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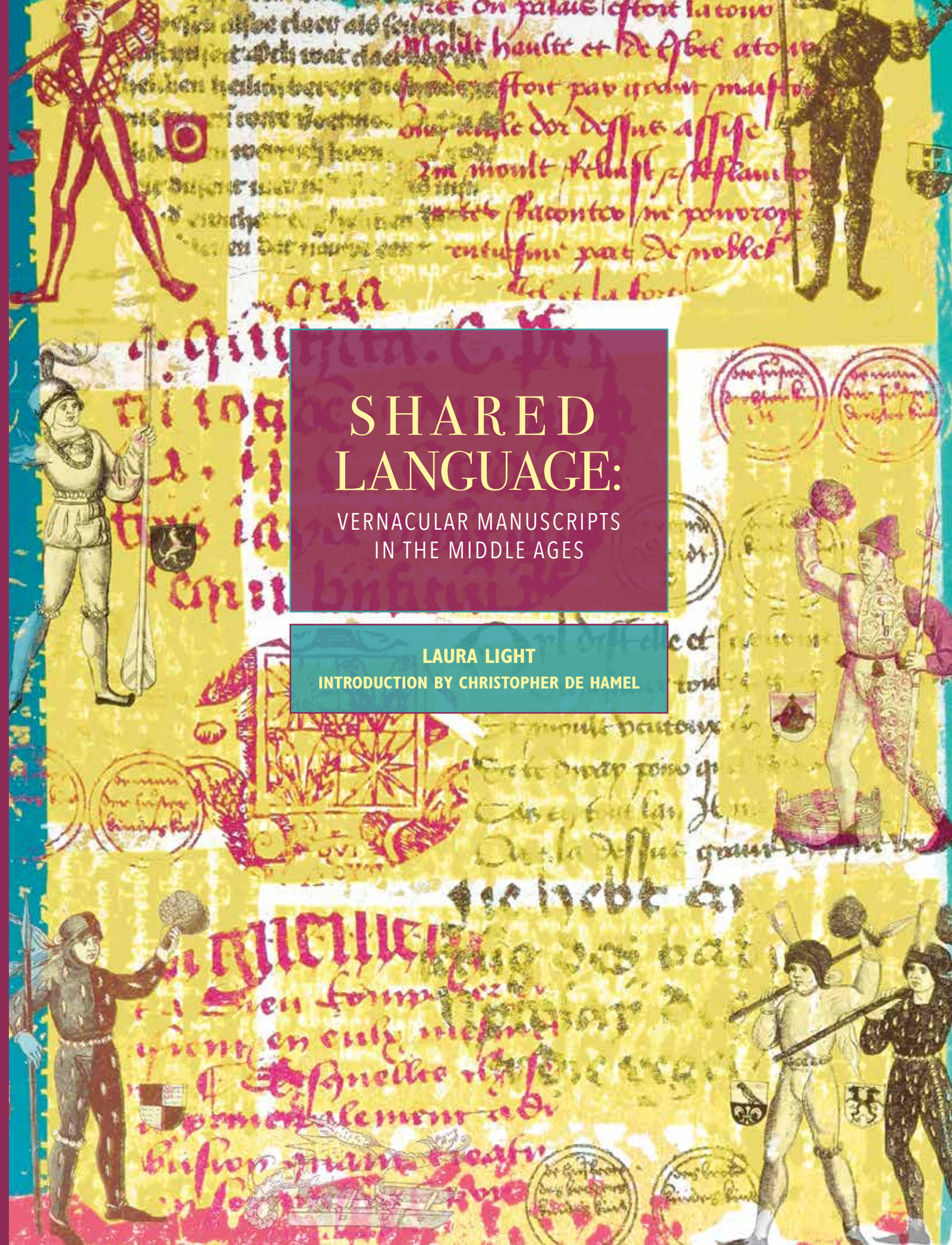


TEXTMANUSCRIPTS 7 SHARED LANGUAGE: VERNACULAR MANUSCRIPTS IN THE MIDDLE AGES

# SHARED LANGUAGE:

VERNACULAR MANUSCRIPTS  
IN THE MIDDLE AGES

LAURA LIGHT  
INTRODUCTION BY CHRISTOPHER DE HAMEL



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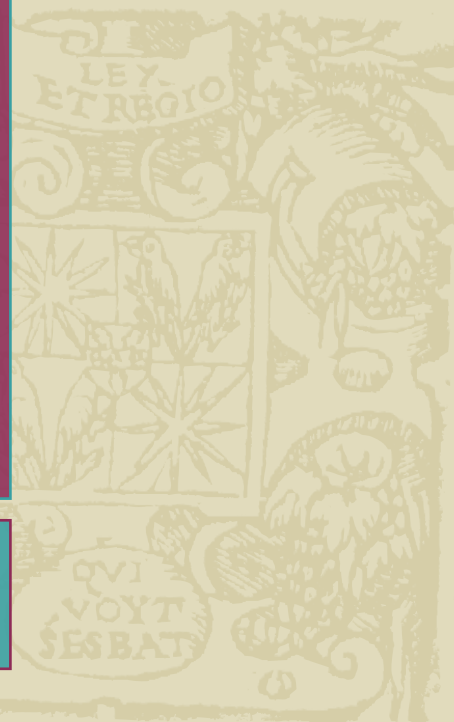
# SHARED LANGUAGE:

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IN THE MIDDLE AGES

LAURA LIGHT

INTRODUCTION BY CHRISTOPHER DE HAMEL

WITH DENNIS DUTSCHKE, STEPHEN MOSSMAN,  
EMILY RUNDE, JOHN VAN ENGEN,  
AND MARY BETH WINN



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**EXHIBITION**

TALKING AT THE COURT, ON THE STREET,  
IN THE BEDROOM:  
VERNACULAR MANUSCRIPTS  
OF THE MIDDLE AGES  
FEBRUARY 23 - MARCH 16, 2018

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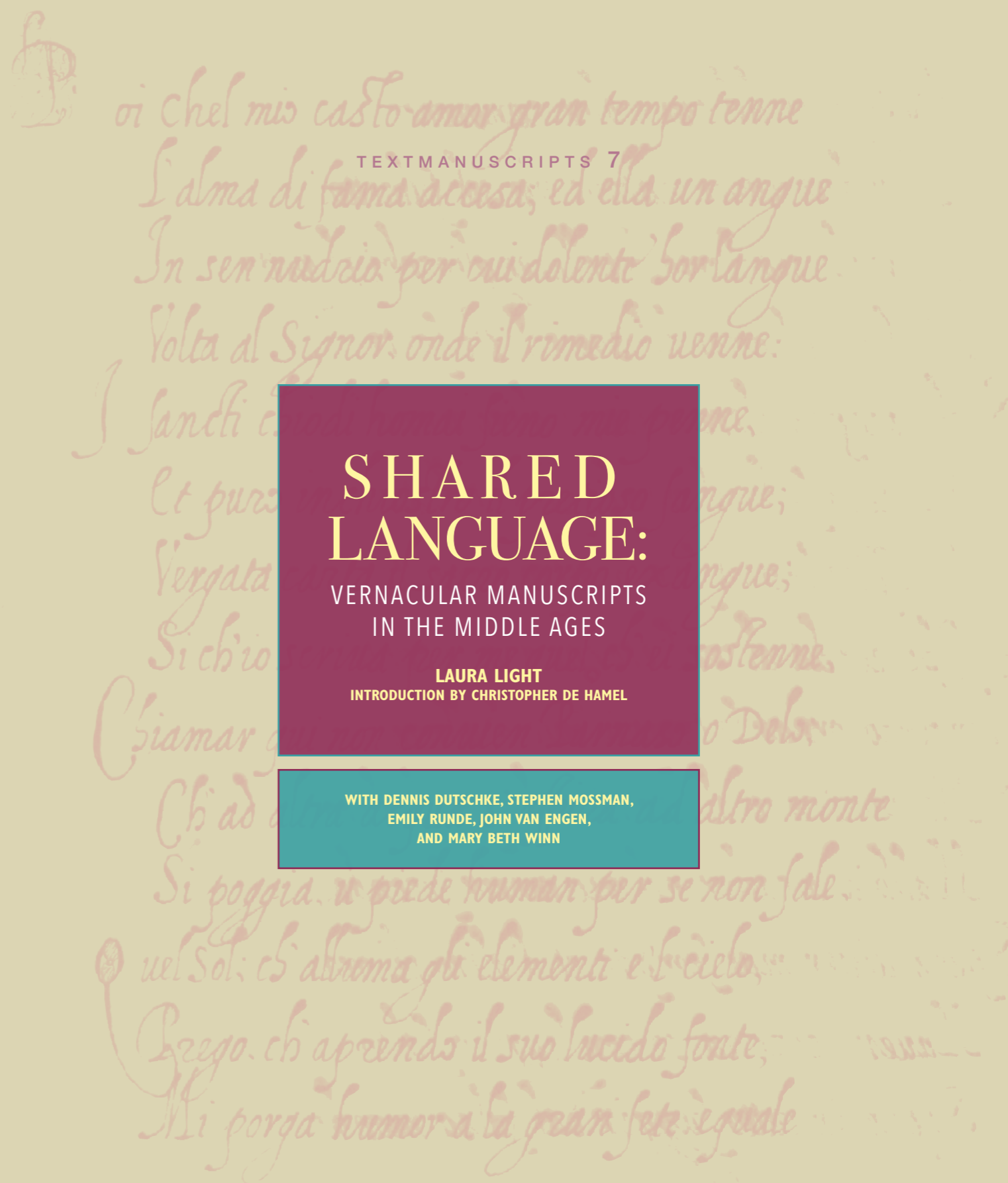
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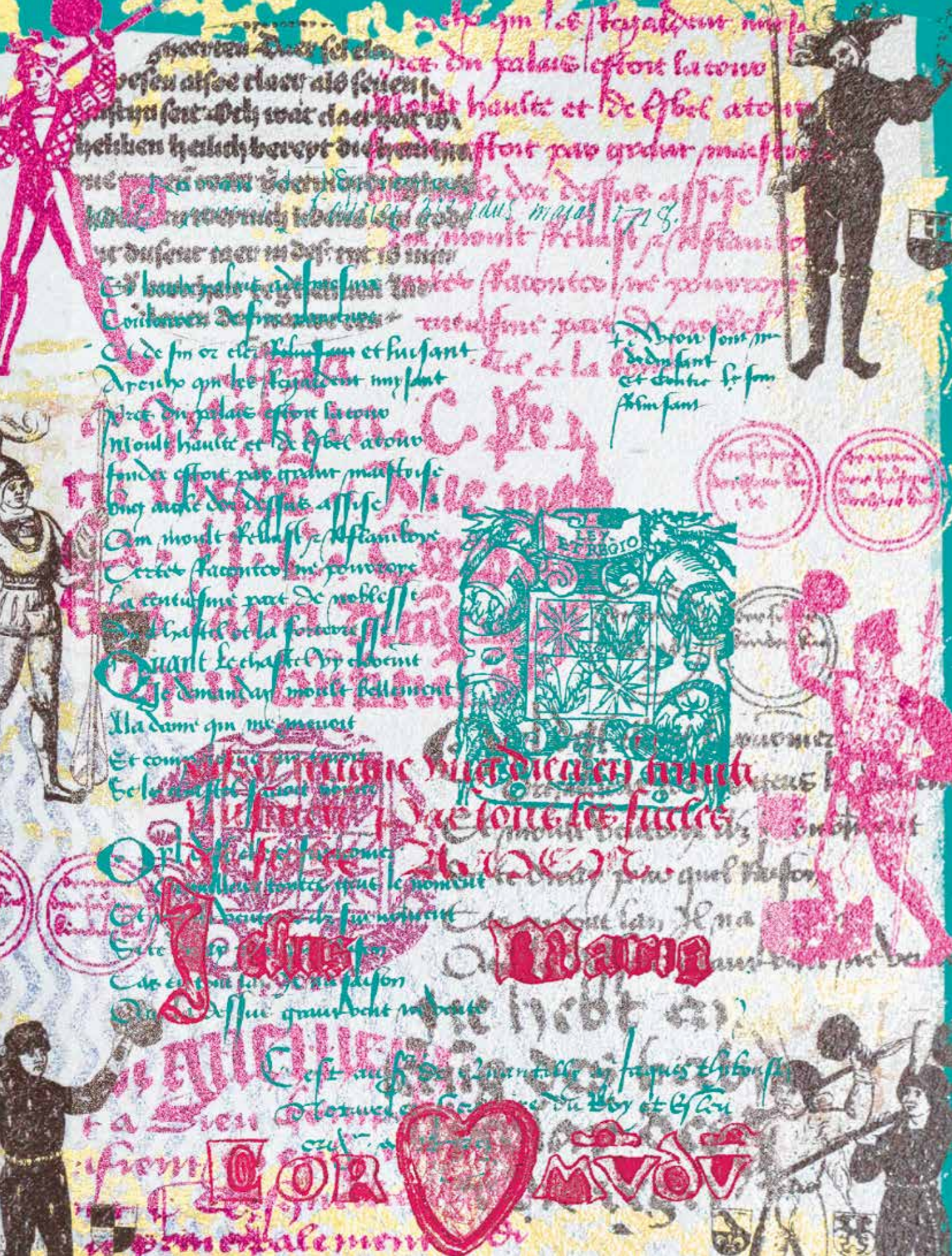
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# SHARED LANGUAGE: VERNACULAR MANUSCRIPTS IN THE MIDDLE AGES

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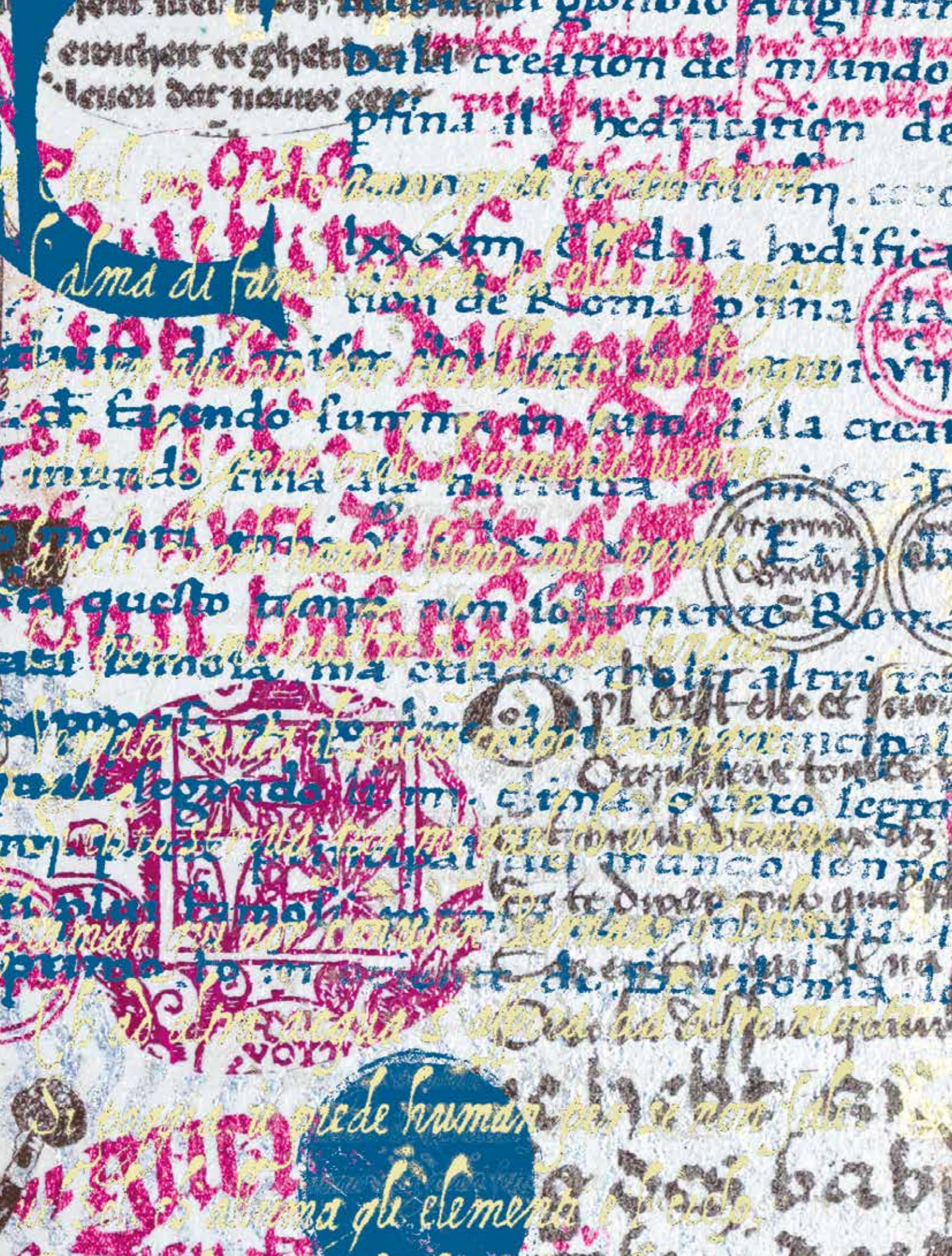
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## PREFACE

I HAVE WORKED ON VERNACULAR MANUSCRIPTS ALL MY (SCHOLARLY) LIFE. I LIKE TO SAY this is partly because, although I wanted to take Latin in high school, my father who was a famous scientist insisted that his high school Latin had proved useless to him professionally. Instead, I took French. But what happened? I became a medievalist not a scientist. To make up for my deficiency, I did take intensive Latin one summer in graduate school, mastering Cicero, Virgil, Catullus, and others all in an eight-hour a day eight-week course. However, even if I still considered my Latin inadequate, I think the full answer to what attracts me in vernacular manuscripts lies elsewhere.

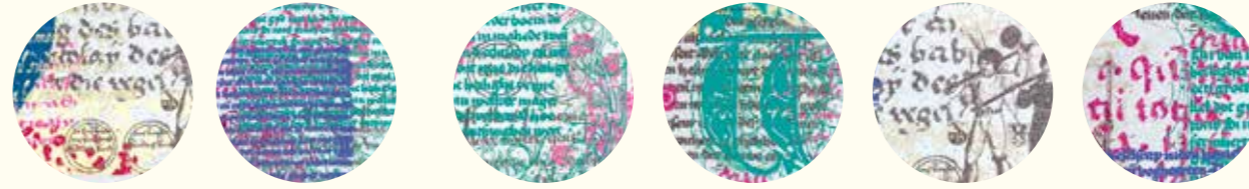
STUDIES ON THE TRANSITION FROM MANUSCRIPT TO PRINT CULTURE AND ON THE HISTORY and collecting of single leaves and cuttings are central to my contributions on the Middle Ages. But my research projects on vernacular manuscripts have been closest to my heart. Profoundly inspired by L.M.J. Delaissé, with whom I studied in graduate school, I was determined to follow in his footsteps to explore what he considered to be the “authentic, spontaneous vision and realistic representation of the external world and human activity” in Dutch manuscripts (he was writing *A Century of Dutch Manuscript Illumination* at the time). This led me to learn medieval and modern Dutch and study Dutch vernacular Bible illumination, which I conjectured encouraged viewers, through a close interaction of text and image, to identify with people, places, and events in the sacred Bible as though they were extensions of their everyday world. Christine de Pizan, the subject of my next book, opened up the world of the royal court, for whom she wrote (and had illuminated) timely advice in an uncertain political climate to the king and his circle. I found Chrétien de Troye’s courtly romances to be mirrors of men and women in medieval feudal culture. Even certain physical manuscripts I consulted were redolent of everyday life, stained with spilled wine, used as a memo for a kitchen shopping list, and bearing reminders of routine activities on the household estate.

WORKS IN THIS CATALOGUE – WHICH OWES ITS INITIATIVE AND REALIZATION ALMOST entirely to Laura Light – unveil the “authentic, spontaneous vision” of people in medieval France, Italy, Germany, the Low Counties, and Britain. Laura Light’s compelling narrative connects the manuscripts one to another. Giving advice to widows, a translator puts Saint Jerome’s famous letters into French in a unique copy probably for a high-born woman. Toiling in the Italian metal industry in towns, metalworkers can follow instructions on minting gold and silver coins in their own language. Monks and nuns, with the spread of lay piety, reenact age-old traditions of meditation and prayer in shared, spoken language instead of Latin. Prominent scholars graciously contributed individual essays on vernacular manuscripts in each country, emphasizing both the uniqueness and commonality in the selections. Christopher de Hamel’s engaging introduction reminds us that reading vernacular manuscripts enables us to “listen in directly” to the daily world of the Middle Ages.

Sandra Hindman

# INTRODUCTION

Christopher de Hamel



**THERE IS ONE WAY IN WHICH MANUSCRIPTS ARE DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER WORKS** of art: they can talk. They tell us things in human speech. They have words. Read a medieval manuscript aloud and you are actually hearing a person's voice from five hundred or a thousand years ago, and it is a captivating experience. Shared language is the basis of all communication, and manuscripts can actually speak to us.

**THE MAJORITY OF WESTERN EUROPEAN MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS ARE WRITTEN IN FORMS** of classical Latin. This began its long life as the vernacular language of ancient Rome (although formal Latin was possibly never precisely the conversational idiom of the street), but by the early Middle Ages it had become a linguistic cipher to be learned by anyone who aspired to literacy. Few people still spoke Latin in their daily lives, although monks were encouraged to try to do so. It was principally a language maintained for use in books and the liturgy of the Church. It must have been rather like being Jewish in (say) Poland in the nineteenth century: in domestic life, most people actually spoke Polish or Yiddish, but when they went to school they were taught to read and write in Hebrew, a formal language of the ancient world. Latin was similar. For much of its two millennia of usage, Latin was (and sometimes still is) kept for writing rather than conversation. With its complicated grammar and flexible word order, it is actually simpler to read than it is to speak.

