbey of Medingen that even has a drawing of a couple in it labeled "mother and father" by the nun-artist (no. 8).

IN THE LIGHT OF MY OVERVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT ON THE STUDY

of "women and the book," I wonder whether Fourth Wave Feminism, a movement said to begin c. 2008, can offer something to this ongoing project. Fourth Wave feminists are generally described as technically savvy and gender-sophisticated. Of course, the explosion of the internet with its social media, blogs, and the digital humanities cannot help but enrich all scholarship, including that on "women and the book." There is another aspect, however, that may be relevant, and this involves gender. The final section of manuscripts written by men includes *Fiammetta*, a work by Boccaccio, whose hermeneutics are now seen as challenging the very categories of "male" or "female" discourse (Olsen, 2011). The reintegration of the voices of women with those of men speaking for society as a whole composed of multiple perspectives may be a welcome by-product of the Fourth Wave. At the same time, might we not want to go back to some fundamental questions of difference raised by Dorothy Miner in her discussion of artistic style? She asked whether humor and a sensitive taste characterized the work of female illuminators "as they struggle with the frustrations of this world"? Is the world really so different, or different enough, today?

Sandra Hindman

INTRODUCTION: WOMEN AND THEIR BOOKS IN THE “NEW SPIRITUAL LANDSCAPE” OF THE LATE MIDDLE AGES



The sisters in our cloister had a great need for books in the beginning of the reform....Within three years, the prioress arranged to have copied six large books that were decorated, page by page, with gold letters and illuminations. For there were artists among the sisters who understood this craft.

...All of these books are as dear to us as precious pearls because of the sweet and delightful writings that they contain.

— CHRONICLES OF CLOISTER EBSTORF, 1490; 1487

CONVENTS, TOWNS, AND AT COURT

Women in the Middle Ages had been writing, copying, and illustrating books at least as far back as Hroswith of Gandersheim, author of chronicles and plays in the tenth century and had been painting manuscripts since the time of artist En (Ende), whose signature appears in the fabulous Girona Beatus-Apocalypse made in tenth-century León. But the arrival of the Observantist Reform Movement in northern Europe during the fifteenth century brought with it a veritable “explosion” in women’s scribal activity (Williams-Krapp, 1995, p. 3).

A Chronicle written by sisters at the Benedictine Cloister of Ebstorf in Lower Saxony recounts that in the first years after the house was reformed by Observant activists from Hadmersleben 1464-1470, all of the old liturgical books were cut up and replaced with new ones following the simpler Bursfeld common liturgy. It relates how the sisters themselves labored mightily to copy twenty-seven large manuscripts (Breviaries, Collectars, Graduals, Gospel Books, Psalters, Antiphoners, Lectionaries and Hymnals) and proudly names six sisters who accomplished this monumental work (Borchling, 1905, pp. 391-92, 407). Although it is true that by the beginning of the fourteenth century book illustration in monastic scriptoria had largely shifted to secular ateliers, this was not the case at women’s cloisters, which continued to produce Choir Books and other manuscripts for their own use (nos. 7-15, 20-22).

In the secular world, one hears of women trained as illustrators who worked in family workshops, such as the daughters of the Nuremberg painter, Georg Glockendon the Elder (d. 1520) or Jeanne de Montbaston (c. 1353), who illustrated copies of the lives of saints as well as secular manuscripts in Paris together with her husband Richard de Montbaston (Rouse and Rouse, 1999, vol. 1, pp. 235-260). There is also the illuminator Anastasia in Paris, whom Christine de Pizan praises for her skills at painting the backgrounds of miniatures. Daughters of prosperous painters such as Konrad Witz and Paolo Uccello were sometimes accepted into convents, as was Katharina Witz who became a nun at Basel’s Magdalen Cloister in 1454 (Erdirn, 1965, p. 80). Antonia Uccello (1456-1491) – whom Giorgio Vasari called “a daughter who knew how to draw” – entered the Carmelite cloister at Florence, where records list her as “pittorressa” (Greer, 1979, p. 15), although no work by her has so far been identified. The last great Flemish illuminator, Simon Bening (d. 1561) active in Bruges, trained his daughters as illuminators; one became court painter and “limner” to Edward VI of England and another a dealer in paintings, parchment, miniatures, and silk.

Not all books owned by women in the Middle Ages were religious texts or kept in communities of religious women. Secular women owned books as well – and of a greater variety – but primarily Books of Hours, miscellanies, tracts, and devotional texts (nos. 1-6, 27). Even at court there were women who could write bookhand, paint, and illuminate on parchment. The “Sister-Book” of the Dominican convent of Oetenbach in Zürich, written c. 1340, relates, for example, that when the wealthy widow Ita von Hohenfels joined the community – having spent most of her life at court – she brought with her three women who could copy, paint, and illuminate. The account goes on to report that the sisters earned ten marks a year (enough to support three women at the fledgling community) by copying and decorating books. Twice widowed, Frau Ita had entered the religious house of Oetenbach after the death of her second husband, a knight who, as the Sister-Book reports, had fallen in love with her when he “saw her reflection in his sword” (Zeller-Werdmüller and Bächthold, 1889, p. 231). Much less romantic than Ita’s story are many other accounts of widows

of rank and means living within religious communities. And manuscripts were often the most precious belongings that they brought with them.

Sometimes these valuable books were bequeathed to the religious house or donated by the family as a memorial. In this way, for example, the exquisite Book of Hours of Margaret of Cleves was given to the reformed cloister of Schönensteinbach in Alsace c. 1409. The manuscript carries an inscription dedicating it to the cloister as a memorial to Margaret of Dillenburg (Marrow, 1995, pp. 12-15, fig. 1). As the first women's cloister north of the Alps to be reformed by the Dominican Observantist Movement, Schönensteinbach was founded in 1397 with funding by Catherine of Burgundy (daughter of Philip the Bold) and her husband Duke Leopold of Austria, sovereigns of the Habsburg lands in Alsace (Winston-Allen, 2004, pp. 81-99). Catherine's great-aunt by marriage, Margaret of Marck and Nassau-Dillenburg (the sister of Count Adolf I of Kleve-Marck), left the world to become a lay sister at Schönensteinbach in 1402 (Dietler, 1897, pp. 249-250). As the cloister's secular patroness, Catherine personally donated a beautifully illustrated Bible and a Psalter with gold initials and a full-page miniature of St. Jerome (Basel, UB, MS O IV 51 and Zürich, ZB, MS Rh 154). One of Catherine's grandnieces, Margaret of Savoy, although widowed twice, chose not to enter a cloister. Instead she married Count Ulrich V of Württemberg, reformer of religious houses in his realm. Margaret herself had been educated by Observant Dominicans and was a literate, highly cultivated woman who spoke four languages and was a serious collector of books. After being forced to sell her first book collection to pay off debts attached to a previous dowry, Margaret as countess in Württemberg assembled a new personal library, of which more than twenty-eight luxury volumes are still extant – most of them illustrated (Lähmann, 2002). Women of the court, such as Margaret (great-grandniece of the Duke de Berry) brought up in the elegant world of art, music, and literature at the cultivated Savoy court, preferred deluxe illustrated editions as books to collect and to give as gifts (nos. 1 and 27).

THE "SOCIOLOGY" OF WOMEN'S MANUSCRIPTS

It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that women's books have much to reveal about late-medieval society and women's role and influence in it. Convent books – apart from their obvious aesthetic and devotional significance – also had economic, political, and social functions that extended beyond the walls of the religious house. Recent studies have begun to call attention to the multiple networks that connected women's religious communities with lay society at all levels. Women's convents served the secular community as schools for educating young women of the patrician classes, as safe

keepers of records (wills, deeds, contracts), as financial institutions for lending and investment, as employers of craftsmen and artisans, as dispensers of food and alms to the poor, and as places of retirement toward the end of life. Christine de Pizan, for instance, retired to the royal abbey of Poissy after a life at court as an author-scribe of deluxe manuscripts. Moreover the pious nuns of a reformed convent were a guarantee that anniversary prayers would continually be said for souls in passage through purgatory and also that prayers of intercession would be offered for the welfare of the town's inhabitants in the here and now.

"TOWN AND GOWN" COLLABORATIONS

Because of their exclusive status as the daughters, sisters, aunts, and relatives of society's most prominent and influential families, convent women had access to the support of wealthy donors. By drawing on these connections they were able to sponsor "town and gown" collaborations and to orchestrate the production of some of the most beautiful and costly manuscripts created in the Middle Ages; books such as the huge, richly illuminated Gradual of St. Katharinenthal (c. 1312, Zürich, Schweizerisches Landesmuseum, inv. no. LM 26117). Although the sisters did not make these most spectacular works entirely themselves (except for perhaps copying the text), they coordinated the production, the financing, and engaged professional illuminators to produce the stunning major initials. The smaller initials and the images of nuns (sometimes labeled with their names) that are painted into the margins and into the text may have been inserted in the women's own scriptorium. Other prominent large-scale "town and gown" collaborations can be found, for example, at Heilig Kreuz in Regensburg and at Wonnental near Freiburg (Oxford, Keble College, MS 49; Karlsruhe, BLB, U.H. 1). These opulent manuscripts depict in the margins many secular donors – but a predominance of nuns.

The convent's production of these splendid liturgical books benefited the lay population by securing God's favor and by soliciting protection from patron saints who were specially honored in the manuscript and were celebrated in its ceremonial Offices sung in the convent's parish church. In this way, town-and-gown projects engaged both communities and served the welfare of all through a mutually beneficial relationship.

PERSONAL AND GIFT BOOKS

Beyond the spectacular collaborative projects and the illuminated Choir Books that convent women regularly made themselves in their own convent "scriptoria," the sisters also created and decorated many smaller, less elaborate books. Among them – but no less interesting – are diminutive books made for women's own personal use (nos. 14, 15, 22) and numerous small manuscripts created as gifts for lay friends and relatives.

Gift-books presented by the nuns to the families of city officials could curry favor and secure advantages for a religious house. Thomas Lentés's research on convent account registers has shown that, in fact, a large part of their budgets was devoted to the production of gifts such as crosses, cards, cakes and other items as well as books (Lentes, 2004). Manuscripts, presented as gifts from one religious house to another (including exchanges between nuns and male religious) can be used to trace networks of influence within medieval towns and localities. While production of a very costly manuscript could demonstrate and enhance the prestige of a house, less costly examples also merit attention as social and cultural artifacts that fill out and delineate the economy of artistic production in the Middle Ages. In their variety, unconventional images, iconography, unique contents, use of the vernacular, or their individual histories, women's manuscripts offer some of the most promising sources of information that survive.

Differing from the exquisite Books of Hours owned by queens and the court nobility – works that have been reproduced in countless art-history surveys – the less professional and more varied images by nun-artists present another side of the Middle Ages, one that fills out part of the history of art not seen in surveys of masterworks. These works, made by women from prosperous burgher families and the lower aristocracy, express the outlook and practices of a large segment of the medieval population (still not the vast silent majority who left no manuscripts at all). These women made and illustrated the kinds of books they liked to own and give as gifts, works that express their spiritual needs, interests, and outlook. Most contain prayers, collections of meditations, lives of saints, songs, and sermons in the vernacular.

PRAYER BOOKS: SIGNATURE GENRES AND REGIONAL STYLES

In fact, women made thousands of prayer books and illuminated a good portion of them, most of which still remain to be studied and described beyond the generic description "prayer book" (Achten, 1980, p. 44). It turns out that there are within this category many different kinds of books

(nos. 14 and 15). Some are unique, signature types that developed at particular convents or in particular areas. Northern German cloisters in the area of Lüneburg such as Medingen, Lüne, Ebstorf and Wienhausen, for example, created a unique form of book, written in Latin, in the vernacular, or in a mixture of Latin and Middle Low German, that combines together prayers, meditations, and religious songs (often with musical notation) keyed to the Christmas or Easter religious services – a kind of service-book for lay people (Uhde-Stahl, 1978; Stork, 2007, Lähnemann, online). Some of these books appear to have been made as gifts or on commission from local townspeople.

At Cloister Medingen at least six of the forty-eight extant manuscripts made in the convent scriptorium can be traced to wealthy owners among the laity (Cermann, 2003, p. 273). Some of the town's most affluent lay women were, in fact, graduates of the convent school. And these graduates may well have maintained friendships with their former teachers and with classmates who had stayed and joined the religious community as nuns. It is likely that "alumnae" who had learned to read some Latin were familiar with the texts of the Offices performed at the Christmas or Easter services, and may have returned to the parish church for holiday services. At Cloister Ebstorf graduates were even allowed to sing along with the nuns's choir on some festive occasions. The dual-language manuscripts that combine Latin and Middle Low German would perhaps have been a popular item for "alumnae" of the school. Moreover, we know that the Cistercian nuns of Medingen had their own bindery, and it may be that in making books for lay people to use during religious services and festivals or for individual devotions, they had found a market and source of income to support their financially troubled cloister. The fact that many of the vernacular books made in convent workshops were owned by secular women itself reflects new trends in book production of the fifteenth century.

The shift from Latin to the vernacular and to dual-language books at Medingen and their inclusion of songs similar to those sung by the Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life (at work and in religious services) illustrates not only connections to other, contemporaneous religious movements, but also, and even more importantly, the sisters's role in shaping a new devotional literature for the laity, and in particular a literature for lay women.

REFORM AND NON-MAINSTREAM STYLES

In books they purchased or made themselves, women tended to prefer prayer books, vernacular lives of saints, sermon collections, tracts, and devotional treatises. And while women of the high nobility such as Margaret of Savoy also owned courtly romances and popular non-fiction, the majority of

hand-written books prior to printing were still religious works. Moreover, in the wake of the Observant Reforms of the fifteenth-century and the so-called “explosion” of literature that accompanied it, most manuscripts can be traced to the libraries of Observant houses – actually, some ninety percent of books of the period whose provenance can be identified (Williams-Krapp, 1995; Schiewer, 1998, p. 78). The result for manuscript illustration was the development of regional, non-mainstream styles that reflect the influence of needlework, textiles, and local folk-art (Hamburger, 1997). The most recognizable style is that developed by nuns at the Dominican cloister of St. Katharine in Nuremberg, where the largest library of vernacular books of the Middle Ages was assembled; their library included some 600 volumes, half of which the sisters copied themselves (Sauer, 2007, pp. 118-29; Schneider, 1983, p. 71).

In the Upper Rhine region, women’s works seem to have been influenced early on by the style of Strasbourg schools of painters such as that of the Master of the Paradise Garden (c. 1410); but thereafter they developed a life and a style of their own (von Heusinger, 1959). Most prolific and best known was Clarissan sister Sibylla von Bondorf (c. 1450-1524) active in Freiburg and Strasbourg, who made over 180 full-page miniatures and enjoyed a reputation that extended beyond her cloister and town (Bodemann, 2007; Winston-Allen, 2007, pp. 190-95). The influence of her work can be seen in the number of her illustrations that appear pasted into works by other artists, copies made of them, and imitations of her distinctive textile-inspired style in the work of other artists (other examples of pasted-in decoration, nos. 8, 10, 13). Another artist in Freiburg was Elsbeth Töpplin, who arrived with a group of Observants from Schönensteinbach in 1464 to reform the cloister of the Penitents of St. Mary Magdalen. A convent necrology from 1509 states that Sister Elsbeth made for the cloister a two-volume Antiphoner and a Missal (Zinke and Karasch, 2002, pp. 116-117). At least four manuscripts made in Freiburg contain the work of both Sibylla von Bondorf and Elsbeth Töpplin. In the preparation of this catalogue, two new manuscripts by artists of the Observant Reform have been identified. One by Elsbeth Töpplin brings the total of manuscripts in which her illustrations are found to six (no. 7). And the identification of another manuscript from the Medingen scriptorium brings the total number of “Medingen manuscripts” that can be traced to forty-nine (no. 8).

The reform that affected Medingen, Wienhausen, Ebstorf and other cloisters of the Lüneburg area in Lower Saxony took place under the secular authority of the Dukes of Brunswick-Lüneburg. In the case of Wienhausen, it was the Duke Otto V, with the active participation of his wife, Anna von Nassau-Dillenburg, great-great-granddaughter of the same Margarete von Nassau-Dillenburg who had “left the world” in 1402 to become a lay sister at Schönensteinbach (Appuhn, 1986, p. 26). Observant activist and promoter of the reform, Augustinian Provost Johannes Busch, had been trained

at the Augustinian monastery of Windesheim near Zwolle, a monastic branch of the Brothers of the Common Life. Busch made a point of sending Latin teachers, nuns who were to educate the sisters in the language of the liturgy, to the cloisters that he reformed (Busch, 1886, pp. 618-27; Winston-Allen, 2004, pp. 106-107). The Observance, through its promotion of literacy for women and its radically increased production of books, thus resulted in a more active role for women in what Kaspar Elm has called the “new spiritual landscape” at the end of the Middle Ages (Elm, 1980, p. 233). It was a momentous time of new religious movements and internal struggles for reform within the church, with appeals coming from every quarter.

The chronicle written by a sister at Ebstorf gives us an inside view of the atmosphere on the eve of the Reformation, expressing the sense of urgency to keep alive the spirit of the reform in a medieval world at the tipping point. Luther himself was a resident of three Observant houses and a scholar. But it was a young woman at Ebstorf who wrote:

Therefore we ought to work hard for a good foundation and apply ourselves with all vigor to our lessons, so that the golden jewel of education – however modest – should not be lost in this revered place by our negligence and idleness. Rather let us make every effort that it shall increase from day to day. For if we were to lose gold or silver, the loss might be recouped, but if the foundation of learning were to be lost, it would do irreparable damage to the religious life. For whenever in cloisters the acquisition of learning goes into decline, the result most assuredly is the destruction of the religious life as well.

— A SISTER AT CLOISTER EBSTORF, c. 1490 (Borchling, 1905, p. 395)

Anne Winston-Allen, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

50 WOMEN AND THEIR BOOKS

AUTHORS, ARTISTS, SCRIBES, PATRONS, AND BOOK-OWNERS

1. SULPICIA (late first century B.C.) was the only female poet from ancient Rome whose works survive today. Her poems are found in the *Corpus Tibullianum*, a collection of poems by Tibullus and others, preserving an aristocratic female voice from the Augustan milieu of Horace and Vergil.



2. FALTONIA BETITIA PROBA (c. 306/315-c. 353/366) was the author of a centon in Virgilian hexameters, the *Cento vergilianus de laudibus Christi*, an account of the major events from Creation to Pentecost. This work was read throughout the Middle Ages, and her biography was included in Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claris* and Christine de Pizan's *La Cité des Dames*.

3. PAULA (347-404), and her daughter EUSTOCHIUM (c. 368-419/420) were well-born Roman women, who followed Jerome to the Holy Land and founded convents near Bethlehem. We know from the many letters addressed to them by Jerome that they were both extremely well-educated in Latin and Greek and also learned Hebrew to help Jerome with his biblical translations (nos. 1, 29, 30).



4. AELIA EUDOCIA AUGUSTA (c. 401-460), the wife of the Eastern Roman emperor Theodosius II, was a poet and author of a Homeric centon that borrowed lines from Homer's epics to retell parts of the biblical narrative, and a work on the martyrdom of St. Cyprian, also in verse.

5. JULIANA ANICIA (462-527/528) was a Roman imperial princess, the daughter of the Western Roman Emperor Olybrius; the Vienna Dioscorides (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindobonensis med. gr. 1), the oldest known copy of this important medical text, was dedicated to her c. 512.

6. WIFE OF DANASH BEN LABRAT (sixth century) was the author of a poem from the Cairo Genizah, "Hayizkor ya'alat hahen" ("Will Her Love Remember"), an accomplished composition written in the voice of a worried woman whose husband is about to leave on a long trip.

7. DHOUDA (c. 803-840), a ninth-century author at the Court of Charles the Bald, wrote the *Liber manualis*, a handbook of right conduct, for her son William.

8. ADA (late eighth-early ninth century) was the sister of the emperor Charlemagne; the Ada Gospels (Trier, Stadtbibliothek, Codex 22), a late eighth- or early-ninth century Gospel Book was dedicated to her.

9. HROTSVITHA OF GANDERSHEIM (c. 935-1002) was a poet and dramatist who lived at Gandersheim Abbey in Lower Saxony; notable for her knowledge of classical authors, she was the author of eight verse legends, six plays, and two epics.

10. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND (c. 1046-1093), daughter of Edward the Aetheling and Agatha of Hungary and wife of Malcom of Scotland, was canonized in 1250. Her *vita* depicts her as an educated woman who read the Bible to her husband; the small Gospel Book, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS lat.liturg.f.5, which miraculously survived unharmed after it was carelessly dropped into a river, is described as her favorite book.

11. MATILDA OF SCOTLAND (c. 1080-1118), daughter of Margaret of Scotland and wife of Henry I of England, commissioned a life of St. Brendan in Latin, and then a second version in the vernacular for her ladies.

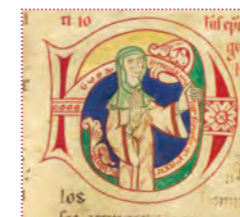
12. ANNA COMNENA (1083-1153), a Byzantine historian of the first crusade, is considered the first female historian; her chronicle is a major source of information about the reign of her father, Alexis I.

13. HILDEGARD OF BINGEN (1098-1179) was a Benedictine nun and abbess, a mystic, theologian, and author of numerous works: three volumes of visionary theology including the *Scivias*, musical compositions for the liturgy, a musical morality play, nearly four hundred letters, sermons, medical works, and many more.



14. HELOISE (c. 1101-1164) was trained in the classics, Latin rhetoric and philosophy, and knew not only Latin but some Greek and Hebrew; her tragic love affair with the philosopher Abelard is famous; after their dramatic parting, she entered the convent at Argenteuil, and subsequently became Abbess at the Paraclete; her correspondence with Abelard survives.

15. HERRAD OF LANDSBERG (c. 1130-after 1196), Abbess of Hohenburg, was the author of the *Hortus deliciarum* (Garden of Delights), that included captions in Latin and German to teach her novices Latin.



16. GUDA (12th century, second half?) was a scribe and artist; an initial in a Homiliary from c. 1175 (now Frankfurt, Stadtbibliothek, MS Barth, 42), shows Guda, dressed as a nun, and holding in her hand a banderole inscribed, "Guda peccatrix mulier scripsit et pinxit hoc librum" ("Guda a sinner wrote and painted this book").

17. MARIE OF CHAMPAGNE (1145-1198), daughter of Eleanor of Aquitaine, was a patron of secular and religious works; she commissioned Chrétien de Troye's *Chevalier de la charrette*, and in her widowhood Evrat's translation of Genesis, and probably a translation and gloss of Psalm 44, "Eructavit cor meum."

18. TROTA OF SALERNO (12th century, early or middle?) was a medical practitioner and medical writer (author of at least two works) in the southern Italian coastal town of Salerno who lived sometime in the early or middle decades of the twelfth century.



19. MARIE DE FRANCE (fl. c. 1160-1215) is known today for her works in Anglo-Norman French, including twelve *Lais* (short poems on courtly themes), a rhymed collection of Aesop's Fables, and the *Purgatory of St. Patrick*. She may have been an aristocratic woman, perhaps a nun, living in England but "from France," as she tells us in the *Fables*.

20. SAINT CLARE OF ASSISI (1194-1253) was one of the first followers of St. Francis of Assisi, and author of the rule for Franciscan Nuns, commonly called today in her honor the Poor Clares.

21. BEATRICE OF NAZARETH (1200-1268) was a Cistercian Nun from Belgium, and author of the *Seven Manners of Love* and of a diary in Dutch, apparently destroyed when her Latin Life was written.

22. SUSANNAH (13th century) was probably the name of the owner of the De Brailes Hours of c. 1240, the earliest free-standing Book of Hours (without a Psalter) for an English user (London, British Library, MS Additional 49999); Susannah may have been from a family living in the parish of St. Laurence, North Hinksey.

23. MARGARET OF PROVENCE (1221-1295) was Queen of France and wife of Louis IX; she commissioned a translation of the *Speculum historiale* by Jean Vignay.

24. MECHTILD OF MAGDEBURG (c. 1207-c. 1282?), a beguine who entered the Cistercian monastery of St. Mary at Helfta late in life, was the author of *Das fließende Licht der Gottheit* (The Flowing Light of Divinity) describing her mystical visions of God.

25. HADEWIJCH (mid-13th century?) was a poet and mystic, probably living in the Duchy of Brabant, perhaps in Antwerp. Most of her extant writings are in a Brabantian form of Middle Dutch. Her writings include visions, prose letters and poetry. Hadewijch was one of the most important direct influences on John of Ruysbroeck.

26. MECHTILD OF HACKEBORN (1240/1-1298), was a Cistercian Nun at the convent of St. Mary at Helfta in Saxony, and the author of the *Liber specialis gratiae* (Book of Special Grace) (nos. 14 and 24).

27. GERTRUDE THE GREAT, OR GERTRUDE OF HELFTA (1256-1301/1302), also a Cistercian Nun at Helfta and Mechtild's protégé, was the author (with her sisters) of the *Herald of God's Loving Kindness*.



28. MARGUERITE PORETE (c. 1250-1310) was a beguine from Valenciennes, and author of the *Mirror of Simple Souls*; she was burned as a heretic in 1310 (no. 25).

29. YOLANDE DE SOISSONS (married by 1276) was a wealthy, noble laywoman, who probably commissioned the Psalter Hours, c. 1280-90 in Amiens, which includes a rather dazzling portrait of her kneeling in prayer on f. 232v (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.729).

30. GISELA OF KERSENBROCK (d. 1300) was a Cistercian nun in the northern German city of Rulle who served as choir mistress, and who probably worked most of her life writing and illustrating manuscripts, including the Gradual known as the Codex Gisle, Osnabrück, Gymnasium Carolinum und Bischöfliches Generalvikariat, MS p.004.