**NO SPOKEN LANGUAGE STAYS UNCHANGED, AS IT FOREVER ABSORBS AND ADAPTS, NONE** more so than English. Writing, however, stands still. Even now, written English is generally more old-fashioned and structured than the way most of us actually speak in our daily lives. As Roman civilization disintegrated and merged with barbarian cultures, books were still being made in traditional Latin but conversational speech was constantly evolving through dialects and verbal imports into recognizable and distinctive regional languages. Linguistic historians will differ about when we can confidently say that French or German or Italian (for example) really became distinct languages, but by some time around the ninth or tenth century there were undoubtedly national tongues whose recognizable descendants are spoken today.

**SUSTAINED WRITTEN TEXTS IN VERNACULAR LANGUAGES USUALLY CAME LATER.** MANY OF the earliest manuscripts in vernacular languages were associated with women and with the aristocracy, both groups which were unlikely to have been taught to read Latin. They commissioned texts of personal devotion or chivalric romance and history. Books were probably often initially read aloud to

their owners. This therefore excluded the peasants, who had neither literacy nor access to readers. By the later thirteenth or early fourteenth century we already have great vernacular monuments such as the *Roman de la Rose* in French and Dante's *Divina Commedia* in Italian, mingling adventurous literature with Christian piety. What is interesting from a modern perspective is how works like these are entirely readable today to speakers of French or Italian respectively, whereas English texts of the late thirteenth century, such as *Havelok the Dane*, are almost incomprehensible to most people now without having learned Middle English; Anglo-Norman is extinct. The rate of language change is something very striking in vernacular manuscripts.

**FASHIONS TRICKLE DOWN THROUGH SOCIAL RANKS. THE MIDDLE CLASSES IMITATED THE** nobility in commissioning vernacular manuscripts. Texts of patriotic history and good manners and courtly romance entered manorial households. Literacy moved away from the Latin-based monopoly of the Church. It may be that the owners were actually reading texts themselves, whereas a great prince or king of an earlier generation would often have heard a story read aloud. By the fourteenth century the mercantile classes needed to read in order to conduct commerce, and it was usually in their own languages. At the end of the Middle Ages probably most people in towns had some experience of literacy. Conventional Latin texts give a picture of a quite narrow intellectual elite, but the vernacular encompassed everyone. People wrote and read words as they were actually spoken; spelling varied with local usages, unlike Latin, which is unvarying and universal. Latin manuscripts were meant to sound the same, whether copied in fifth-century Rome or fifteenth-century Germany. Vernacular texts, by contrast, reproduced language as their authors or scribes heard it. With enough knowledge, many vernacular manuscripts can be localized by phonetics and spelling alone.

**IF WE WANT TO EAVESDROP ON THE ACTUAL WORDS OF THE MEDIEVAL COURTS, OR THE** songs of love, or the banter of trade, or the inmost thoughts of private piety, it will not be in Latin but in medieval French, English, German, Dutch, or Italian. Most medieval readers articulated words aloud as they read, and scribes while copying almost certainly did so, at the very least whispering each phrase as they wrote it down. Read a medieval manuscript in the vernacular and we hear those very voices: we listen in directly to their daily world.



# I. FRENCH

Roman de l'esperance  
Mille cent et lxxxvij plus ouz ans 1773

Et haultz palais admesure  
Contourrez de fine peinture  
Et de fin et cler filuzun et susant  
Dreube qui les bayardent my font  
Pice du palus estoit la coue  
Monte haulte et de esbel atouu  
funde estoit par grand maistrise  
vingt aube dor dessus assise  
Ouz moult bellest et estambore  
Certes facontes ne pourrore  
La contesme par de noblesse  
Du d'haistel et la fortoreuss  
Quant le chaste d'v' devant  
Je demandy moult bellement  
Ma dame qui me menoit  
Et compaignie me tenoit  
Et le chasteel sauoit nomer

Quant font m'  
et d'haistel et de fin  
filuzun



Orl dist elle et savoune  
Orquellez toutes que le noment  
Et moult de toure dz su noient  
Et se d'v' pour quel raison  
Car en tout cas il na  
Que la d'v' pour quel raison

C'est ausi de Quantilly a Jacques thibault  
D'oruel et secretaire du Roy et l'v' au  
cas an 1773



# VERNACULAR MANUSCRIPTS IN FRANCE

Mary Beth Winn

**FIVE MAJOR CATEGORIES OF FRENCH LITERATURE SOUGHT BY LATE MEDIEVAL READERS** are represented in this collection: religious, moralizing, scientific, historical, and fictional (Duval, 2009). The categories overlap, and over-arching perspectives connect them, regardless of the material form or specific subject of the manuscripts.

**RELIGIOUS WORKS (NOS. 4, 5, 6, 12) ATTEST TO THE DEVOTIONAL READINGS AND** practices of the laity. Among the texts in the small Prayer Book (no. 4) is one that is also known in a Book of Hours printed c. 1502 in Paris by Philippe Pigouchet (Rézeau, 1986, R 559). Pastoral literature was often directed to women. Saint Jerome's letter to the young Roman widow Furia was later translated for and dedicated to an unidentified French noblewoman by the cleric Charles Bonin (no. 6). The depiction of Furia recalls the numerous images of French noblewomen of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, whose mourning attire underscored their power (Broomhall, forthcoming). The late Middle Ages witnessed a proliferation of spiritual guides for lay readers (no. 5). The *Miroir d'or de l'ame pecheresse* is a translation of a well-known Latin treatise copied from a printed edition issued in Paris c. 1482; manuscripts copied from printed books were more common than one might expect (Blair, 2015). A study of this translation would be enriched by consideration of the English translation made from the French by Margaret of Beaufort (Morley, 2016).

**MORALIZING WORKS SOMETIMES TOOK THE FORM OF DREAM VISIONS OR ALLEGORICAL** voyages such as *La voie d'enfer et de paradis* (no. 3). The *Livre de bonnes meurs* by the Augustinian friar Jacques Legrand (c. 1360-c. 1415), and the *Secrets des secrets* were among the most widely read of moralizing texts (nos. 2 and 1). Scientific works are represented by a remarkable manuscript of medical remedies for various illnesses and conditions, followed by a "régime de santé" and a treatise on the medicinal properties of plants (no. 8; for recent research on related materials, Hillard, 2012, and Martin, 2017).

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND THE NEED TO JUSTIFY MILITARY AND** political action fostered the writing of historical works focusing on contemporary events. *Les Roys de la tres crestienne maison de France* provides a brief chronology of the French kings up to Louis XII, asserting divinely ordained royal power by situating them firmly as the champions of Christianity (no. 9). Jean de Baudreuil's summary of the rights of the Orléans-Longueville dukes to lands under their rule was commissioned by and dedicated to Duke Louis II (no. 11).

**WORKS OF FICTION INCLUDE THE PROSE VERSION OF THE EPIC POEM, GARIN LE LOHERAIN,** by the late 15<sup>th</sup>-century author Philippe de Vigneulles (no. 10). Herbin's studies of *Garin* (since 1988) have contributed to a veritable flood of recent scholarship on the prose versions of medieval verse poems that proliferated in late medieval France (Cifarelli, 2017; Colombo Timelli, 2014(1)(2); Herbin, 2014(1) (2)).

**POETRY, HOWEVER, RETAINED ITS VALUE, AND THE POPULARITY OF A TRADITIONAL FORM** is nowhere more evident than in the volume of rondeaux dating from c. 1500 (no. 7). Although the manuscript identifies no authors, concordant sources enable attributions to such renowned poets as Jean Marot, Octovien de Saint-Gelais, and Jean Picart. This manuscript was prepared for a member of a noble, if not royal, court at which the composition and recitation of rondeaux was a social activity, not limited to professional poets. Rondeaux were also, as here, collected into books, which might tell a story. This manuscript was in fact published in 1893 by the count Auguste de Blangy as a "petit roman," a "confession of a lover" whom he identified, incorrectly as it turns out, as Gringore (Pierre Gringore, *Rondeaux contenant la confession d'un amoureux*). The poems are not organized, as is often the case, into dialogues between male and female speakers. In fact, the female-authored texts usually occur in pairs. Five of the female-voiced poems are from Jean Marot's collection, *Rondeaux de femmes*. Questions of authorship, form, and assemblage of lyric pieces into manuscript and printed *recueils* continue to generate current research (Taylor, 2007; Fery-Hue, 2011).

**UNIQUE COMPOSITIONS (NO. 8) OR TRANSLATIONS (NOS. 6, 12), SOLE SURVIVING EXAMPLES** or rare versions of famous works (nos. 1, 2, 7) – most of the texts are still unpublished and largely unknown, awaiting critical editions. They are presented in a variety of scripts, on paper or on parchment. The artists include the celebrated Master of Spencer 6 and the Master of the Paris Entries (nos. 6 and 11). Five (nos. 3, 6, 8, 9, 10) are bound in contemporary bindings of velvet, parchment, or blind-tooled leather, reflecting illustrious provenance. Connections with printed books (nos. 4, 5, 7, 12) raise important questions of publication, readership, and patronage that continue to spawn research in the history of the book. Women play decisive roles as dedicatees and owners, authors and readers (nos. 6, 7), their presence underscoring issues that pervade contemporary feminist scholarship as well as medieval and Renaissance studies.

## 1.

PS.-ARISTOTLE, *Les Secrets des secrets* (Secret of Secrets), anonymous translation

In French, illuminated manuscript on parchment

France (perhaps Arras or Tournai, or Paris?), c. 1300-1320

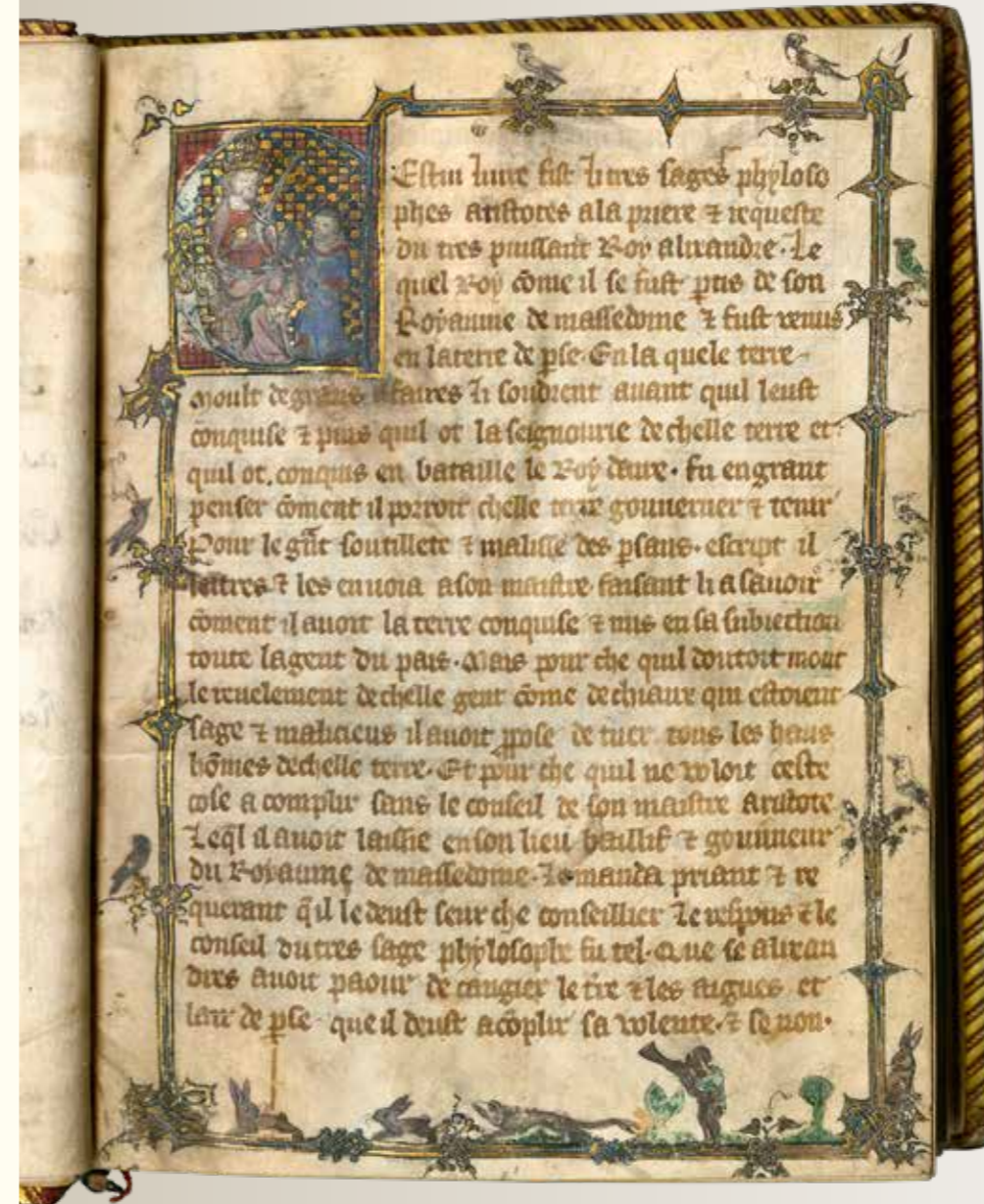
One historiated initial and border by an anonymous artist in the style of Jean Pucelle

We begin with a two-fold translation – a French translation of a Latin translation of an Arabic text. This is the earliest manuscript in our catalogue in any language; French was widespread as a written language only in the thirteenth century. *The Secret of Secrets* is written as an extended letter from the Greek philosopher, Aristotle (384-322 BC) to his former pupil, Alexander the Great (356-320 BC), offering a guide to the art of government and correct royal conduct in the broadest sense, including moral and political advice, as well as information on science and medicine, astrology, physiognomy, alchemy, numerology, and magic. Although accepted as part of the Aristotelian corpus in the Middle Ages, this is actually an Arabic text that was written sometime before the late tenth century by an anonymous author. Translated into Latin twice during the Middle Ages, first in the twelfth century and then c. 1230 by Philip of Tripoli, it became a medieval bestseller, surviving in many hundreds of manuscripts. The French version in our manuscript – early and known in only four complete copies – is a very faithful translation of the Latin that includes all the scientific advice (medical, alchemical, astrological, and so forth). Most of the other more broadly disseminated French translations concentrated only on the moral and political advice to the sovereign – transforming a scientific Latin text into a “Mirror of Princes.”

We do not know for whom this small and personal manuscript was made; it is a high-quality copy, illuminated, and on excellent parchment. This particular translation was once thought to have been commissioned by Charles V (1338-1380), king of France from 1364-1380. Its identification by Professor Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas in our manuscript has disproven this theory, and this copy is very likely a presentation copy made for someone of high rank and wealth who commissioned the translation early in the fourteenth century. [TM 720]

**DESCRIPTION:** 67 folios on parchment, wanting three leaves, written on 25 lines in a gothic bookhand, polished gold initials on colored grounds, one 6-line historiated initial, one full border of gold and colored bars, slightly trimmed and cockled, 18<sup>th</sup>-century gold-tooled red morocco binding, small scuffs, stains and scratches. Dimensions 156 x 112 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas, “Révélation hermétique et savoir occulte de l’orient dans le *Secretum secretorum* et les *Secrets des secrets* français,” in *Trajectoires européennes du “Secretum secretorum” du Pseudo-Aristote (XIII<sup>e</sup>-XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, ed. Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas, Margaret Bridges, Jean-Yves Tilliette, Alexander Redivivus 6, Turnhout, 2015, pp. 57-106; S. J. Williams, *The Secret of Secrets: The Scholarly Career of a Pseudo-Aristotelian Text in the Latin Middle Ages*, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 2003.



## 2.

JACQUES LEGRAND, *Le livre de bonnes meurs* (The Book of Good Manners)

In French, manuscript on paper

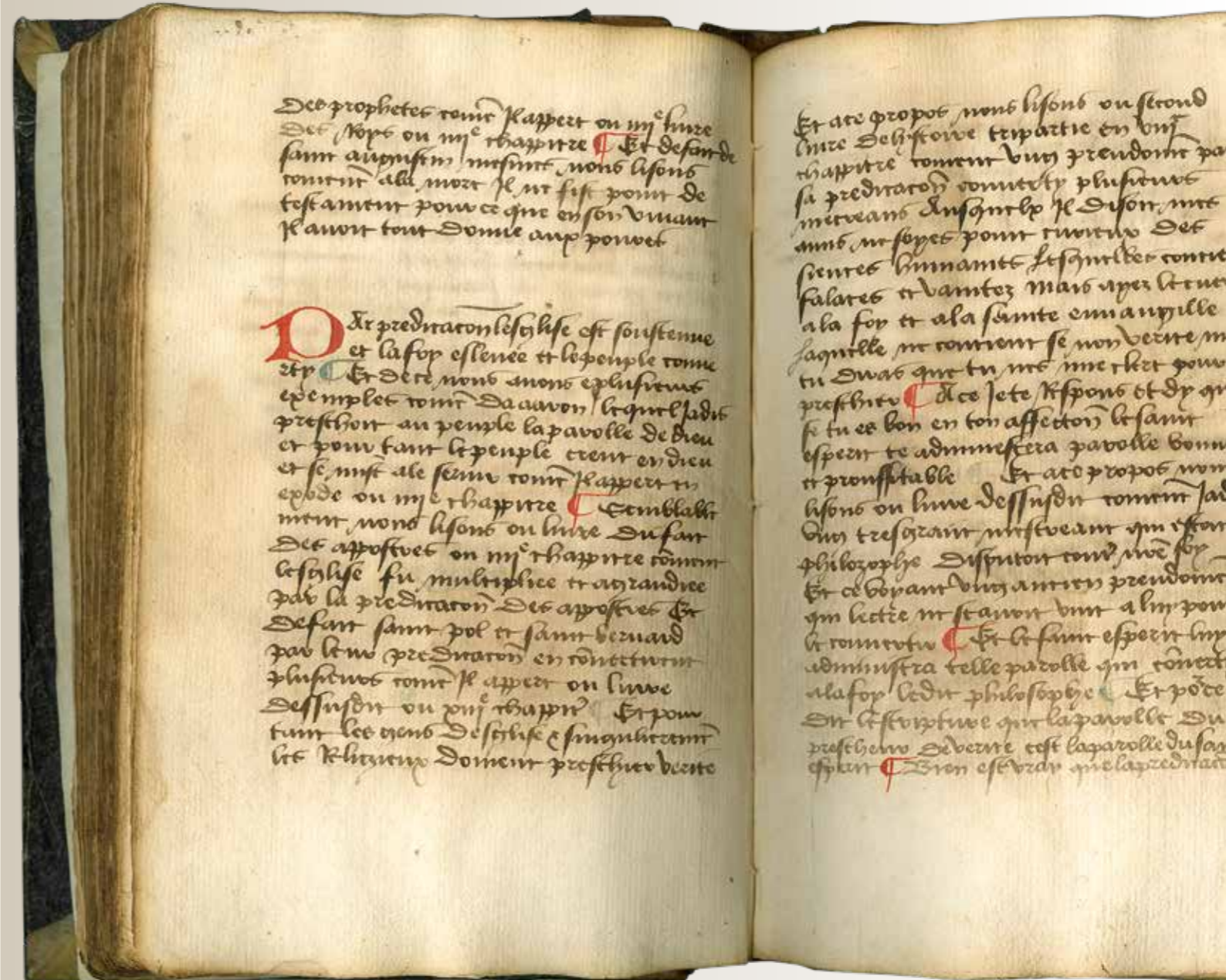
France (Burgundy), or Switzerland (Basel?), c. 1450

Although quite different in its approach, *Le livre de bonnes meurs*, like the previous text, addresses the problem on how to lead a good life, discussing the remedies against the seven deadly sins, the three estates (clergy, nobles, and commoners), and death and the end times. It is a translation, or perhaps better, an adaptation, of a longer work, but in this case, it is the author himself, Jacques Legrand (d. 1425), an Augustinian friar and a well-known preacher, who wrote both the Latin and the French versions. It is another example of the French court's role in encouraging vernacular literature. Legrand dedicated one of his works to Louis of Orléans (1372-1407), the only brother of Charles VI (the son of Charles V, just mentioned in connection to the *Secret of Secrets*, no. 1). This work survives in two versions; the first version (in this manuscript) written in 1404, and a revised version from 1410 dedicated to Jean de Berry (1340-1416), the king's uncle.

The text follows in the medieval tradition of works that discuss the structure of society and how to lead a moral life, joined with a new humanist knowledge of classical sources. In a single page of chapter 13, "How the knights should govern," for example, Legrand quotes from both Suetonius's *Life of Caesar* and the *Ethics* of Aristotle, framing these quotations within the excerpts from Deuteronomy, Job, and Augustine's *City of God*. The conclusion, however, is quite simple: What is the difference between king and tyrant? The king rules for his people, whereas the tyrant rules for himself and oppresses his people. Legrand's text was a bestseller in its day, circulating among the ruling elite at the French and Burgundian courts in luxurious, illuminated copies. It is therefore of interest to find a copy without illumination, but copied in a very elegant calligraphic bookhand that echoes the script of many of the luxury copies. [TM 722]

**DESCRIPTION:** 139 folios on paper, watermark dated 1452, apparently complete, written in a formal cursive gothic bookhand (close to *lettre bâtarde*) in 23 long lines, red and blue initials, one parted red and blue initial, damaged from damp with text space darkened (text remains legible), worming, last folio torn, first folio damaged, 19<sup>th</sup>-century cartonnage binding. Dimensions 214 x 138 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Evencio Beltran, ed., Jacques Legrand, *Archiloge Sophie. Livre de bonnes meurs: édition critique avec introduction, notes et index*, Geneva, 1986; Duval, 2007, pp. 173-83; Hanno Wijsman, "Good Morals for a Couple at the Burgundian Court: Contents and Context of Harley 1310, *Le Livres des Bonnes Moeurs* of Jacques Legrand," *Electronic British Library Journal*, London, 2011, article 6, pp. 1-25, <http://www.bl.uk/ebj/2011/articles/pdf/ebjarticle62011.pdf>



## 3.

[ANONYMOUS], *La voie d'enfer et de paradis*  
[or *Songe de la voie d'enfer et de la voie de paradis*] (The Road to Hell  
and Paradise, or The Dream of the Road to Hell and of the Road to Paradise)

In French, decorated manuscript on paper  
France (Bourges), c. 1460

Imaginary journeys to hell and to heaven were a popular genre in the Middle Ages in both Latin and the vernacular (see also no. 23). This – one of only three copies – is an anonymous verse adaptation, probably from the late fourteenth century, of *La voie d'enfer et de paradis* by Pierre de l'Hôpital, a fourteenth-century cleric from Artois or Picardie. Both the original version and the present adaptation are unpublished. The language of the version in our manuscript lacks the “picardismes” found in the original poem, suggesting an origin in Central France. The text tells the story of a cleric who, in a dream, is guided by *Desesperance* (Despair) and visits the Seven Deadly Sins. He is saved from the flames of Hell by Hope and is brought to the Eternal Father after having encountered the virtues, but is nonetheless condemned to a life of penitence. Another manuscript begins with the apt title, “Du clerc qui vouloit aller en Enfer et puis aprez se repenti” (Of the cleric who wanted to go to hell and after repented).