31. BRIDGET (or BIRGITTA) OF SWEDEN (1303-1373) was the founder of the order of Bridgettine nuns and monks; her mystical visions were recorded in the *Revelationes coelestes* (Celestial Revelations).



32. BLANCHE OF BURGUNDY (d. 1348) was Countess of Savoy, and the granddaughter of Louis IX of France; she commissioned a Book of Hours now known by her name (Yale University, Beinecke Library, MS 390) that was made Paris at the atelier of Jean Pucelle; although only a fragment of her book survives, she is depicted a remarkable twenty-five times.

33. JEANNE D'EVREUX (1310-1371) was the third wife of King Charles IV of France; her Book of Hours, now in the Cloisters in New York (Metropolitan Museum of Art, MS 54.1.2) was commissioned from the artist Jean Pucelle between 1324 and 1328, probably as a gift from her husband.

34. CATHERINE OF SIENA (1347-1380), a Dominican tertiary, is an example of a religious woman, known for her asceticism, who led an active life as a peacemaker and prophet; her writings include her mystical treatise, the *Dialogue of Divine Providence*, prayers, and more than 300 letters, many of them to the major political leaders of her day, and more than one third to other women.

35. JULIAN OF NORWICH (1342-c. 1416) was an English anchoress who is regarded as one of the most important medieval mystics; she recorded her visions in the *Revelations of Divine Love*.

36. ANNE OF BOHEMIA (1366-1394), wife of King Richard II of England, commissioned a translation of the Gospels into English.



37. CHRISTINE DE PIZAN (1364-1430), known as the first professional female author, supported herself and her family by writing after her husband's death in 1390, composing forty-one works, all in French, including *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames* ("The Book of the City of Ladies") and *le Trésor de la Cité des Dames* ("The Treasure of the City of Ladies").

38. ANASTASIA (fl. c. 1400) was a French artist and illuminator, who specialized in decorative borders and the backgrounds to miniatures; she was praised by Christine de Pizan in *The Book of the City of Ladies* as the finest illuminator of her day.



39. VALENTINA VISCONTI (1371-1408), was Sovereign Countess of Vertus, and Duchess consort of Orléans as the wife of Louis de Valois, Duke of Orléans, the younger brother of King Charles VI of France; she was the patron of the poet Eustache Deschamps, and the mother of one of France's most famous poets, Charles of Orléans (no. 26).

40. MARGERY KEMPE (c. 1373-after 1438) was an English mystic; her work, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, has been called the first autobiography in the English language; it tells of her extensive pilgrimages to holy sites in Europe and the Holy Land, as well as her conversations with God.

41. SIBYLLA VON BONDORF (c. 1450-1524) was a Franciscan nun in Freiburg, c. 1460-85, and then in Strasbourg, c. 1485-1524; she was a prolific and popular artist, and her work has been identified in more than 180 miniatures.

42. ELSBETH TÖPLIN (fl. c. 1464-1500) was a scribe and artist from the scriptorium of the Dominican (formerly Magdalene) convent of St Mary Magdalene in Freiburg; her work has been identified in several manuscripts, and she is known to have collaborated with Sibylla von Bondorf (no. 7).

43. IPPOLITA MARIA SFORZA (1446-1484) was a member of the powerful Italian Sforza family which ruled the Duchy of Milan from 1450 until 1535; she was a learned woman, who knew Latin and Greek, and was the author of numerous letters and poems.



44. MARY OF BURGUNDY (1457-1482), the daughter and only child of Charles the Bold, the Duke of Burgundy (1433-1477), has traditionally been considered the owner of the Book of Hours known by her name, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindobonensis 1857, which includes what may be the most famous depiction of a medieval woman reading from her Book of Hours, her small dog on her lap, with a vision of the Virgin within a Gothic chapel behind.

45. MARGARET OF YORK (1466-1503) commissioned several devotional and moral treatises after she became the Duchess of Burgundy in 1468 including the *Dialogue de la duchesse de Bourgogne à Jésus Christ* by her almoner, Nicolas Finet; Margaret's copy, now in the British Library (Add. MS 7970) is introduced with a miniature of Margaret experiencing an apparition of the resurrected Christ in her bed chamber.

46. CATHERINE D'AMBOISE (c. 1482-1550) was a prose writer and poet of the French Renaissance; she wrote both verse and novels, including the *Livre des prudents et imprudents* (Book of the Prudent and Imprudent) (1509) and *La complainte de la dame pasmée contre fortune* (Fainting Lady's Complaint against Fortune) (1525). (no. 27).

47. ANNE OF BRITTANY (1477-1514), duchess of Brittany by birth and wife to two kings of France, had a library equal to the finest collections of her male contemporaries that included 1300-1500 volumes; she commissioned a prayerbook, now New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.50, to teach her son, the dauphin Charles Orland (1492-1495), his catechism.



48. CLAUDE DE FRANCE (1499-1524) was the eldest daughter of Louis XII of France and Anne of Brittany; the owner of many illuminated manuscripts, her primer, commissioned by her mother, still survives (now Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 159), and begins with the alphabet.

49. MARGUERITE DE NAVARRE (1492-1549) was the princess of France, Queen of Navarre, and Duchess of Alençon and Berry; she was a celebrated patron and humanist, who wrote numerous poems and plays, including a collection of stories, the *Heptameron*, and an intense religious poem, the *Miroir de l'âme pécheresse* (Mirror of the Sinful Soul).



50. LAURA BATTIFERRA DEGLI AMMANNATI (1523-1589) was celebrated by her contemporaries as the "new Sappho of our time"; she was extremely well-educated, and the author of more than 400 sonnets, and a translation of the Penitential Psalms into Italian (no. 28).

I. OWNED BY LAY WOMEN



IT IS CERTAINLY TRUE THAT DURING THE MIDDLE AGES, fewer manuscripts were owned by lay people (men or women), than by people living a religious life in a monastery or convent. It is also true that most people – male or female, lay or religious – did not own books at all, since books were far too expensive. But lay women at the upper levels of society were book-owners, and this group broadened to include women from more diverse backgrounds as time went on.

THE CAREFUL RECONSTRUCTION OF LAY WOMEN'S LIBRARIES through the study of surviving manuscripts, documentary sources and wills has been a particularly fruitful area of research, and one that is still ongoing (for example, Legaré, 1996; Beaune and Lequain, 2006; Halladay, 2006; Legaré and Schnerb, 2007; Brown, 2011, among others). In particular, a picture of the type of books owned by aristocratic women is taking its place alongside that of books owned by queens and princesses. The examination of actual books once owned by these women will also be an essential part of future research in the search for answers to many questions that still remain, for example: Did women's libraries differ from men's? Were they essentially more private? Did women collect and read different texts than did men? Did women read more in the vernacular, and if so, when and where was this true? What do these books tell us about women's literacy (in both Latin and the vernacular)? What was the role women played in

teaching their children? These questions need to be investigated within the context of society as a whole. It is often tantalizingly difficult to interpret evidence related to women's books, since the comparative information for men's libraries below the rank of kings and princes is still so incomplete (see Caroline Bynum's essay urging a gendered approach to women's history in Hamburger and Marti, 2008).

THIRTY-SIX BOOKS HAVE BEEN RECORDED FROM THE LIBRARY of Anne de Polignac (c. 1495-1554), a well-born woman from a prominent noble family. Her preferred reading language was French, and she owned diverse devotional, historical, and literary works in the vernacular. The volume owned by Anne included here (no. 1) is an expensive book, with an illuminated frontispiece miniature; it is a book that befits her status as a wealthy woman from the nobility. Its text is also significant. Jerome's strong connections with holy women made his writings a special choice for women throughout the Middle Ages (nos. 29-30), and this is a French translation. As early as the twelfth century, there was a notable connection between women and works in the vernacular. Marie de Champagne (d. 1198) commissioned a courtly romance from Chrétien de Troyes, and later in life, a translation of Genesis from Evrat. Anne's manuscript of this translation of St. Jerome by Charles Bonin is dedicated to a woman ("tres honorée demoiselle"), who has yet to be identified. Anne also owned Latin devotional manuscripts including a Psalter, prayer books, and a Book of Hours, and a Latin thirteenth-century Bible. Her books were the books of an educated woman, literate in French and at least to some extent in Latin, who read for pleasure, and as part of her devotional life.

ANNE DE POLIGNAC'S OWNERSHIP OF LATIN DEVOTIONAL BOOKS is an important reminder that despite the link between women and vernacular literature, the book most often owned by women was in fact a Latin Book of Hours. Books of Hours were not exclusively books for women, but many of them were. Evidence that allows us to discover the original owners of Books of Hours varies: in addition to ownership inscriptions and pictures of the original donors (nos. 3-4), historians examine the text for prayers using feminine forms, and the subject of the illuminations. The manuscript known as the Françoise Fortin Hours (from its sixteenth-century owner, a woman, who signed it numerous times), includes prayers using feminine gender (no. 2). The only Suffrage (a prayer invoking the protection of a saint) that is illustrated is the Suffrage of St. Margaret, patron saint of childbirth and pregnant women. It is even possible that the young girl pictured in the margin with a unicorn could be the original owner of this charming book.

OWNED BY LAY WOMEN

ALTHOUGH MANY BOOKS OF HOURS WERE LUXURY BOOKS for the highest levels of society, they were owned by an increasingly broad segment of society, including many women from the burgeoning middle class. If a lay woman owned just one book (and that was doubtless not unusual), the book would be a Book of Hours. Books of Hours, therefore, represent significant evidence that many, many lay women in the later Middle Ages owned at least one book, and therefore suggest that many women were not only literate in the vernacular, but also had at least a working literacy in Latin based on their familiarity with the Latin liturgy and private prayer. Women had a special role, moreover, in promoting literacy, because they were often their children's first teacher (Bennett, 1996; Cullum and Goldberg, 2000; Clanchy, 2011). Two of the Books of Hours described here (nos. 5-6) include images of St. Anne teaching her daughter, the Virgin Mary, to read. In England, the word "primer," now used generically to mean any book used to teach reading, was also used for Books of Hours.



1.

JEROME, *LETTER LIV TO FURIA* [TO FURIA, ON THE DUTY OF REMAINING A WIDOW], TRANSLATION BY CHARLES BONIN

In French, illuminated manuscript on parchment
 France (likely Bourges), c. 1500-1510
 1 full-page miniature by the Master of Spencer 6 (active c. 1490 to 1510)

The earliest identifiable owner of this elegant manuscript is Anne of Polignac (c. 1495-1554). Her godmother was Anne of Brittany. Both women, albeit on different scales, assembled important libraries. Anne of Brittany (1477-1514), duchess of Brittany by birth and wife to two kings of France, had a library equal to the finest collections of her male contemporaries that included 1,300-1,500 volumes. Anne of Polignac's library included thirty-six manuscripts. She owned a number in Latin including a thirteenth-century Bible and Books of Hours, but most of were in French, ranging from edifying, devotional books (such as Jacques Le Grand's *Livre de bonnes moeurs*), to books demonstrating broader interests: history (a Universal Chronicle), political philosophy (a text by Guillaume Budé), and humanism (Petrarch's *Trionfi* in French and poems by Marguerite of Navarre); she owned only one chivalric romance.

This volume is a vernacular translation by Charles Bonin dedicated only to "tres honorée demoiselle" of St. Jerome's Letter LIV written in 394/5, in which Jerome urges Furia, a recent widow, to embrace her widowed state, avoid another marriage, and devote herself to a life of religious devotion and good works. Stylistic evidence suggests that the manuscript was copied c. 1500-10, when Anne was somewhere between five and fifteen years old, and this may at first glance seem to be an odd manuscript for a young girl (and indeed, it may have been given to her later in life; Anne was destined to be widowed twice). Nonetheless, like the copy of Cicero's *On Old Age* copied for Beatrice of Aragon when she was ten (Yale University, Beinecke Library, MS 805), this text, with its numerous examples of strong and virtuous women from the Bible, may have been seen as quite appropriate educational material.

DESCRIPTION: 63 folios, complete, written in *lettre bâtarde*, 1- to 2-line initials, line fillers and paragraph marks in gold on blue or dark red, 3-line blue initial with floral gold decoration, full-page miniature, f. 5, in very good condition with wide margins, original velvet binding over wooden boards, velvet worn, hinges fragile. Dimensions 210 x 135 mm.

LITERATURE: Babcock, *et al.*, 2005, p. 16; Walter Cahn, "A French Renaissance Collection of Ancient Oratory from the Library of Anne de Polignac," *Yale University Gazette* 79 (2005), pp. 119-137.



*Ces presentes heures appartient
A damoizelle francoise fortin*

2.

FRANÇOISE FORTIN HOURS (USE OF LISIEUX AND ROUEN)

In Latin and French, illuminated manuscript on parchment
France (Rouen), c. 1480
11 miniatures by a follower of the Master of the Echevinage of Rouen

Perhaps the most commonly owned book by medieval women was the Book of Hours, the prayer book of the medieval laity. The original owner of this manuscript is not known by name, but its contents and illumination allow us to say that it was made for a woman. The prayer beginning "Obsecro te" (I beseech you) on ff. 13-16, includes the phrase "and for me your servant" in the feminine form ("...et mihi famula tua ..."), a common clue betraying female ownership. It also seems significant that the only Suffrage (a prayer invoking the protection of a saint) that is illustrated is the Suffrage of St. Margaret, patron saint of childbirth and pregnant women (f. 52v); the image here, where we see St. Margaret being delivered whole from the belly of the dragon, underlines the association. The fine miniatures are accompanied by numerous marginal motifs of great charm and imagination that seem to underscore female ownership since they celebrate childhood and domestic life, including scenes of a mother and child playing, a mother teaching her child to walk (f. 25), and a young girl, perhaps the owner (or the Virgin Mary?) with a unicorn (f. 52v).

The book was still owned by a woman in 1593, when it belonged to Françoise Fortin, who was married to Jehan Lamembrey (or Lamembrey), seigneur of Maisonnettes near Evreux. She signed the book in many places, indicating that it was being used extensively more than a century after its completion, and once even promised a reward of wine for its return, if lost. (We may also note that two subsequent owners were men, reminding us of the dangers of generalizing). [BOH 99]

DESCRIPTION: 3 + 165 folios, collation impracticable, but apparently complete, written in a large bold gothic bookhand, gold initials on colored grounds throughout, some with borders, eleven half-page paintings with full borders, 19th-century blind-tooled brown leather binding. Dimensions 205 x 145 mm.

LITERATURE: Claudia Rabel, "Artiste et clientèle à la fin du Moyen Age: les manuscrits profanes du Maître de l'échevinage de Rouen," *Revue de l'Art*, 84 (1989), pp. 48-60; Wendy R. Lawson, "Who is the master of this narrative? Maternal patronage of the cult of St. Margaret," in Erlar and Kowaleski, 2003, pp. 94-104.





A Beata es tu margarita que oleū
 sanctum quesisti beata es tu que in
 orationibus tuis omnes memora-
 sti per memetipsum iuro et p̄ glo

riam angelorum meorum quae ex-
 audite sunt petitiones quas petisti
 et que non es memorata hec tibi
 data sunt beata es tu quia in oratio-
 nibus tuis omnes memorasti pec-
 catores alleluia. **V** Ora pro nobis

beata margarita. **R** Ut digni ef-
 ficamur promissionibus. **O**rient.

Deus qui uirginalis pu-
 dicitate titulo et sacre
 passionis uerillo beatam mar-
 garitam martirem tuam glo-
 rificasti. da nobis sic sacre ca-
 stitatis floribus exornari. ut
 cum fructu bonorum operum

3.

BOOK OF HOURS (USE OF ROUEN)

In Latin and French, illuminated manuscript on parchment
France, Normandy (Lisieux, Sées?), c. 1480

6 historiated initials, 7 small miniatures, 8 square miniatures, 10 arch-topped miniatures, 1 full-page miniature by two unidentified artists

Evidence for female ownership of this Book of Hours is straightforward. Following the calendar, the first miniature, a prominent full-page composition with a full border, depicts the Pietà, showing Mary cradling her dead son, and two kneeling women -- the original patron and, we assume, her daughter. The interesting and rare texts included in this book were almost certainly specially ordered by the original owner, including the Hours of St. Barbara. This text is found in other Books of Hours, but it is not common, and suggests that the owner's patron saint may have been Barbara. The volume begins with Gospel excerpts that are illustrated with miniatures of the Presentation, Annunciation and Assumption; two of these scenes are illustrated a second time in the Hours of the Virgin. Focus on the Passion is equally marked, since the Hours of the Cross are illustrated by a depiction of Gethsemane and a series of historiated initials. The unusual texts and plentiful miniatures suggest that the design of this book was a carefully thought-out choice. We do not know if the book was commissioned by the woman in the miniature for herself, or perhaps for her daughter, or if it was a gift intended for her. As is often the case, the question of female agency is unclear.

Although Books of Hours are often discussed as personal prayer books for women (and men), they were also passed down within a family and used to record important events (like a family Bible). This book was used in this way, and records the births in the D'Abancourt family, originally from Beauvais, from 1604 to c. 1654. [BOH 72]

DESCRIPTION: 83 folios, wanting some leaves, written in a fine *lettre bâtarde*, numerous 1- and 4-line initials in gold, pink or blue initials on gold or colored grounds, six historiated initials, seven small and eight square miniatures, ten three-quarter page miniatures, one full-page miniature, full illuminated borders, a few stains but in very good condition, modern red morocco binding. Dimensions 221 x 160 mm.

LITERATURE: François Avril and Nicole Reynaud, *Les manuscrits à peintures en France, 1440-1520*, Paris, 1993; Kathleen M. Ashley, "Creating Family Identity in Books of Hours," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 32.1 (2002), pp.145-165.





Inuicium sancti euuageli. Scdm iohane.
In principio erat uerbu[m] et gl[ori]a d[omi]ni
 et uerbu[m] erat apud deum et deus
 erat uerbu[m]. hoc erat in principio
 apud deum omnia p[er] ip[s]u[m] facta sunt et
 sine ip[s]o factu[m] e[st] nichil. Quot fac
 tu[m] e[st] in ip[s]o uita erat. et uita erat lux
 hominu[m]. et lux in tenebris lucet et tene

4.



BOOK OF HOURS (USE OF ROME)

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment

Southern Netherlands (Bruges), c. 1450

37 full-page miniatures, 13 small miniatures, and 8 historiated initials by the Gold Scrolls Painter of Berlin, Kunstbibliothek, MS Grisebach, 4

Books of Hours as a genre are often thought of as books for women, and the two previous manuscripts are good examples. The evidence for the ownership of this book, however, is more complex. The male figure in the margin of f. 105v, shown standing and reading from an open book, is quite prominent, and he may be the original owner. There is some evidence within the text that supports the idea that this book was made for a man. The saints in the Suffrages are mostly male, and masculine forms are used in the prayers. Nonetheless, in two places, the patron of the book is shown with his wife. On f. 65v, they are depicted very prominently, kneeling in prayer in the lower half of the miniature, with a heavenly vision of Mary and the saints above. On f. 86v we see the couple again, still dressed in the same clothes, kneeling before an altar displaying the Host. This is an impressive and expensive example of a Book of Hours. It is small, but very long, with 395 folios (or 790 pages), and elaborately decorated with a rich sequence of miniatures and borders. It is possible it was commissioned by or for the couple to mark their marriage, or another significant point in their life?

We are left with no clear answer. The ambiguity underlines the fact that interpreting ownership evidence is not always straightforward. The unusual emphasis on Louis of Toulouse and Francis of Assisi, with their Suffrages placed at the beginning of the book just after the calendar, may suggest that the book's patron was a member of the Third Order of Saint Francis, but since Franciscan Tertiaries could be married, it does not help to resolve the question. [BOH 76]

DESCRIPTION: 395 folios, complete, written in *hybrida formata*, geometric line fillers, 8- to 1-line gold or blue decorated initials, borders, eight historiated initials, thirteen small and thirty-seven full-page miniatures, unfinished full-page armorials, some pages rubbed, generally in good condition, modern worn red velvet binding, one clasp missing. Dimensions 110 x 82 mm.

LITERATURE: [Exhibition], Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, *Miniatures flamandes 1404-1482*, eds. Bernard Bousmanne and Thierry Delcourt, Brussels and Paris, 2011.



5.

SUFFRAGES AND PRAYERS FROM A BOOK OF HOURS

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on vellum
 Eastern France (Savoy?), c. 1475-1500
 11 large miniatures

These fourteen folios with Suffrages of eleven saints and a series of prayers to Christ, illustrated with eleven charming miniatures executed in a provincial style, were undoubtedly once part of a Book of Hours. On f. 5v there is a particularly lovely miniature of St. Anne teaching the Virgin. The scene is depicted under a canopy; the young blond-haired Virgin stands before her mother, who gently touches her shoulder, as she learns to read from a book that rests open on her mother's lap. Medieval religious imagery, of course, need not directly reflect an artist's reality. However, this is not a scene described in the Bible, and its presence in numerous Books of Hours beginning in the fourteenth century almost certainly derives from the fact that many women did teach their children to read, often from Books of Hours. (In England, the word "primer," now used generically to mean any book used to teach reading, was also used for Books of Hours.) In addition to images of Anne and the Virgin like this one, there are numerous written sources that mention mothers as their children's first teachers. Both shed important light on the question of women's literacy.

There is nothing in this manuscript, or its subsequent history, that allows us to say anything about the gender of the original owner, although one could speculate on the selection of saints (they are mostly male). The coat-of-arms of Savoy plainly held by Saint Michael on f. 14 suggests localization in eastern France, and the style of the unusual borders recall those in a manuscript attributed to the Savoy region now in Moscow. [BOH 64]

DESCRIPTION: 14 folios, once part of a longer Book of Hours, written in a gothic liturgical script, 2- to 4-line liquid gold initials on colored grounds, nine full borders, eleven large miniatures, effaced coat of arms, f. 4, modern brown leather binding. Dimensions 170 x 130 mm.

LITERATURE: Pamela Sheingorn, "The wise mother: the Image of St. Anne Teaching the Virgin Mary," in Erler and Kowaleski, 2003, pp. 105-134; Clanchy, 2011.



6.

BOOK OF HOURS (USE OF ROME)

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment

France (Lyons), c. 1495-1510

11 full-page, 28 small, and 1 half-page miniatures by Guillaume II Le Roy

It would be difficult to overemphasize the importance of devotion to the Virgin Mary to medieval religious practice, especially in the later Middle Ages. Assessing just what that might have meant to medieval women and their relative position in society has often been discussed by modern scholars (and they have come to many different conclusions). Theoretical considerations aside, it seems self-evident that part of the connection between women and Books of Hours were the numerous images commemorating the life of Mary. The usual iconography for the Hours of the Virgin centers on scenes from Mary's life, beginning with the Annunciation at Matins. The depiction of the Visitation at Lauds, where the young Mary sought counsel from her older cousin Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, is an affirmation of the bonds between women. The cycle continues, depicting the nativity at Prime and usually concluding with the Coronation of the Virgin at Compline. Mary's story is not just a woman's story, and she was never considered just another woman, but many of the events in her life must have had special meaning to woman in the Middle Ages (just as they continue to do today).

This is a handsome, richly illuminated Book of Hours; like the previous example (no. 5), it includes a small image of St. Anne teaching the Virgin to read. It was painted by a prolific, multi-talented artist, Guillaume II Le Roy, who was active as an illuminator at the same time that he supplied drawings and designs for illustrations for the printing industry and executed large-scale media (panel-painting and ephemeral art tied to royal entries or celebrations). [BOH 46]

DESCRIPTION: 187 folios, lacking two leaves probably with miniatures, written in a *lettre bâtarde*, 1- to 5-line colored initials and line endings, panel borders on every page, one half-page and twenty-eight small miniatures and eleven full-page miniatures, some losses of pigment, occasional smudging, small tear, upper half of textblock split at f. 86, old red velvet binding, spine rubbed. Dimensions 215 x 142 mm.

LITERATURE: E. Burin, *Manuscript Illumination in Lyons 1473-1530*, Turnhout, 2001, pp. 212-213; Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary*, New Haven, 2009.



II. OWNED BY NUNS



BOOKS OWNED BY NUNS ARE AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT PART OF OUR TOPIC given the fact that the majority of books owned by women during the Middle Ages were owned by religious, rather than lay, women. “Nuns” here is used to represent all women leading a religious life, thus including not only nuns who took permanent vows, but also canonesses, beguines, Sisters of the Common Life, and so forth. Once again it is important to note that the same could be said for men; more books were owned by religious men (monks, friars, canons, secular clergy, etc.), than by lay men.

MANY OF THE BOOKS IN THIS SECTION, IN FACT, WERE NOT ONLY OWNED (or for the use of) nuns, they were also made by nuns. As Professor Winston-Allen has noted in her introduction, nuns continued to copy books for their own use throughout the Middle Ages and indeed later, well after the invention of printing (nos. 10-14, 17-19, 21-22). In the fifteenth century, the Observant Reform movement was accompanied by an increase in the production of books in female convents. (Observant Reform originated first in Italy, and spread throughout Europe in the fifteenth century; aiming at broad religious changes, it was especially concerned with the reform of religious Orders). Two examples of manuscripts from reformed convents are included here, a Psalter from the flourishing scriptorium of the Cistercian nuns at Medingen in Northern Germany (no. 8), and a Hymnal decorated at the Dominican convent in Freiburg by the artist Elsbeth Töpplin (no. 7).

ALTHOUGH EARLY IN THE MIDDLE AGES THERE WERE CERTAINLY MORE MALE MONASTERIES than houses for nuns, by the later Middle Ages this position was often reversed. This seems to have been true, for example, in the Low Countries and Germany (Winston-Allen, 2004). In Italy, a remarkable percentage of the female population, especially from the nobility, lived in convents (Reardon, 2002; nos. 21 and 23). Careful studies of surviving manuscripts and archival records have identified many more books associated with female religious houses than would have seemed likely forty years ago. In her book dedicated to German monastic scribes working for female convents, for example, Cyrus estimates that as many as 4,000 manuscripts survive from 450 convents in German-speaking countries (Cyrus, 2009). Nonetheless, compared with male monasteries, nuns’s convents tended to be poorer, and consequently may have had smaller libraries that were less likely to be catalogued, and (even more significantly), were more likely to have been dispersed, leaving fewer clues that allow historians to recognize the books now.

BOOKS OWNED BY RELIGIOUS WOMEN, LIKE THOSE OWNED BY LAY WOMEN, are often identified by ownership notes either from a single nun, or a convent. The text of manuscripts, and in particular the use of feminine forms (for example “peccatrix” for “peccator,” or sinner), and/or references to the sisters or the abbess, can also be direct evidence of female ownership. Whether the liturgical books used by nuns always included the appropriate feminine references is an open question. The ambiguous provenance evidence found in a number of the manuscripts described here, in fact, suggests that it may have been common for nuns to use books that were designed for male use, and even to copy books without changing male references in their exemplars to the appropriate feminine forms (nos. 7, 9, 18-20).

SCHOLARS ALSO IDENTIFY BOOKS MADE BY NUNS BASED ON THE STYLE OF THEIR ILLUMINATION or other aspects of their physical make-up that are characteristic of nun’s scriptoria. For example, the practice of decorating manuscripts by adding engravings or initials cut from other manuscripts seems to have been characteristic of nuns’s work (nos. 8, 10, 13). We know that the work of Sibylla von Bondorf was disseminated in part through pasted-in miniatures. The nuns of the Bridgettine Abbey of Syon in England also cut initials from their own books and pasted them into other manuscripts. Our Psalter from Medingen (no. 8) has a number of rather quickly-executed pen initials that have been pasted in. Another remarkable example of this practice is the sixteenth-century Antiphonal of unknown provenance

OWNED BY NUNS

described here (no. 13); it was meticulously decorated with cuttings from a number of manuscripts of different dates and origins, and we therefore suggest that it was made by nuns.

NUNS (LIKE MONKS), NEEDED BOOKS FOR THE LITURGY, FOR EDUCATION, for personal devotion and spiritual development, as well as for administrative and financial purposes. Books for the Divine Office are well-represented (nos. 7-11, 13). Numerous Processionals (personal volumes with texts and music for liturgical processions, and often with texts for other occasions including funeral rites and burial services), survive with evidence of ownership by nuns (nos. 17-20). Perhaps the most famous examples of Processionals for nuns are those from the royal abbey of Poissy near Paris. The very fine Processional commissioned by Bishop Charles Hémart for his sister Loyse, a nun at the convent of St.-Marcel in Paris, was probably a gift to mark her entrance to the convent, or her solemn vows (no. 17).

THE QUESTION OF LITERACY RATES AMONG NUNS IS OBVIOUSLY COMPLEX. Nonetheless, the most straightforward answer is that most choir nuns were certainly literate in both Latin and the vernacular. They needed to know at least enough Latin to chant the liturgy, and many nuns, such as the very learned sisters at the Cistercian convent at Helfta (including Mechtild of Hackeborn and Gertrude the Great) in the thirteenth century, knew much more (no. 24). The numerous vernacular manuscripts surviving from convents, however, do suggest that many nuns were probably most comfortable reading in the vernacular. Books used by nuns for private devotion and spiritual guidance, for example, are commonly in the vernacular (nos. 14-15, 24-25, 31-32). The fact that the Breviary for Franciscan use (no. 10), almost certainly copied for a House of the Annunciates in Louvain, is bilingual and includes the text in both Latin and Dutch is unusual, and it may have been used by a novice who was still learning Latin.



7.

HYMNAL AND GOSPEL READING FOR HOLY THURSDAY

In Latin with musical notation, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Germany (Freiburg), c. 1470-80

Throughout the Middle Ages, nuns – like their male counterparts -- needed books – first and foremost they needed liturgical books for the Divine Office and Mass, but they also needed books for personal devotion and spiritual development. In many cases, nuns had an active role in copying and illuminating books for their own use, and also for people outside the convent (both as gifts and to sell). The focus on work, devotion, and books was especially important in the fifteenth-century Observant Reform movement. This is a wonderful manuscript, amply illustrating the accomplishments of a female scribe and artist from the scriptorium of the Dominican (formerly Magdalene) convent of St. Mary Magdalene in Freiburg, Elsbeth Töpplin. Elsbeth's work has been identified in several manuscripts; one of her most characteristic motifs is the depiction of a face peeking out from alongside a cadel initial; an example here is the Man of Sorrows on f. 18. Her style is quite similar to that of Sibylla von Bondorf, a nun at the neighboring Franciscan convent, who was a prolific artist (more than 180 miniatures by Sibylla have been identified), and the two artists even collaborated on occasion.

The text of this manuscript, copied in a skillful formal liturgical bookhand and accompanied by musical notation, includes nine settings of Psalm 94 ("Venite exultemus"), sung at the beginning of the night Office of Matins, selected Hymns and the Gospel of John, chapters 13-16, marked for liturgical chanting on Holy Thursday. The Gospel reading is accompanied by liturgical directions, one of which mentions "fratribus" (the brothers). This manuscript may therefore have been copied and illuminated by Elsbeth for a male convent; alternatively, it may be an example of a book used by nuns that was copied without changing a masculine reference from its exemplar (nos. 9, 18-20). [TM 788]

DESCRIPTION: 34 folios, complete, written in a gothic bookhand, music in square notation on red 4-line staves, multi-colored rubrics and 1-line initials, nineteen colored initials and seven historiated initials, very good condition, occasional marginal stains, near-contemporary paste board binding, lined in linen and covered with vellum and paper with painted decoration, covers both fragile and cracking with pronounced damage to the front, edges and at top of the spine. Dimensions 305 x 220 mm.

LITERATURE: Anne Winston-Allen, "Networking in Medieval Strasbourg: Cross-Order Collaboration in Book Illustration among Women's Reformed Convents," in Stephen Mossman, Nigel F. Palmer und Felix Heinzer, eds., *Schreiben und Lesen in der Stadt: Literaturbetrieb im spätmittelalterlichen Straßburg*, Berlin, 2012, pp. 197-212.



reduced

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us. ut. qd. me. derē. hiqui. st.
Et. iduato. capi. te. emisit.

Lū. er.
go. accepillet. ace. tū. dicit
con. summa. tum. est.
E corda. re. virgo
mat. dū. stete. ris. ī. cō. spectu. de.
ut. loqua. ris. p. nob. bo. na. et. ut. a.
ver. tas. ī. dignacionē. suā.
A bhac
a. nobis. ale. luid

*sc̄e. i. a. d. o. r. a.
ma. m. te.
re. x. p. e. et.
b. n. d. i. c. a. m.
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ave

8.

PSALTER

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Northern Germany (Cistercian convent of Medingen), c. 1475-1500 (after 1462 and before 1513)

This small illuminated Psalter was copied at the Cistercian convent of Medingen near Lüneburg in Saxony. Founded c. 1228, in 1479 Medingen was reformed under the influence of the *Devotio Moderna*, and the old monastic injunction "ora et labora" (pray and work) was put into new practice. A scriptorium became one of the focal points of life at the convent, and the nuns copied numerous manuscripts for their own use and for noblewomen in neighboring towns. Many of these manuscripts were unique prayer books that expand the Latin liturgy with vernacular prayers, songs originating in lay circles, and meditations. This manuscript is a formal Latin Psalter; its use of feminine forms in the prayers indicates it was copied for women, and it may have been used by one of the nuns at Medingen. This is a newly-identified addition to the corpus of the surviving manuscripts from this important scriptorium.

Several features common to manuscripts produced at Medingen are well-illustrated here, including the lively brightly-colored painted initials accompanied by borders that include speech banderoles, and the silk curtains that still protect most of the historiated initials. The small ink drawings clinging to descenders in the bottom line of text are particularly charming, and it is easy to imagine they were drawn by a nun who may have been thinking of home (there is a drawing of a couple labelled "mother and father" in Latin). Six penwork initials in this manuscript have been cut from another manuscript and glued onto the page. The practice of decorating manuscripts with printed engravings or initials from other manuscripts seems to have been characteristic of manuscripts made by nuns. In this case, the practice seems odd, since the pasted-in initials are fairly hastily done, and add little to the manuscript's decorative scheme (related examples nos.10 and 13).

DESCRIPTION: 284 folios, missing some leaves at the end, written in a gothic bookhand, fifteen small ink drawings, six 2- to 11-line penwork initials (all pasted in), nine polished gold 3- to 8-line penwork initials, eight 4- to 8-line historiated initials extending into borders, nine charts and tables, f. 1 worn, some discoloration throughout, early 16th-century(?) blind-stamped leather binding, spine worn and cracking at top and bottom. Dimensions 105 x 78 mm.

LITERATURE: Ulrike Hascher-Burger and Henrike Lähnemann, 2013; Henrike Lähnemann, 2013; Ulrike Uhde-Stahl, 1978; Henrike Lähnemann, "Medingen manuscripts," http://research.ncl.ac.uk/medingen/public_extern



Herhardus h. sancta sanctorum
psalms ad mlti soler



Dicitur
v. q. n.
abijt
i. fili
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na stent: et i cathedra pestilencie
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ac nocte. **E**t erit tanq. lignu. q.
plantatum e. ser. de. s. u. s. a. q. e. q.



fron suu dabit i tpe suo. **E**t
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q. faciet p. p. abut. **N**on sic i
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icit v. e. r. a. f. a. n. e. t. r. e. **I**deo n.
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e. r. t. g. e. t. e. s. : et p. p. l. i. m. e. d. i. c. a.
n. s. i. i. a. m. i. a. **A**l. t. i. e. r. e. r. e. g. e. s.
t. r. e. : et p. n. c. i. p. e. s. d. u. e. n. e. r. u. t. i.
v. n. u. : a. d. u. s. d. o. m. i. n. u. m. et a. d. u. s.

9.



BREVIARY (CISTERCIAN USE)

In Latin with added musical notation, decorated manuscript on parchment
Southwestern Germany or Switzerland (diocese of Constance), c. 1475-1500

Like the previous manuscript (no. 8), this small Breviary was copied for a Cistercian convent of nuns, in this case in the diocese of Constance. Small in size, but carefully copied in a fairly large script, this was a practical volume. It includes attractive pen initials and is still preserved in an early binding. The added musical notation in the margins of many of the Psalms is evidence of its continued use. Still found between its leaves are a very tiny (contemporary?) hand-colored woodcut and a petal from a flower. It is the type of book that the nuns may have copied for themselves.

One of the aims of the Cistercian system of annual general councils and visitations was to ensure uniform customs and liturgical practices throughout the Order. Although many convents for women considered themselves Cistercian, they were not all accepted by the Order as a whole, and some fell outside this system of supervision. In this case, the calendar in this manuscript follows Cistercian legislation carefully, and even at this late date includes only a very few additional local saints. The prayers for the Divine Office are copied using masculine forms. The prayer on f. 13rv, beginning, "Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit accept ... this offering of the Psalms that I, unworthy sinner, wish to offer ...," in contrast uses the feminine form of sinner, "peccatrix." On this basis we can conclude that this must have been made for nuns, even though the Office prayers retain masculine forms (presumably following the manuscript's exemplar). This seems to be characteristic of some manuscripts copied for Cistercian nuns, possibly because of their wish to follow the uniform liturgy of the Order (nos. 19-20; see also nos. 7 and 18). [TM 755]

DESCRIPTION: 339 ff., complete, written in a conservative gothic bookhand, 8- to 1-line colored initials, two 10- to 9-line line parted red and blue initials with pen decoration, one very small hand-colored oval woodcut of the Virgin, Child and St. Anne, laid in between ff. 224v-225, overall in very good condition, trimmed, some stains, 16th-century blind-tooled brown leather binding, restored, both covers and spine are worn. Dimensions 107 x 82 mm.

LITERATURE: Elizabeth Freeman, "Nuns," in Mette Birkedal Bruun, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Cistercian Order*, Cambridge, 2012, pp. 100-111.



10.

BILINGUAL BREVIARY (FRANCISCAN USE)

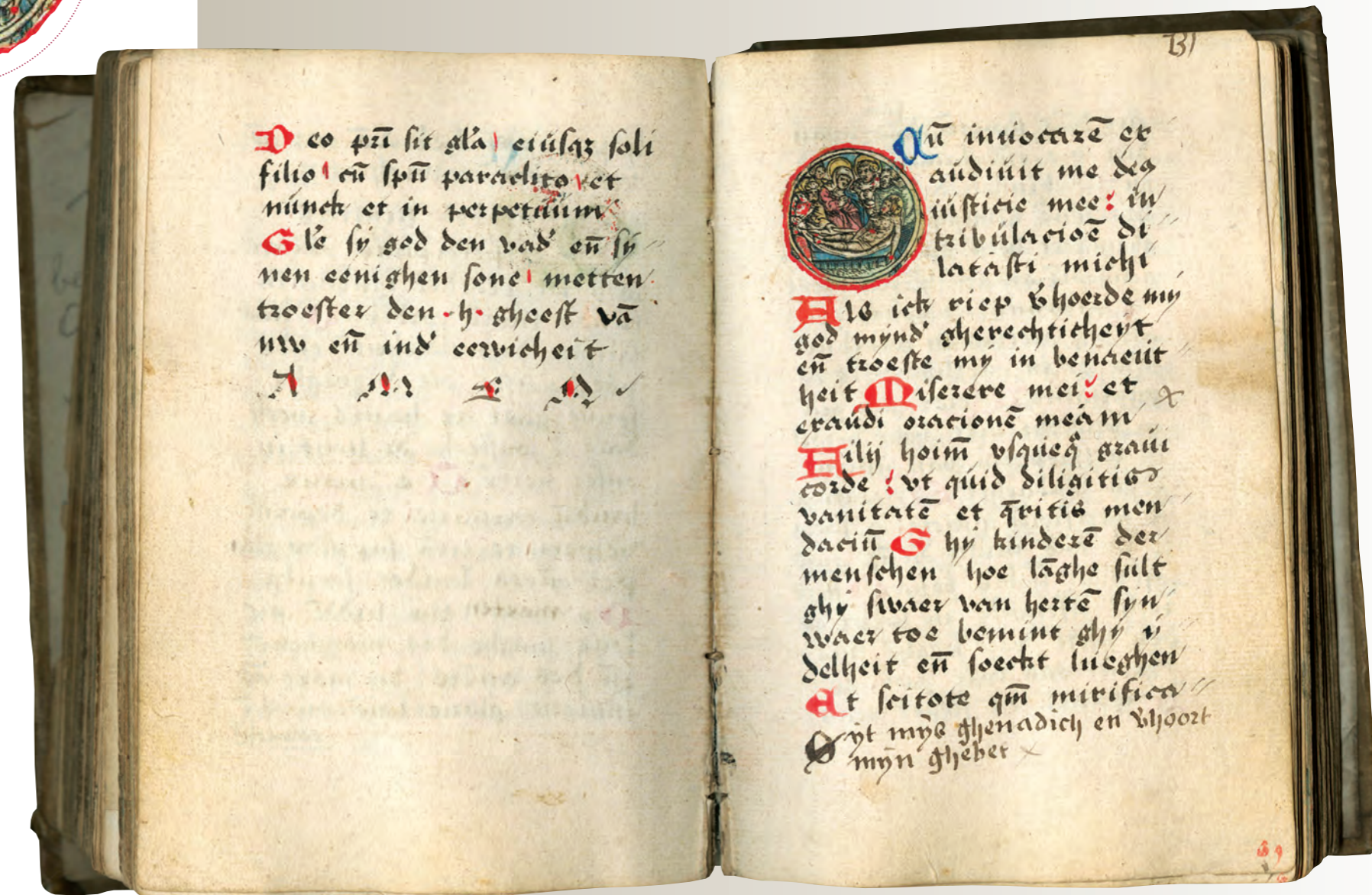
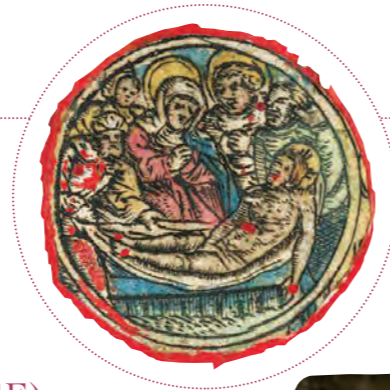
In Latin and Dutch, manuscript on paper
Southern Netherlands (Louvain?), c. 1525-1550

This unusual bilingual manuscript that includes the Psalms, Hymns, and Canticles of the Latin Breviary with a verse-by-verse Dutch translation is material evidence of the link between nuns and the development of liturgical texts in the vernacular. The Low Countries were an important center for vernacular religious texts, dating back to the translation of the Book of Hours into Dutch by Geert Grote (1340–1384), founder of the *Devotio Moderna*, a book for private devotion. There were also Dutch translations of the Breviary that have been called “lay Breviaries” by scholars (evidently used for private devotion), and manuscripts combining texts for the Office and Mass, again in Dutch, used as formal liturgical volumes by female religious. This manuscript, however, is different, since it is bilingual. It may have been used during the Divine Office (chanted in Latin), by novices whose knowledge of Latin was imperfect.

The manuscript includes a seventeenth-century note that it was for the use of Sister Sara de Licht. We know Sara became the mother superior of the Convent of Annunciates in Brussels in 1616, a new foundation that borrowed books to serve as exemplars from the Convent of the Annunciates in Louvain. Although the evidence is indirect, the links between these two houses suggests that this manuscript may have been originally copied at the convent in Louvain. Its text is for Franciscan use, and the Annunciates, a contemplative order founded c. 1500 at Bourges, were placed under the supervision of the Franciscans in 1517 (no. 22). The illustration of this book with cuttings from woodcuts is a practice found in many books copied by Nuns (see also nos. 8 and 13). [TM 614]

DESCRIPTION: 299 folios, lacking seven leaves (apparently cancelled with no loss), written in a *littera hybrida* by four scribes, 4- to 2-line colored initials, six inserted woodcuts, in reasonable condition, first leaf loose, holes in last leaf, last page rubbed, minor soiling, simple 17th-century vellum binding, binding loose. Dimensions 146 x 103 mm.

LITERATURE: Youri Desplenter, “Translating the Prayer: Latin Hymns and Sequences in the Central Netherlands,” *Tijdschrift Voor Nederlandse Taal-en Letterkunde* 122.3 (2006), pp. 193–212; Youri Desplenter, “The Latin Liturgical Song Subtitled: Middle Dutch Translations of Hymns and Sequences,” *Church History and Religious Culture* 88.3 (2008), pp. 395–413.



11.

HYBRID DIURNAL WITH A PRINTED PSALTER (AUGUSTINIAN USE)

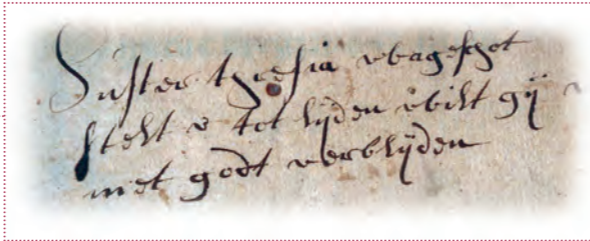
In Latin, with some rubrics in Dutch, decorated printed book and illuminated manuscript on paper
Paris, 1536, and Low Countries (diocese of Liège), c. 1536-1550

This hybrid book was assembled by (or for) nuns following the Augustinian Rule, and combines a printed Psalter from Paris from the illustrious humanist publisher, Claude Chevallon (apparently very rare and known in one other copy), with extensive manuscript sections to make a Breviary for the Day Offices specific to their Order and diocese. Numerous rubrics (in Dutch) speak of the sisters, and many of the prayers include feminine forms. In the late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century, it was still owned by a nun, Sister Thresia Wageschot, "Suster thresia wageschot stelt v tot lijden wilt gij v met godt verblijden"; the second phrase rhymes, and can be translated, "apply yourself to suffering/hardship if you want to rejoice in/with the Lord." The last name, "Wageschot" was particularly common around Antwerp according to the databases of the Archives of Belgium (we thank Evelien Hauwaerts for this information).

The history of the printed portion of the volume is also relevant to our topic. Claude Chevallon (1479-1537) began his career as a modest publisher and bookseller. After his marriage in 1520 to Charlotte Guillard (d. 1557), the widow of the printer Bertold Rembolt, he had access to a press (the famous Soleil d'Or) and his output increased significantly. After his death, Charlotte continued the business for another twenty years, and is thus known as the first female printer in Paris. Her role as a woman who was active as a printer and publisher both with her two husbands, and independently, has attracted the attention of a number of modern scholars (no. 26). [TM 759]

DESCRIPTION: 12 [manuscript] + 132 [imprint] + 103 [manuscript] folios on paper, watermarks dated 1529-1540, missing three leaves, written in a hybrida script, Hufnagel musical notation on red 4-line staves, fourteen woodcut initials (imprint), one 7-line painted initial (manuscript), excellent condition, calendar pages trimmed, contemporary blind-tooled leather binding, spine damaged, overall good condition. Dimensions 157 x 115 mm.

LITERATURE: Beatrice Beech, "Charlotte Guillard: A Sixteenth-Century Business Woman," *Renaissance Quarterly* 36 (1983), pp. 345-357; Sandra Hindman and James Douglas Farquhar, *Pen to Press: Illustrated Manuscripts and Printed Books in the First Century of Printing*, College Park, 1977; David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order, 1450-1830*, Cambridge and New York, 2003.



12.

ORDO AD INUN/GENDUM INFIRMUM &/ AD COMMUNICANDUM AT/QUE AD MORTUUM SPELI/ENDUM. SECUNDUM CISTERCIENSIS OR/DINIS CONSU/ETUDINEM; NOTED TEXTS FOR THE OFFICE OF THE DEAD AND REQUIEM MASS (MANUSCRIPT)

In Latin, imprint on paper and manuscript on parchment
Coimbra, Johannes Alvarus [Juan Alvarez or João Alvarez], 1555 and Portugal (?), c. 1550-1575

Like the previous book, this volume is a hybrid liturgical book combining an imprint and a manuscript. It contains a small selection of *Ordines* for services including the visiting, anointing and communion of the sick, the burial and anniversaries of the deceased, and the blessing and vows of monks or nuns, printed for use by Cistercians. The manuscript that follows is contemporary with the printed text, and includes only the chants and musical notation for many of the liturgical occasions described in the printed text. These two sections have been bound together since the mid-sixteenth century. Although at first it seems unusual that an early owner wanted two copies of the same texts, it is likely that the manuscript was copied for actual use by a singer participating in the liturgy, whereas the more complete printed *Ordo* was used for reference.

There is nothing in the text that points definitely to use by nuns, but an inscription on the upper pastedown in Portuguese from the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century shows it was then owned by a woman, Antonia de Magahari, perhaps a Cistercian nun. The manuscript portion was certainly copied in Portugal, and it includes very delicate initials with a selection of birds and other animals in purple and pale brown ink that are typical of Portuguese calligraphic penwork from this time period. The manuscripts owned (and possibly made) by the Dominican nuns at the Convent of Nossa Senhora da Anunciada in Lisbon, for example, were decorated with penwork (D'Alvarenga, J. P. *et alia*, 1992, fig. 6), and this may have been copied in a similar monastic environment. [TM 668]

DESCRIPTION: 44 folios (imprint) + 22 folios (manuscript), complete, imprint printed in red and black in Roman type, printed music on 4-line red staves with square musical notation; manuscript in an upright humanist script and in a rounded gothic textura script, square musical notation on 5-line red staves, cadels and penwork initials, mid-16th-century blind-tooled calf binding. Dimensions 140 x 95 mm.

LITERATURE: P. M. Gy, "Collectaire, rituel, processional," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 44 (1960), pp. 441-69; J. P. D'Alvarenga, *et alia*, eds., *Tesouros da Biblioteca Nacional*, Lisbon, 1992.



13.

ANTIPHONAL FOR THE DAY OFFICES
(AUGUSTINIAN USE)

In Latin with musical notation, decorated manuscript on parchment, with added illuminated initials
Southern Netherlands or Germany, c. 1530-50 (before 1579)

This small-format manuscript is an Antiphonal or, more properly, a Diurnal, the liturgical book that includes the musical texts for the portion of the Divine Office said during the day. There are no clues in the text, nor are there ownership notes, that point to its use by women rather than men. Nonetheless, the ingenious method by which it was decorated strongly suggests that it was made by nuns. All of the illuminated initials, including a full border on f. 1 and sixteen smaller initials, were meticulously cut from earlier manuscripts and pasted in. Several different manuscripts of varying origins, German, Netherlandish, and French, dating from the mid-fifteenth century to c. 1510 were mined for the initials used here. Among the initials there are two that are figurative: a gold monstrance on f. 13, possibly from a German or Dutch manuscript, c. 1450-1500, and an image of St. Anne holding the Virgin and the Child in camaïeu d'or on f. 53, similar in style to initials in manuscripts painted by Jean Bourdichon (c. 1459-1521) in Tours, although more likely Flemish in origin, c. 1510 (we thank Nicholas Herman for his assistance).