This manuscript boasts illustrious early provenance, as it was owned and cherished by Jacques Thiboust (1492-1555), the celebrated Bourges poet and patron of the arts. Jacques Thiboust trained as a jurist and later served Francis I, King of France, and his sister, Marguerite de Valois, future Queen of Navarre, as the “notaire et secrétaire du roi” (the king’s notary and secretary). Today he is remembered chiefly for the literary circle he founded and headed in Bourges. The manuscript includes an ex libris note in Thiboust’s own hand, and his heraldic book stamp, the earliest example of a French armorial book stamp, that bears his anagram (QVI VOYT S’ESBAT = IAQVES TYBOUST). [TM 775]

**DESCRIPTION:** 139 folios on paper, missing leaves at the beginning and end, watermarks dated 1464 and 1455, written in a cursive gothic bookhand (close to *lettre bâtarde*) on up to 24 lines, red and blue initials, first leaves frayed, 16<sup>th</sup>-century binding of reused parchment over pasteboards. Dimensions 212 x 150 mm.

**LITERATURE:** F. Bar, G. Hasenohr, G. Keith and A. Micha, “Voies de paradis,” *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises: le Moyen Age*, Paris, 1992, pp. 1489-1491; H. Boyer, *Un ménage littéraire en Berry au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Jacques Thiboust et Jeanne de La Font*, Bourges, 1859; D. D. R. Owen, *The Vision of Hell: Infernal Journeys in Medieval French Literature*, Edinburgh and London, 1970; Arthur Rau, “The Earliest Extant French Armorial Ex-libris,” *The Book Collector* 10 (Autumn 1961), pp. 331-332.



## 4.

## Collection of Prayers

In French, with some Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment  
Northern France, c. 1480-1530 with later additions

The most famous devotional book for the laity from the Middle Ages is the Book of Hours, often called a “medieval bestseller.” Books of Hours were the most widely copied text in Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, used daily by people from a wide variety of backgrounds. Many people learned to read with their mother’s Book of Hours. Nonetheless, Books of Hours were not vernacular manuscripts; most were almost entirely in Latin. The one exception to this was the Dutch translation by Geert Groote (d. 1384), who firmly believed that people should be able to read and pray in their own tongue. But by the fifteenth century, even in Latin Books of Hours, it is increasingly common to find some rubrics and prayers in the vernacular, and prayers in French often circulated in other contexts (nos. 16, 24, 32, 26). This collection of prayers in French is quite short, and it may have once belonged to a longer devotional manuscript, although given its format, probably not a Book of Hours. Some of the prayers included were widely known and circulated in both Books of Hours and in other types of manuscripts, for example a French translation of the Profession of Faith. Other prayers, however, were much less common, including one which is also known in a Book of Hours printed c. 1502 in Paris. The volume concludes with a very long prayer (here twelve folios in length) for “any tribulation, affliction, persecution, or bodily temptation” (Sonet, 1956, 2206, listing only one other manuscript).

One of the interesting features of this manuscript is its decoration. On the last page, below the final prayer, the words “Iesus Maria/ cor mundum” (Jesus Maria/ clean heart) are found in gold letters on red and blue backgrounds, with a gold heart between *cor* and *mundum*. The phrase echoes the verse from Psalm 50, “Create in me a clean heart oh God,” and it was certainly added to the manuscript. Indeed, close examination suggests all the decoration here may have been added. Manuscripts, especially ones with devotional content, could live long lives; convents of nuns are particularly known for enhancing their manuscripts in various ways. The additions in this manuscript, whether they were added in the nineteenth century, or somewhat earlier, are evidence of continued devotional use long after it was made. [TM 938]

**DESCRIPTION:** 30 folios on parchment, complete, written in a cursive gothic bookhand in 19 long lines, gold initials on red or blue and full border on f. 1 (possibly added), a few initials damaged, edges browned, a few stains, modern blind-tooled brown leather binding, flyleaves from another manuscript. Dimensions 197 x 135 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Christopher de Hamel, *Syon Abbey: The Library of the Bridgettine Nuns and Their Peregrinations after the Reformation: An essay*, Otley, 1991; Rudy, 2015; Roger Wieck, “The Book of Hours,” in *The History of the Book in the West 400-1455*, ed. Jane Roberts and Pamela Robinson, Farnham, 2010, vol. 1, pp. 323-360



## 5.

[ANONYMOUS], *Les sept fruits de la tribulation* (The Seven Fruits of Tribulation); and *Miroir d'or de l'ame pecheresse* (Golden Mirror of the Sinful Soul), anonymous French translation of JACOBUS DE GRUYTRODE or JACOBUS DE JÜTERBORG, *Speculum aureum animae peccatricis*

In French, illuminated manuscript on parchment  
France, c. 1490 (after 1482)

The complicated paths that led to the creation of vernacular texts are well illustrated here. The first text exists in at least two Latin versions, several French translations, and in Middle English. The prologue found in this manuscript states it was translated from the Latin, but the modern editor of the Middle English translation (Barrat, 1983), has raised the possibility that it is instead a version of another French translation (and has even suggested that the Latin versions are translations of the French texts instead of the other way around). The second text is certainly a translation of a Latin treatise, but it is copied from a printed text. Texts in the vernacular were an important part of lay religious life in late medieval France.

This manuscript now begins with an added full-page illuminated frontispiece with the coat of arms and motto of Louis de Grolée (fl. late fifteenth-early sixteenth century), the abbot of Bonnevaux and Saint-Pierre de Vienne. Bonnevaux was a Cistercian Abbey founded in 1117 in southeastern France (département Isère) near Vienne. This identical page was added to Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 5211, the illuminated Bible of Saint-Jean d'Acre, a translation of parts of the Old Testament into French made for St. Louis (reigned 1226-1270) himself in Acre c. 1250-1254. Louis de Grolée added this same frontispiece to other manuscripts including Arsenal MS 5107, Jacques de Cessolis in French, a manuscript that once belonged to Jean de Berry, and to a French miscellany, Arsenal MS 3386. He also owned Arsenal MS 5222, Commentaries of Caesar translated into French by Robert Gaguin, likely copied for him (his arms, contemporary with the manuscript, are included in a miniature on f. 2 and elsewhere). Louis de Grolée was the proud owner of exceptional books; his illuminated heraldic frontispiece serves the same function as Jacques Thiboust's simple heraldic book stamp (no. 3), but is fundamentally different in scale and grandeur, underlining the importance of his library. The story of this sixteenth-century collector is waiting to be told. [TM 466]

**DESCRIPTION:** 70 folios on parchment, complete, written in a cursive Gothic *bâtarde* script on up to 34 lines, 18 large initials red, blue, or parti-colored, inserted full-page heraldic composition, 19<sup>th</sup>-century blue velvet binding over wooden boards. Dimensions 274 x 175 mm.

**LITERATURE:** A. Barratt, *The Book of Tribulation*, ed. from MS Bodley 423, Middle English Texts, 15, Heidelberg, 1983; L. Meier, *Die Werke des Erfurter Kartäusers Jakob von Jüterborg in ihrer handschriftlichen Überlieferung*, Münster, 1955; Morrison and Hedeman, no. 1, pp. 93-95; H. Martin, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la bibliothèque de l'Arsenal*, Paris, 1899, vol. 8, pp. 306-7.



## 6.

CHARLES BONIN (translator) of JEROME, *Letter LIV to Furia*  
(To Furia, On the Duty of Remaining a Widow)

In French, illuminated manuscript on parchment

France (likely Bourges), c. 1500-1510

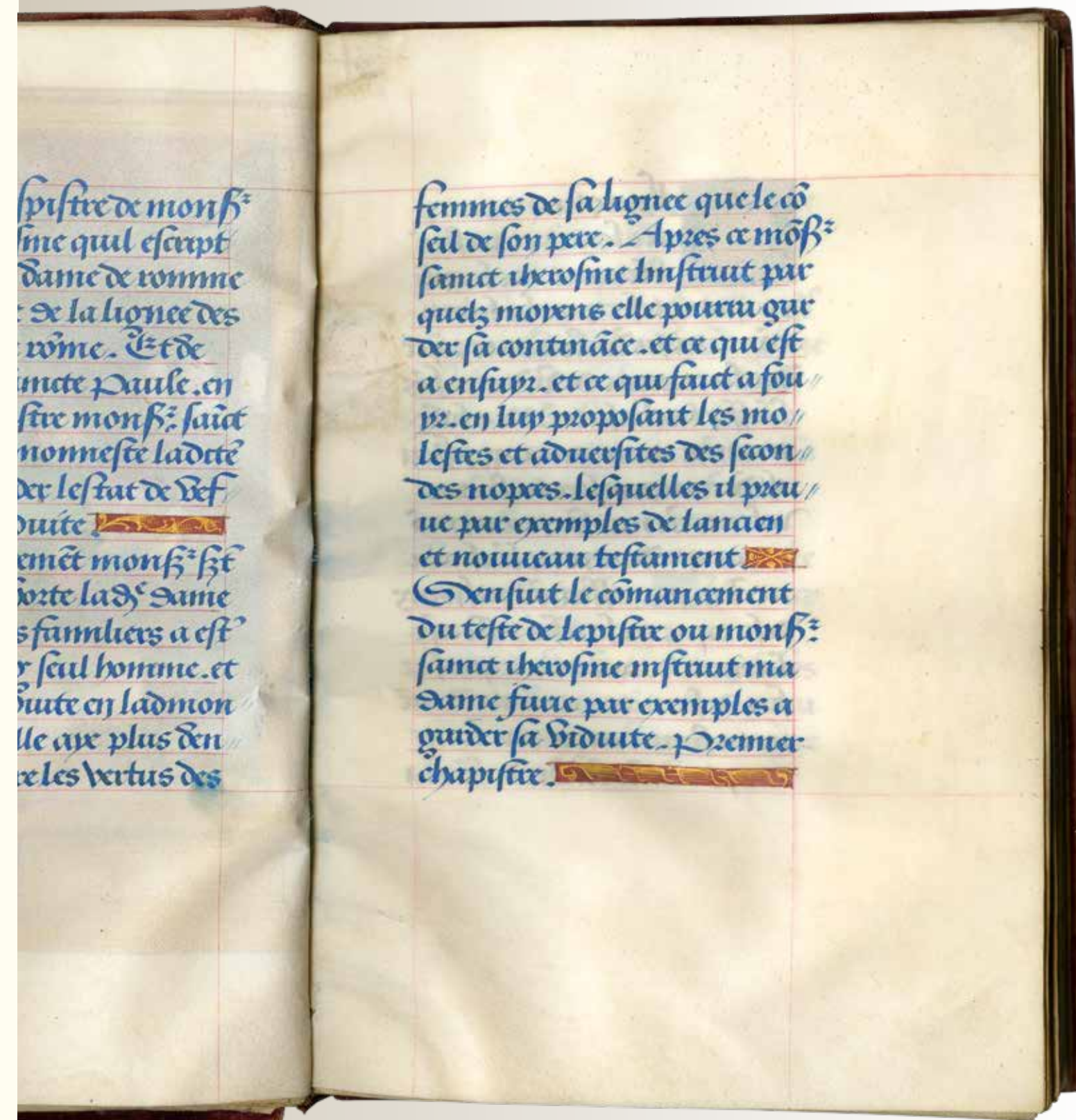
One full-page miniature by the Master of Spencer 6 (active c. 1490 to 1510)

The impact women had on the rise of French vernacular literature is undeniable. From Marie de France (late 12th century) to Christine de Pizan (d. 1430) to Catherine d'Amboise (d. 1550), women writing in French struggled to carve out a place for themselves within a largely male literary canon. And, certainly by the Renaissance if not earlier, women – particularly aristocratic women – also built important collections that they used not only for pleasure but to make statements about their lineage, power, and cultural heritage. The earliest identifiable owner of this elegant manuscript is Anne of Polignac (c. 1495-1554) who owned thirty-six manuscripts. A number of these were in Latin including a Bible and Books of Hours, but most were in French, ranging from edifying, devotional books (such as Jacques Le Grand's *Le livre de bonnes meurs*, no. 2), to books demonstrating broader interests: history (a Universal Chronicle), political philosophy (a text by Guillaume Budé), and humanism (Petrarch's *Trionfi* in French); she owned only one chivalric romance.

This volume is a vernacular translation by Charles Bonin dedicated only to “tres honorée demoiselle” of a letter by St. Jerome (d. 420) 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 she may have not been the manuscript's first owner (the coat of arms on f. 1 has been left blank). 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. [TM 935]

**DESCRIPTION:** 63 folios on parchment, complete, written in *lettre bâtarde* on up to 17 lines, gold initials, paragraph marks and line-fillers, full-page miniature set in a liquid gold architectural frame, original binding of purple velvet (worn) over wooden boards, hinges fragile, but in good condition. Dimensions 210 x 135 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Robert Gary Babcock, with Torrence N. Thomas, D. Marshall Kibbey, Elizabeth P. Archibald, *A Book of Her Own: An Exhibition of Manuscripts and Printed Books in the Yale University Library that were Owned by Women before 1700*, New Haven, 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.



Epistre de mon frere  
 saint iherosme  
 Dame de romme  
 de la lignee des  
 romme. Et de  
 mate paulse. en  
 frere mon frere  
 nomme se la dite  
 de lestat de ve  
 duite. **¶**  
 emet mon frere  
 ierte la dite  
 s famliers a est  
 y seul homme. et  
 duite en la mon  
 le ave plus de  
 re les vertus des

femmes de sa lignee que le co  
 seil de son pere. Apres ce mon frere  
 saint iherosme instruit par  
 quelz moens elle pourra gar  
 der sa continence. et ce qui est  
 a ensuyr. et ce qui faict a sou  
 yr. en luy proposant les mo  
 lestes et aduersites des secon  
 des nopces. lesquelles il preu  
 ue par exemples de l'ancien  
 et nouueau testament. **¶**  
 En suit le comancement  
 du teste de l'epistre ou mon frere  
 saint iherosme instruit ma  
 dame furie par exemples a  
 garder sa viduite. Premier  
 chapitre. **¶**

en vers rimées. pour le moment  
mal que ay sceu approcher de  
sa facon. Et d'auant que ce q' le d<sup>s</sup>  
seigneur et saint escript ensem-  
blement ie lay diuise par chypres  
selon les propos cōtenus en la d<sup>s</sup>  
epistre affin de scauoir meulx  
trouuer vng chun de son propos.  
Et adieu ma damoiselle auq<sup>l</sup>  
ie prie vous donner la grace de  
ce petit present faue vostre prouf-  
fit.





## 7.

*Rondeaux* by JEAN MAROT, JEAN D'AUTON, PIERRE GRINGORE, OCTOVIEN DE SAINT-GELAIS, JEAN PICART, and MARTIN DE HOUSSE

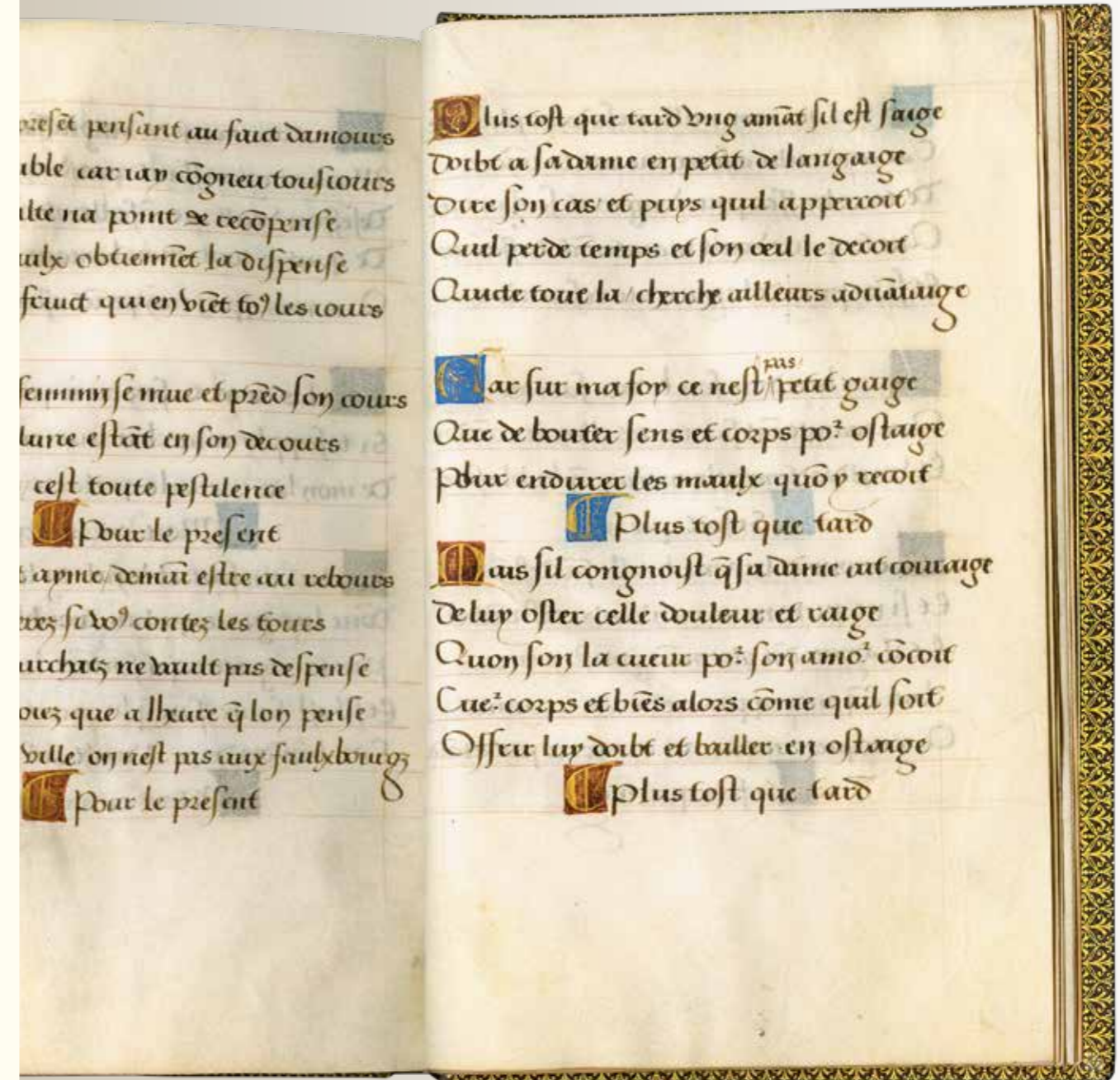
In French, illuminated manuscript on parchment  
France (Paris?), c. 1500-1515

From what we know about Anne de Polignac and her books, she was a serious person, who turned to her library for edification and religious instruction. This manuscript in contrast illustrates the more light-hearted side of vernacular literature in the early sixteenth century. This is a collection of 122 *rondeaux*, a popular poetic form in late medieval and Renaissance France. Courtly love animates these *rondeaux*. They run an emotional gamut from hope to adulation to despair as they range in their subject matter from the pursuit of the beloved – poems of courtship and flirtation – to the celebration of her virtues – poems of adoration and obsession – to the loss of love – poems of lamentation and recrimination.

These were poems written to be shared among the French nobility and at the French royal court. Many can be linked to poets who were members of a poetic circle known as the *Grands Rhétoriciens*, who wrote with the patronage of the king and other members of the court. Their poetry is known for its rich word play and experimentation with sound. One of the best known among the *Rhétoriciens* is the court poet Jean Marot (1457-1526), secretary to Anne of Brittany (1477-1514) during her second reign as queen consort of France, and later the official poet of both Louis XII (reigned 1498-1515) and Francis I (reigned 1515-1547). It seems likely that one of the poets present in the volume supervised the collection of this small intimate volume. Collections such as this are not common (about twenty are extant, and only three similar manuscripts have sold in the last century). Was this given as a love token? Presented to an aristocratic patron? What we certainly know is that this beautiful little book was made to be perused within a very small circle of readers at court – and that it was intended to please and delight. [TM 860]

**DESCRIPTION:** 61 folios on parchment, complete, written in a cursive gothic script influenced by humanist script on 16 long lines, gold initials on blue or red grounds, a few leaves slightly rubbed and soiled, otherwise excellent condition, 19<sup>th</sup>-century brown morocco binding. Dimensions 170 x 107 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Blangy, 1893; Jennifer Britnell, "Competition and Co-operation: The Court Poets of Louis XII and Anne of Brittany," in *Court and Humour in the French Renaissance: Essays in Honour of Professor Pauline Smith*, ed. Sarah Alyn Stacey, Oxford, 2009, pp. 43-56; Cynthia Brown, *The Shaping of History and Poetry in Late Medieval France: Propaganda and Poetic Expression in the Works of the Rhétoriciens*, Birmingham, 1985.