Although historians have explored manuscripts (and printed books) decorated with printed materials, manuscripts decorated with cuttings from earlier manuscripts have been less well-studied. Among the known examples are miniatures by the Franciscan artist Sibylla von Bondorf and manuscripts from the English Bridgettine convent of Syon. The high quality of the initials pasted into this manuscript and the extreme care that was taken to create a harmonious and beautiful book from this re-used material (the manuscript is even made from parchment leaves from earlier manuscripts that were carefully erased) is remarkable (related examples nos. 8 and 10). [TM 717]

DESCRIPTION: 84 folios on parchment, many, possibly all, palimpsest, complete, written in a bold late gothic bookhand, square musical notation on red 4-line staves, seventeen illuminated initials (two historiated) and illuminated border, all pasted in, slight ink-burn on f. 1, 17th-century(?) gold-tooled leather binding, worn and slightly warped, but overall in good condition. Dimensions 180 x 127 mm.

LITERATURE: Christopher de Hamel, *Syon Abbey: The Library of the Bridgettine Nuns and Their Peregrinations after the Reformation: An essay*, Otley, 1991; Mary Erler, "Pasted-in Embellishments in English Manuscripts and Printed Books, c. 1480-1553," *The Library*, series 6, 14 (1992), pp. 185-206.



14.

PRAYER BOOK, WITH EXCERPTS FROM JEAN GERSON,
OPUS TRIPARTITUM, AND MECHTILD OF HACKEBORN,
LIBER SPECIALIS GRATIAE; PENITENTIAL PSALMS; PRAYERS
 ATTRIBUTED TO NICHOLAS OF FLÜE AND KASPAR
 SCHATZGEYER

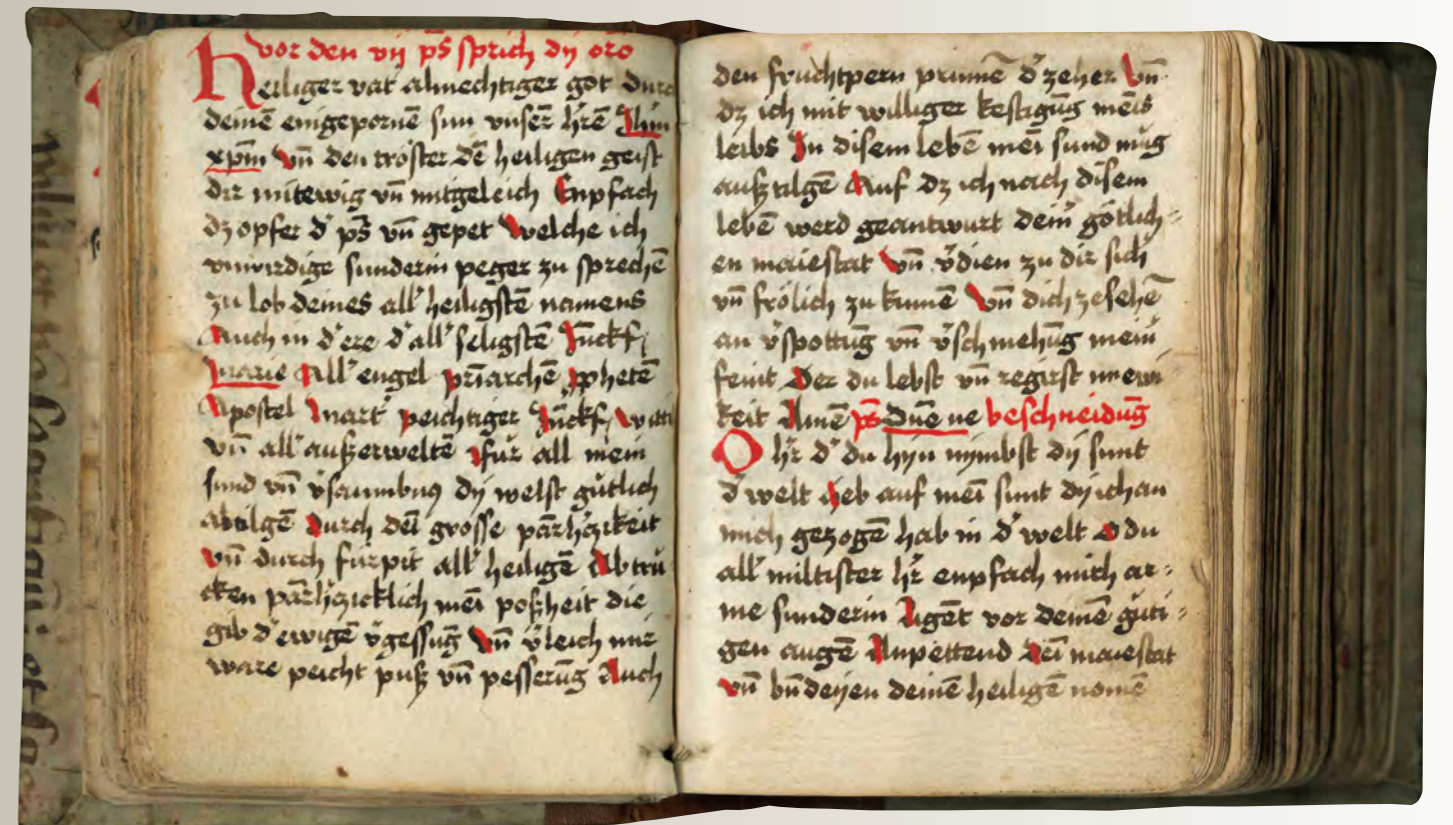
In German and Latin, decorated manuscript on paper
 Southern Germany, Bavaria (Neuburg an der Donau?), c. 1515-1540

This compendious book of prayers and meditations bears fascinating witness to female monastic piety and practices in a Bavarian Benedictine house at the time of the Reformation. Evidence for the date and origin of the manuscript is found on the final two leaves which were made from a letter addressed to Euphemia, abbess of Bergen; the scribe copied his text in the blank spaces of the letter, leaving a fragment of its address page in German visible. Internal evidence suggests that this book may have been compiled by Euphemia for her own use, and possibly was partially copied by her. Euphemia Pirckheimer (1486-1457) was born into a wealthy and erudite patrician family in Nuremberg. She was the younger sister of Willibald Pirckheimer (1470-1530), well-known Nuremberg humanist and friend of Albrecht Dürer, and of Caritas Pirckheimer (1467-1532), abbess of the Franciscan convent of St. Clare in Nuremberg and a gifted humanist in her own right. Euphemia and her sister Sabina (1482-1529) both became nuns (and eventually abbess) at the Benedictine convent of the Holy Cross at Bergen in Neuburg an der Donau, just south of Eichstätt.

It is difficult to summarize the numerous texts in this prayer book, but several are noteworthy, including an excerpt from a text by Jean Gerson (1363-1429), included in both Latin and German, two excerpts from the *Liber specialis gratiae* of Mechtild of Hackeborn (1240/41-1298) (no. 24), and a prayer attributed to Kaspar Schatzgeyer (1463-1527), a Bavarian Observant Franciscan friar who corresponded with Caritas Pirckheimer. The nuns at Bergen may have been familiar with him through this connection. The numerous prayers for the Mass and Divine Office, many in German translation, seem particularly interesting given the date of this manuscript and the criticism of the Latin liturgy by Reformation leaders. [TM 801]

DESCRIPTION: 196 folios on paper, watermarks dated 1506-1524, complete, written in ten different hands in hybrida scripts, 1- to 5-line red or green initials, red fore-edge tabs, a few ink blots, water stains, closely trimmed, f. 1 torn, 19th-century quarter leather binding with leaf from a 15th-century parchment manuscript on the sides. Dimensions 101 x 74 mm.

LITERATURE: Emil Reicke, Helga Scheible, and Dieter Wuttke, eds. *Willibald Pirckheimers Briefwechsel*, 7 vols., Munich, 1940-2009; Reinhard H. Seitz, "Das Benediktinerinnenkloster Bergen und die Bergener Klosterkirche," *Kloster Bergen bei Neuburg an der Donau und seine Fresken von Johann Wolfgang Baumgartner*, Kunst in Bayern und Schwaben 3, Weissenhorn, 1981, pp. 5-38.



15.

PRAYER BOOK INCLUDING PSEUDO-BIRGITTA OF SWEDEN, FÜNFZEHN GEBETE ZUM LEIDEN CHRISTI [FIFTEEN OES]; MARIAN PRAYERS; PRAYERS TO THE SAINTS; SPECULUM ARTIS BENE MORIENDI (ADAPTATION); AND MANY OTHER PRAYERS AND SHORT TEXTS

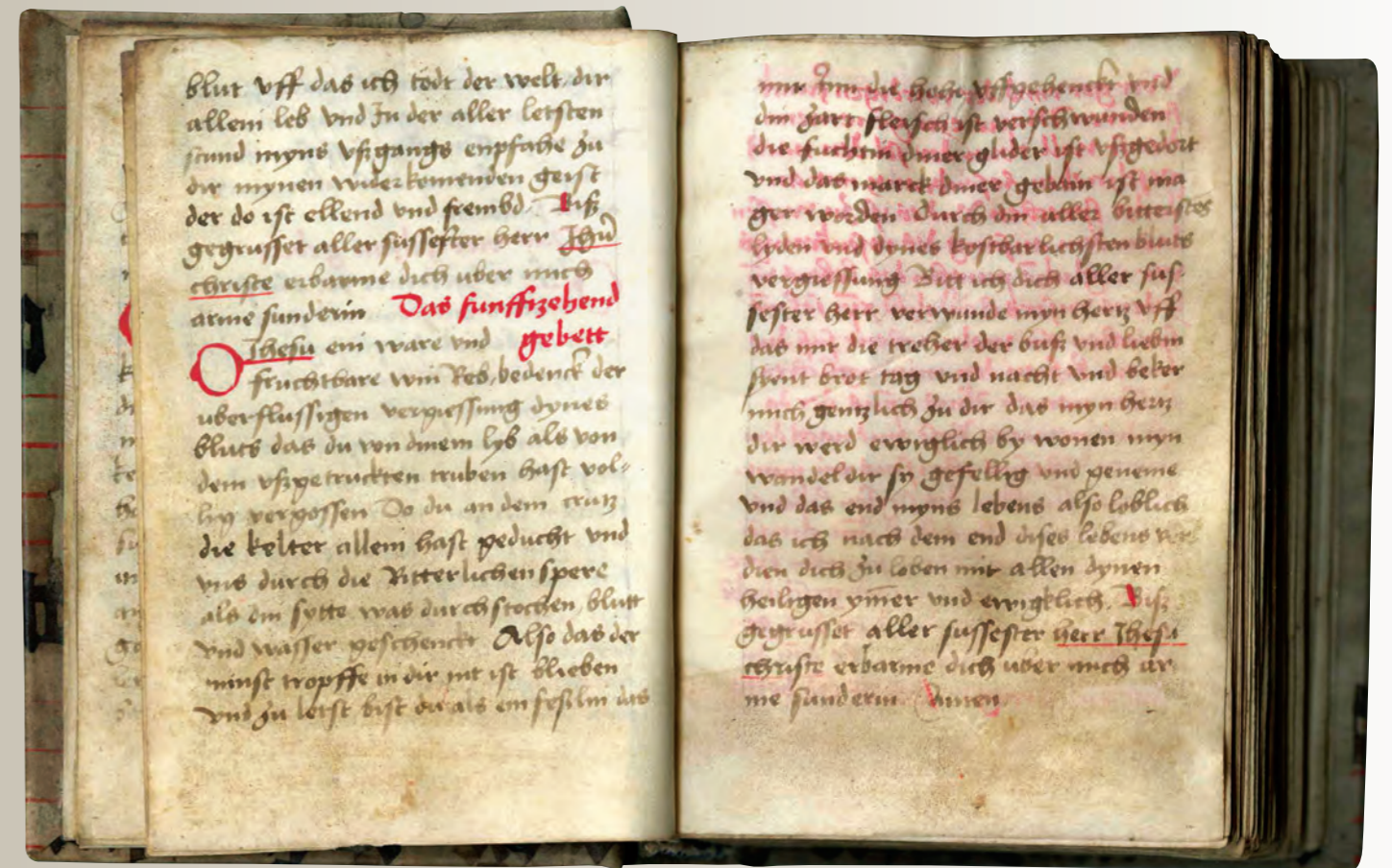
In German, manuscript on parchment, Germany (Middle Rhine), after 1478, c. 1500

In contrast to the previous prayer book (no. 14) with its numerous liturgical prayers for the Mass and Divine Office, the texts in this manuscript are for private devotional use, with a marked focus on the Virgin Mary and the rosary. Private prayer books such as this one were important to the spiritual life of late medieval nuns, and the process of choosing and copying prayers mirrored and strengthened a female scribe's devotional life. Nonetheless, it is also possible that it was made for a lay woman, and male ownership, perhaps by a confessor, cannot be completely ruled out (some of the prayers use feminine forms, but this is not consistent throughout the book).

There is a strong Dominican connection to many of the texts in this manuscript, but it would be difficult to argue that it was necessarily made for Dominican use. The order promoted devotion to Mary through the rosary in a very active and widespread manner in the fifteenth century. The Marian Rosary on ff. 9v-16 in this manuscript includes a lengthy rubric that discusses the particular merits which accrue to the members of the confraternity of the rosary; this confraternity was founded in 1475 in Cologne by Jacob Sprenger (1436/8-1495), infamous for the traditional (but probably false) association of his name with the *Malleus maleficarum*, or "Hammer of Witches." Women were excluded from many confraternities, but were welcome in the brotherhood of the Rosary, where they often out-numbered men significantly. [TM 431]

DESCRIPTION: 112 folios, complete, written in a single hand in a German cursive script, 1- and 2-line red initials, modern (late 19th- or 20th- century) glued binding with re-used medieval leaf from a Missal over pasteboard, original binding cords removed. Dimensions 113 x 78 mm.

LITERATURE: Cyrus, 2009; Winston-Allen, 1997.



16.

BOOK OF HOURS (USE OF ROME AND OF SAINTE-WAUDRU, THE COLLEGIATE CHURCH IN MONS)

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment

Southern Netherlands, Mons (Hainaut), c. 1460-70

8 large and 2 small miniatures by the Master of Philippe of Cröy and 2 large grisaille miniatures by the Master of Girart de Roussillon (Jehan Dreux) or a close collaborator

The rare liturgical use of this Book of Hours is evidence that it was made for use at the collegiate church of Sainte-Waudru in Mons, a religious community for canonesses of noble birth. It may have been commissioned by a noble family who were connected to the community as donors, or one who had a daughter who was a canoness there. The family has not yet been identified, but their motto and heraldic arms are found scattered throughout the manuscript. Sainte-Waudru probably dates back to a convent for nuns founded as early as c. 650, but by the thirteenth century the community had adopted the life of secular canonesses. Always a foundation for well-born women, the entrance requirements were limited to the nobility by the time it was suppressed in 1793/4. Their life had little in common with the life of most nuns. They each were given their own house, and their only religious obligation was to sing the Divine Office in choir. Many medieval women embraced a religious life voluntarily, as an expression of true religious conviction, but convents and other religious institutions were also important resources for families with unmarried daughters. Sainte-Waudru offered well-born and noble women a life that was in keeping with their status.

By the middle of the fifteenth century, Mons was the capital city of Hainaut and a center for the production of illuminated manuscripts, thanks to the noble families in the area and to the ducal patronage of Philip the Good (1396-1467). This Book of Hours, although now lacking some miniatures, was illuminated by two of the most fashionable artists of the time, the Master of Philippe of Cröy and the Master of Girart de Roussillon (Jehan Dreux). [BOH 97]

DESCRIPTION: 143 folios, wanting an underdetermined number of leaves including miniatures for Hours of the Virgin, written in a *bâtarde* script, 1-line and 4-line burnished gold and colored initials, one historiated initial, ten large and two small square miniatures with full borders, numerous panel borders, some smudging, overall very good condition, modern dark red velvet binding. Dimensions 133 x 95 mm.

LITERATURE: A. Esch, "La Production de Livres de Jacquemart Pilavaine à Mons. Nouvelles Perspectives," in *Als ich can: Liber Amicorum in Memory of Professor Dr. Maurits Smeyers*, eds. Bert Cardon, et al., Corpus of Illuminated Manuscripts 11-12, Paris and Dudley, Mass., 2002; B. Van Caenegem, "A propos du chapitre du Sainte-Waudru à Mons," 2005, http://duccassedemons.info/pedagogie/Chapitre_de_Sainte-Waudru_Mons.pdf.



17.

PROCESSIONAL (USE OF ROME; CORDELIERS OF ST.-MARCEL)

In Latin and French with musical notation, illuminated manuscript on parchment
France (Paris), dated 1534

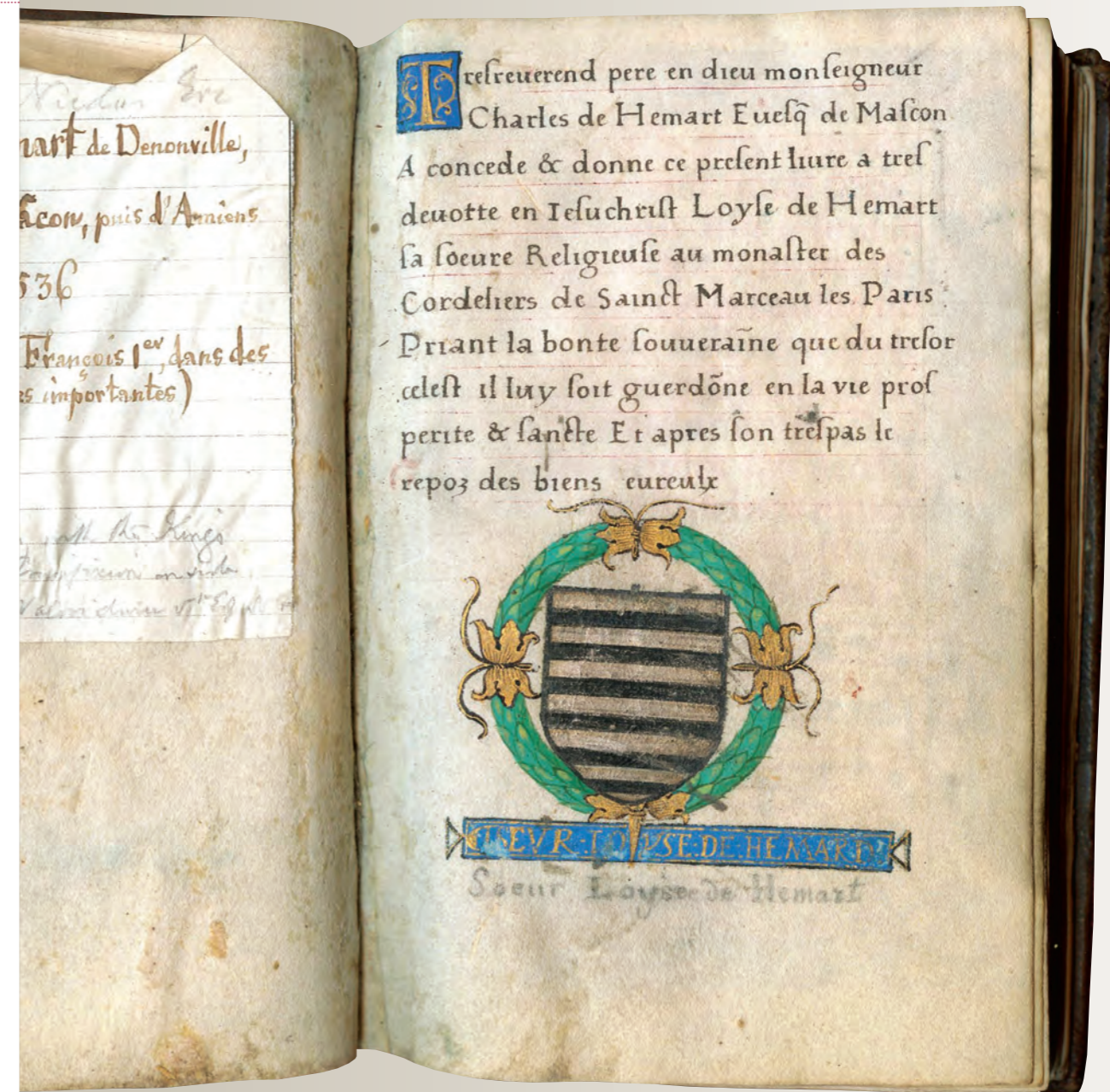
Like the previous manuscript, this Processional was made for a nun living in a house for the daughters of the nobility. Processionals, as their name suggest, were portable liturgical books containing the chants for liturgical processions. They were personal books, owned or used by a single nun (or monk) during her lifetime. This manuscript was commissioned by Bishop Charles Hémart de Denonville (1493-1540) in 1534 for his sister, Louise (here spelled Loyse) de Hémart, who was a nun at convent of the Cordeliers of St.-Marcel in Paris, a house of Observant Franciscans following the rule of Isabelle de France (no. 31). The convent was founded c. 1270-5 by Margaret, the widow of King Louis IX of France. Louise probably had the manuscript bound in its present very beautiful fanfare binding, and added two prayers in French.

This is one of four surviving Processionals from St.-Marcel, and the only one not in an institutional collection. The sophisticated musical and liturgical life of this royal foundation has been the subject of a recent scholarly study (Guilloux, 2012). In addition to processions, these Processionals include a very rare example of a polyphonic trope. (Polyphonic music is music written for more than one voice; a trope is an interpolation of new material into an existing chant.) In 1603 the book was owned by another noble member of this house, Judith de Forgues. Examples of Processionals as personal books used by high-born nuns are also seen in the many examples surviving from the well-known royal Abbey of St.-Louis at Poissy. [TM 383]

DESCRIPTION: 85 folios, missing at least one leaf, written in a formal liturgical gothic bookhand, square musical notation on 4-line red staves, numerous gold initials, full border, two coats-of-arms, 16th-century gold-tooled fanfare binding, excellent condition, slight damage to extremities. Dimensions 168 x 109 mm.

LITERATURE: Fabien Guilloux, "Musique et liturgie aux cordelières de saint-marcel. À propos de quatre processionaux manuscrits (15^e-17^e siècles)," *Archivum franciscanum historicum* 105 (2012), pp. 9-50; Roest, 2013; Anne Bagnall Yardley, "Clares in Procession: The Processional and Hours of the Franciscan Minoresses at Aldgate," *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 13 (2009), pp. 1-23.

Loyse de Hemart.



18.

PROCESSIONAL (DOMINICAN USE)

In Latin with musical notation, illuminated manuscript on paper
Italy, (Bergamo?), c. 1490-1525 (before 1538)

Processionals from different religious orders can be identified based on their contents (Huglo, 1999 and 2004); this Processional is clearly Dominican. There is also no doubt that it was copied from an exemplar for male use since the text mentions the brothers and the prior frequently. The connection between this convent of Dominican friars and the lay community is demonstrated by the very detailed texts for burials, which begins with the service for people other than the friars themselves. This section includes alternate forms for men and women, as well as particular directions for burials of children, for people particularly close to this convent, and for members of the third order of St. Dominic. This is all straightforward. However, the manuscript concludes with the name, "Est Augustae sororis Angelice Bergom[ensis]" (This is [the book of] sister Augusta Angelica of Bergamo) in a bold script very similar to the script used to copy the entire manuscript, leaving us with a puzzle. Presumably sister Augusta owned this book, even though the services were not adapted to female use (nos. 7, 9, 19-20).

The extensive liturgical directions in this Processional that describe how the liturgy was actually performed are of particular interest. For example, the text on f. 61 describes in detail how the brothers of the convent are to gather in the Choir a little before a burial service. The cantor is directed to distribute liturgical vestments and "libellis processionalibus" (little books for processions) to the priests. Details of the musical notation here also may repay further study (see in particular f. 44, with red and black neumes). [TM 804]

DESCRIPTION: 77 folios on paper, no identifiable watermarks, apparently complete, copied in a gothic bookhand, square notation on red 4-line staves, gold initials, three larger colored initials with borders, one large initial with full border, first folio and a few other initials smudged, ink bleed, a few letters etched through, some soiling, f. 39 rip in lower margin, 19th- or early 20th-century blue velvet binding over early wooden boards, metal plaque, front cover, front cover detached. Dimensions: 195 x 131 mm.

LITERATURE: Michel Huglo, "Processional," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 20, London, 2001, pp. 388-393; Michel Huglo, *Les manuscrits du Processional: Volume 1, Autriche à Espagne, Volume 2, France à Afrique du Sud*, Répertoire international des sources musicales B XIV (1-2), Munich, 1999 and 2004.



19.

PROCESSIONAL (CISTERCIAN USE?)

In Latin with musical notation, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Central Italy (Rome or Florence), c. 1500-25

This manuscript includes three sections, each copied by different groups of scribes, although the initials and marginal decoration in the manuscript are uniform throughout. The first texts are processions for use in a monastery (the abbot and the brothers frequently mentioned in the rubrics), possibly copied from a Cistercian Processional. The second section contains noted texts for the Office of the Dead, the Mass and the Divine Office, with feminine forms added above the line. The concluding section includes processions for Corpus Christi and for the adoration of the Cross; this section was certainly copied for nuns, since the rubrics mention the sisters and the abbess. This Processional therefore may have been copied for Cistercian nuns, adapting texts written for monks for their own use. As suggested earlier, the Cistercian emphasis on liturgical uniformity, might explain why these nuns copied the early sections of this manuscript from their exemplar *verbatim*, without altering the gender (nos. 9, 20; see also nos. 7 and 18).

Even considering this a book for Cistercian nuns is not without its problems, especially since some of the processions one would expect to find in a Cistercian Processional of this date are missing. The relationship between foundations for women and the Cistercian Order was a complex one throughout its history, and there were many nuns that considered themselves Cistercian without official status in the Order. This is an attractive manuscript, with lovely illuminated initials and delicate floral borders. Musically, the inclusion of a tonary (that is a collection of chants organized by modes, ordinarily used for teaching the chant), black mensural notation (mensural notation indicates the length of individual notes, unlike the square notation used for most chant), and white mensural notation, are notable. [TM 718]

DESCRIPTION: 38 folios, complete, written in southern gothic bookhands, and in an upright script influenced by humanistic scripts, square musical notation on red 4-line staves (some neumes in red and blue), black mensural notation, and white mensural notation on a 5-line staff (f. 38 only), numerous illuminated initials and borders, well-used, 17th-century (?) blind-tooled leather binding, upper board partially detached. Dimensions 187 x 142 mm.

LITERATURE: Michel Huglo. "Processional," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 20, London, 2001, pp. 388-393; Elizabeth Freeman, "Nuns," in Mette Birkedal Bruun, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Cistercian Order*, Cambridge, 2012, pp. 100-111.



20.

PROCESSIONAL (CISTERCIAN USE)

In Latin with musical notation, decorated manuscript on parchment with later paper additions
Germany (Lower Rhineland?), c. 1475-1500 [after 1476]

This German Cistercian Processional is yet another example of a liturgical manuscript with ambiguous provenance. In comparison with the previous examples, this is a much more restrained manuscript, and its decoration is confined to lovely, but simple initials. One liturgical direction mentions the two brothers ("fratres") so we have a clue that its exemplar was for the use of monks rather than for nuns. Nonetheless, in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, not long after the manuscript was copied, an owner added an inscription in Middle Dutch that says, "Dyt boeck hort Alb[a] (?) Travelman frouwe int cloister" (This book belongs to Alba (?) or Alberta (?) Travelman, sister in the cloister). Thus the book belonged to a Dutch female owner, presumably a nun from a Cistercian abbey, early in its history.

Although it would be tempting to conclude that this is an example of a book for nuns that retained the male reference from its exemplar (nos. 7, 9, 18-19), in this case this explanation seems unlikely, because there are annotations in the manuscript in German that appear to be earlier than the Dutch ownership inscription. The simplest explanation, therefore, is that this manuscript was copied for the use of Cistercian monks in a German-speaking monastery in the Lower Rhineland, and that it subsequently was owned by a Dutch-speaking nun, probably in a neighboring convent. The region of the Duchy of Cleves in the Lower Rhineland is close to the Dutch border and the regions of Guelders and Limburg. This is not only interesting evidence of the exchange of manuscripts between monks and nuns, but also evidence of exchanges across a linguistic frontier. [TM 192]

DESCRIPTION: 59 folios on thick parchment, with added paper quire, complete, written in a gothic textura script, Hufnagel notation on 4-line staves, cadel initials, nine gold initials with pen decoration, some rubbing on first folios, disbound, quires sewn with rope. Dimensions 152 x 108 mm.

LITERATURE: Michel Huglo. "Processional," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 20, London, 2001, pp. 388-393; Elizabeth Freeman, "Nuns," in Mette Birkedal Bruun, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Cistercian Order*, Cambridge, 2012, pp. 100-111.



21.

*CONSTITUTIONES MONALIIUM SANCTE MARIE MAGDALENE
DE SENIS ORDINIS EREMTIARUM SANCTE AUGUSTINI*
[CONSTITUTIONS OF THE NUNS OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE
OF SIENA OF THE ORDER OF AUGUSTINIAN HERMITS];
CEREMONIAL; AND TONARY

In Italian and Latin, with musical notation; decorated manuscript on parchment; painted binding
Italy (Siena), after 1503-c. 1526, and c. 1539-51

This manuscript was copied at the convent of St. Mary Magdalen in Siena, founded in 1339 outside the walls at the Porta Tufi, at the southern edge of the city. There was an active scriptorium at the convent, and the nuns copied and illuminated religious books for the Ospedale della Scala and the Opera del Duomo in Siena in 1440 and 1470. The convent was closely aligned with the Hermits of St. Augustine, followed the Rules and Constitutions of the Order, and depended upon the Friars for direction and supervision.

Included here are convent's constitutions, rules governing life in the community, and its Ceremonial, which described the community's liturgical life in detail. The (male) Augustinian Ceremonial consisted of thirty-nine chapters. The Ceremonial here is a shortened version that includes only eighteen chapters, and is in Italian rather than Latin. The manuscript was updated c. 1539-51 with the addition of a second copy of the constitutions in an elegant italic script. Within the Ceremonial there are many chapters related to music, including chapters on ringing the bells, on the duties of the female cantor, and processions, all of particular interest given the importance of music in Italian convents during the Renaissance. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in Siena, as in Milan, Bologna, Rome, and other Italian cities, many of the most skilled female musicians lived in convents. This manuscript's remarkable contemporary binding includes, in the manner of Siena's painted bindings from the Biccherna, a painting of St. Mary Magdalene that may be compared with work of Giacomo Pacchiarotti (1474-1539/40). [TM 470]

DESCRIPTION: 68 folios, complete, copied in a running gothico-antiqua script and in an upright gothic bookhand, square musical notation on red 4- or 3-line staves, later section in a formal italic script, red initials, good condition, some staining and soiling, and fading, exceptional blind-stamped binding with an early sixteenth-century Siennese painting on the back cover. Dimensions 233 x 162 mm.

LITERATURE: Scipione Borghesi Bichi, *Nuovi documenti per la storia dell'arte senese, raccolti da S. Borghesi e L. Banchi*, Siena, 1898; K. Christiansen, Laurence B. Kanter, Carl Brandon Strehlke, *Painting in Renaissance Siena, 1420-1500*, New York, 1988; Reardon, 2002.



Vierge marie

22.

REIGLE DES SEURS RELIGIEUSES ET FILLES DE LA VIERGE [RULE OF THE SISTERS OF THE ORDER OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED MARY (ORDRE DE L'ANNONCIADE)]; [ANONYMOUS], DIALOGUE BETWEEN LUKE AND THE VIRGIN MARY

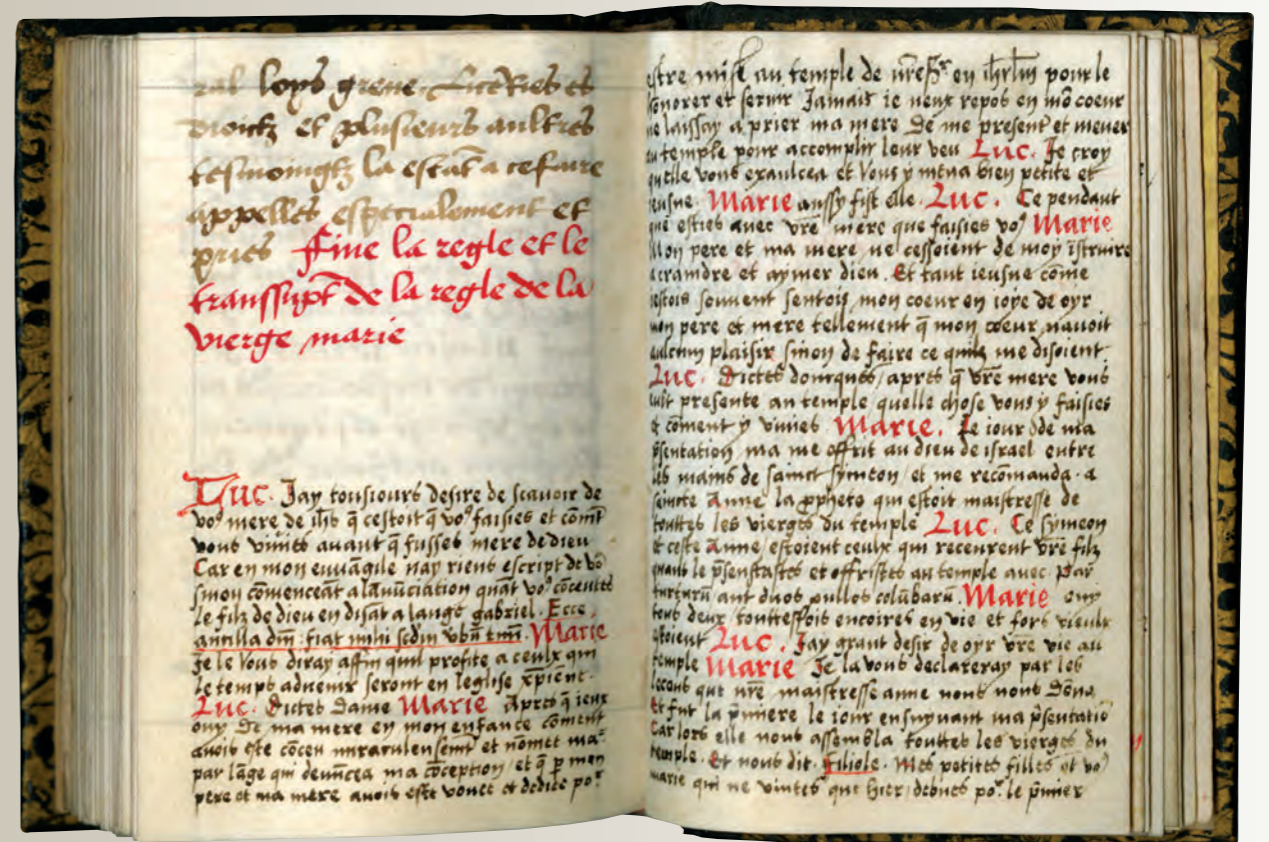
In French, decorated manuscript on parchment
France (Bourges?), c. 1525 and additions c. 1575-1600

The Order of the Annunciation of the Blessed Mary (the Annunciates), was a contemplative order of nuns founded by Jeanne de France (1464-1505), the daughter of Louis XI and wife of Louis duc d'Orléans, later King Louis XII. After the annulment of their marriage in 1498 (Louis XII repudiated her), she retired to Bourges close to her youthful home, the castle of Lignièrès, later home to Catherine d'Amboise (no. 27). Central to her vision of the religious life were the ten virtues of the Virgin Mary that Jeanne discovered through meditation on the Gospels. One of the symbols of the Order of the Annonciade was the rosary that allowed one to string through the ten virtues of the Virgin Mary and meditate on each one in turn (no. 15).

The Order was placed under the jurisdiction of the Franciscans, and Gilbert Nicolas, later Gabriel-Maria (c. 1464-1532) was appointed as the superior. He was entrusted by Jeanne to help her draft a Rule for the new order that was presented to Pope Alexander VI in 1502; a second version of the Rule, confirmed by Pope Leo X in 1517, is included in this manuscript. The Order grew rapidly and there were numerous foundations in France and the Low Countries (no. 10), but manuscript copies of the Rule are rare. This small, portable copy may have been copied from the first known imprint (Toulouse, 1529), but it equally possible that it was copied from another manuscript. The text that follows the Rule, a fictitious dialogue between Mary and Luke, has apparently never been printed. It seems likely that this is a hitherto unknown work by a Renaissance nun, and as such, as well as for its literary merits and vivacious tone, it merits further study. [TM 752]

DESCRIPTION: 50 folios, apparently complete, written by two distinct hands in a gothic cursive script and in an upright very regular semi-cursive script, rubrics, paragraph marks and some initials in red, later 19th-century blue morocco binding, edges and corners rubbed but in sound condition. Dimensions 105 x 70 mm.

LITERATURE: D. Dinet, Pierre Moracchini, Marie-Emmanuel Portebos eds., *Jeanne de France et l'Annonciade : Actes du colloque international de l'Institut catholique de Paris, 13-14 mars 2002*, Paris, 2004; [Exhibition], *Sainte Jeanne de France et l'Annonciade*, Bourges, 2002.



23.

MARTINUS POLONUS [MARTIN OF TROPPAU OR MARTINUS OPPAVIENSIS], *MARGARITA DECRETI ET DECRETALIU*; ADDED LISTS OF TITULI FROM *DECRETALES* OF GREGORY IX, AND WORKS WITHIN THE *CORPUS IURIS CIVILIS*; LIST OF SERMONS PREACHED IN 1459

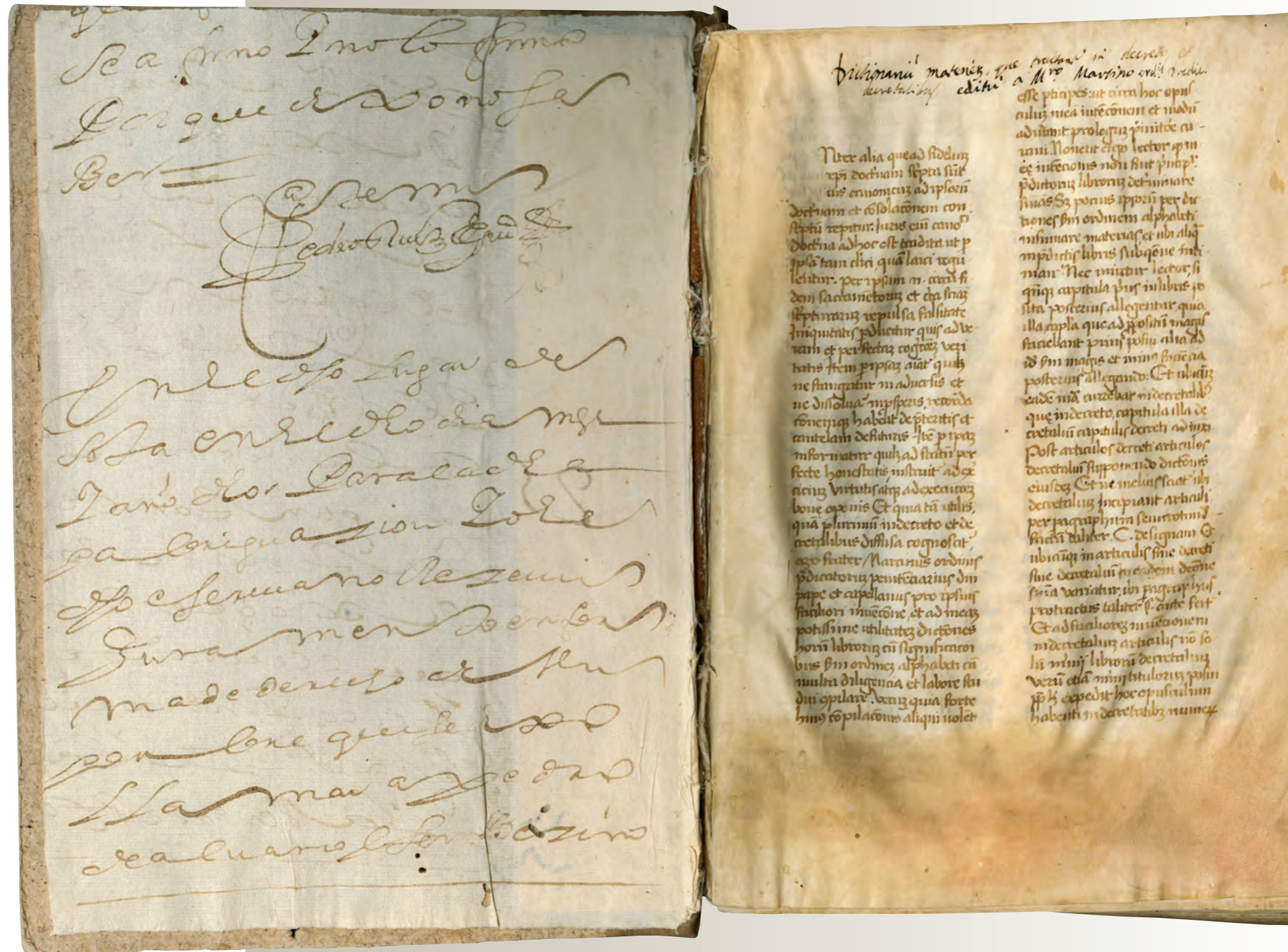
In Latin, manuscript on parchment and paper
Italy (Venice), c. 1425-1450; and before 1459

The text in this manuscript is by Martinus Polonus, also known as Marin of Troppau (d. c. 1278) the Dominican theologian and Archbishop of Gnesen, known today for his popular history of the world (*Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum*). This work, the *Margarita*, or “Pearl” of the *Decretum* and *Decretales*, is a concordance to these two basic works of canon law that lists topics by keyword in alphabetical order, with relevant phrases and their locations in the complete texts. It was a widely popular text, but it is not on the first glance the type of book we think of as owned by nuns.

Nonetheless, this manuscript almost certainly belonged to the Benedictine convent of San Zaccaria in Venice, since someone used the verso of its final leaf to record the sermons preached “by me” at San Zaccaria in 1459; the list includes sermon topics keyed to feast days and Sundays beginning in December and leading up to Lent; below, in at least two subsequent stints, there are lists of daily Lenten sermons. San Zaccaria was founded in the early ninth century, and by the end of the Middle Ages it was the wealthiest female convent in Venice, home to nuns from many of Venice’s patrician families. The nuns of San Zaccaria were known for their patronage of the arts and their independence. In 1521 the abbess of San Zaccaria protested vigorously, albeit ultimately unsuccessfully, the introduction of complete enclosure in the name of Observant Reform. Ownership of Latin canon law texts by nuns is documented elsewhere. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the convent of Poor Clares at Bressanone owned numerous early printed books in Latin including the *Liber Sextus* and Gratian’s *Decretum* with a commentary (Roest, 2013, p. 293). [TM 642]

DESCRIPTION: 261 folios on parchment and paper (watermarks dated 1423-1443), complete, written in gothic-antiqua scripts and in a script with hybrida features, blank spaces left for initials, trimmed, slight staining, 17th-century half vellum binding (retaining traces from a Hebrew manuscript of the Babylonian Talmud). Dimensions 225 x 167 mm.

LITERATURE: Roest, 2013; Torrence Thomas, “Most Noble and Worthy Treasure: The Library of the Cloister of Saint Elisabeth in Bressanone,” in Babcock, 2005, pp. 22-37; Gary M. Radke, “Nuns and Their Art: The Case of San Zaccaria in Renaissance Venice.” *Renaissance Quarterly* 54 (2001), pp. 430-59; Jutta Gisela Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice*, Chicago, 1999.



reduced

III. WRITTEN BY WOMEN



RECOVERING THE VOICE OF FEMALE AUTHORS FROM THE MIDDLE AGES has been a significant scholarly achievement in the last decades. Writing in 1984, Peter Dronke was often breaking new ground in his *Women Writers of the Middle Ages: A Critical Study of Texts from Perpetua (d. 203) to Marguerite Porete (d. 1310)*. Today, the works of many of the writers he discussed have been translated and are now read and studied widely by students of the Middle Ages. The work is ongoing, with scholars addressing question of what authorship meant in the Middle Ages, and how that changes our understanding of female (and male) authors (Summit, 2003), as well as uncovering “new” authors, such as fourteenth-century authors of the Sister-Books from German Dominican convents, and the convent histories, chronicles, foundation narratives and other writings by nuns analyzed by Professor Winston-Allen (Lewis, 1996; Winston-Allen, 2004). The manuscripts included in this section were chosen as illustrations of some of the complicated issues relevant to the topic of women as authors in the Middle Age and Renaissance.

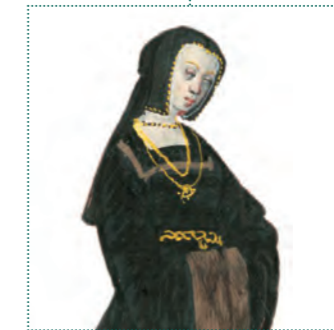
THERE IS A LONG AND IMPORTANT TRADITION in the Middle Ages of visionary literature by female mystics from Hildegard of Bingen (d. 1179) in the twelfth century to St. Teresa of Ávila in the sixteenth (d. 1582). The question of what it meant to be an author is particularly relevant for mystics like Angela of Foligno (c. 1248-1309), Catherine of Siena (1347-1380), and Margery Kempe (c. 1373-after 1438), who

dictated their works to male scribes, leaving us to wonder to what degree the works we now read reflect their actual thoughts and words. The works of other authors, such as the nuns at Helfta, are examples of collective efforts. Mechtild of Hackeborn (1240/1-1298), author of the *Liber specialis gratiae* (The Book of Special Grace) (no. 24), and her protégé, Gertrude of Helfta (or St. Gertrude the Great; 1256-1301/1302), author (with her sisters) of the *Legatus memorialis abundantiae divinae pietatis* (The Herald of God’s Loving Kindness), were both nuns at the Cistercian monastery at Helfta. Helfta was renowned for its commitment to education, and both these authors wrote in Latin. Their works were written for the close-knit community at Helfta, with the help and participation of other sisters from the convent. A third mystic from this remarkable community was Mechtild of Magdeburg (c. 1207-1282?), a beguine who entered the monastery late in life. In contrast with the two nuns raised in the learned environment at Helfta, this Mechtild wrote *Das fließende Licht der Gottheit* (The Flowing Light of Divinity) in the vernacular. Mechtild describes herself as from a noble family, and her choice may reflect the vernacular education that was common to a woman of her background.

THE STORY OF MARGUERITE DE PORETE (c. 1250-1310) as an author had a very different and tragic outcome. Her work, *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, now considered one of the classics of medieval spirituality, was declared heretical, and Marguerite, along with her text, was burnt as a heretic in Paris 1310. In contrast with the three Helfta mystics, Marguerite, who was a beguine, did not have the support and protection of an important monastic community. (Beguines were lay women who chose to live a religious life without a formal rule or permanent vows). Ironically, her work continued to circulate after her death, although without her name, in both French and in Latin. The French version barely survived to the present day, and is known in only two manuscripts (only one complete). Her text is represented here by a manuscript containing a French devotional text, written by a Celestine monk for the use of a nun, that draws heavily on her work as a source (no. 25).

LAY WOMEN DURING THE MIDDLE AGES WERE ALSO AUTHORS, turning to writing for reasons rather different than the deep religious convictions of the female mystics. Christine de Pizan (1364-1430), often called the first professional author, wrote to support herself and her family; Dhouda (c. 803-840), wrote as an expression of her role as a mother, composing a book of advice for her son. Catherine d’Amboise (c. 1482-1550), a well-born French woman composed two works as consolation in the wake of tragic events (no. 27), and her relationship to literature has a very modern feel to it. Laura Battiferra degli Ammannati (1523-1589), takes her place firmly in the culture of the late Italian Renaissance, writing with the support of her husband within a close intellectual circle of fellow poets and artists (no. 28).

ALTHOUGH SCHOLARS INTERESTED IN TEXT and authorship often base their studies on the texts alone, examination of the manuscripts that include these texts can be key to answering questions related to the circulation of works by female authors and their audience: How were works by female authors disseminated? Did this differ from male authors? For whom did women write? Catherine d'Amboise, for example, was part of French courtly culture, and she wrote in French for her family and close connections. She chose to circulate her works as deluxe, illuminated manuscripts, although she certainly had the means to have them printed if that is what she wanted. The manuscript of her *La complainte de la dame pasmée contre fortune* (Complaint of the Fainting Lady against Fortune) described here (no. 27), may have been copied in part by her, and she almost certainly supervised the unique program of illustrations (probably by the Poitevin illuminator, P. Merevache) recounting the vagaries of Fortune from a female perspective. The manuscript including Laura Battiferra's texts (no. 28) in contrast, is plain and unadorned, and may have been copied by, or for, someone within her close circle of fellow poets.



24.

MECHTILD OF HACKEBORN, *HET BOEK DER BIJZONDERE GENADE* [*LIBER SPECIALIS GRATIAE* (THE BOOK OF SPECIAL GRACE), IN DUTCH]; AND OTHER TEXTS

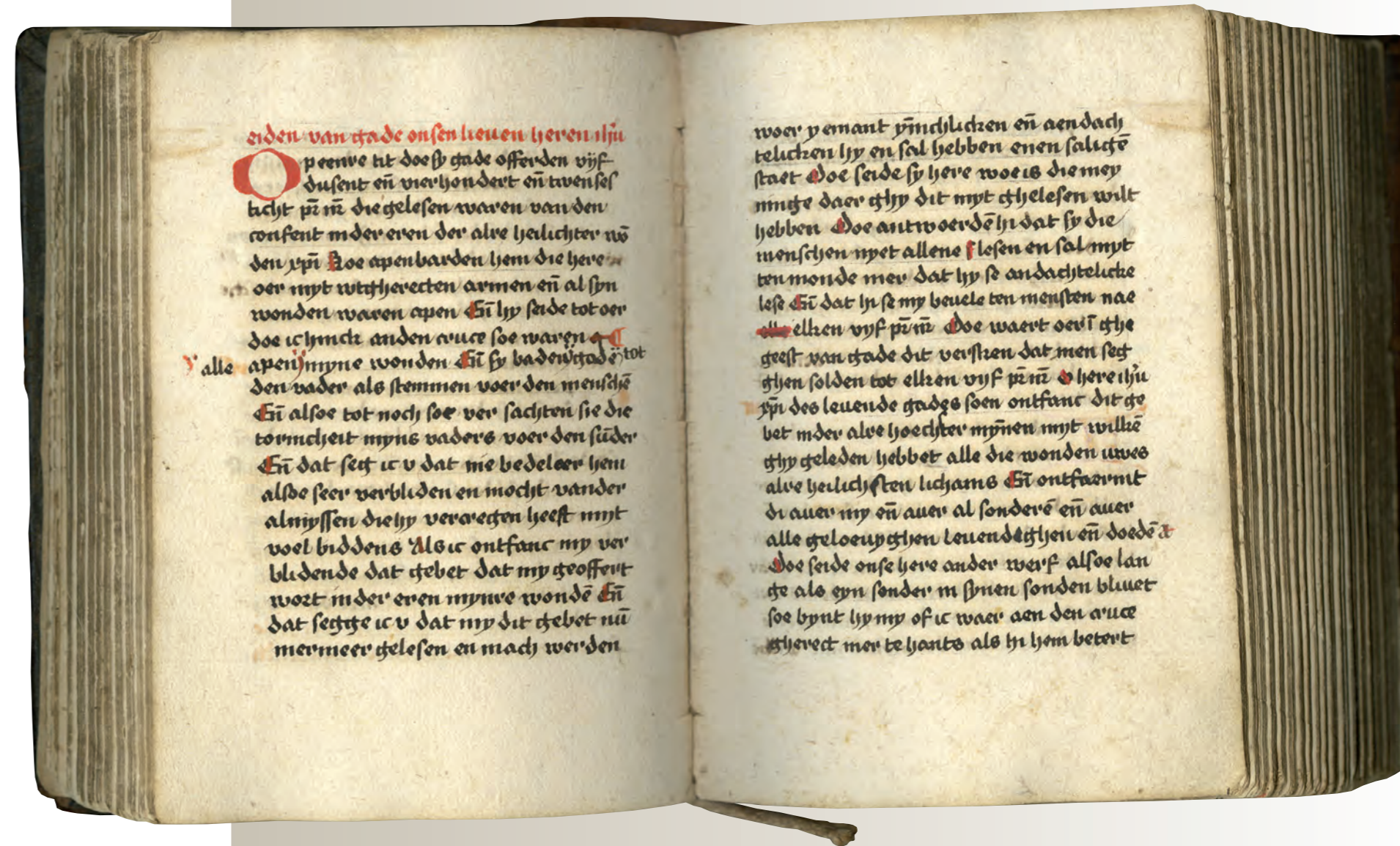
In Dutch, manuscript on paper
Eastern part of the Northern Netherlands (IJssel region), c. 1490-1510

There is a long and important tradition in the Middle Ages of visionary literature by female mystics. Mechtild of Hackeborn (1240/1-1298) was a nun who entered the monastery of St. Mary at Helfta where her sister Gertrude of Hackeborn (c. 1232-1291) was abbess as a child oblate. Helfta was renowned for its learning, and the remarkable confluence of female authors at Helfta that included Mechtild, Mechtild's protégé, St. Gertrude the Great (1256-1301/1302) and Mechtild of Magdeburg (c. 1207-1282?), a beguine who took refuge at Helfta late in her life in 1270, speaks both to the educational resources found at the abbey, and to the importance of female networks and kinship.