## 8.

Collection of Medical Recipes and Health Regimens, including *Receptes de plusieurs experts medecins consernant diverse malladies* (Recipes of Several Great Physicians Concerning Various Maladies), compiled by FRANÇOIS II DE ROHAN; recipe excerpted from GIOVANNI DA VIGO, *Practica in arte chirurgica* (Practical Treatise on the Art of Surgery); Pharmacopoeia of thirty-one plant-based recipes; and other texts

In French and Latin (with additions in Italian), illuminated manuscript on parchment  
France (Lyon?), c. 1515-1525

This manuscript could not be more different than the previous collection of court poetry, although it is equally elegant in its appearance, and elevated in its origins. It includes c. 117 medical recipes. (Although in the modern world we usually think of recipes as instructions for preparing food, in the Middle Ages and well into the early modern era a “recipe” was understood as a how-to instruction of any sort, including, as in this case, medical remedies.) Most recipe collections are plain – or even downright scruffy – manuscripts designed for practical use (no. 20). This collection in contrast is elegantly written, illuminated, and survives in its original velvet binding – all hallmarks of vernacular books made for the French court and nobility in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. We know it was made for François II de Rohan (1480-1536), Archbishop of Lyon and Bishop of Angers, who presented it to his elder brother, Charles de Rohan-Gié, whose arms are found on the first page.

The contents are equally unusual. Most of the recipes are from contemporary physicians, rather than traditional sources from the past, including, among many others, François d’Allez and André Briau, doctors for the king of France, making this a valuable record of medicine as it was actually practiced among the French nobility in the early sixteenth century. François II de Rohan, who directed the compilation of this volume, probably knew many of these physicians personally. His own health regimen is included, and the preponderance of the volume’s attributed recipes are connected to the exalted circles in which he moved in Lyon and elsewhere. In addition to this collection, he was the author of a translation of *Fiore di virtù* (Flower of Virtue), an early fourteenth-century Italian collection of moral texts, surviving in an illuminated presentation copy (now Paris, BnF, MS fr. 1877, produced c. 1530). His motto is an appropriate one for a man with medical interests: “mentem sanam in corpore sane” (a sound mind in a healthy body). [TM 937]

**DESCRIPTION:** 63 folios on parchment, complete, written in elegant *bâtarde* script with some humanist letterforms on 15 long lines, painted line fillers, blue or grey foliate initials on gold grounds, full border, some rubbing and stains, but fine condition, original red velvet binding over wooden boards, velvet worn, upper board cracked. Dimensions 205 x 144-147 mm.

**LITERATURE:** John F. Freeman, “Physicians and Humanists in the World of Francis I,” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 30 (1975), pp. 124-135; Ludmila Viramsamyaiken, ed., *Lyon Renaissance: arts et humanism*, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon (exhib.), Paris, 2015.



anciens duns

**A**utre unguent d'huilles

Pour conforter l'estomac et faire

diger ordonne d'ax maistre

André médecin du Roy à Lyon

**R**enes huille Rosat bon bien  
deorant fait avecques huille

vioge suuron deux onces six neufue trois

dragmes huille nardm demye once quil fault

fonder ensemble Duns prenez de la poudre

de romaticu Rosaxum de la discretion de

gabrielis vngt grams muse fm quatre

grams Et soit fait unguent

**A**utre unguent de maist

Bernard pour chauffer l'estomac

Et froter

**R**enes huille nardm huille

de la sue et de mastie de chacun

une demye once du corral Rouge du

gamingal de chin deux scrupules du

clou de grossefle de troscis de galie muscate

de chin demye dragme et vng peu de six

neufue Et faites unguent

**A**utre unguent 1 jour

eschauffer led estomac ordonne

d'ax maistre albert médecin de la

royne

**R**enes huille de mastie huille

de roses de chin une once et demye

poudre de grossefle de corral Rouge de chin

## 9.

*Les roys de la tres crestienne maison de France*  
(The Kings of the Very Christian house of France)

In French, illuminated manuscript on parchment  
Northern France (Paris?), c. 1500-1525 (after 1497/98)

Around 1250, King Louis IX of France (reigned 1226-1270), commissioned a French history of the kings of France from Primat, a monk at Saint-Denis, based on the Latin chronicles of the kings written at that abbey. The king requested that the history be in French, "roman langue vulgaire parlée par les laïques, langue du plaisir et de la recreation" (the common romance language spoken by the laity, language of pleasure and recreation). Primat's work, the *Roman des rois* (later called the *Grandes chroniques de France*), played a role in the consolidation of royal power. It is significant that the chosen vehicle was a prose history in the vernacular.

The history of the kings of France in this manuscript is much briefer and to the point, listing each king, followed by the dates and a brief summary of the events of his reign. It begins, as does Primat's text, with the legendary king Pharamond. The last king is Louis XII (1462-1515). His notice includes only a heading, suggesting that the text was written after his succession to the crown in 1497/98, but before he had time to accomplish anything. This text was previously known in a single manuscript, Paris, BnF, MS n.a.f. 11119, described by Henri Omont in 1912, which specifically states that Louis d'Orléans was then the king (our copy omits the phrase, "et regne a present"). Although the name of the first owner of the copy in the Bibliothèque nationale is not known, the "elegance of its execution" and the presence of the coat of arms of France suggested to Omont that it was made for a prince or princess "of the house of France." Our copy is simpler, but its very elegant script, illuminated initials, and velvet binding that is likely original, suggest that it too was probably made for someone close to the royal family. [TM 748]

**DESCRIPTION:** 23 folios on parchment, complete, written in a skilled cursive gothic bookhand on 24 long lines, brushed gold initials on alternately red or blue, a few leaves cockled, early, possibly original red velvet binding, worn, spine bare, back board attached mainly by the pastedown. Dimensions 211 x 145 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Morrison and Hedeman, 2010; Henri Omont, "Un résumé politique de l'histoire des rois de France au temps de Louis XII," *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 56 no. 3 (1912), pp. 175-182; Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-century France*, Berkeley, 1993.



## 10.

PHILIPPE DE VIGNEULLES, *La chanson de geste de Garin le Loherain*

In French, illuminated manuscript on paper  
 France (Metz), c. 1515-1527/28  
 With three full-page miniatures and three historiated initials

The text in this manuscript is an example of history of another type. "Chansons de geste" (songs about deeds) are narrative poems telling the stories of the heroes of the French past, often Charlemagne and his followers. The *Song of Roland* is the most famous example, but there were many others (the earliest examples may originate in the eleventh century). The links between traditional oral literature, sung or chanted in the courts of the French nobility, and texts recorded in manuscripts in written form are particularly important in understanding these epic poems.

This is a translation into modern French prose by Philippe de Vigneulles of the *Geste de Loherain*, the story of the hero Garin "the Lotharingian" that takes place in lower Lorraine; this cycle of epic songs was written originally in Old French verse in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Recounting the heroic exploits of four generations of a legendary Lorraine family and their endless feud with the treacherous Bordelais (from the region of Bordeaux), the four branches of the *Geste* remained popular, especially in eastern France, throughout the Middle Ages. Philippe de Vigneulles (1471-1527/28) was from Metz in eastern France. The only other known copy of Philippe's text was destroyed in 1944, when many of the treasures of the Bibliothèque municipale of Metz were set on fire by retreating German troops. Thus, Philippe's *Garin* remains the only complete prose translation of the entire epic cycle, and the present manuscript is the only surviving copy. Its wonderfully animated full-page miniatures and fine calligraphic pen work initials suggest it was a presentation copy, but one that also served as the author's working text, with numerous corrections, excisions, and additions, many of which are in Philippe De Vigneulles's own hand. It has been a treasured volume in the libraries of many important collectors from Metz, including most recently the Count of Hunolstein, and extending back in time to Paul Ferry (d. 1669), a Protestant minister in Metz, who was married to the author's great-granddaughter.

**DESCRIPTION:** 613 folios on paper, complete, watermarks dating 1492-1508, written in a cursive gothic bookhand on 28-37 long lines, penwork initials, three historiated initials, three full-page miniatures, original blind-stamped brown calf binding. Dimensions 285 x 205 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Cifarelli, 2017; Jean-Charles Herbin, "Approches de la mise en prose de la Geste des Loherains par Philippe de Vigneulles," *Romania* 113 (1995), pp. 466-504; Herbin, in Colombo Timelli, 2014 (1), pp. 165-194; Herbin, in Colombo Timelli, 2014 (2), pp. 545-557; Philippe de Vigneulles, *La chanson de geste de Garin le Loherain, mise en prose par Philippe de Vigneulles, de Metz. Table des chapitres avec les reproductions des miniatures, d'après le manuscrit de la chanson appartenant à M. le Comte d'Hunolstein*, Paris, 1901.





## 11.

JEHAN DE BAUDREUIL,  
*Sommaire abrégé des ducs de Orléans-Longueville*

In French, illuminated manuscript on parchment  
France (likely Paris), c. 1525 (likely after 1524)  
one miniature by the Master of the Paris Entries and thirty-two painted heraldic shields

Like the history of the French kings (no. 9), perhaps owned by someone with close connections to the French royal family, this manuscript had special significance for one particular family, the House of Orléans-Longueville. Closely related to historical manuscripts, and even to the legendary retelling of the past in *Chansons de geste* (no. 10), genealogy with its focus on individual families had obvious relevance to the French nobility, who were certainly fond of books about themselves, and happy to spend money on lavish manuscripts such as this one (cf. no. 26).

This text is quite rare, extant in only four manuscripts, suggesting a restricted circulation within the family, and it is by an author, Jehan de Baudreuil (1455-c. 1531?), about whom we know very little. Unedited, this is the only illustrated copy, and must be the dedication copy for Louis II d'Orléans-Longueville (1510-1537). The title of Duke of Longueville (Longueville-sur-Scie, Haute Normandie) was created in 1505 by King Louis XII for his first cousin once removed François II d'Orléans (1478-1513) and it was inherited in 1525 by the fifth Duke of Longueville, Louis II d'Orléans-Longueville. Confirmation that the manuscript was written for and commissioned by Louis is found in the dedicatory prologue, and in the lavish full-page allegorical miniature of two facing knights in full heraldic regalia by the important Parisian artist known as the Master of the Paris Entries. More than a simple "genealogy," this text confirms Louis II d'Orléans-Longueville's rights to his lands and titles. It includes a summary of these rights, with historical justifications and identifications of the customs that apply to the various lands and fiefdoms under his rule, illustrated with the coat of arms of each family's fiefdom. It must have been a cherished possession, but also one of practical value, including information essential to the new duke.

**DESCRIPTION:** 32 folios on parchment, complete, written in a French *lettre bâtarde* on up to 21 lines, liquid gold or blue initials on colored grounds, 32 painted heraldic shields, one large full-page miniature in a gold architectural frame, modern binding of old red velvet over boards. Dimensions 255 x 180 mm.

**LITERATURE:** P. Anselme, "Ducs de Longueville," in *Histoire généalogique et chronologique de la maison royale de France...*, Paris, 1726, vol. 1, pp. 212-; G. Bresc-Bautier, et alia, *France 1500. Entre Moyen Age et Renaissance*, exh. cat., Paris, 2010; I. Delaunay, "Le Maître des entrées parisiennes" in "Le Graduel de Saint-Dié," *Art de l'enluminure* 26 (2008), pp. 52-70.

La ville Chastel baronnie et seigneurie de  
parthenay Et pays de gaslme ouquel  
pays de gaslme sont situées et assises Lesd  
seigneuries de Secoudigny Bessleu et Le  
coulroy sillebert Qui adous Monseigneur



## 12.

*Traicté d'aymer Dieu*, anonymous French Translation of BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX,  
*De diligendo deo* (On Loving God)

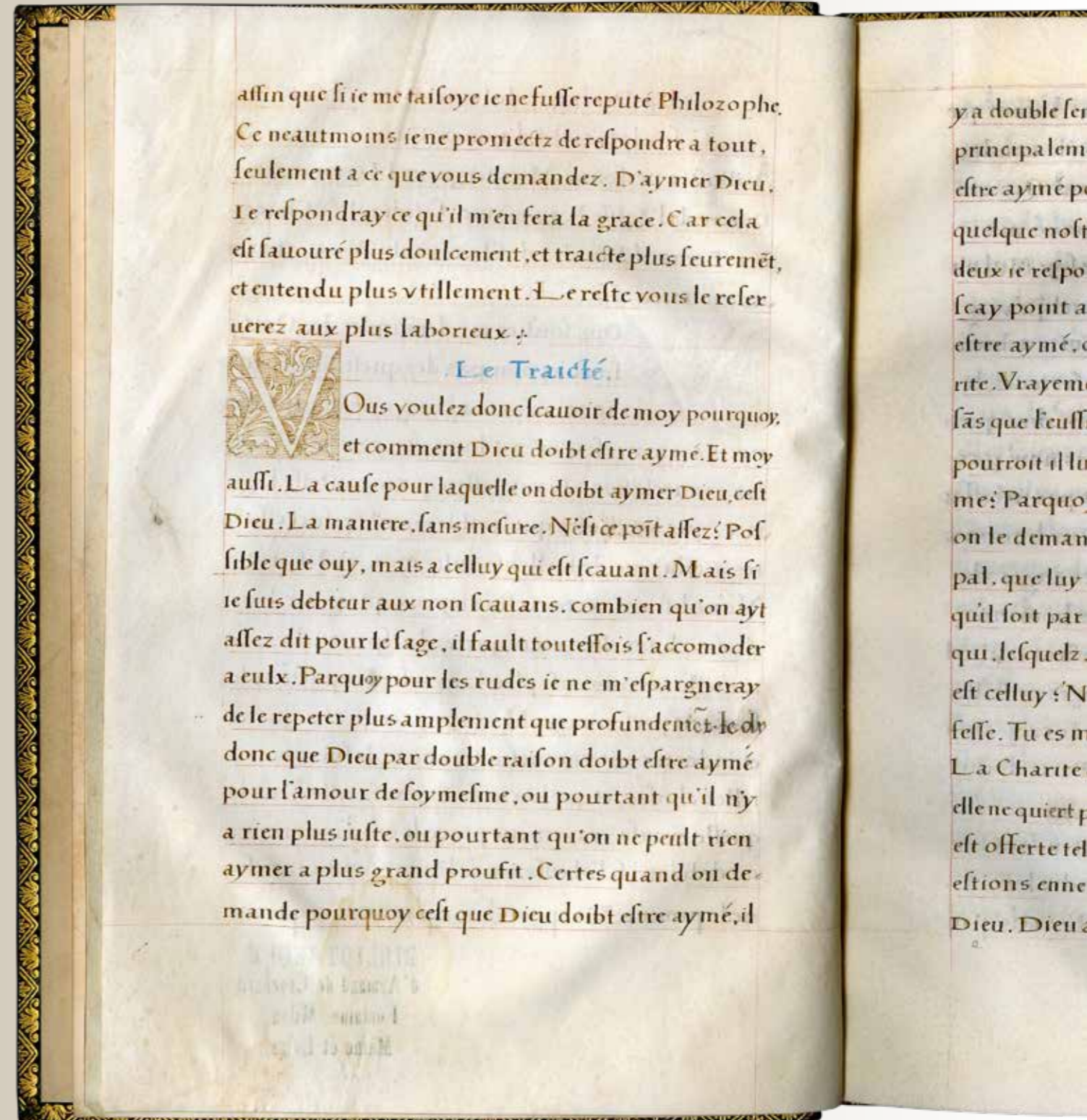
In French, decorated manuscript on parchment  
France, c. 1535-1550

This elegant manuscript is apparently the only surviving copy of a hitherto unknown (and thus unedited and unpublished) French vernacular translation of the important work by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, *De diligendo deo*. The Latin version, written by the great Cistercian saint c. 1132-1135, was very popular, and survives in over 60 extant manuscripts. It was translated into French as early as the twelfth century (Gregory, 1994), and again in the seventeenth century in 1664 by Dom Antoine de Saint-Gabriel, a Feuillant monk in Paris. Every translation of a text is a unique and important moment in its history. This translation, a testimony to the endurance of Bernardine spirituality, offers new insights to historians studying religious thought and literature in the sixteenth century. French prose works from this period are known for the beauty of their language, and this is also a text that should be studied and published in its own right as an important new addition to the canon of texts from the French Renaissance.

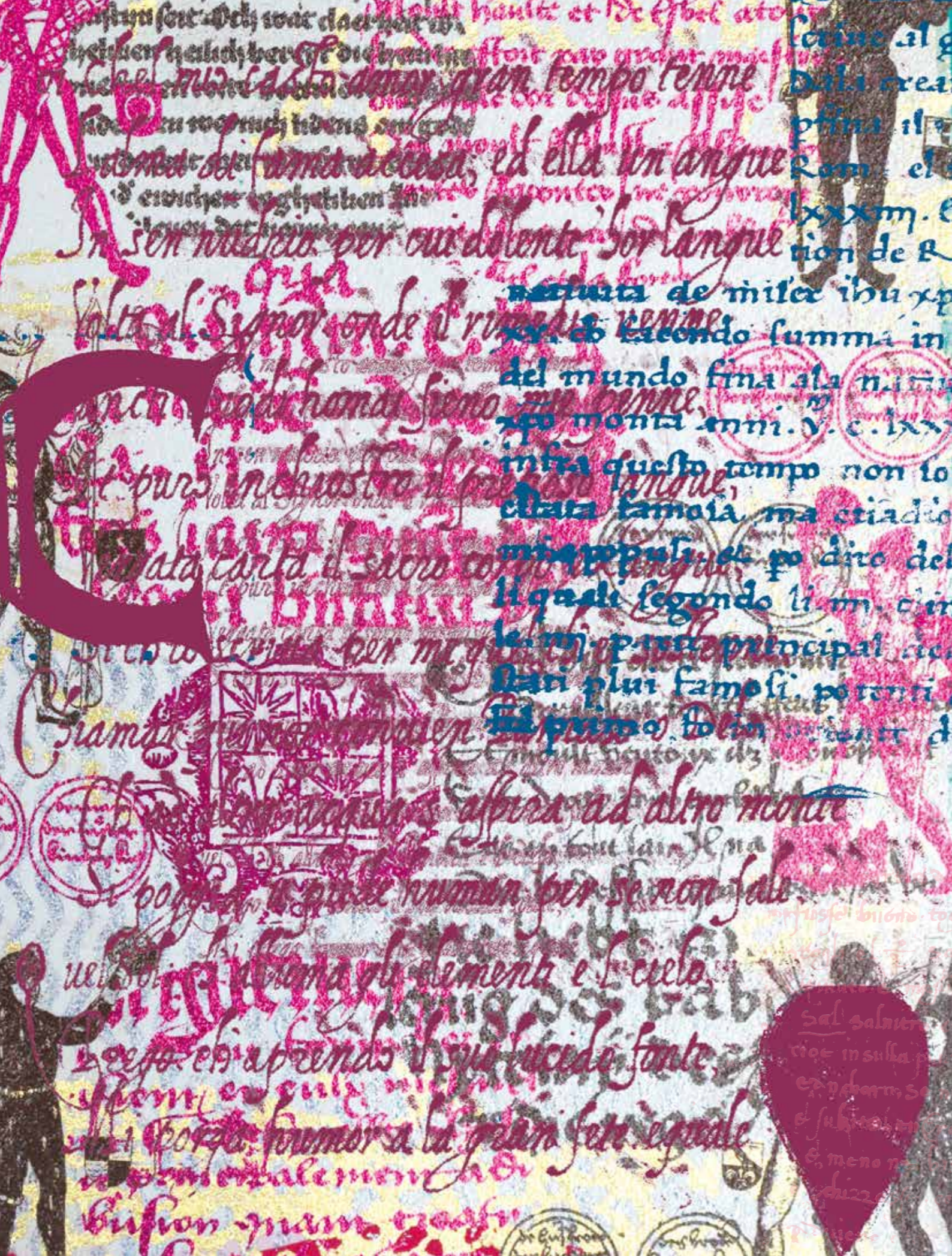
The invention of printing with moveable type in the mid-fifteenth century did not mean the end of the hand-written book (see also nos. 19, 24-25). This manuscript, which is a wonderful example of the skill of a sixteenth-century scribe and artist, was almost certainly a presentation copy to a patron, who may someday be identified. The extremely regular script, spacing, punctuation, and the decorated initials are inspired by contemporary printed volumes, and their aspect suggests that the book was copied in France c. 1535-1550, during the latter portion of the reign of King Francis I (d. 1547). [TM 671]

**DESCRIPTION:** 36 folios on parchment, complete, written in a fine and regular humanist script influenced by roman type on up to 22 lines, two decorated initials, 19th-century English binding of dark blue morocco. Dimensions 310 x 250 mm

**LITERATURE:** Bernard de Clairvaux, *Traitez spirituels de S. Bernard, premier abbé de Clairvaux*, Paris, 1674; Stewart Gregory, *La traduction en prose française du 12e siècle des Sermones in Cantica de Saint Bernard*, Amsterdam, 1994







# II. ITALIAN

**Q**uando la terra fu creata, ed ella era un angue  
In sen matrice per cui dolente sor l'anguie  
Saltò al Signor onde il rimedio venne  
Cancro di nome, e di nome siemmo  
E pure in questo il primo angue  
Cancro di nome, e di nome siemmo  
Cancro di nome, e di nome siemmo  
Cancro di nome, e di nome siemmo

**Q**uando la terra fu creata, ed ella era un angue  
In sen matrice per cui dolente sor l'anguie  
Saltò al Signor onde il rimedio venne  
Cancro di nome, e di nome siemmo  
E pure in questo il primo angue  
Cancro di nome, e di nome siemmo  
Cancro di nome, e di nome siemmo  
Cancro di nome, e di nome siemmo

**Q**uando la terra fu creata, ed ella era un angue  
In sen matrice per cui dolente sor l'anguie  
Saltò al Signor onde il rimedio venne  
Cancro di nome, e di nome siemmo  
E pure in questo il primo angue  
Cancro di nome, e di nome siemmo  
Cancro di nome, e di nome siemmo  
Cancro di nome, e di nome siemmo

Sal saluare  
cioe insulla  
e di harm  
e sub  
e meno  
dizze

acqua. Togli sal uero e alla facinogna torre far la cura  
li el p sal e d allume. 7 se uoi ege d assi troppo bion a  
el, e d allume: et se puoi hauer d allume rosso lino di a  
ore che saltro uoe per taleffetto. Et ualer cognosier e b  
son maly modi. el p modo si e di por sene insulla biza  
ta desso. d quanto si sente piu pugnente, tanto migliore  
e di harm. Se se fa que d altra pruoua. gientalo insulla brace  
e sub. e di harm. e di harm. e di harm. e di harm. e di harm.  
e meno. e di harm. e di harm. e di harm. e di harm. e di harm.  
dizze. e di harm. e di harm. e di harm. e di harm. e di harm.