The story of the origin of the book recounting Mechtild of Hackeborn's visions is a reminder that authorship in the Middle Ages is a difficult concept in general, but particularly so for many female writers. Mechtild had experienced mystical visions from childhood, but only began to speak of them to others after her sister's death in 1291. Her pupil, Gertrude the Great, and other sisters in her convent wrote them down, at first without her knowledge, in the *Liber specialis gratiae* (Book of Special Grace). Her visions were an inspiration for personal reform for many, including followers of the Modern Devotion, evidenced by this Dutch translation of her work, copied in the IJssel region, the very region where this movement began. Her work is followed by five short meditations and exempla from other sources, including the *Bonum universale de apibus* – in Dutch called the *Biënboec* – of the Dominican author Thomas of Cantimpré (1201–1272), and other texts that are still unidentified and call for further study. [TM 545]

DESCRIPTION: 304 folios, watermarks dating 1495-1499, missing three leaves, written in a hybrida script, red and blue initials, some pen decoration, some ink corrosion and worm holes, 16th- or 17th-century leather binding, re-using part of the original blind-tooled covering. Dimensions 144 x 102 mm.

LITERATURE: R. L. J. Bromberg, ed. *Het Boek der Bijzondere Genade van Mechtild van Hackeborn. Uitgegeven naar een Nijmeegs handschrift. Alsmede een beschrijving van haar mystiek en een onderzoek naar de geschiedenis der middelnederlandse vertalingen*, Zwolle, 1965; K. Schmidt, ed., *Mechtild von Hackeborn. Das Buch der Besonderen Gnade. Liber Specialis Gratiae*, Münsterschwarzach, 2010; R. Voaden, "Mechtild of Hackeborn," in Minnis and Voaden, 2010, pp. 431-451.



25.

[ANONYMOUS], *LE LIVRE NOMMÉ LA DISCIPLINE D'AMOUR DIVINE*

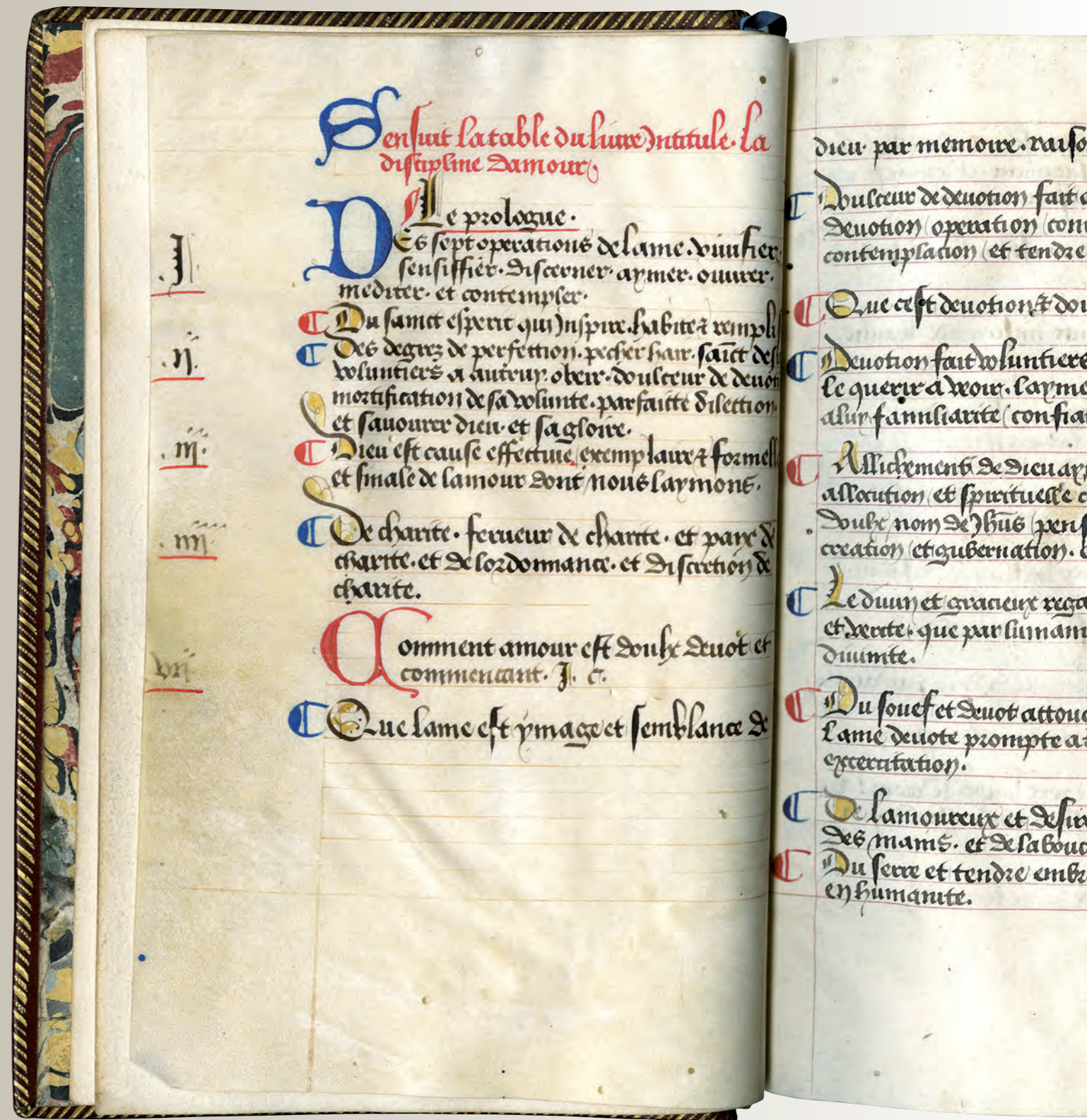
In French, decorated manuscript on parchment and paper
Northern France or Southern Low Countries, c. 1480-1500

La discipline d'amour divine (The Discipline of Divine Love) was written by an anonymous Celestine monk in the 1470s at Notre Dame D'Ambert near Orleans. In itself, it is an interesting example of devotional literature in the vernacular written by the Celestines for women. The complicated story behind this text (which survives in only two manuscripts), however, is even more interesting, since its source is the *Miroir des simples âmes* (Mirror of Simple Souls) by the mystical writer, Marguerite Porete, who was burnt at the stake as a relapsed heretic in Paris in 1310.

Marguerite was from Hainault, most likely Valenciennes, and was probably a beguine, a lay woman living in a religious community without permanent vows. *The Mirror of Simple Souls* is a description of the seven stages required to achieve union with God, presented as a dialogue between Love (representing God), Reason, and the Soul. It expresses Marguerite's conviction that true religion was not found in good works or a virtuous life or even in the sacraments, but instead in a striving towards the annihilation of the self and union with Divine Love. The original French version of this work survives in two manuscripts (only one complete), but despite its condemnation as heretical, it continued to circulate without the author's name in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, often in Benedictine and Carthusian circles, and it was translated into English, Italian, and Latin. Modern scholars attempting to explain why her work was condemned have suggested that political circumstances and her decision to write in the vernacular may have been as important as its content. [TM 380]

DESCRIPTION: 128 folios, watermarks dating 1484-1509, copied in a *batârde* script by more than one scribe, red or blue and parted red and blue initials, in excellent condition, bound in 18th-century gold-tooled red morocco by Richard Wier. Dimensions 203 x 129 mm.

LITERATURE: Emund Colledge, Judith Grant and J. C. Marler, transl., *The Mirror of Simple Souls* by Margaret Porete, Notre Dame Texts in Medieval Culture 6, Notre Dame, 1999; Geneviève Hasenohr, "La tradition du Miroir des simples âmes au XV^e siècle : de Marguerite Porete (†1310) à Marguerite de Navarre," *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* 143 (1999), pp. 1347-1366; Michael G. Sargent, "Marguerite Porete," in Minnis and Voaden, 2010, pp. 291-309.



26.

INVENTORY OF TAPESTRIES BELONGING TO VALENTINA VISCONTI, DUCHESS OF ORLÉANS AND HER SON CHARLES, DUKE OF ORLÉANS; CHARTER RECORDING THE SALE OF HÔTEL DES TOURNELLES TO THE DUKE OF BERRY IN 1402

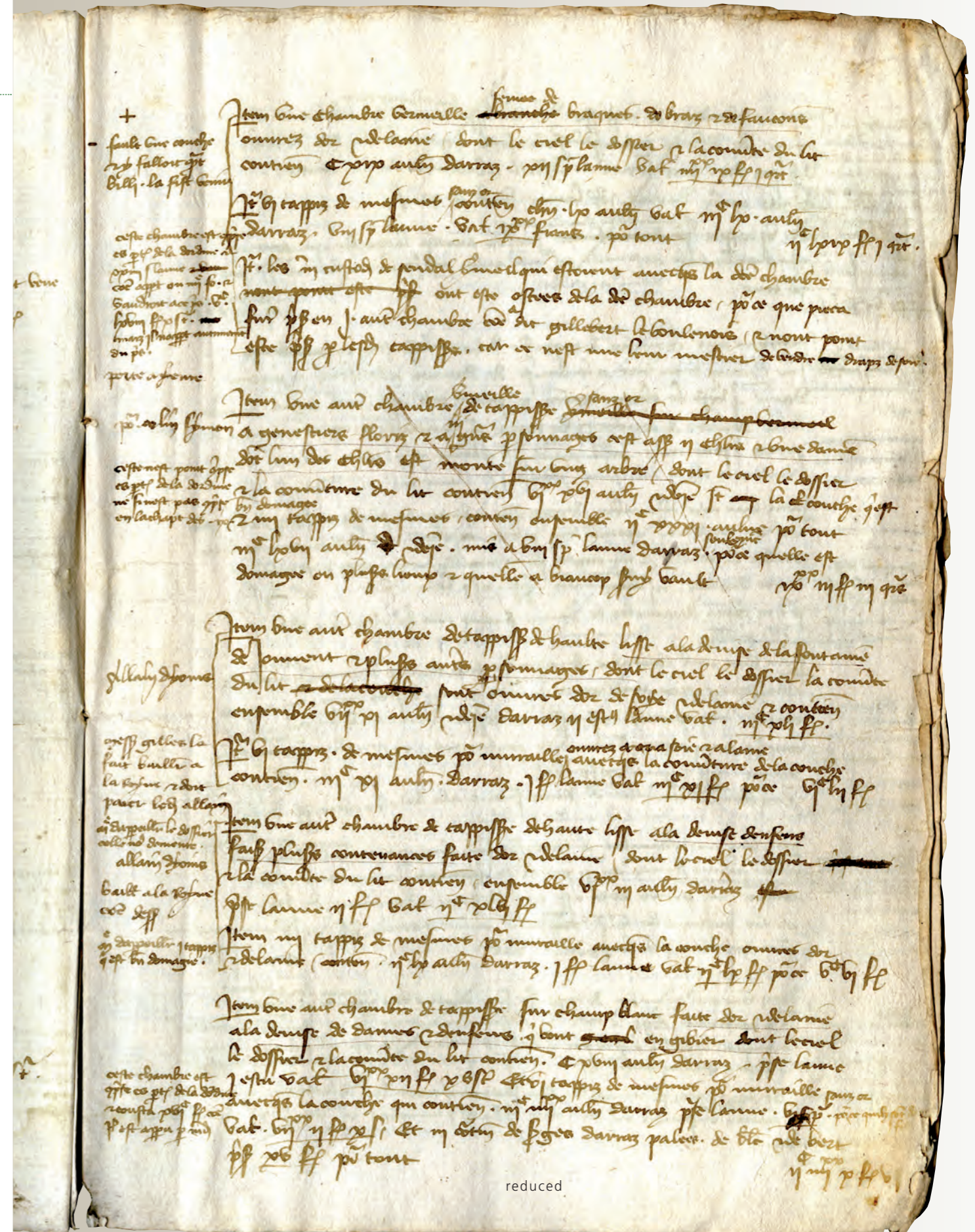
In French, two manuscripts on paper and parchment
France (Paris) dated 20 June 1408 and 27 August 1408; 7 September 1404 (charter)

In this document we have firsthand evidence of the economic independence of widows and the role of women as patrons of the arts. It is an inventory dated 1408 of the tapestries found in three properties belonging to the Orléans family in Paris and Blois, almost certainly made at the request of Valentina Visconti (1371-1408) following the death of her husband, Louis d'Orléans, who was murdered in 1407. Their son Charles was still a young boy of fourteen in 1408. Numerous tapestry dealers are mentioned by name, as are many of their wives, presumably because they were managing the business for aging or deceased husbands. The independent economic role of widows can be seen in other trades as well, including the booktrade in Paris (for example the illuminator and *libraire* Jeanne de Montbason, whose career has been discussed by Richard and Mary Rouse; see also no. 11). Valentina herself was a widow, and the inventory indirectly demonstrates her role in managing her family's extensive properties.

The inventory describes in detail around forty late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century tapestries owned by Louis d'Orléans, including the subjects depicted, the materials and techniques used to make them, and their appraised value at market prices. Both Louis and Valentina were known patrons of the arts, and this document is direct evidence of one aspect of their patronage that has been little studied by modern scholars. Appended to the inventory is a charter of the type known as a "vidimus" (a certified copy of another original act), documenting the sale of the Hôtel de Tournelles to Jean, Duke of Berry in 1402. This vidimus undoubtedly was produced in 1404 and given to the Duke of Orléans by the Duke of Berry to justify his ownership of the Hôtel des Tournelles. [TM 706]

DESCRIPTION: 8 folios, a single quire on paper (watermark dated 1398-1410), written in a highly cursive script, some entries crossed out, good general condition, outer borders a bit frayed, unbound. Dimensions 305 x 220 mm. Joined charter, large parchment leaf (folded), written in a secretarial script.

LITERATURE: Fabienne Joubert, "Les 'tapissiers' de Philippe le Hardi," in *Artistes, artisans et production artistique au Moyen Âge*, t. 3, Paris, 1990, pp. 601-608; Fabienne Joubert, *La tapisserie au Moyen âge*, Rennes, 2000; Richard and Mary Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers: Commercial Book Producers in Medieval Paris 1200-1500*, 2 vols., Turnhout, 2000.



reduced

27.

CATHERINE D'AMBOISE. *LA COMPLAINTE DE LA DAME PASMÉE CONTRE FORTUNE* [COMPLAINT OF THE FAINTING LADY AGAINST FORTUNE] OR *TRAITÉ DE MORALE SUR LA FORTUNE*

In French, illuminated manuscript on parchment
 West-central France (Bourges? or Poitiers?), c. 1525-1530
 8 large miniatures by the artist of Paris, Mazarine MS 978 (P. Merevache?)

This text, a rare example of consolatory literature written by a woman in the French Renaissance, was written by Catherine d'Amboise (c. 1482-1550), probably to comfort herself and members of her family saddened by the death of her nephew, Georges II d'Amboise in 1525. This is the most important of three known manuscripts, and the only one remaining in private hands.

Catherine d'Amboise, the posthumous daughter of Charles I d'Amboise and Catherine de Chauvigny, was born into one of the foremost families of Touraine. Her earlier work, the *Le Livre des prudens et imprudens* (Paris, Bibl. de l'Arsenal, MS 2037), a long prose treatise that examines the fortunes of men and women from Adam to Charlemagne, was written in response to the death of her first husband and child. It is surely of interest to see a woman from this period turning to writing as an act of consolation. Equally interesting is her choice to circulate her works as manuscripts, with deliberately limited circulation, rather than as printed books. The evidence suggests she played an active role in the production of this manuscript, possibly copying it herself, and almost certainly supervising the unique program of illustrations (probably by the Poitevin illuminator, P. Merevache) recounting the vagaries of Fortune from a female perspective. Catherine inherited the vernacular books from the library of her uncle, the great humanist prelate Georges d'Amboise (1460-1510), and her education and literate background are evident in the composition of this work. Her library, like the library of Anne de Polignac (no. 1), is of particular importance since it allows us a glimpse into the education and literary tastes of secular women below the rank of queens and princesses.

DESCRIPTION: 24 folios, complete, written in a gothic bookhand, 8 large initials in blue and red with acanthus infills on grounds of liquid gold, 8 large miniatures in rectangular frames of liquid gold, slight staining to miniature on fol. 19v and facing text page, 18th-century brown calf binding, two corners and spine restored at head and foot. Dimensions 216 x 152 mm.

LITERATURE: Ariane Bergeron-Foote, "Les oeuvres en prose de Catherine d'Amboise, dame de Lignières (1481-1550)," *Positions de thèse de l'Ecole des chartes*, Paris, 2002; M. D. Orth, "Dedicating Women: Manuscript Culture in the French Renaissance, and the Case of Catherine d'Amboise and Anne de Graille," *Journal of the Early Book Society for the Study of Manuscript and Printing History* 1.1 (Fall 1997), pp. 17-47; Orth, 2001.



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wus vous la debues embrasser et souue
 raiement armer pour la sercher et pro
 curer car sans elle le pecheur ne peut
 paruenir a leternelle beatitude.

Des louanges de patience.





E fus ioieuse de ouyr tant de bies
dire de patience et me augmē
ta le courage de me retirer vers
elle. Par quoy priay raison

de me mieffre au chemin et conduire au
lieu ou elle se tenoit. A quoy elle se corda
Et atant entraïne en vng chemin fort,
estoit plain de pierres et chailloux asles
rigoureux toutestors par les coustes le che
min estoit bien plaissant car il estoit ten
du de belle verdure. Et tant cheminisme
que nous arriuasmes ala premiere repue
ou nous fumes tresbien tractes et ainsi
qu'on a prestoit le disner arriu a vne noble
dāe de haulte et grande renomee que bien
cognoissoye car elle estoit de ceulx que plus
jaimors et si toult quelle me vit les lar
mes luy tumberent des yeulx en si grant
habondance que plus ne pouoit. Je ne la
voulu surc interroguer car bien ie sca
uors la cause de la douleur. Toutestors
cōmenci a renouueller toutes ses plaic
tes Davant raison qui la reconforta
come elle auoit fait moy ausly hostelliere
dudit logis plusieurs belles exemples
luy rata la quelle a ps disner no^r fit ense

28.

TWENTY-ONE SONNETS BY GIOVANNI ANDREA GILIO, FRANCESCO COPPETTA DEI BECCUTI, JACOPO SANNAZARO, AND LAURA BATTIFERRA, AND OTHER AUTHORS; LAURA BATTIFERRA, *I SETTE PSALMI PENITENTIALI* [THE PENITENTIAL PSALMS IN ITALIAN TRANSLATION]

In Italian, manuscript on paper

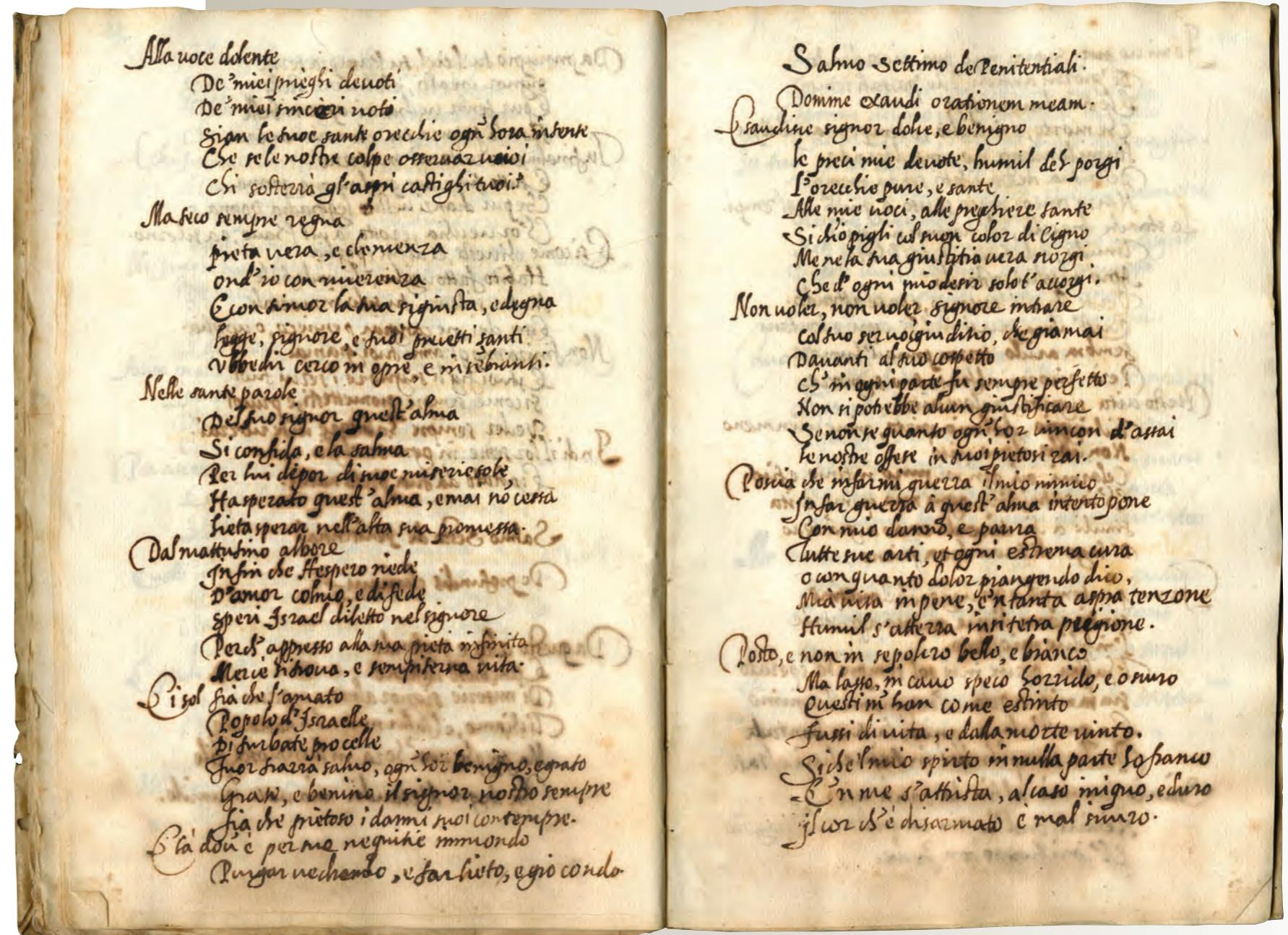
Italy (Tuscany or Latium?), c. 1560-1570 (probably after 1564, closer to 1567-1570)

This collection includes twenty-one sonnets and the Italian translation of the Penitential Psalms by Laura Battiferra degli Ammannati (1523-1589). Twelve of the sonnets are by unidentified authors, eight by known male authors, and one by Laura herself. Although little known to today, in the words of her modern biographer Victoria Kirkham, she was celebrated by her contemporaries as the “new Sappho of our time.” Laura was born in Urbino, and received an excellent education. She was married twice; her second husband, the Tuscan sculptor Bartolomeo Ammannati, supported her in her work as an author. Settled in Florence, Laura was part of the circle of Humanist artists and writers that included Benedetto Varchi, Agnolo Bronzino and Benvenuto Cellini. The members of this intellectually rich network exchanged many letters, sonnets and sketches. Her translation of the Penitential Psalms was dedicated to the Duchess of Urbino, Vittoria Farnese Della Rovere (1519-1602) when it was published in 1564. In the prologue (not found in this manuscript), Laura Battiferra boldly places herself in the same family of poets as King David.

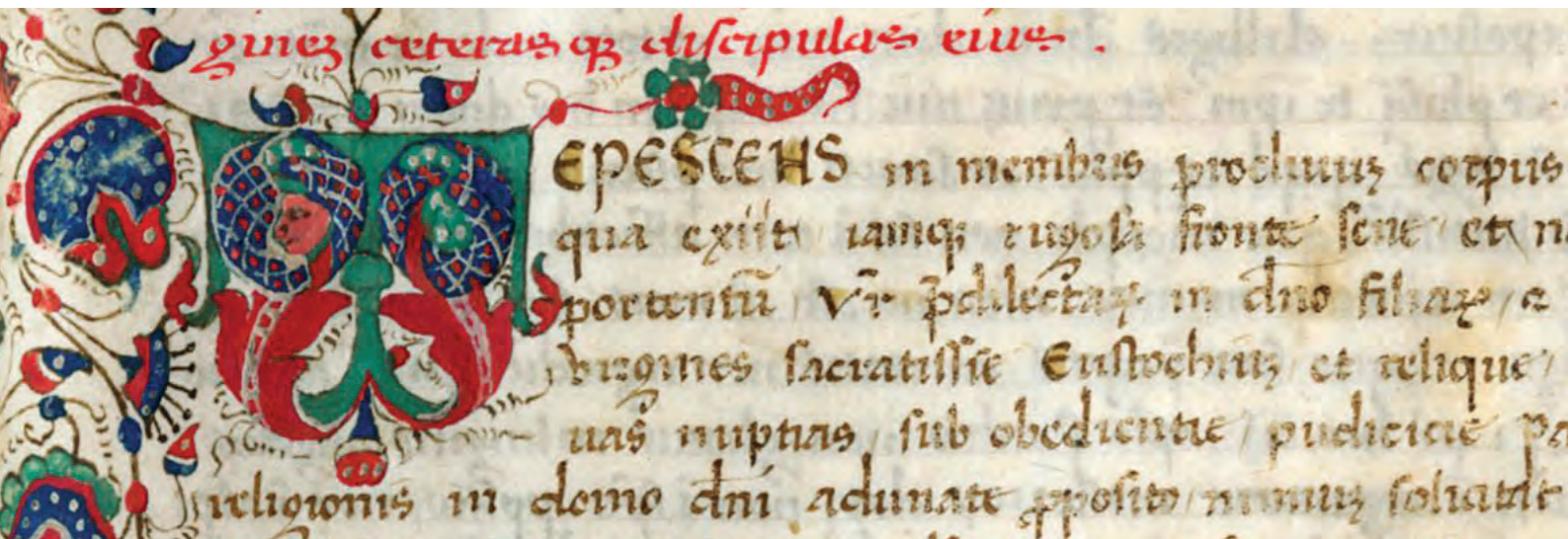
Laura was a prolific poet; Kirkham has identified 550 Italian poems attributed or addressed to her. This manuscript seems likely to have been copied in circles close to Laura, although it was not copied by her or her husband. We know that she was close to certain important poets such as Benedetto Varchi and Annibale Caro, both of whom she turned to for advice. This is an interesting collection of spiritual poetry, steeped in the ideals of the Counter-Reformation that will surely repay further research. [TM 572]

DESCRIPTION: 44 folios on paper, watermarks dating 1548-1575, complete, written in an Italian cursive script probably by two scribes, general condition satisfactory, although acidity of ink has caused smudging to fol. 17, a few holes and tears, limp vellum cover from a 15th-century liturgical manuscript. Dimensions 210 x 150 mm.

LITERATURE: V. Kirkham, ed., *Laura Battiferra and Her Literary Circle: An Anthology*, Chicago and London, 2006; V. Kirkham, “Sappho on the Arno: The Brief Fame of Laura Battiferra,” in *Strong Voices, Weak History: Early Women Writers and Canons in England, France and Italy*, eds. P. Benson and V. Kirkham, Ann Arbor, 2005, pp. 174-196.



IV. WRITTEN BY MEN



TEXTS BY MALE AUTHORS WRITING TO WOMEN CAN INFORM US ABOUT ATTITUDES towards women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and help us to understand the world in which women lived. Studying the manuscripts of these texts as material artifacts allows us to look at the question in a slightly different light, and to focus on questions related to transmission and audience: Were they read by women? By men? Can we uncover clues as to how these texts were actually read by different audiences? Studying transmission, early ownership, annotations and other signs of use can offer us information beyond what is available from the study of textual content in isolation.

ST. JEROME (c. 347- c. 419) IS THE PREEMINENT EXAMPLE OF A MALE WRITER whose own work was shaped by his personal relationship with women. His close friendship with holy women, in particular Paula, her daughter Eustochium, Marcella and Proba, is a remarkable aspect of his life and writings. Many of his works were written in response to their questions, and over a third of his extant letters are addressed to women. His passionate championship of holy virgins and widows (and his defence of his own friendship with them), was paired with an equally vehement disparagement of marriage and worldly women, a dichotomy that permeates his Epistle XXII, a lengthy treatise on virginity addressed to Eustochium. Religious women throughout the Middle Ages must have turned to this letter for affirmation of their choice to lead a life as a bride of Christ.



IT WOULD BE OF INTEREST TO KNOW HOW MANY COPIES of works by Jerome addressed to women have been identified with evidence of female ownership. In the sixteenth century, Anne de Polignac owned a French translation of Jerome's letter LIV to the widow to Furia (no. 1). A copy of this letter in Latin, and four other letters to women, is found in a collection of texts by Jerome copied by Johannes Tyrolf in 1435 (no. 30). We know the scribe eventually entered the Benedictine monastery of St. Emmeram at Regensburg. Whether he was a monk there in 1435 is unclear, but it is probable that this miscellany was copied for the monastery of St. Emmeram, for Johannes himself, or for a male cleric in the neighborhood, based on what we know of his other signed works. It includes formal marginal glosses that deserve further study as evidence of the reception of these texts, a particularly interesting question in the case of Jerome's texts addressed to women, here being read by men.

THERE IS NO DIRECT EVIDENCE OF THE FIRST OWNER OF THE COLLECTION OF TEXTS BY Jerome from Northern Italy described here (no. 29). The quality of the parchment, script, and minor decoration suggest that it was made in a professional shop. The first text, which begins with the rubric, *Regula vivendi in monasteriis monialium* (Rule for Living in Monasteries of Nuns), is in fact not by Jerome, but it was accepted as his during the Middle Ages, and is addressed to Eustochium. The fact that it is in Latin need not rule out ownership by nuns, as we have noted before (no. 23). It is also possible that it was made for a man with a particular interest in the religious life of women, possibly a confessor or someone associated with a convent. Since neither female nor male ownership can be ruled out, it is an interesting manuscript to examine from both perspectives.

NUNS DEPENDED ON MALE PRIESTS FOR THE SACRAMENTS, and there was a tradition throughout the Middle Ages of men writing texts for their spiritual guidance. *Traité de la vanité des choses mondaines* (Treatise on the Vanity of Worldly Things) was written in 1460 for a nun, Jehanne Girard (or Gerande) of the Royal Abbey of Longchamp near Paris by Jean Barthélemy (fl. 1446-1460) (no. 31). *La discipline d'amour divine* (The Discipline of Divine Love) was written by an anonymous Celestine monk in the 1470s at Notre Dame D'Ambert near Orleans (no. 25). The transmission of both these texts was quite narrow: *La discipline d'amour divine* is known in only one other manuscript; Jean Barthélemy's text in only four. The investigation of why these texts were not more widely disseminated would be of interest. The *Leven von Jezus*, a re-telling of the life and Passion of Christ in Dutch, survives, in whole or in part, in more than forty manuscripts (no. 32). The copy described here is a small book, appropriate for private devotion, made for a woman (feminine forms are used in a prayer). This text was based at least in part

on a popular Latin text, the *Meditationes vitae christi*, once attributed to St. Bonaventure. Most modern scholars now believe this Latin text was written by an early fourteenth-century Italian Franciscan, Johannes de Caulibus, for a Franciscan nun (and some believe that it may have originated in an Italian text written by a nun for another nun).

TEXTS WRITTEN BY MEN FOR WOMEN WERE NOT EXCLUSIVELY RELIGIOUS in content, as illustrated by the works of Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375). His most famous work, the *Decameron*, was dedicated to women in love, and *De mulieribus claris* is a collection of lives of famous women. He even chose to speak in the narrative voice of a woman in a number of the tales in the *Decameron* and in the *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta*, which tells the story of the tragic love affair of Fiammetta (no. 33). We know something of the origin of our copy of the *Elegia* since it was signed by the scribe, who identifies himself as Laurentius Nannis, "formerly of Gubbio, citizen of Pesaro," and dated November 12, 1458. We unfortunately do not know whether he was copying the manuscript for himself, or for someone else. Investigation of the readership of Boccaccio among women (and men) is of considerable interest given the complicated attitude towards women expressed in his texts.



29.

PSEUDO-JEROME, *REGULA MONACHARUM AD EUSTOCHIUM*; AND *DE LAPSU VIRGINIS*; JEROME, *DE PERPETUA VIRGINITATE BEATAE MARIAE*; AND *ADUERSUS JOVINIANUM*; AND OTHER WORKS

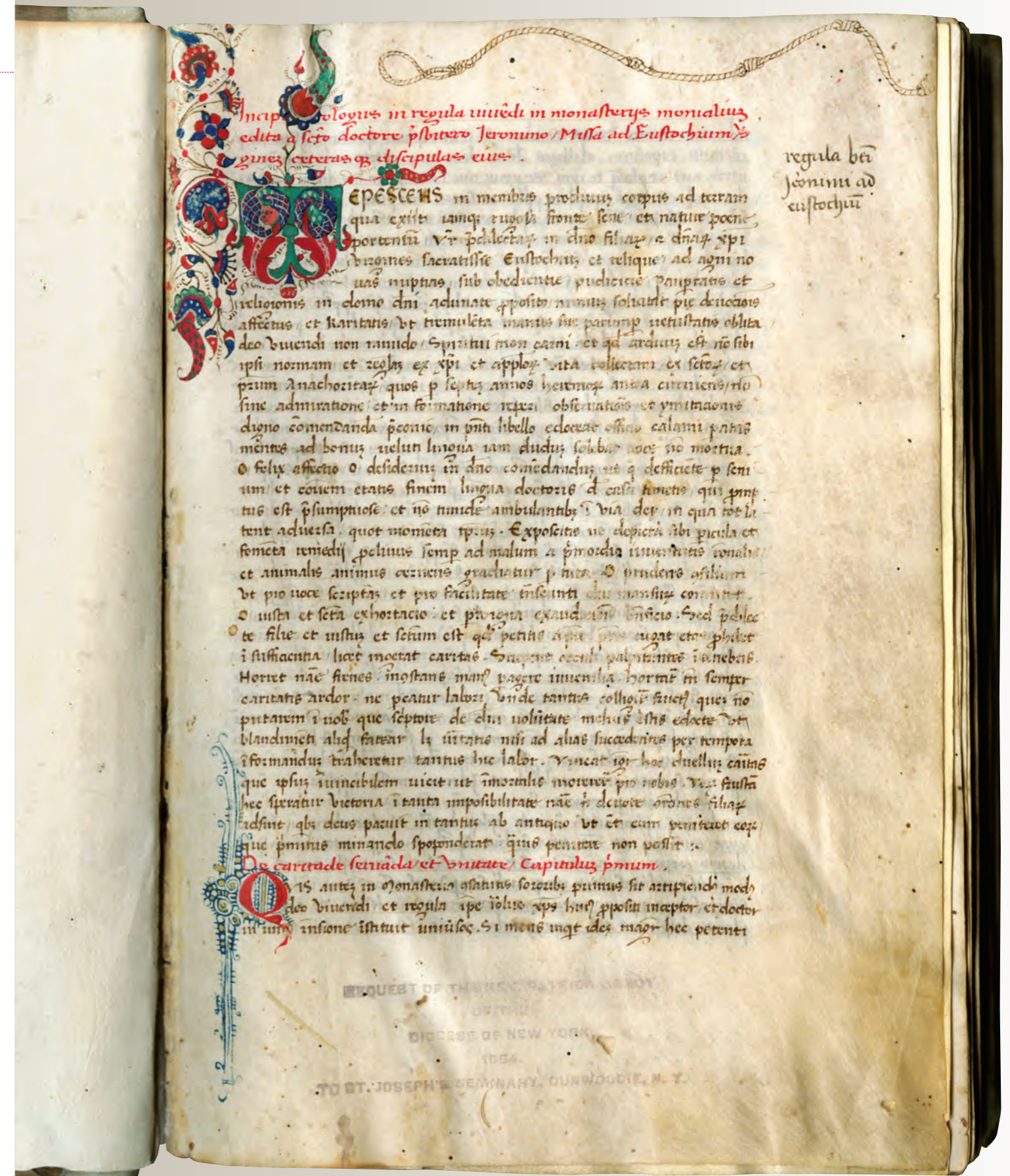
In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment
Northern Italy, c. 1450-1500

St. Jerome (c. 347- c. 419), was a brilliant scholar, and author of numerous works, including the translation of the Bible into Latin from Hebrew and Greek known as the Vulgate. His close personal friendship with women is a remarkable aspect of his life and writings, creating for the Middle Ages a paradigm of holy women who were dedicated to the religious life. His passionate championship of such women (and his defence of his own friendship with them), was paired with an equally vehement disparagement of marriage and worldly women. Jerome believed the best Christian life was one of chastity, and even argued against the validity of second marriages. Theologically this viewpoint extended to his defence of the doctrine that Mary remained a virgin throughout her life.

The original owner of this manuscript is unknown, but the texts in this miscellany seem to have been chosen by someone with a special interest in the dynamics of gender, female virginity, and the religious life of women, including *De Lapsu Virginis*, the *Regula monachorum* (both of which circulated as Jerome's, although they are not accepted as authentic by modern scholars), *De perpetua virginitate Beatae Mariae*, Jerome's exposition of the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary, and *Aduersus Jovinianum*. This last text was an especially popular work throughout Europe in the later Middle Ages. In Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, the wife of Bath's husband owns a copy, and the wife herself responds to Jovinianus's claim – that a woman's virginity and marriage are of equal worth – throughout her “prologue.” [TM 559]

DESCRIPTION: 79 folios, complete, written in a humanistic script by two scribes, 2- to 13-line colored initials, one 4-line multi-colored initial with acanthus leaves and floral sprays and a sketch of a hangman's noose in the upper margin, minor wear to f. 20v, early 20th-century vellum binding. Dimensions 242 x 164 mm.

LITERATURE: Ralph Hanna, ed., *Jankyn's Book of Wikked Wyves*, Athens, 1997; J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies*, New York, 1975.



30.

JEROME, *EPISTULAE; ADVERSUS VIGILANTIUM; AND DE PERPETUA VIRGINITATE BEATAE MARIAE ADVERSUS HELVIDIUM*

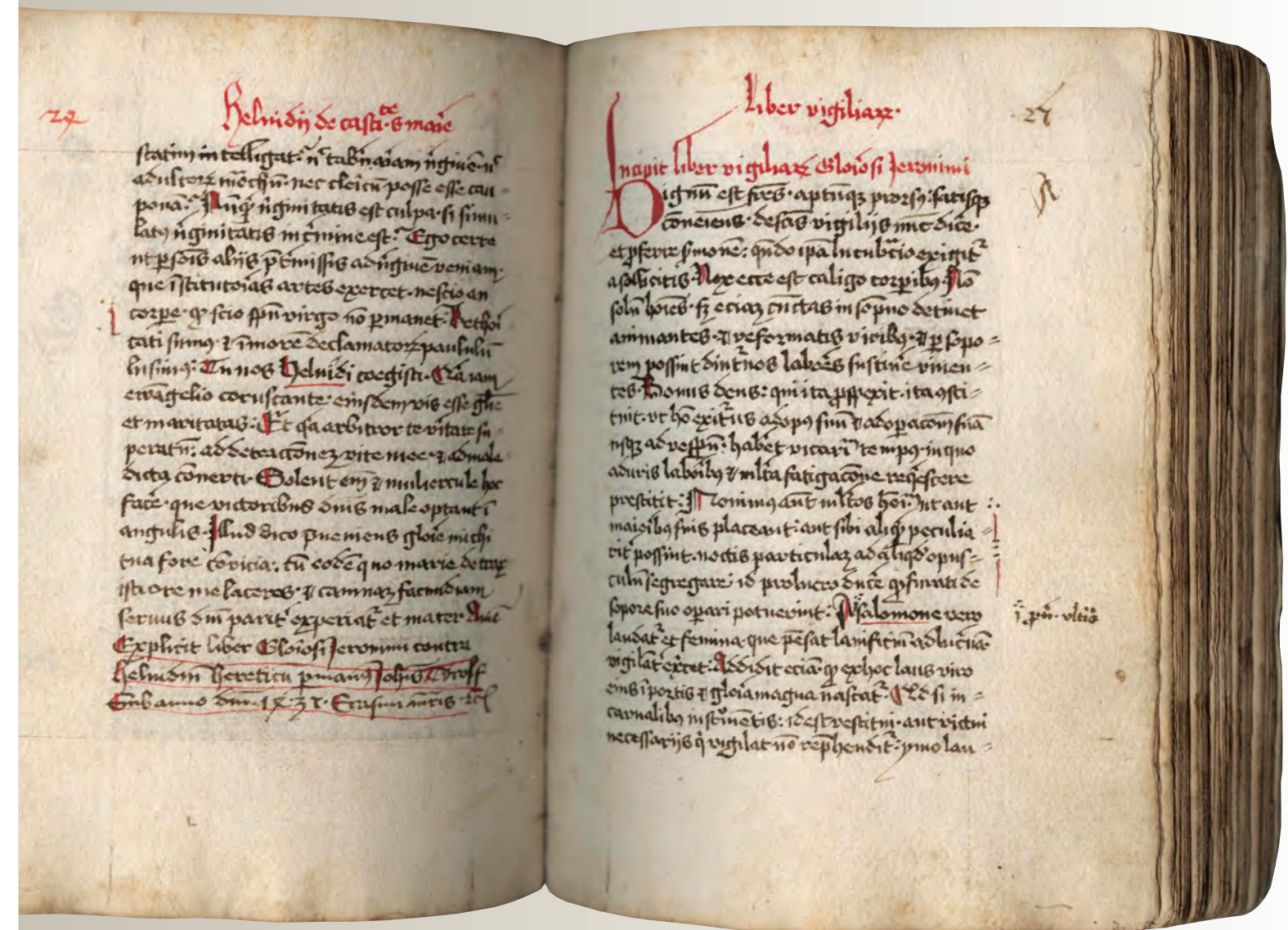
In Latin, decorated manuscript on paper
Southern Germany (Regensburg), signed and dated 1435

Jerome (c. 347- c. 419), was known as “*vir trilinguis*” due to his knowledge of Hebrew, Greek and Latin, and his greatest achievement was his translation of the Bible. He was a brilliant, but difficult man, quick to make enemies. As noted in the previous entry (no. 29), his closest friendships were with a group of holy women, including Paula and her daughter Eustochium whom he met in Rome, and who subsequently travelled with him to the Holy Land. They worked with him on his biblical translations, and he wrote many of his treatises and commentaries in response to their requests. Over a third of his extant letters are addressed to women. This manuscript includes five letters to various women, including Letter LIV to Furia, encouraging her to shun marriage and remain a widow (see no. 1 for this text in a French translation).

The scribe of this manuscript, Johannes Tyrolf, signed it in several places with his name and a date, allowing us to calculate how long it took him to copy various sections of the book (evidence of this sort is very rare in medieval manuscripts). Johannes is known to have copied at least five other manuscripts; at the end of his life he became a monk at the Abbey of St. Emmeram in Regensburg. The sophisticated layout of this manuscript that was designed to make it easy to search is noteworthy; each text is numbered in the table of contents, and the numbers are repeated in the running titles. It also includes a subject index and formal marginal glosses, almost certainly copied by Johannes himself, that include variant readings, identification of biblical citations, and extensive notes on the contents. [TM 582]

DESCRIPTION: 216 folios on paper, unidentified watermark, complete, written in a skilled hybrida script, 2- to 3-line red initials, three damaged folios at the end, minor wear, else excellent condition, original red leather binding over wooden boards, in fragile condition, front cover partially detached, back cover mostly missing. Dimensions 146 x 109 mm.

LITERATURE: Andrew Cain, *The Letters of Jerome: Asceticism, Biblical Exegesis, and the Construction of Christian Authority in Late Antiquity*, Oxford and New York, 2009; Joan Ferrante, *To the Glory of her Sex: Women's Role in the Composition of Medieval Texts*, Bloomington, 1997.



31.

JEAN BARTHÉLEMY, *TRAITÉ DE LA VANITÉ DES CHOSES MONDAINES*

In French, illuminated manuscript on paper
France, (Paris?), 1471

The degree of autonomy of houses of female religious varied to such an extent that generalizations are largely meaningless. All women in the religious life, however, depended on priests to say the Mass (and often to hear confessions and to preach), and many convents were supervised by male religious or secular clerics. Monks and friars also were entrusted with providing more general spiritual direction to the nuns.

The text in this manuscript, *Traité de la vanité des choses mondaines* (Treatise on the Vanity of Worldly Things) is an unpublished vernacular work of spiritual guidance written in 1460 for a nun, Jehanne Girard (or Gerande) of the Royal Abbey of Longchamp near Paris by Jean Barthélemy (fl. 1446-1460). Longchamp was founded in 1259 by St. Isabelle of France (1225-1270), sister of the French king St. Louis IX. Longchamp and its daughter houses, including St.-Marcel in Paris (no. 17), followed a rule written by Isabelle that differed in several respects from the rule followed by other Franciscan nuns. Strict enclosure was insisted upon, as was obedience to superiors within the Franciscan order, and the foundations were restricted to the nobility and other women from the highest ranks of society, who brought with them substantial dowries. Longchamp was home to an impressive library of 193 books by the late fifteenth century. Evidence of a scriptorium at Longchamp, however, is debatable, and many of these books were gifts, or books nuns brought with them when they entered. This text, which has never been printed, is known in only five manuscripts, all dating to the 1460s and 1470s shortly following its composition. [TM 729]

DESCRIPTION: 67 folios on paper, watermark dated 1471, formerly with additional leaves used as a diary by Frances Vaurelha (b. 1508) in Albi, written in a cursive gothic bookhand, black rubrics, 2-line red initials, one 3-line gold initial with an illuminated panel border, illuminated initial and border rubbed, some marginal damage, now disbound, but still sewn on the original(?) thongs. Dimensions 293 × 207 mm.

LITERATURE: C. Portal, "Notes d'un bourgeois d'Albi au XVIe siècle," *Revue historique, scientifique, et littéraire du Département du Tarn* 8 (1890-1891), pp. 229-237; Roest, 2013; Gertrud Mlynarczyk, *Ein Franziskanerinnenkloster im 15. Jahrhundert: Edition und Analyse von Besitzinventaren aus der Abtei Longchamp*, *Pariser historische Studien* 23, Bonn, 1987.

A la louange et honneur de dieu
et contempnement des choses
terrennes Cy commence un petit
traicte de la vanité des choses mondaines
fait par nulle nuy le alustant et honnorable
et devote Religieuse sœur Jehanne girard du
très pieux religieux convent de humilité de nre
dame de long champ par le plus petit et
indigne des moines frere Jehan barthelemy

Le premier chapitre qui est le prologue du livre
et introduction de la parole pour l'humme donnee
par la dame Alacatw du traicte

Semblant l'adieu figure et deve
y mange de dieu en toute d. nre
raisonnable se tu ne dors amiglee par pechie
Incessamment tu deussés penser que dieu
te fait grant tu neffortis plus beate
et humilite en la nature que nest le monde
ou le plus haut en excellence que
nature brutale et dng plus bas en
dignite que nature angelique la sou ce
que en gloire tu les peu plus surmonter
Deventer tu donne la lumiere de boult
liberte gratuite et par ses deux puissances
faire et liberad arbitre amigles l'aveche



32.

LEVEN VON JEZUS [MIDDLE-DUTCH TRANSLATION OF
THE PSEUDO-BONAVENTURE-LUDOLPHIAN,
LIFE OF JESUS]

In Dutch, decorated manuscript on paper
Southern part of the Northern Netherlands (North-Brabant?), c. 1475–1500

Although it is true that the strong identification with the life of Christ and with His Passion known as affective piety or affective meditation, was not limited to women during the Middle Ages, it is also true that this form of devotion had a special importance to women, both lay and religious. Many of the classic medieval texts of affective meditation were written by men for women, and the identification medieval nuns felt for the life of Christ is manifested in much of the art produced in convents. McNamer has argued that this was a form of religious devotion created by women, and in particular, by nuns (McNamer, 2010). The text in this manuscript is an account of the life and Passion of Christ that encourages the reader to relive and identify with these events. One of its sources is the Latin text known as the *Meditationes vitae christi*, once attributed to St. Bonaventure. Many modern scholars now suggest it was written in the early fourteenth century by an Italian Franciscan, Johannes de Caulibus, for a Franciscan nun. McNamer has argued that the text originated not with this Latin work, but with a shorter Italian version written by a nun for another nun.

We know that this manuscript was made for a woman, since the feminine form “*dierne*” is used in the prayer interpolated between the stories of the entombment of Christ and His resurrection. More than forty manuscripts of this Dutch meditation on the life of Christ survive, evidence of the increasing desire among both religious and lay people in the fifteenth century for devotional and meditative texts in the vernacular. It was a desire which was strongly inspired by the *Devotio Moderna*, the religious movement, founded by the Dutch reformer Geert Groote, which revived spiritual life in the Low Countries during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. [TM 753]

DESCRIPTION: 197 folios, paper, no watermarks discernible, complete, written in a hybrida script, 6- to 2-line red or blue initials, one drawing in green and red of a cross on a hill, in good condition, small tears on two folios, some unobtrusive stains, 18th-century vellum binding. Dimensions 135 x 100 mm.