# VERNACULAR MANUSCRIPTS IN ITALY

Dennis Dutschke

**THE COLLECTING OF ITALIAN VERNACULAR MANUSCRIPTS IN THE UNITED STATES BEGINS** in the nineteenth century with James Lenox, who in 1874 purchased a copy of Petrarch's *Trionfi* and *Canzoniere* and the Ps.-Antonio da Tempo's *Vita di Petrarca*. In 1895 as part of the Lenox Library it entered the New York Public Library (now New York Public Library, NYPL MA 87). Lenox's purchase was followed by other collectors of manuscripts in Italian, and, like him, their acquisitions focused mainly on the "Three Crowns" of Italian literature, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio.

**COLLECTING MANUSCRIPTS OF DANTE ALSO BEGAN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, IN** the then rather inauspicious setting of Harvard University, championed by none other than Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and his fellow Dante enthusiasts, but countered by the university's negative attitude towards the Italian language. As Matthew Pearl explained in his edition of Longfellow's 1867 translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy*: "Italian was among the more suspect 'living' languages. In an age of comfortable anti-Catholicism, Unitarian Boston Brahmins balked at Papist loyalists and incense-scented 'superstitions' reported to be propagated in cathedrals" (Pearl, 2003, p. xii).

**NOTWITHSTANDING RESISTANCE OF THE UNIVERSITY, ON MAY 15, 1883, THE DANTE SOCIETY** announced the "most important purchase of the past year" (*Annual Report of the Dante Society* 2 (1883), pp. 9-10), the fifteenth-century manuscript of Dante's *Rime* and Petrarch's *Trionfi*, now Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Ital 56. It was followed in 1885 by a gift of another manuscript from Charles Eliot Norton (Houghton Library, MS Ital 52: Petrarch, *Trionfi*; Dante, *Canzoni*), and in 1906, also from Norton, the rare and coveted manuscript of Dante's *Divine Comedy* with commentary by Ps.-Boccaccio (Houghton Library, MS Ital 54).

**THE INTEREST IN COLLECTING MANUSCRIPTS OF THE "THREE CROWNS" NEVER WANED.** Lenox and Longfellow were followed by collectors including Willard Fiske, J. P. Morgan, Isabella Stewart Gardner and Henry H. Huntington. Although Longfellow, Norton, and Fiske were motivated to collect manuscripts of vernacular texts principally by Dante and Petrarch (Boccaccio, as in his lifetime, remained in the shadows of his great predecessors), some manuscripts were acquired simply because they were beautifully illuminated and just happened to have Italian texts in them. This was probably the case of Lenox's Petrarch manuscript, mentioned above, which was lavishly illuminated by Cristoforo Majorana.

**ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO ASCERTAIN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ITALIAN VERNACULAR** manuscripts in American public and private collections today, the list of over 6,000 codices or fragments from codices (excluding legal documents) in the database of the Digital Scriptorium offers pertinent information: over one third of these manuscripts in the United States (2,329) are from Italy, and 410 of them contain texts in Italian; 1,239 manuscripts were produced in France, and 398 of them are in French (did the French read less Latin than the Italians?). English and German follow with c. 750 manuscripts (of which 261 are in English, 132 in German). It is evident that Italian manuscripts (in Latin and in Italian) played a major role in the collecting of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts in the United States.

**TODAY IT IS INCREASINGLY RARE TO FIND COPIES OF WORKS BY THE "THREE CROWNS"** or even lesser known Italian writers. Most medieval and Renaissance manuscripts available for sale today are books produced in the fifteenth century. A representative example is the Italian translation (from Latin) of the *Cronica degli pontifici e degli imperatori* by Martinus Polonus (no. 14). The Italian *volgarizzamento* of the *Chronica*, as well as numerous other Latin texts, signals a major cultural shift in medieval and Renaissance Italy, when literacy extended from Latin elite circles (Church and university) to the world of the vernacular, and led to a need for texts in Italian for the growing audience of those who preferred or were only able to read in their native tongue. The manuscript *De fatti e detti memorabili della città di Roma* (no. 13) further emphasizes the interest in ancient imperial Rome and it reinforces the desire by modern scholars, as well as earlier ones, to connect translation to one of the "Three Crowns," falsely attributing it to Giovanni Boccaccio.

**THE MANUSCRIPTS INCLUDED HERE ILLUSTRATE THE REMARKABLE EVOLUTION OF THE** Italian language as it emerged from relative obscurity in the thirteenth century to ultimately compete with Latin in the production of manuscript and printed books. The "Three Crowns" of Italian literature ushered in a new era of vernacular literacy that was not only embraced by the religious and secular elites, but also by the burgeoning middle class of the "mercantanti" depicted by Giovanni Boccaccio in his *Decameron*.

# 13.

*De fatti e detti memorabili della città di Roma ad Tiberio Cesare*, translation of VALERIUS MAXIMUS, *Factorum et dictorum memorabilium urbis Romae historia* (History of the Memorable Deeds and Sayings of the City of Rome)

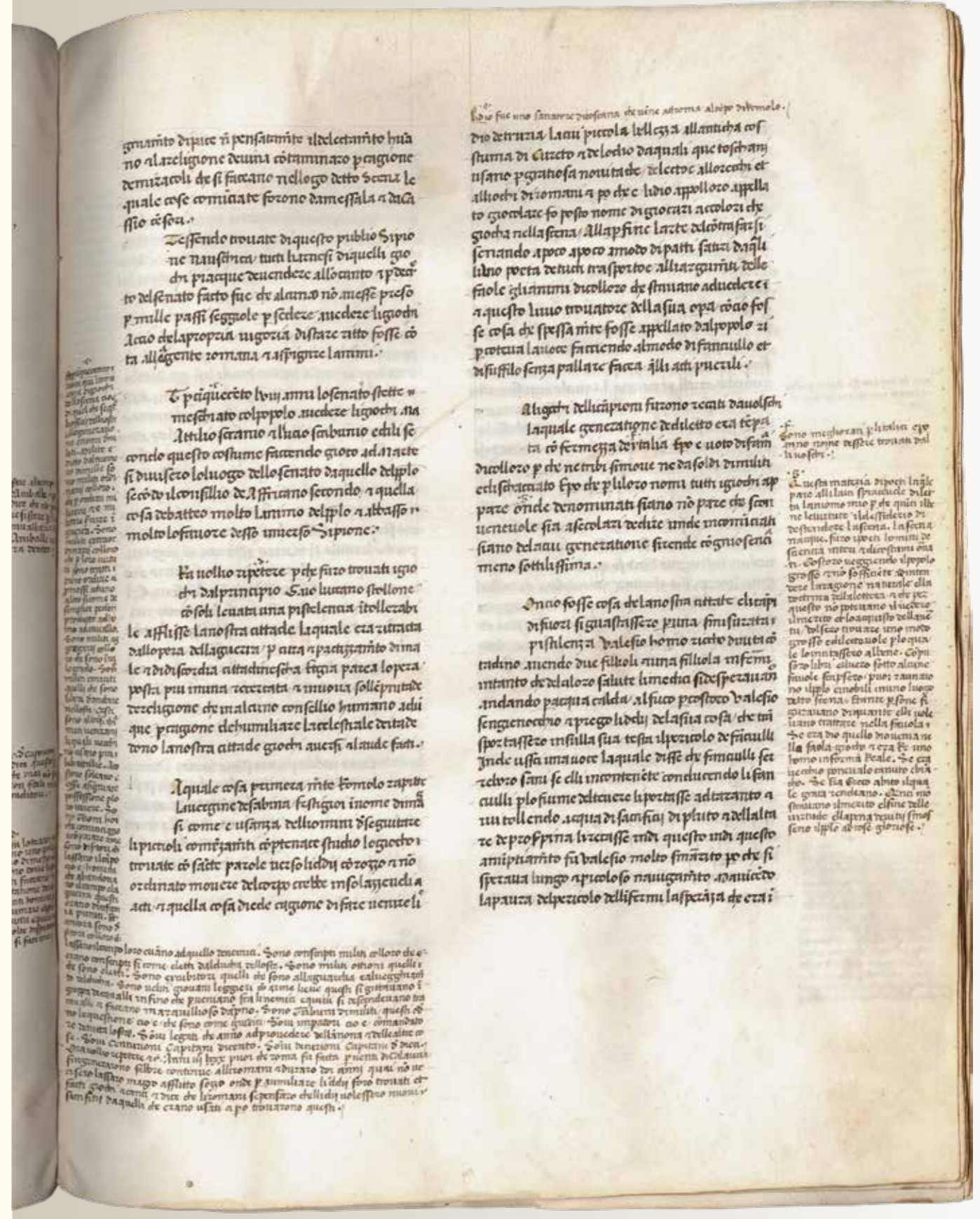
In Italian, illuminated manuscript on parchment  
Italy (Northern?), c. 1400-1450

It is appropriate to begin our discussion of the vernacular in Italy with this translation of the *Factorum et dictorum memorabilium urbis Romae historia* (History of the Memorable Deeds and Sayings of the City of Rome) by the Ancient Roman author, Valerius Maximus (c. 20 BC- c. 50 AD), since it has traditionally been associated with Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375), one of the “Three Crowns” of Italian literature. Valerius collected about one thousand historical anecdotes and arranged them according to topic, including numerous edifying examples of virtues cultivated under the Roman Republic. By the fourteenth century the text was taught in the schools, and it was particularly popular with the Italian humanists who studied it as a historical text.

The simple fact is that we do not know the author or authors of this translation, which survives in three versions, almost always accompanied by one of four different versions of a marginal commentary, all in the Tuscan dialect. However it is tied – by content, use, and literary style, if not by authorship – to Boccaccio, and through the marginal glosses, to a less familiar, but important figure, Dionigi da Borgo San Sepolcro (c. 1290-1342), the author of the first commentary on this text, who was a close friend of Petrarch, and one of Boccaccio’s teachers. Boccaccio uses this text often in his works, but although he owned a Latin copy, he cites it from an Italian translation. Maria Teresa Casella argued that Boccaccio was not only using a vernacular translation of Valerius, but he was in fact the author of the translation (Casella, 1982); a theory she later retracted (1990) (part of the dispute hinges on the date of the translations and the glosses, as well as the complexity of the transmission of the various versions). The debate over the identity of the author of this translation should not mask the intrinsic interest of this manuscript, nor the important fact that Boccaccio is an example of a humanist scholar who made use of classical works in the vernacular, despite his skill as a Latinist. [TM 813]

**DESCRIPTION:** 105 folios on parchment, lacking 5 leaves, written in a Gothico-Antiqua script in 2 columns of 40 lines, extensive glosses, blank spaces for initials, 19<sup>th</sup>-century parchment binding over pasteboards. Dimensions 295-298 x 221-229 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Lippi Bigazzi, ed., *Un volgarizzamento inedito di Valerio Massimo*, Florence, 1996; Maria Teresa Casella, “Sul volgarizzamento Boccacciano di Valerio Massimo. Un codice rintracciato: Una chiosa imbarazzante?” *Studi sul Boccaccio* 19 (1990), pp. 191-208; Casella, 1982; Cornish, 2011; Cornish, 2013; Marijke Crab, *Exemplary Reading: Printed Renaissance Commentaries on Valerius Maximus (1470-1600)*, Scientia Universalis 1; Studien zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte der Vormoderne 2, Munster, 2015.



reduced

## 14.

*Cronica degli pontifici e degli imperatori*, translation and continuation of MARTINUS POLONUS [MARTIN OF TROPPAU], *Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum*

In Italian, decorated manuscript on paper and parchment  
Northeastern Italy (Vicenza?), after 1471 (possibly 1472)

This Italian *volgarizzamento* of an extremely popular and influential medieval Latin chronicle, along with translations of numerous other Latin texts, signals a major cultural shift in medieval and Renaissance Italy, when literacy extended beyond elite Latin circles (Church and university), and led to a need for texts in Italian for the growing audience of those who preferred or were only able to read in their native tongue. The popularity of the text (over 400 manuscripts of the Latin version survive) is evidence of the interest in sacred and secular history and legend, bringing together the popular topics of the competing powers of ancient imperial Rome intertwined with the papacy and the church.

Scholars have identified at least eight other manuscripts containing various Italian translations made from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. The version in this manuscript is an apparently unique translation that has gone unnoticed by scholars. Martinus wrote his *Chronicon* between 1265 and 1268, with later updates to 1277. This translation extends the chronicle to the year 1471, with particular interest in events in northeastern Italy, including, for example, the sack of Vicenza in 1236 by Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor (1220-1250), and Venice's conquest of Padua in 1405 and Brescia in 1439. The text ends on f. 132v; following this is a parchment leaf that has been inserted into the middle of the quire. The page is blank except for this statement copied at the top: "Cronicha vulgar schrita per mj dom Lodouigo da cha da fan prior de San Vio de Vicentia del 1472 (A vernacular chronicle written by me, Dom Lodovigo da Cha da Fan, prior of San Vito in Vicenza)." Does this mean that our manuscript was copied in Vicenza in 1472 by the prior of San Vito? The date is in keeping with the contents of the text and the watermark evidence, and the hands seems to be the same. Or does this mean that Dom Lodovigo was the author of this translation and adaptation of Martinus's chronicle? It seems quite possible that both are true. [TM 117]

**DESCRIPTION:** 138 folios on parchment (only f. 133) and paper, watermarks dating 1459 and 1467, complete, written in two humanist hands on 24 long lines, red and blue initials, coat of arms, some foxing, 19<sup>th</sup>-century reddish calf binding, dated 1847. Dimensions 207 x 149 mm.

**LITERATURE:** F. Brandileone, "Una traduzione della Cronica di Martino Polono," *Archivio storico per le province napoletane* 7 (1882), pp. 799-801; Sebastiano Ciampi, *Saggio d'un antico volgarizzamento inedito della Cronica di Martino Polono con osservazioni critiche*, Milan, 1828; A. Ceruti, "Cronica deli imperadori: antico testo veneziano, ora primamente pubblicato," *Archivio glottologico italiano* 3 (1878), pp. 177-243; Pietro Santini, "La Cronaca di Martino da Troppau e il suo volgarizzamento," in *Quesiti e ricerche di storiografia fiorentina*, Florence, 1903, pp. 27-35.

Cronicha vulgar schrita per mj dom Lodouigo da cha da fan prior de San Vio de Vicentia del 1472.

Comincia la cronica de beate Martino del ordine deli predicadori del stato degli summi pontifici et degli Impetori. Et prima del modo dela creation de Roma secondo la opinion de diversi auctori et scriptori de le colle antiche.

**C**OME dice Orosio lo ql scrive al glorioso Augustino Dala creation del mundo p fina ala hedification de Roma el fo anni. m. cccc. lxxxvii. Et dala hedification de Roma p fina ala natiuita de miser ihu xpo. el fo anni. vij. xv. ch facendo summa in tuto dala creatio del mundo fina ala natiuita de miser ihu xpo monta anni. v. c. lxxxvii. Et p ch infra questo tempo non sola mente Roma estata famosa ma etiam molti altri reamispopuli. et po dico deli. m. principali li quali secondo li. m. clima. o uero segatio le. m. parte principal del mundo sonno stati plui famosi. potenti et principali. El primo fo in oriente de Babilonia. lo



## 15.

ZANOBI DA STRADA, *Morali di Santo Gregorio papa sopra il libro di Job, libri I-X*, translation of GREGORY THE GREAT, *Moralia in Job*

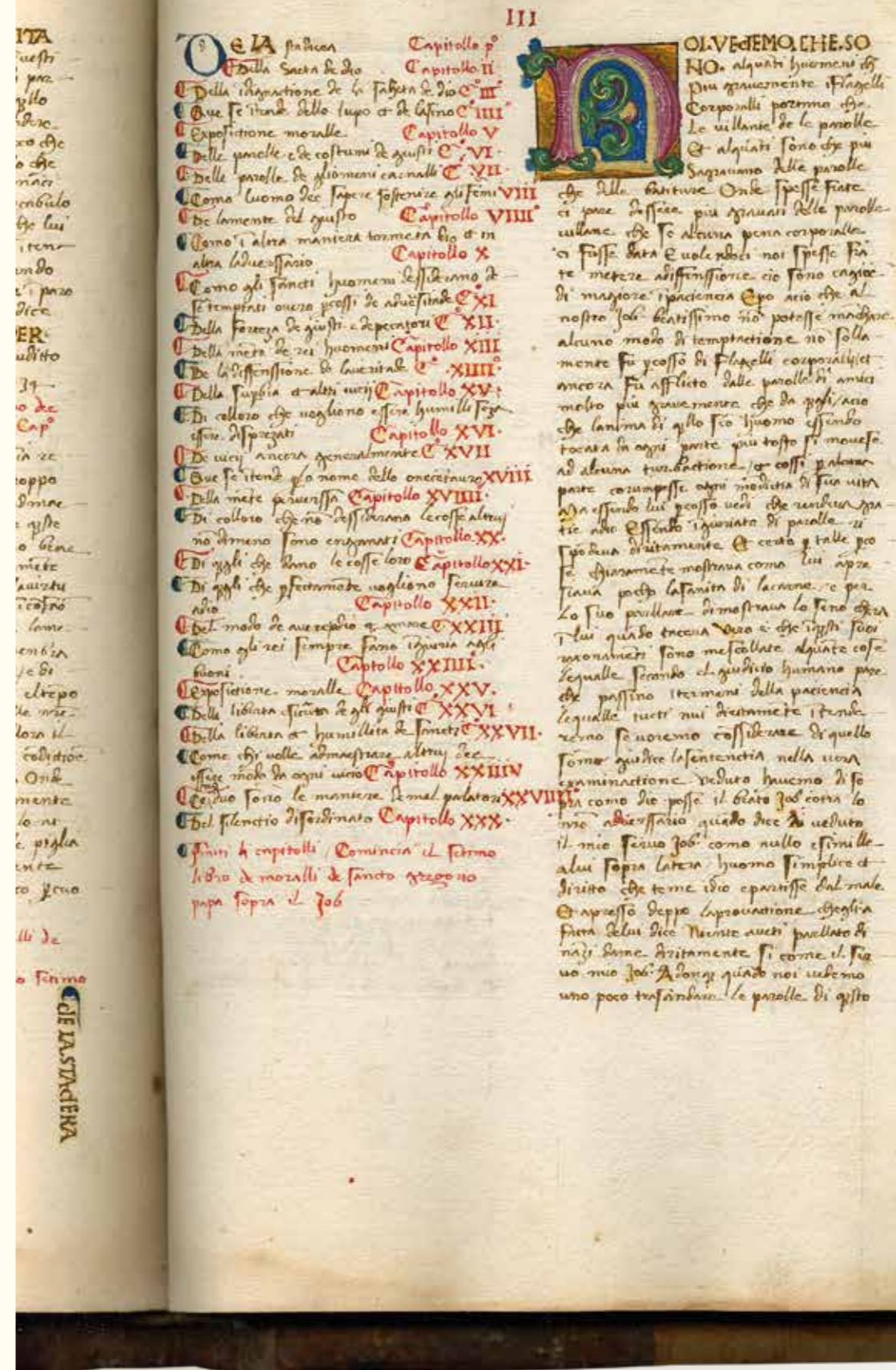
In Italian, illuminated manuscript on paper  
Northeastern Italy, Veneto (Venice?), dated 1474

Religious texts were also translated from Latin into Italian during the late Middle Ages in Italy. A prime example is this translation attributed to Zanobi da Strada (1312-1361), the Latin poet, translator, and schoolmaster. Zanobi was important in humanist circles in Florence, and a friend and correspondent of Giovanni Boccaccio and Petrarch. Gregory's *Moralia* was one of the best known and most widely copied texts in the Middle Ages. His works received attention from Italian translators (*volgarizzatori*) who had begun translating classical texts into Italian in the thirteenth century and were soon also translating sacred and devotional texts. By the middle of the fourteenth century, Gregory's *Dialogues* had been translated by Domenico Cavalca. Zanobi da Strada began work on his translation of the *Moralia* in 1351, but it was incomplete when he died of the plague in 1361. Over fifty years later, Giovanni da San Miniato completed the translation in 1415.

The critical edition (Porta, 2005) lists thirty-nine surviving manuscripts, all in European, mostly Italian, libraries. None include all thirty-five books of the *Moralia*, although some were clearly copied as companion volumes. This manuscript contains the first ten books; there are no losses to at the end. It may have been the first volume of a complete copy of the *Moralia*; alternatively, it could have been copied for a recipient chiefly interested in the first ten books. A scribal colophon on f. 190v states that it was "Written by me, Zuane de Zane, a jeweler" in 1474 ("Scripto per mi zuane de zane zoelier ... MCCCCLXXIII"). Zuane is otherwise unknown, but it is interesting to see someone who describes himself as a jeweler also copying manuscripts. The name is Venetian and this, alongside the evidence of the watermark, decoration, and orthography, support an origin in the Veneto, and quite possibly in Venice. [TM 796]

**DESCRIPTION:** 188 folios on paper, watermarks dating 1471-1475, missing 3 leaves, written in an Italian cursive gothic script with some humanistic influence in 2 columns of 44-47 lines, red or blue initials, 8 illuminated initials on gold, initial excised f. 70v, a few slight tears, water-staining, re-cased using original binding of brown half leather over wooden boards. Dimensions 328-332 x 230 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Billanovich, 1994; Georg Dufner, *Die "Moralia" Gregors des Grossen in ihren italienischen Volgarizzamenti*, Padua, 1958; Giuseppe Porta, ed., Zanobi da Strada and Giovanni da San Miniato, *Morali di santo Gregorio papa sopra il libro di Job*, Archivum Gregorium 5, Florence, 2005.



## 16.

**I**l principio il prologo del salterio fu miracolosamente abbreviato per lo glorioso dottore d'essi s'cō Giuliano ridotto in forma di orationi dicitate gliele dal angelo di dio senza alcuna cosa mutare / ma solo secondo la dicitatura

PRUDENTIUS OF TROYES, *Flores psalorum* (Flowers of the Psalms); Prayers

In Italian and Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment  
Northern Italy, c. 1400-1450

The question of the role of the vernacular in the spiritual life of people in the Middle Ages is not one that is always easy to answer. Although the language of the public liturgy of the Church was certainly Latin, vernacular texts for private prayer and spiritual reading become steadily more common in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (nos. 4, 5, 24, 28, 30, 3, 36). Nonetheless, in many cases, the manuscript evidence suggests people were comfortable praying in Latin. This manuscript is an example of a Prayer Book, almost certainly for lay use – quite possibly for a woman – with a striking fluidity of languages. Prayers begin with explanatory rubrics that are often in Italian, but the prayers themselves are in both languages, with more texts in Latin than in Italian.

The main text is an abbreviated Psalter, probably better described as a series of prayers based on the psalms, by Prudentius of Troyes (d. 861). His prologue (not included here) says he wrote this work as a source of consolation and courage for a noble woman suffering from “various mishaps,” possibly Judith of Bavaria (d. 843), second wife of Louis the Pious, and as an alternative for travelers and others who were unable to recite the entire Psalter. It is fascinating to see this early medieval text still in active use in fifteenth-century Italy. It is accompanied by other prayers that begin with rubrics that suggest a prayer life undertaken with a view to results. The final text in the manuscript is a charm to use during child birth, recalling various New Testament mothers and invoking Jesus. This is a strikingly informal volume, copied in an unpracticed hand (the scribe often ignores the ruled lines entirely). The contents suggest personal use, almost certainly by a woman, and it does not seem impossible that this was copied by its owner. [TM 891]

**DESCRIPTION:** 63 folios on parchment, complete, written in a rapid and informal Gothico-Antiqua script on 20-25 long lines, red or blue initials, some soiling and staining, original brown leather binding over heavy wooden boards, spine missing but thongs intact. Dimensions 176-178 x 122-123 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Jean-François Cottier, “Psautiers abrégés et prières privées durant le haut Moyen Âge,” *Recherches augustiniennes* 33 (2003), pp. 215-230; Pierre Salmon, “Psautiers abrégés du Moyen Âge,” in *Analecta Liturgica: Extraits des manuscrits liturgiques de la Bibliothèque Vaticane: Contribution à l'histoire de la prière chrétienne*, Studi e Testi 273, Vatican, 1974, pp. 69-119; Jared G. Wielfaert, “Prudentius of Troyes (d. 861) and the Reception of the Patristic Tradition in the Carolingian Era,” PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2015.



## 17.

*El transito del gloriosissimo santo Jeronimo doctore eximio* (The Death of the Glorious Saint and Exalted Doctor Jerome): anonymous Italian translations of PS.-EUSEBIUS OF CREMONA, *Epistola de morte Hieronymi*, PS.-AUGUSTINE, *Epistola ad Cyrillum de magnificentiis Hieronymi*, and PS.-CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, *Epistola de miraculis*; BERNARDINO DA SIENA, *Confessione volgare*; BIANCO DA SIENA, *Laudi* (28 stanzas)

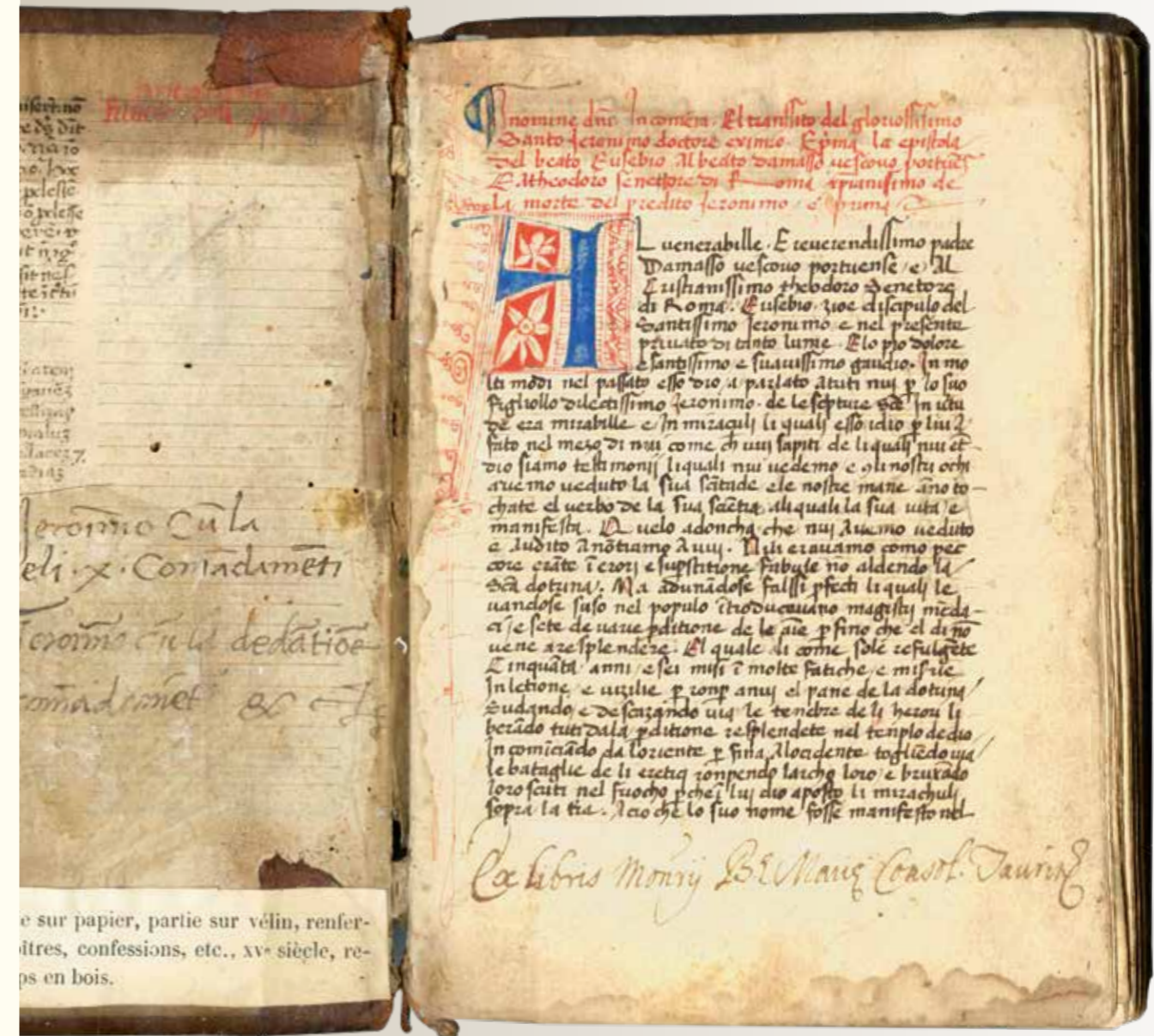
In Italian, decorated manuscript on parchment and paper  
Northern Italy (Lombardy? or Veneto?), c. 1460-1475

The first three texts here are letters purporting to be by three contemporaries of St. Jerome (d. 420), which often circulated together. All three answered medieval readers's avid curiosity about the details of Jerome's death, and were foundational texts for his cult in fifteenth-century Italy. They were tremendously popular (more than 400 manuscripts in Latin survive, including Les Enluminures, TM 656), and widely translated. There are versions in Tuscan, as in this manuscript, as well as in Sicilian, German, Dutch, French, Spanish, Catalan, Danish, and English. They were likely written in Rome at the end of the thirteenth or early in the fourteenth century in the circle of Santa Maria Maggiore by a Dominican author (the remnants of Saint Jerome were believed to have been transferred in the late thirteenth century from the Holy Land to the "cappella del presepio" (the Chapel of the Holy Crib) in Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome). The origin and transmission of the Italian translations of these important texts have yet to be fully explored in the scholarly literature.

The manuscript also includes two contemporary religious texts, both written in Italian by their authors. The first, a text on confession by St. Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444), was designed to help priests administer the sacrament; the second is a *laude* (a religious poetic song of praise) by Bianco da Siena (c. 1350-1399). This is an attractive codex, with beautiful pen decoration, still in its original binding. Identifying its original audience raises interesting questions. The text by Bernardino in particular suggests it was copied for clerical rather than lay use. If so, this manuscript is evidence of preference for religious texts in the vernacular in the second half of the fifteenth century by a clerical audience, even for texts like the letters on Jerome's death that were readily available in Latin (see also no. 22). [TM 605]

**DESCRIPTION:** 99 folios on paper and parchment, texts are complete, but possibly missing some leaves near the end, watermarks 1475 and 1469, written in a cursive bookhand on up to 35 lines, red or blue penwork initials, original blind-tooled leather binding over wooden boards, re-backed. Dimensions 154 x 105 mm.

**LITERATURE:** *La Vita e la fin del santo Hieronymo* ..., Venice, c. 1471 (GW 9455); D. Pacetti et al., *Operette volgari. S. Bernardino da Siena; integralmente edite a cura di P. Dionisio Pacetti*, Florence, 1938; F. Lanzoni, "La leggenda di S. Girolamo," in *Miscellanea geronimiana*, ed. V. Vannutelli, Rome, 1920, pp. 37-38; E. Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, Baltimore and London, 1985.



e sur papier, partie sur vélin, renfer-  
mées, confessions, etc., xv<sup>e</sup> siècle, re-  
ps en bois.

## 18.

## Ordinal and Processional (Dominican Use)

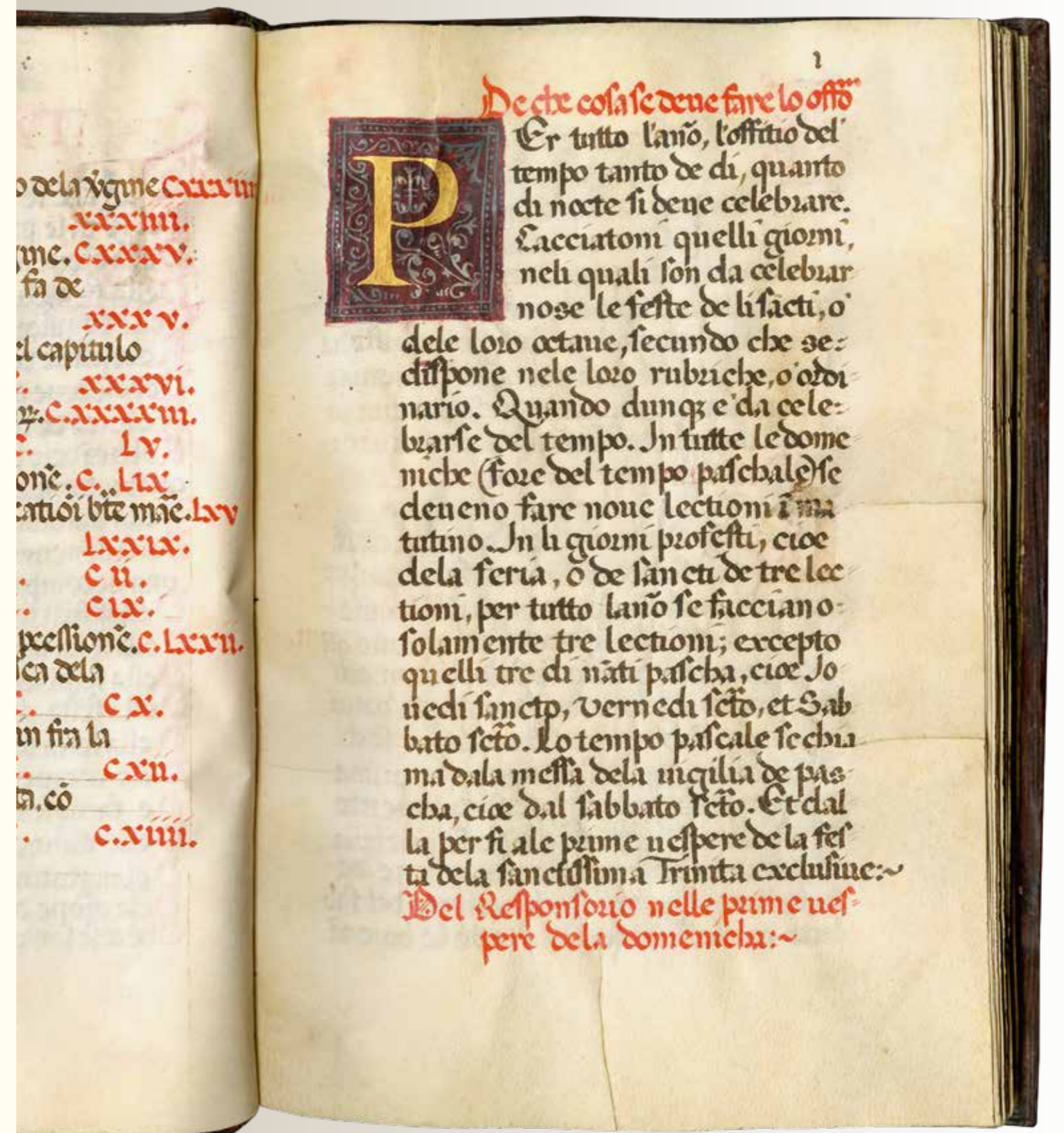
In Latin and Italian, illuminated manuscript on parchment with musical notation  
Italy (Rome or Naples), dated March 24, 1556

The bilingual culture of Italian convents even in the middle of the sixteenth century is demonstrated by this manuscript. The text includes two parts. The first, which is in Italian, is here called a "Liber rubricarum" (a book of rubrics). Liturgical historians would classify it as an Ordinal, that is a liturgical book that does not record the actual words of the liturgy, but instead discusses how the liturgy was to be observed; in this case the Divine Office is described in detail. This Italian text is followed by a Processional in Latin with musical notation. Processionals were personal volumes that include the texts and chants necessary for liturgical processions. Although Processionals were books used by both men and women religious, many of the surviving examples were made for nuns.

The manuscript includes the coat of arms of the Carafas, an important noble family from Naples, twice, in a full-page illumination on the final page, and on the binding. The text and calendar provide evidence that this was copied for Dominican nuns in Naples. Santa Maria della Sapienza, the most important Dominican convent in Naples for women, was founded by Maria Carafa in 1528. Maria, the sister of Gian Pietro Carafa, who served as Pope Paul IV from 1555-1559, and the niece of Cardinal Oliviero Carafa, the archbishop of Naples, was prioress at the Sapienza until her death in 1552. Members of the Carafa family were well represented at the Sapienza for many years after, and it seems very likely that this Processional was made for a member of the Carafa family at this convent. We might even suggest that her name – either her given name or the name she adopted as a nun – may have been Margaret, given the prayer at the end of the manuscript invoking Margaret and the prominent initial for this saint in the calendar. [TM 906]

**DESCRIPTION:** 67 folios on parchment, complete, copied in a rounded gothic bookhand on 25 long lines of text or up to 7 lines of text and music, square notation on red 4-line staves, red or gold strapwork initials, gold penwork initials, brushed gold initials on colored grounds, large initials in the form of trees, full-page illuminated coat of arms, somewhat cockled, original red morocco blind-tooled armorial binding, rebacked. Dimensions 212 x 145 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Helen Hills, *Invisible City: The Architecture of Devotion in Seventeenth-century Neapolitan convents*, Oxford and New York, 2004; Aislinn Loconte, "The Convent of Santa Maria della Sapienza: Visual Culture and Women's Religious Experience in Early Modern Naples," in *Wives, Widows, Mistresses, and Nuns in Early Modern Italy: Making the Invisible Visible through Art and Patronage*, ed. Katherine McIver, Farnham and Burlington, 2012, pp. 207-234.





**E**m e lecta  
mea: et ponā in te  
thronū meū qā cōcupiunt rex speci

em tuas Magnificat. E v o v a e:~

*Oratio pro nobis beatae Margaritae.*

*ut digni efficiamus promissionibus christi.*

**M**agnificetias nobis dñe beata  
Margarita virgo et martyr im  
ploret: que tibi grata semper  
extitit: et merito castitatis et  
tue p̄fessionis virtutis: *per dñs:*

*Dñs vobiscū Et cū spū tuo  
Benedicamus domino. Deo gratias:~*

**M**AGNIFICAT

## 19.

ANTONIO FIORDIBELLO, *De auctoritate ecclesiae...*, Romae, apud Antonium Bladum, 1545; TADDEO PICCONI, *De itinere christiani sacrum opusculum*, Romae, apud Ioannem Mariam de Viottis Parmensem in domo S. Birgittae, 1553; VITTORIA COLONNA, *Rime spirituali*

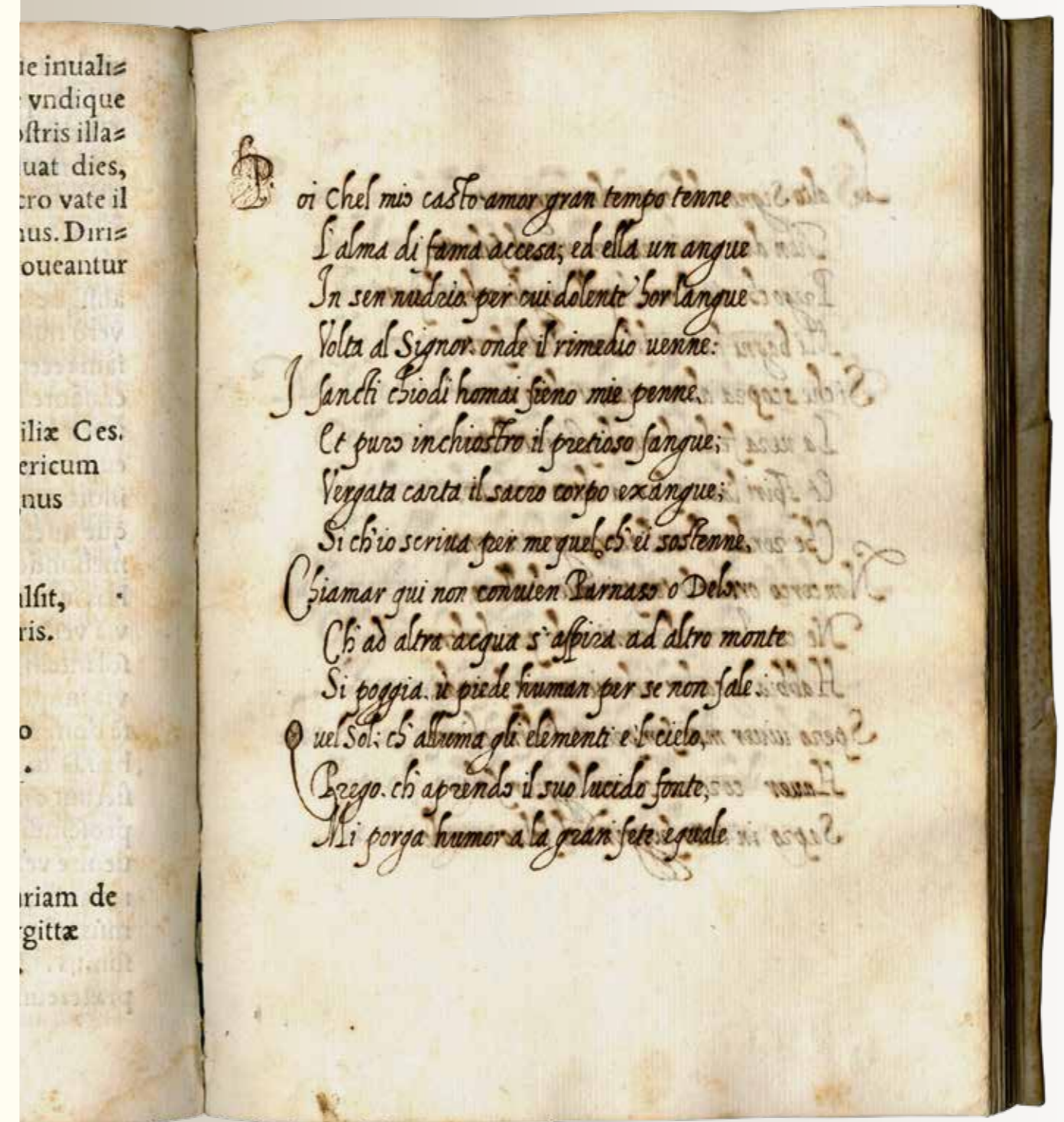
In Italian, two imprints and a manuscript on paper  
Italy (Rome?), 1545; 1553; c. 1563-1580

The invention of printing c. 1455 did not mean the end of manuscript production; many genres continued to circulate as manuscripts throughout the sixteenth century (see also no. 24). This manuscript of Vittoria Colonna's (1490/2-1547) *Rime spirituali*, bound together with two printed texts, is an excellent demonstration of this coexistence of print and manuscript. As was true of many authors in sixteenth-century Italy, in particular poets, Colonna's poetry was disseminated in both formats during her lifetime and after her death. Catherine d'Amboise (c. 1482-1550), her contemporary in France, in contrast, seems to have consciously chosen to circulate her works only as manuscripts. This manuscript includes all 176 poems of Colonna's *Spiritual Poems*, and was almost certainly copied from the printed *editio princeps*, published in Venice by Vincenzo Valgrisi in 1546.