LITERATURE: C. C. de Bruin, ed., *TLeven Ons Heren Ihesu Christi = Vita Ihesu Christi : het pseudo-Bonaventura-Ludolfiaanse leven van Jesus*, Leiden, 1980; Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion*, Philadelphia, 2010.



33.

GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO, *ELEGIA DI MADONNA FIAMMETTA*; [ANONYMOUS], COMIC NOVELLA

In Italian, illuminated manuscript on paper
Central Italy (Pesaro?), dated 1458

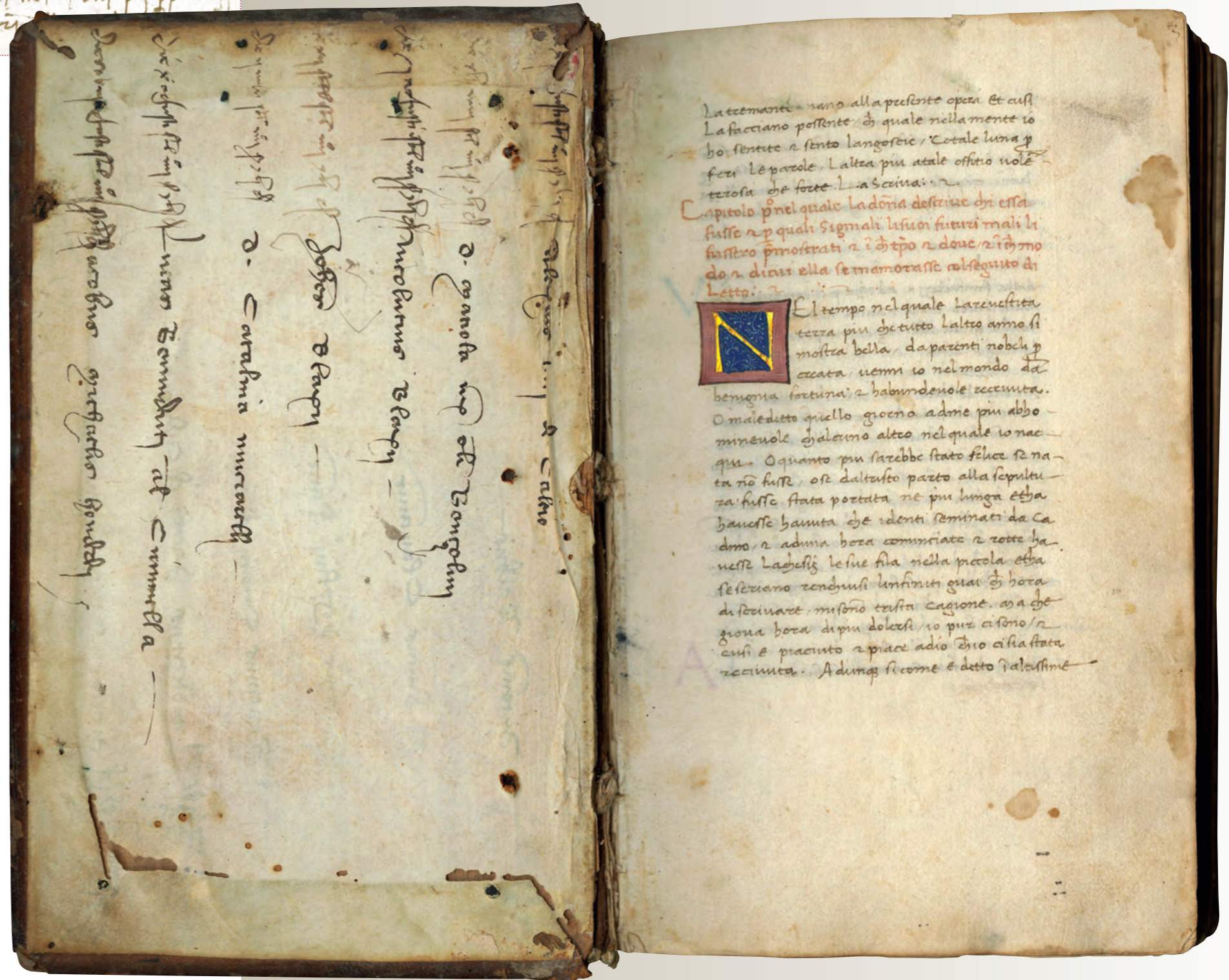
The importance of women in the works of Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375) is undeniable, although open to a number of interpretations, as reflected in the abundant scholarly discussion related to the topic. *De mulieribus claris* adapts the literary model of the collected lives of famous men to recount the lives of famous women. His choices to speak in a female narrative voice in many tales of the *Decameron* (which was dedicated to women in love) and in the work included in this manuscript is even more interesting. The *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta* tells the story of the tragic love affair of a beautiful and wealthy Neapolitan lady, Fiammetta, told as a cautionary tale to future female readers. The novel draws on the model of Ovid's *Heroides*—a series of epistolary poems written in the voices of mythological and literary heroines mistreated by their lovers—to give voice to Fiammetta's lamentation over lost love.

The *Elegia* was an enormously popular and influential text in the two centuries that followed its composition. Both its classical erudition and its elegant prose appealed to humanist readers of the fifteenth century, and many of the surviving manuscript copies date from this period. Signed and dated by its scribe, Laurentius Nannis, who is known in one other manuscript (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS Z 123 sup.), this is an attractive manuscript. Copies of the *Elegia* are relatively uncommon outside of Italian collections and only three copies are currently housed in North American libraries. The unidentified novella at the end of the manuscript recounts a bawdy comic tale of a miller, a young man, and his wife, and will surely repay further study (although it now ends imperfectly). [TM 791]

DESCRIPTION: 140 folios on paper, watermarks dated 1459-1463, missing two leaves at the beginning and some leaves at the end, written in a neat humanistic cursive script, 2- to 3-line colored initials, eight 3- to 4-line burnished gold initials on colored grounds, some initials slightly smeared, occasional stains and worming, contemporary blind-tooled leather Italian binding, lower board partially detached, patches of leather lost on the upper board. Dimensions 220 x 133 mm..

LITERATURE: Giovanni Boccaccio, *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta*, ed. Carlo Delcorno, in *Tutte le opere di Giovanni Boccaccio*, ed. Vittore Branca, Milan, 1964-98, vol. 5, part 2, pp. 3-412; Thomas C. Stillinger and F. Regina Psaki, eds., *Boccaccio and Feminist Criticism*, Studi e Testi 8, Chapel Hill, 2006.

Consumatum hoc opus manu mey Laurentij
Nannis olim de Sgubio. Cuius pater die xxv
novembe 1458 Episcopus nostrorum dny ppi pp terti
Sub domino fth. d. N. N.



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34.

ANTONINUS FLORENTINUS (ANTONIO PIEROZZI), CONFESSIOALE [VERSION: DEFECERUNT SCRUTANTES SCRUTINIO]; AND OTHER TEXTS

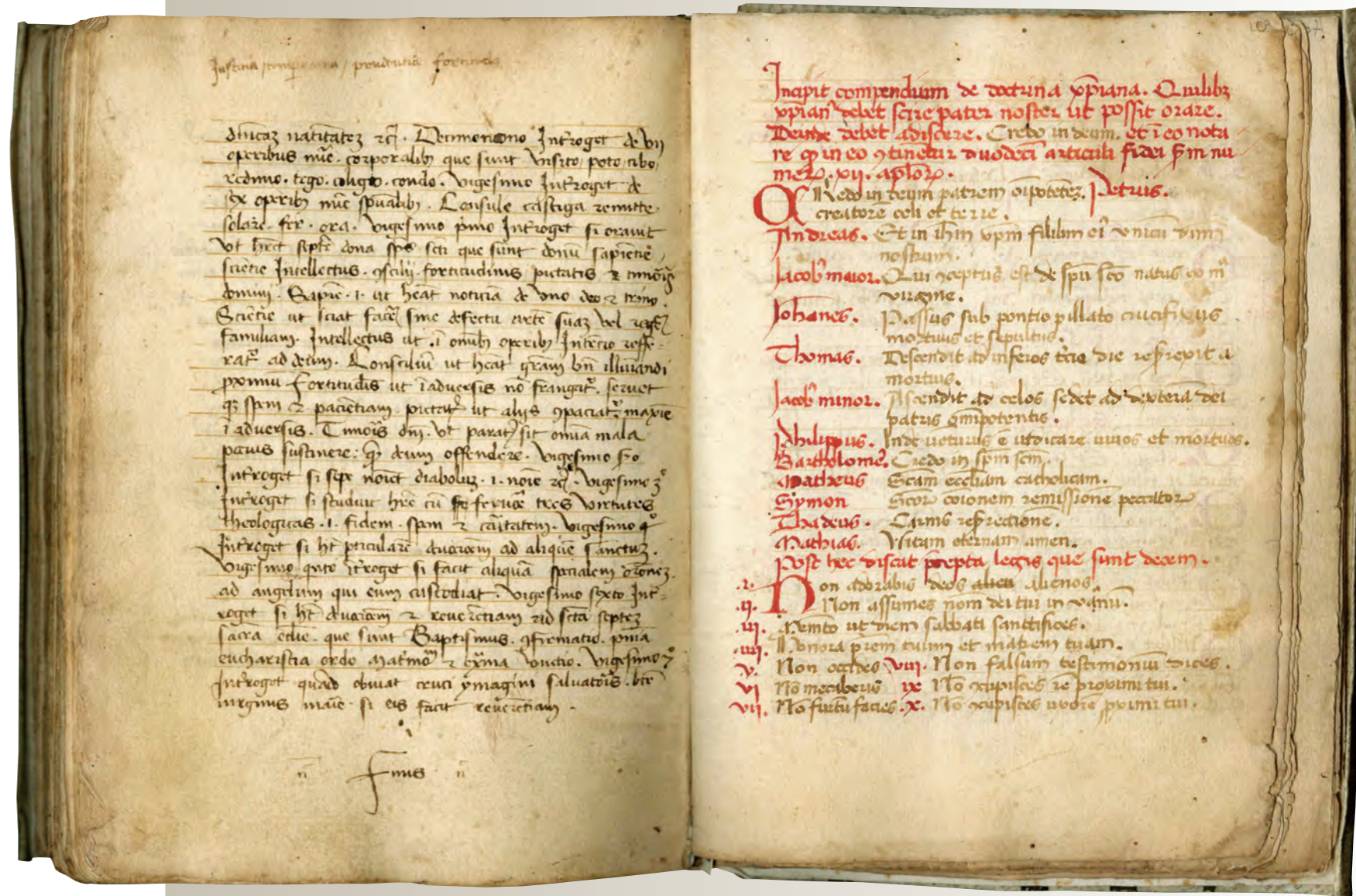
In Latin and Italian, decorated manuscript on paper.
Northern Italy (Florence, Milan?), dated 14[6]2

The core of this manuscript is a copy of a very popular manual for confessors by Antoninus of Florence (1389-1459), a Dominican theologian who served as archbishop of Florence from 1446. Works of this type, known as *summae confessorum*, aimed at preparing priests to serve as wise and informed confessors, knowledgeable in both moral theology and canon law. They were a response to the emphasis on the importance of confession enacted by the Fourth Lateran council in 1215, and the accompanying need to train priests in their pastoral mission. The topic of women and confession in its positive and negative aspects, and the often complex interaction between women, especially nuns, and the male priests administering the sacrament, has been explored by Elliott (Elliott, 2003).

Accompanying this text is an excerpt from another work by Antoninus, *De ornatu et habitu mulierum* (On the Dress and Appearance of Women) written in 1440, frequently copied with his confessional. Florence enacted sumptuary laws as early as the thirteenth century, and they were re-enacted periodically for centuries. Antoninus's treatise should be seen in the context of the campaigns of Franciscan Observants like Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444), who preached against luxury and immodest apparel; we are told Bernardino inspired "bonfires of vanities" where people cast in mirrors, high-heeled shoes, false hair, perfume, and other frivolities. Sumptuary laws, in Florence and elsewhere, tended to be concerned primarily with women's clothes and ornament (often along with that of young men). The phenomenon is complex, but it is difficult not to see it as inspired at least in part by misogyny, together with political motives, and class concerns. [TM 498]

DESCRIPTION: 112 folios on paper, watermark dated 1468-1478, complete, written in a humanistic script by four scribes, 2-line red initials, 9-line blue initial with red penwork, limp vellum binding reusing part of a leaf from a fifteenth-century Choir book. Dimensions 165 x 120 mm.

LITERATURE: Dyan Elliott, "Women and Confession: From Empowerment to Pathology," in Erlar and Kowaleski, 2003, pp. 31-51; Thomas Izbicki, "The Origins of the *De ornatu mulierum* of Antoninus of Florence," *Modern Language Notes* 119, number 1 (2004), pp. S142-S161; Susan Mosher Stuard, *Gilding the Market: Luxury and Fashion in Fourteenth-Century Italy*, Philadelphia, 2006.



35.

PETRUS DE UBALDIS IUNIOR [PETRUS DE PERUSIO], ATTR., COMMENTARIUM SUPER DECRETALES GREGORII IX OR LECTURA SUPER QUIBUSDAM TITULIS LIB. II. DECRETALIUM GREGORII IX

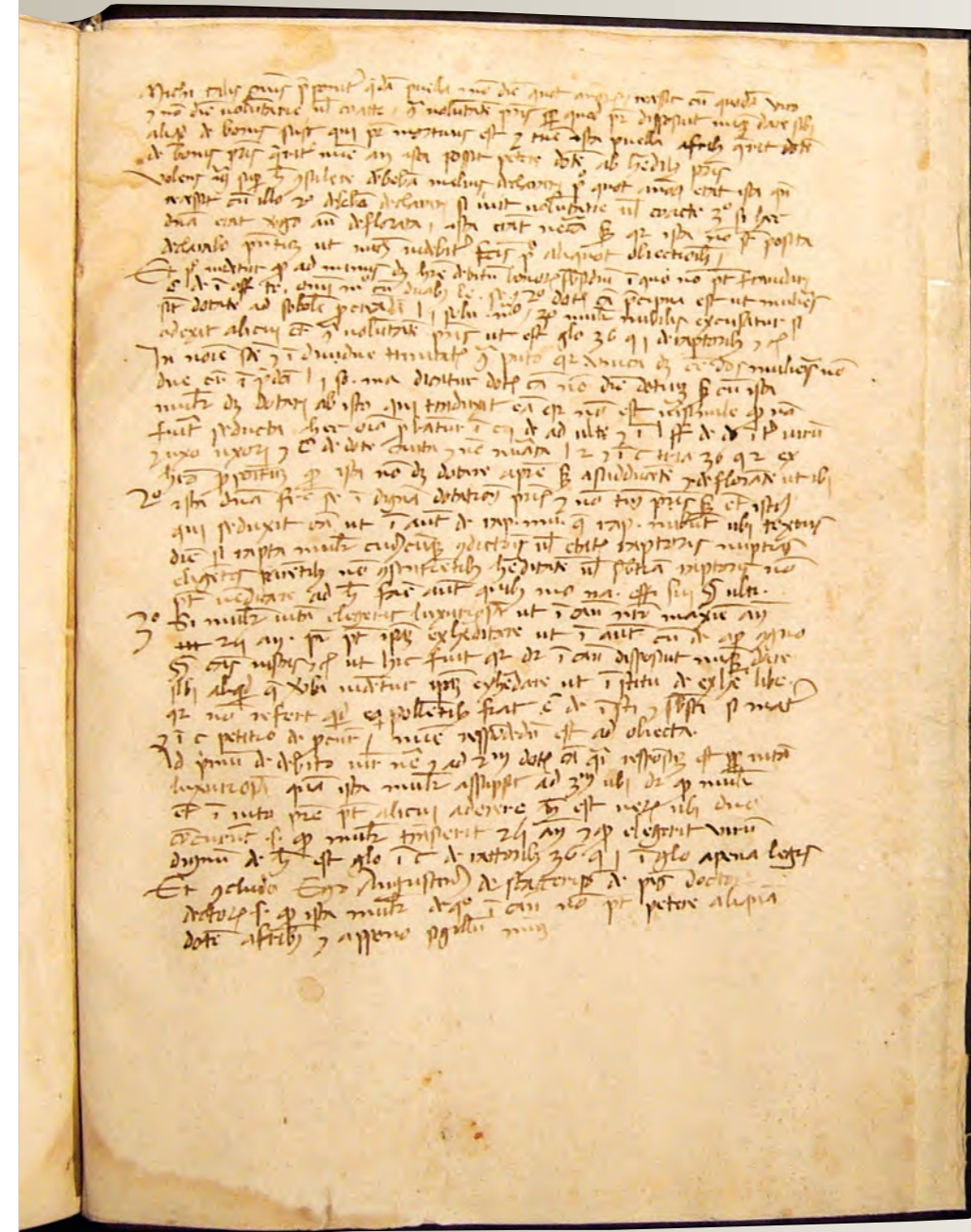
In Latin, manuscript on paper
Northern Italy (Perugia?), c. 1400-1425

The *Decretals* of Gregory IX, promulgated in 1234, were the standard collection of canon law for the Catholic Church. Throughout the Middle Ages (and beyond), they were the subject of university lectures, where professors and canon lawyers explained the text and added commentaries that kept them up to date. The present manuscript is an unrecorded and unedited copy of a commentary on Book II of the *Decretals*, attributed to Petrus de Perusio, who can most likely be identified with Petrus de Ubaldis Junior from an important Perugian family of canonists including Baldo de Ubaldis, and Petrus de Ubaldis Senior.

There is no evidence in this manuscript, that indicates ownership by women, nor was this commentary on the *Decretals* a text that was written for women. But it does include, on its final leaf, a copy of a legal response related to a woman who seems to have been in a dispute concerning her inheritance and dowry with her brothers, signed by Augustinus de Statteris of Pisa, a doctor of the *Decretals*. Augustinus, who has not yet been identified in other sources, may have been one of the early owners of this manuscript. Law, including the law of the church, had a direct impact on secular women's lives in cases of marriage and inheritance, as here, and the lives of nuns were of course subject to canon law. The exact position within the law of the church of quasi-religious women – secular canonesses, beguines, tertiaries, and Sisters of the Common Life – was a matter frequently discussed by canon lawyers. Their uncertain legal position in part explains the periodic mistrust and direct attacks these women suffered at different times during the Middle Ages. [TM 168]

DESCRIPTION: 57 folios on paper, watermarks dating 1378-1404, lacking a leaf after f. 7 and probably leaves after f. 54, written in a cursive bookhand, blank space for initials, one initial supplied in ink, some stains and frayed edges, skillful repairs to first leaves, modern diced calf binding. Dimensions 296 x 218 mm.

LITERATURE: Joseph Canning, *The Political Thought of Baldus de Ubaldis*, Cambridge and New York, 1987; R. Chabanne, two entries articles on "Petrus de Ubaldis," senior, and junior, *Dictionnaire de droit canonique*, Paris, 1957, vol. VI, col. 1455-61; Elizabeth M. Makowski, *A Pernicious Sort of Woman: Quasi-Religious Women and Canon Lawyers in the later Middle Ages*, Washington, D.C., 2005.



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36.

MISCELLANY OF DEVOTIONAL, MORALISING AND THEOLOGICAL TEXTS, INCLUDING [ANONYMOUS] *VISIO PHILIBERTI*; LEGENDS OF S. PATRICK; PSEUDO-BERNARDUS, *EPISTOLA AD RAYMUNDUM DE CURA REI FAMILIARIS*; ALBERTANUS BRIXIENSIS, *LIBER CONSOLATIONIS ET CONSILII*; NICOLAUS MAGNI DE IAWOR (?), *DE ACCESSU ALTARIS SEU PRAEPARATIONE AD MISSAM*; ANDREAS DE ESCOBAR, *MODUS CONFITENDI*; PELAGIUS (DUBIUM; PSEUDO-AUGUSTINUS), *DE VITA CHRISTIANA*

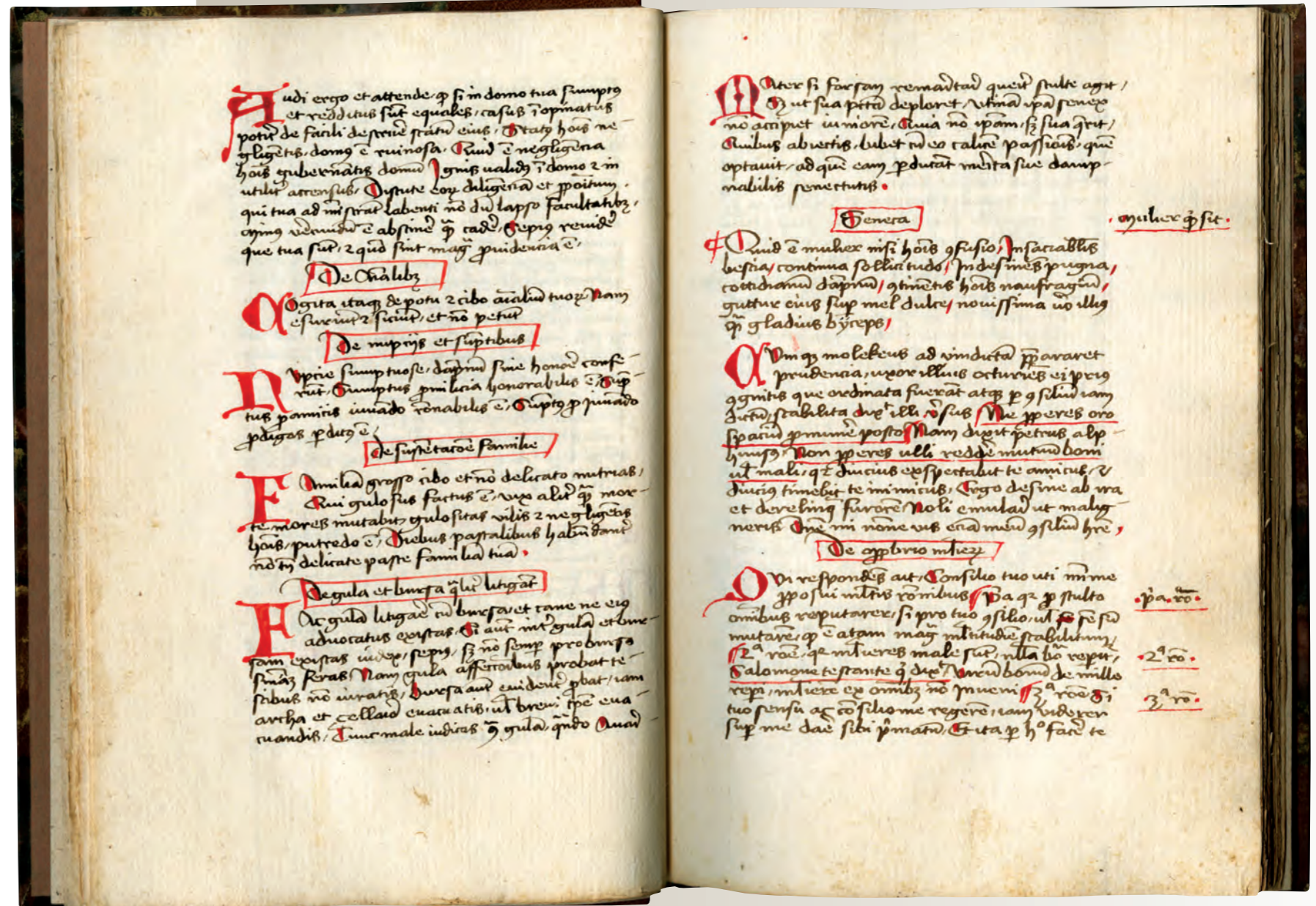
In Latin, manuscript on paper
Low Countries, c. 1450-1475

The choice of texts in this miscellany exhibit an intriguing interest in questions related to women and family life. The manuscript begins with several "popular" Latin literary texts, the *Visio Philiberti*, a poem presenting a debate between the body and the soul, and two legends about St. Patrick, and concludes with texts that suggest use of the manuscript by a priest, including texts on the Mass and confession. In this context, the texts in the middle section stand out: Ps.-Bernard, *Epistola ad Raymundum*, a letter discussing household economy including the care of children, wives and servants; a short citation on women here attributed to Seneca; and the chapters from Albert of Brescia's *Liber consolationis* that tell the story of Melibeus and his wife Prudence (retold by Chaucer), that includes a debate on the proper role of women.

Most interesting of all is a remarkable list of eight reasons why women are more exalted than men: woman was made from a rib, while man was made from mud; woman was made in paradise, and man was not; the Son of God took his human nature from a woman, not from a man; no woman asked for the death of the Lord, not even the wife of Pilate; the church stood at the Passion through women, while men fled; Christ appeared first to a woman; a pure woman is exalted above the choir of angels; and the woman greeted by the angel is more excellent than any man. Overall, the contents suggest that the manuscript was copied by a priest with pastoral responsibilities, and (possibly) with an unusually sensitive attitude towards women. [TM 737]

DESCRIPTION: 148 folios on paper, watermarks 1447-1479, and 1440-1453, loss of text after the third quire, written in a gothic *cursiva currens* by two hands, 3- to 1-line plain red initials, excellent condition, minor signs of use, half leather binding. Dimensions 213 x 150 mm.

LITERATURE: Neil Cartledge, "In the Silence of a Midwinter Night: a Re-evaluation of the *Visio Philiberti*," *Medium Aevum* 75 (2006), pp. 24-45; Jane Cowgill, "Patterns of Feminine and Masculine Persuasion in the 'Melibee' and the 'Parson's tale,'" in *Chaucer's Religious Tales*, eds. C. David Benson and Elizabeth Robertson, Cambridge, England, and Rochester, N.Y., 1990, pp. 171-184.



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