Vittoria Colonna was born to a noble family in Italy, and began writing poetry in the manner of Petrarch early in life. After the death of her husband, Fernando d'Avalos, the Marquis of Pescara, in 1525, her poems become more serious and, particularly late in her life, religious in theme, as is evident in her *Rime spirituali* in this volume. Colonna was an important member of the group of reform-minded Catholics who gathered around the English Cardinal Reginald Pole (d. 1558) in Naples, and then in Viterbo in the 1540s. Colonna herself lived in Viterbo at the convent of Santa Caterina from 1541-1544. Other members of this circle of *spirituali* were the artist, Michelangelo, a close friend of Colonna's, Cardinal Jacopo Sadoletto (d. 1547), and Antonio Fiordibello (d. 1574), the author of the first text in this volume, who also wrote Sadoletto's biography and served in Reginald Pole's household. Although slightly later in date, the origin of this volume, which was owned by the Jesuits at Viterbo, should be understood in the context of this important movement for reform within the Catholic church (see also nos. 28 and 36). [TM 750]

**DESCRIPTION:** two imprints and a manuscript, 44 + 32 + 88 folios on paper, watermarks dating 1563-1580, complete, manuscript copied in an elegant italic script in 14 long lines, flourished initials, imprints begin with engraved title pages and opening initials, occasional foxing throughout, bleed-through on manuscript pages, original parchment binding. Dimensions 192 x 132 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Abigail Brundin, *Vittoria Colonna and the Spiritual Poetics of the Italian Reformation*, Aldershot, 2008; Abigail Brundin, Tatiana Crivelli, and Maria Serena Sapegno, eds., *A Companion to Vittoria Colonna*, Leiden and Boston, 2016; Diana Robin, *Publishing Women: Salons, the Presses, and the Counter Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Italy*, Chicago, 2007.



TADDAEI PICONII COLLEN-  
 sis de christiani itinere, siue christiane Insti-  
 tutionis sacrum opusculum, Ioannis  
 Daudii Nepotis opera, ac dili-  
 gentia in lucem Editum.



TADDAEI PICONII COLLEN-  
 sis Compendium de Christiani Itinere.



**S**A P I E N T I S S I M U S  
 quisque, dum breuia temporis  
 huius spatia sibi ad viuendum  
 prorogantur, saluti nō tam cor-  
 poris, quàm animæ modis om-  
 nibus putat consulendum, se' que  
 intelligit in hanc lucem editum  
 esse ad laborem, vt post supremū fati diem placidis  
 tandem sedibus requiescat, post' que turbidos seculi  
 huius fluctus tranquillū portū petat felicitatis æter-  
 næ. Hic. n. quies est nulla: quippe cum tot, tantis' q̄  
 vita hæc repleta sit malis, & conflictationibus, vt  
 comparatione eius mors miseriarum meta, remedi-  
 um' que malorum putetur esse, nō pœna. Hoc pro-  
 fecto Thraces, gens alioqui fera, nullóque humani-  
 tatis cultu perpolita suo pte olim ingenio intellexe-  
 re, cum natales quidem hominum luctu, flebilique  
 clamore, funera vero cantu, epulis, tripudiis' que ce-  
 lebrabant. Hinc sane vnusquisque cum nascitur, &  
 hospitio mundi huius incola nouus excipitur, lucis  
 huius vsuram à lachrymis auspicator: & quamuis  
 rerum adhuc omnium ignarus nihil aliud in ipso  
 primo ortu nouit, quàm uagire, ac flere. Prouidētia  
 naturali lamentatur, vt primū cælestem hunc spiritū  
 cœpit haurire: uitæ' que huius labores, ac procellas  
 mundi, quas ingreditur, in exordio statim suo rus-

## 20.

*Dell'affinare l'oro e l'argento* (On the Refining of Gold and Silver)

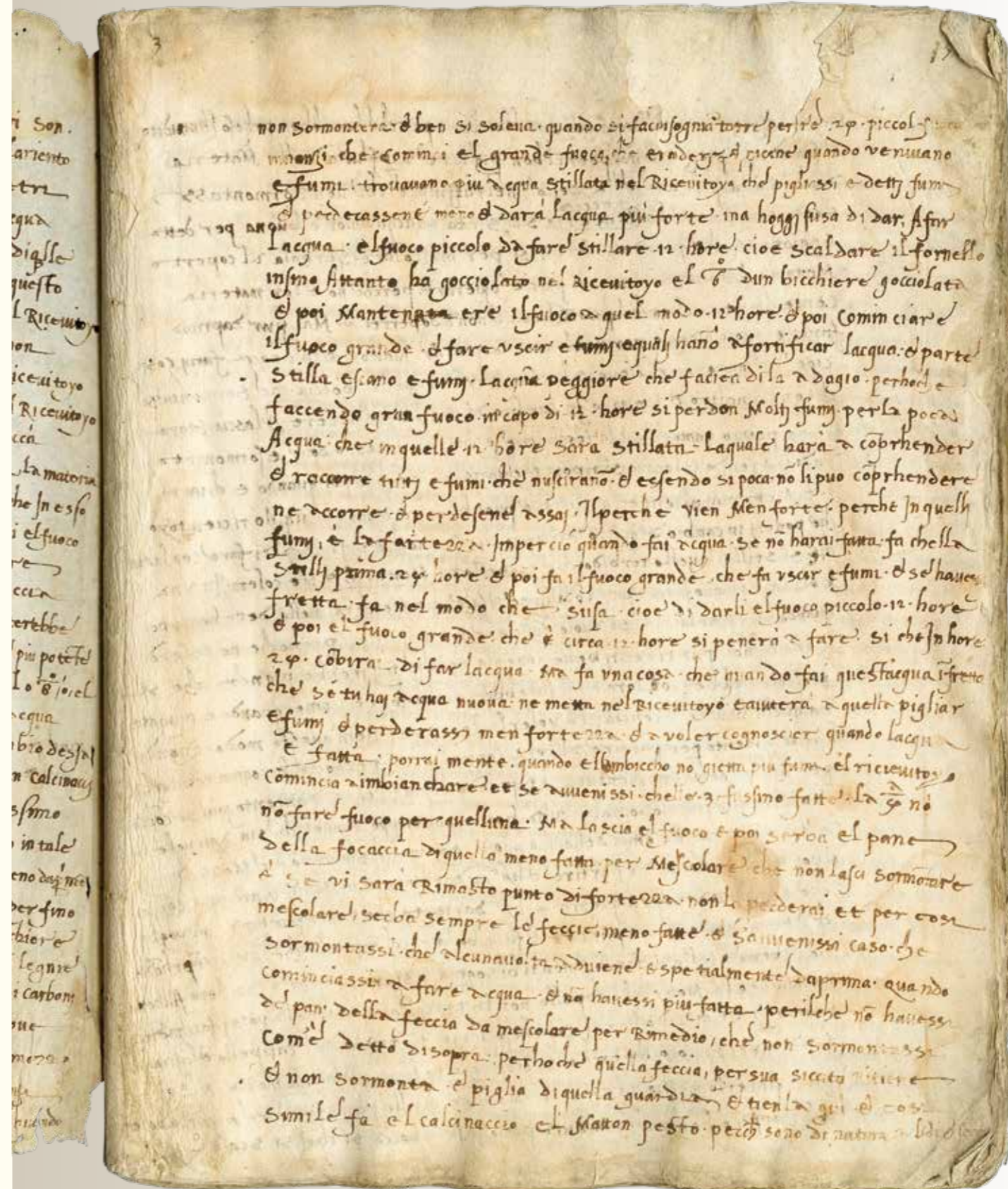
In Italian, manuscript on paper  
Central Italy (Tuscany), c. 1520-1530

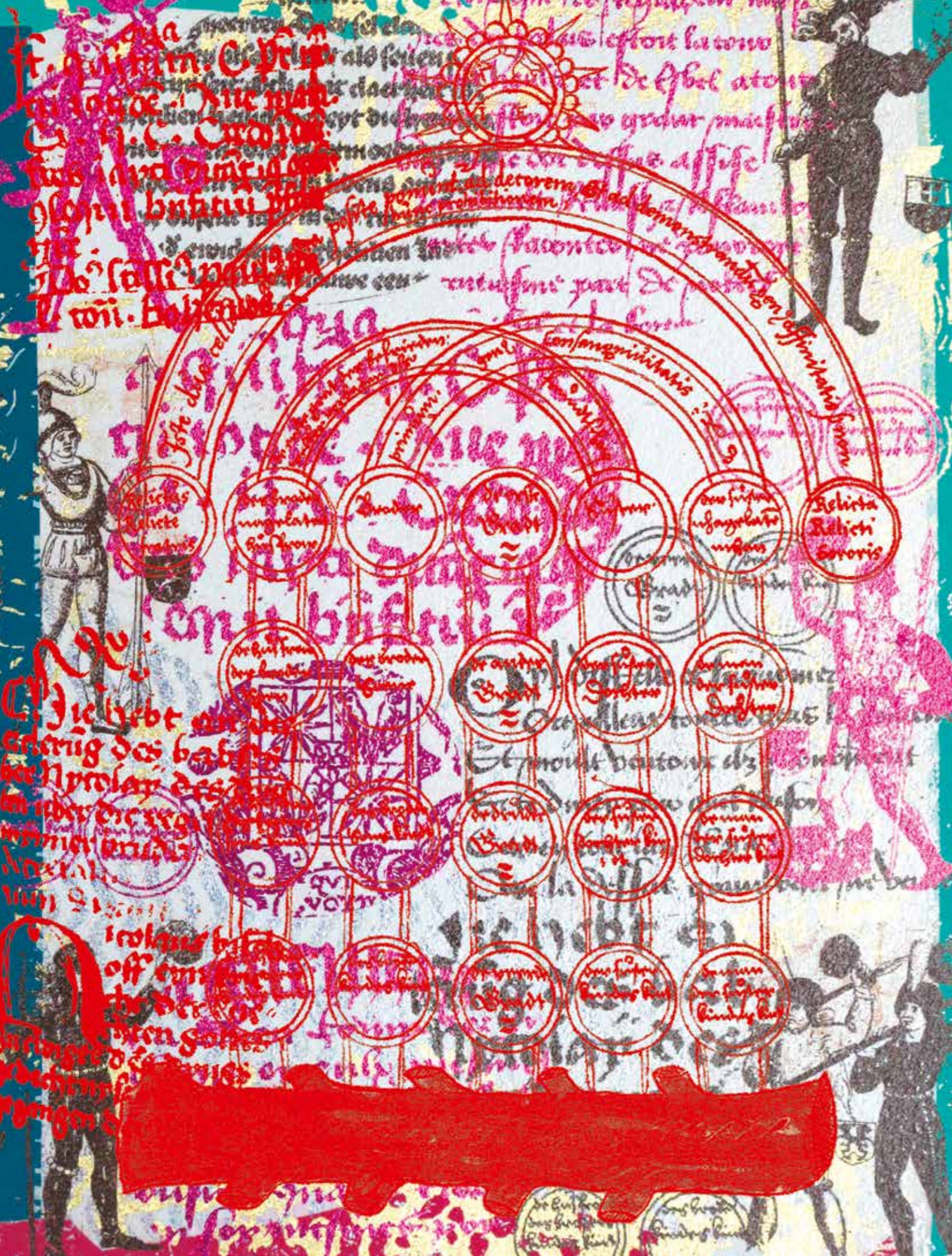
A Tuscan metalworker experienced in metallurgy was almost certainly the author of this pragmatic treatise, likely written very early in the sixteenth century. This is a text full of careful details and rigorously laid out methodologies that was intended to be used, perhaps by students in a workshop associated with the state mint of Florence, given the inclusion of specialized recipes related to making coins. This a practical rather than a theoretical or academic discussion of the subject, and the materiality of this copy speaks equally of a new non-academic vernacular culture. It is copied on large paper sheets in one very long quire of fifty-six leaves, in the type of quick script that was used by Italian merchants and in documents; stains and worn spots are evidence of actual use. The text survives in only five copies including this one; in this copy the text is followed by eight additional recipes (all but one unpublished). The contrast between this supremely practical manuscript, born and perhaps used in a workshop, and the collection of medical recipes compiled by the noble François II de Rohan (1480-1536), Archbishop of Lyon for his brother (no. 8) could not be greater.

*On the Refining of Gold and Silver* also bears witness to an important shift in preservation and presentation of metallurgical knowledge that took place during the Italian Renaissance when metallurgical materials and practices begin to receive more extensive and codified coverage in manuals like this one. As such, this text takes part in a trend of increasingly systematic and scientific works on mineralogy and metallurgy, among which Vannoccio Biringuccio's *De la pirotechnia* (printed in Venice, 1540) and Georgius Agricola's *De re metallica* (published in 1556) are the best-known works of the sixteenth century. [TM 897]

**DESCRIPTION:** 56 folios on paper, watermarks 1521-1528, complete but once part of a longer volume, written in cancelleresca script on 32-40 long lines, staining and fading from humidity leaving the text faint but legible on the last ten leaves, losses and wear to lower outer corner (no loss of text), losses to upper margin of ff. 1-2, with slight loss of text, unbound and loose, with traces of sewing along the spine. Dimensions 293-297 x 215 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Chiara Marini, *Due trattati di metallurgia della Biblioteca Marciana di Venezia: tecniche di estrazione e raffinamento dei metalli tra XV e XVI secolo*, Galatina, 2007; Cyril Stanley Smith and Martha Teach Gnudi, trans., *The Pirotechnia of Vannoccio Biringuccio: The Classical Sixteenth-Century Treatise on Metals and Metallurgy*, New York, 1990.





# III. GERMAN



# VERNACULAR MANUSCRIPTS IN GERMAN

Stephen Mossman

**THE STORY OF GERMAN-LANGUAGE MANUSCRIPTS IS A STORY OF THE RISE OF A LANGUAGE** in the later Middle Ages. The translation of Latin works into German to meet the needs of those without literacy in Latin, very often religious women, was a long-standing phenomenon. It explains why a book like the German translation of a Latin commentary on the Rule of St Augustine was produced (no. 21). That manuscript belonged to the beguines (a type of “semi-religious” women) at Kamp near Boppard on the lower Rhine, and the work would have helped the women to understand, in their own language, what a central normative text of the Christian monastic tradition meant for their daily lives.

**YET IN THE COURSE OF THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES WORKS NOW CAME** to be composed in, and translated into, German in new fields, and for new audiences. That expansion of the remit of German is neatly illustrated by one of the earliest manuscripts of the Franciscan Rule in German translation (no. 22). This was produced for educated men, friars schooled in Latin with no primary need for a translation, but for whom German was now a language of intellectual endeavor nearing equivalent status with Latin. The rise of German into a Latinate world can be seen in a different way in the lengthy miscellany containing texts in Latin, German, and Dutch (no. 23). In this manuscript, copied in the third quarter of the fifteenth century, German and Latin texts stand together with equal gravity. A series of Latin visionary narratives, in which seers are escorted through the afterlife, is followed by a hitherto unstudied German meditation on the life of Christ; and a German translation of the account of the pilgrimage made to the Holy Land by the fourteenth-century priest Ludolf von Sudheim is sandwiched between Bonaventura’s *Lignum vitae* and the Ps.-Anselm’s *Interrogatio sancti Anselmi de passione Domini*, two central Latin treatises on the contemplation of Christ’s Passion. The primary use of German as a language of theological discussion and political polemic by the Protestant reformers and their opponents in the sixteenth century was no sudden shift, but only made possible by a long process of linguistic development to which these manuscripts bear witness.

**THE OTHER GREAT TRANSITION IN BOOK PRODUCTION ACROSS LATE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY** modern Germany, namely from manuscript to print, was equally no sudden shift. The technology

of print had its advantages, but generated uniform products with content that could not readily be personalized. Types of books that had customarily been compiled to meet the personal needs of their readers, in particular Prayer Books, continued to be copied by hand, even as printed texts were readily available. The sixteenth-century Prayer Book (*Andächtiges Myrrhenbüschlein*) is a fine case in point, with its set of texts brought together to respond to the spiritual requirements of an individual nun in a Swabian convent in the middle of the century (no. 24).

**MANUSCRIPTS COULD ALSO BE CREATED AND CUSTOMIZED AS OBJECTS OF PRESTIGE IN** a way that was much more difficult to achieve in the adaptation of printed books. The tradition of high-quality book illumination was consequently continued in some German cities well into the early modern period. Nuremberg was at the forefront of this ancient craft. The commissioning of a richly-illustrated *Schembartbuch* was a powerful statement of cultural and political patronage for a leading family of the city, whose ancestors had held the right to display their status by participation in the carnival processions that the *Schembartbücher* recorded (no. 26). A city itself could use the manuscript form to make manifest its corporate identity, as in the case of the civic law code copied in Hamburg in 1570 (formerly *Les Enluminures*, TM 294). Script becomes image in a manuscript that encapsulates corporate civic values through its guarantee of order, rights, and liberty.

**YET MANUSCRIPT AND PRINT PRODUCTION DID NOT RUN ON PARALLEL TRACKS. IN THE** German émigré community in Stockholm at the height of the Thirty Years’ War, the postmaster Andre Wecheln produced a small library of Protestant works, of which this diminutive volume of four texts was a major component (no. 25). He copied his manuscripts from printed books, probably books brought out of Germany by other émigrés, with war and exile having disrupted the trade in books for sale. What he made, though, was as personal an object as any medieval book. His name and initials were skillfully introduced into the frontispieces copied from the printed texts before him, and hidden signs of personal identity can be otherwise discerned. The manuscript may be written in German, but is bound with endbands of blue and yellow silk, the Swedish colours of his adoptive homeland.

## 21.

Anonymous German translations of PS.-HUGH OF ST VICTOR, *Commentary on the Rule of St. Augustine*; and *Vitaspatrum*, excerpts (Lives of the Fathers)

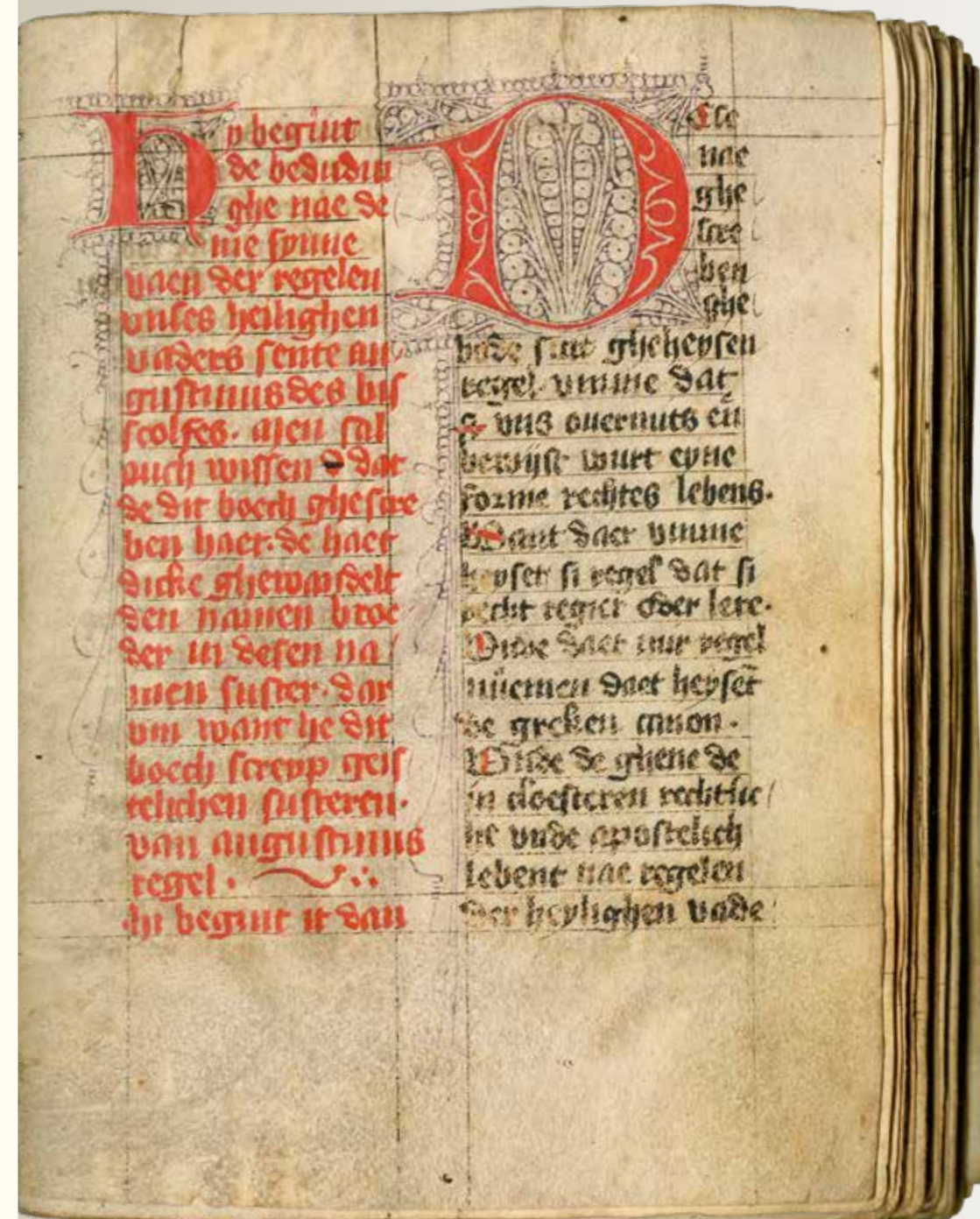
In German, manuscript on parchment  
Germany (Northwestern), c.1400-1450

Some of the earliest texts translated into German were texts used by nuns or other women leading the religious life. This is not to say that nuns knew no Latin. Many knew enough Latin to chant the liturgy, and some were very well educated in both Latin and their native tongue. But the numerous vernacular manuscripts surviving from houses of religious women are evidence that many women were more comfortably literate in the vernacular. This manuscript was owned, and was probably made for, the beguines of Kamp, near Boppard (diocese of Trier). Beguines were religious women who chose to live together, but who did not take permanent vows. The origin of the movement dates from the thirteenth century, but some houses lasted into the early modern period and later; the Beguinage in Bruges is a well-known example. The convent at Kamp is attested from 1378, originally as adherents of the Augustinian Rule (they later adopted the Franciscan Rule); five other manuscripts are known from this convent, all in German. Female religious often copied their own books. In this case, however, the manuscript was copied by a male scribe, *broder iohannes van brubach*.

Modern scholars have identified eight different translations into Dutch and German of this twelfth-century Latin commentary on the Augustinian Rule. The version in our manuscript is an example of the "Rooklooster" translation, known in twenty-seven manuscripts (Kramp, 2009), and named after the two earliest manuscripts which belonged to the Augustinian canons of the Windesheim Congregation at the Rooklooster, south of Brussels. The text here is of special interest because it has been consistently rewritten for a female audience, a phenomenon known from only four other manuscripts, all later. Following the Commentary are three brief extracts from the lives of the early Desert Fathers of the third and fourth centuries, the *Vitae Patrum*, or *Vitaspatrum*, in German translation (a Dutch translation of this text is no. 29). [TM 855]

**DESCRIPTION:** 58 folios on parchment, missing at least one quire at end, copied in a semi-hybrida script in 2 columns on 28 lines, penwork initials, original limp brown leather wallet-style binding, the book block is no longer attached to the binding. Dimensions c.180 x 130 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Igna Marion Kramp, ed., *Mittelalterliche und frühneuzeitliche deutsche Übersetzungen des pseudo-hugonischen Kommentars zur Augustinusregel*, *Corpus Victorinum. Textus historici* 2, Münster, 2008; Kramp, 2009; Walter Simons, "'Staining the Speech of Things Divine': The Uses of Literacy in Medieval Beguine Communities," in De Hemptinne and Góngora, 2004, pp. 85-110; Ulla Williams and Werner J. Hoffmann, "Vitaspatrum," *Verfasserlexikon*, 1999, vol. 10, cols 449-466.



## 22.

Anonymous German translations: FRANCIS OF ASSISI, *Rule and Testament*; Papal Bulls: NICHOLAS III, *Exiit qui seminat* and CLEMENT V, *Exivi de paradiso*; Chapter from the Franciscan Statutes; and *Stationes ecclesiarum urbis Romae* (The Station Churches of Rome)

In German with Latin additions, decorated manuscript on parchment  
Germany (Eastern Franconia), c.1450-1500

This tiny book, nearly as wide as it is tall (almost a cube), likely belonged to someone in a position of authority in a Franciscan convent in East Franconia. We do not know the specific convent where it was copied, but it is written in East Franconian (*ostfränkisch*) dialect. It includes the foundational Franciscan texts that a friar would need to understand the precepts by which he was to govern his convent, with particular concern for the critical issues of voluntary poverty and the ownership of property. Its tiny format meant that its owner would have it always in hand (or in his pocket) for ready consultation, quite unlike a reference book meant for use in the library. That this manuscript, copied for use in a male convent where literacy in Latin might be expected consists instead entirely of texts in German translation, is an important indicator of the rise of German as an intellectual and administrative language in the later fifteenth and earlier sixteenth centuries (see also no. 17).

Its central text is a German translation of the Franciscan Rule known as the *Regula bullata* of 1223. Three German translations are known of the Rule from just six manuscripts. The present manuscript contains a translation hitherto identified in a single manuscript (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 111), a rare example of chrysography (i.e. written entirely in gold) in a metal binding, copied around 1500, probably for a princely patron. Our manuscript preserves the text in a better state, and is much earlier, evidence that this translation of the Franciscan Rule was first produced for use in a Franciscan milieu, and was not commissioned specifically for the later princely manuscript. Other Franciscan texts and statutes follow, all common in Latin, but rare and interesting in German translation. [TM 872]

**DESCRIPTION:** 239 folios on parchment, complete, written in semi-hybrida and gothic bookhands by 4 scribes on 10-14 long lines, red or blue initials, early blind-tooled leather binding over wooden boards, leather covering of spine in poor condition. Dimensions 70-71 x 55 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Kurt Ruh, *Franziskanisches Schrifttum im deutschen Mittelalter*, vol. 1, *Texte, Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters* 11, Munich, 1965; Tanneberger, 2014; Norbert Richard Wolf, "Die mittelalterlichen deutschen Übersetzungen der Bulle *Exiit qui seminat* von Papst Nikolaus III," *Franciscan Studies* 32 (1972), pp. 242-305.





## 23.

Miscellany including THOMAS A KEMPIS, *Imitatio Christi*, book one (Imitation of Christ); MARCUS OF REGENSBURG, *Visio Tnugdali* (The Vision of Tondal); HENRY DE SALTRY, *Tractatus de purgatorio de Sancti Patricii*; JEAN GOBI, *Historia de spiritu Guidonis*; *Historia Udonis Magdeburgensis episcopi*; PS.-BEDE, *De meditatione passionis Christi*; BONAVENTURE, *Lignum vitae*; LUDOLF VON SUDHEIM, *Reise ins heilige Land*; *Visio Philiberti*; PS.-ANSELM, *Dialogus beatae Mariae et Anselmi de passione domini* (Latin and Dutch versions); and other texts

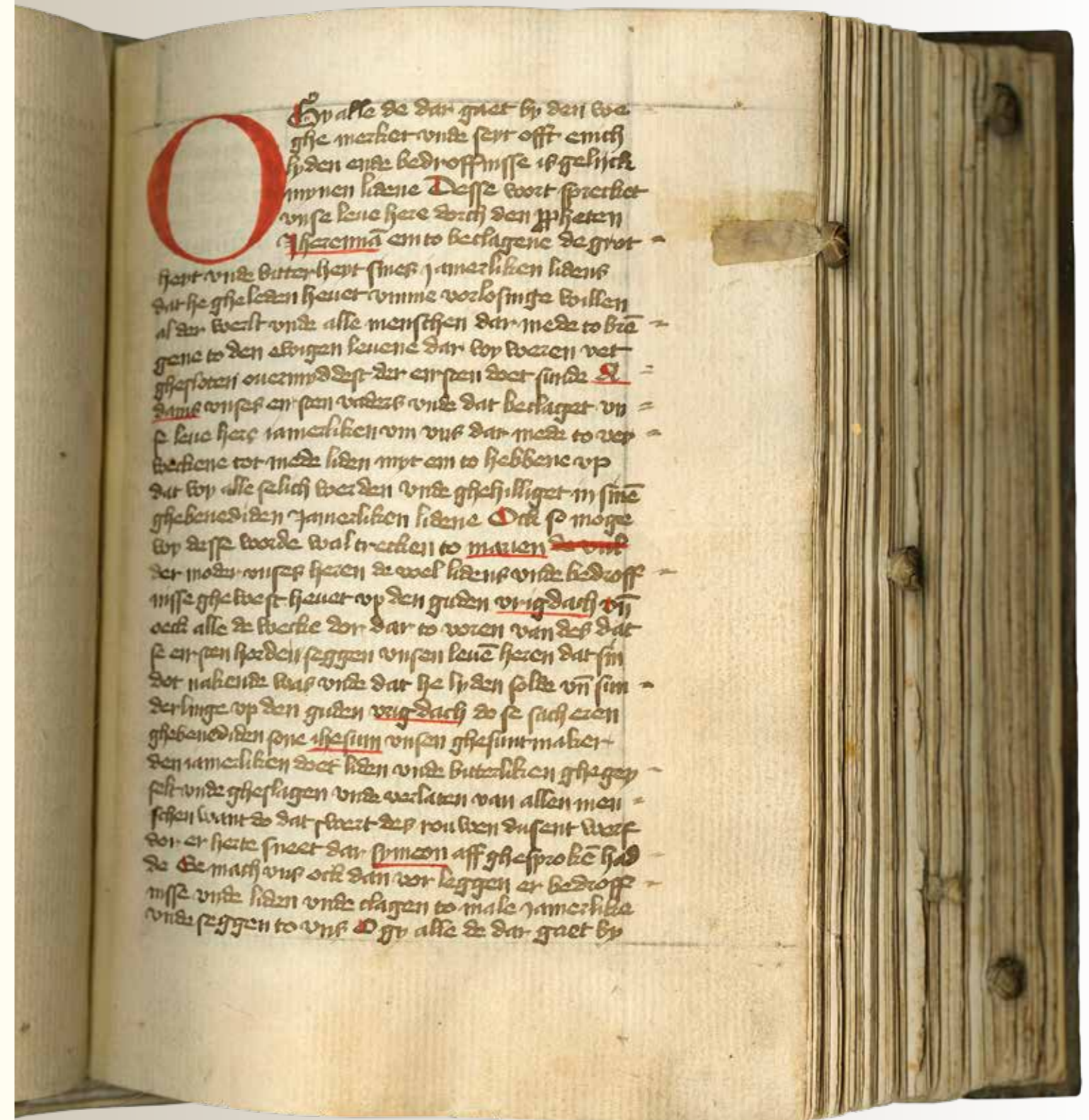
In Latin, Low German, and Dutch, decorated manuscript on paper  
Netherlands (Southeastern?) or Western Germany, c. 1460-1480

The mixture here of vernacular (Dutch and Low German) and Latin texts reflects the linguistic realities of the Late Middle Ages in the Southeastern Netherlands or in neighboring Western Germany where this manuscript was probably copied. As interesting as the vernacular texts are in themselves – a meditation on the life of Christ in Low German, perhaps unique to this manuscript, and certainly unstudied, a Dutch verse translation of the Latin prose text, *The Dialogue of Mary and Anselm on the Passion of the Lord*, and Ludolf von Sudheim's *Journey to the Holy Land* in a low German translation known in only nine manuscripts – their presence seamlessly mixed in with texts in Latin is almost more interesting and is evidence of a culture literate in multiple languages. The texts included, especially the *Imitation of Christ* and the many texts related to visions of the afterlife and the Passion, suggest it was copied for a religious house associated with the *Devotio Moderna*.

The Latin texts in this manuscript also circulated widely in the vernacular. The *Imitation of Christ*, a medieval bestseller, was known in numerous vernacular translations. *The Vision of Tondal*, an important example of a visionary journey to the other world written in Latin c. 1149 by Marcus of Regensburg, survives in Latin, German, French, Dutch, Spanish, Icelandic, English, and Italian (it was one of Dante's important sources). Henry de Saltrey's twelfth-century *Treatise about Purgatory of St. Patrick* tells of the successful penitential journey of the sinful knight, Sir Owain, to purgatory, and circulated both in Latin and in translations and adaptations in almost every European vernacular, including in Middle English and in a French translation by Marie de France (fl. 1175-90). These three works, as well others in this manuscript, exemplify the international and multi-lingual culture of late medieval Europe (see also no. 31). [TM 625]

**DESCRIPTION:** 222 folios on paper, several watermarks from 1461-1471, apparently complete, written by at least 4 scribes in a cursive gothic bookhand in 28-32 long lines, red initials, some water damage and modern repairs, modern half-leather and exposed wood binding. Dimensions 211 x 143 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Nigel F. Palmer, "*Visio Tnugdali*": the German and Dutch Translations and Their Circulation in the later Middle Ages, Munich, 1982; Ivar von Stapelmohr, ed., *Ludolfs von Sudheim Reise ins Heilige Land, nach der Hamburger Handschrift*, Lunder germanistische forschungen 6, Lund and Copenhagen, 1937.



## 24.

Prayer Book including *Andächtiges Myrrhenbüschlein* (Devout Bundle of Myrrh) and texts by JOHANNES VON INDERSDORF and JOHANN VON NEUMARKT

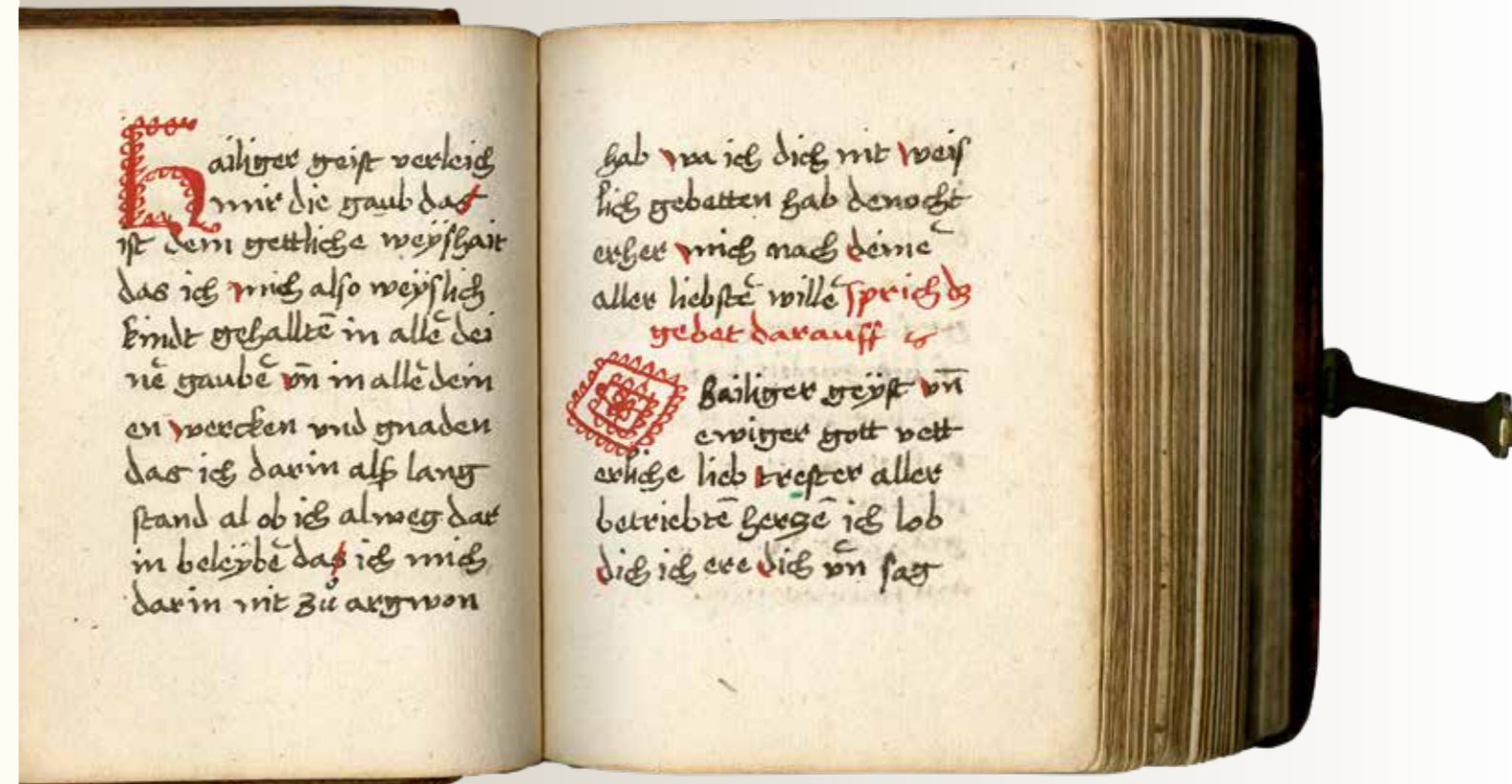
In German, decorated manuscript on paper  
Germany, (Swabia), c. 1520-1550

The tradition of German-language prayers is one with its roots in the Old High German period, but the first Prayer Books to consist primarily or entirely of German-language texts date to the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Prayer Books in German continued to be copied well into the early modern period (examples in other languages, 4, 16, 32, 36). Indeed, whereas by c. 1490 most other textual types had wholly switched to production in the new technology of print – and German-language printed Prayer Books do exist from the incunabular period – a thriving tradition of manuscript copying of Prayer Books continued well into the later sixteenth century (cf. no. 19). The reason for this surely is found in the opportunity these books provided to create an entirely individual assembly of texts with which to shape and assist one's spiritual life, compiled not just from existing books, but from a flourishing culture of texts exchanged in single-sheet copies and as letters.

This small volume was copied in an East Swabian dialect by nuns in a convent in the region around Ulm and Augsburg in the second quarter of the sixteenth century. It is a very personal book, with devotions designed to accompany its owner throughout her daily life. The nun copying a prayer by the imperial chancellor and humanist Johann von Neumarkt (d. 1380) (one of two in the book) to one's guardian apostle added the names of her own guardians, Saints Phillip and James. The first eight prayers in the volume, petitions to Mary to aid at the hour of one's death, and an extended meditation on the Christ's suffering and the crown of thorns, show signs of particularly intensive use (dirt in the outer corners, and handling to the point where the parchment is almost translucent). The long sequence of prayers which focuses on preparation for Eucharistic reception, and the extensive narrative of Christ's Passion (the *Andächtiges Myrrhenbüschlein*, Devout Bundle of Myrrh), are of special interest to scholars studying devotional practices of the later Middle Ages. **[TM 893]**

**DESCRIPTION:** 287 folios on paper, complete, watermarks c. 1520-1550, written in 2 (possibly 3) hands, normally on 10-12 unruled lines in irregular hybrid scripts, red penwork initials, original blind-tooled brown leather binding. Dimensions 105 x 70 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Tobias A. Kemper, *Die Kreuzigung Christi. Motivgeschichtliche Studien zu lateinischen und deutschen Passionstraktaten des Spätmittelalters*, Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters 131, Tübingen, 2006; Stephen Mossman, "Ubertino da Casale and the Devotio Moderna," *Ons Geestelijk Erf* 80 (2009), pp. 199-280; Mossman, 2010; Dietrich Schmidtke, "Myrrhenbüschel-(Fasciculus-myrrhae-)Texte," *Verfasserlexikon*, 1987, vol. 6, cols 832-39.



# 25.

*Communion: vnd Gebetbüchlin...* (Treatise on the Eucharist and Prayer Book); *Eygentlicher Bericht vom Ursprung der Strittigkeiten in Religionssachen zwischen den evangelischen Kirchen*; German translation of RATRAMNUS OF CORBIE, *De corpore et sanguine Domini*; CHRISTOPH REICHELDT, *Calendarium biblicum perpetuum*; et alia

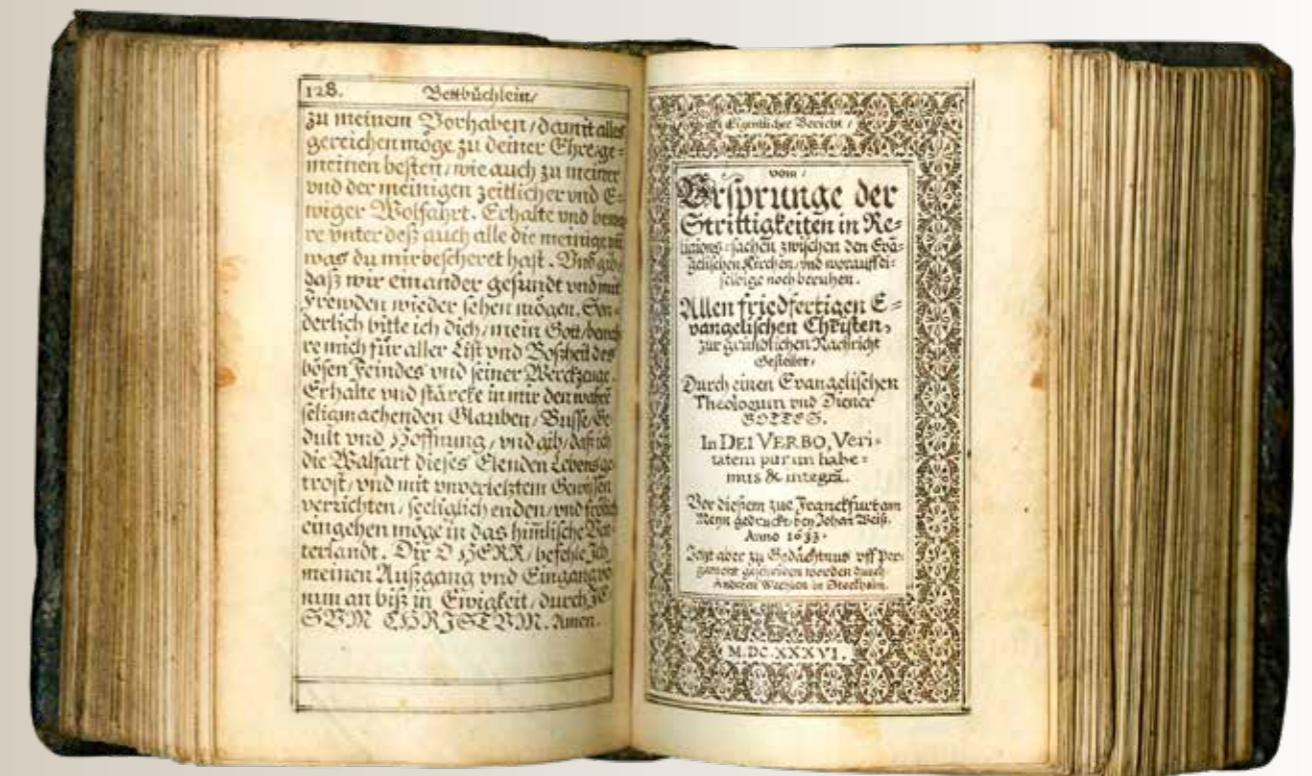
In German, decorated manuscript on parchment  
Sweden (Stockholm), dated 1636-37

Four main texts are included here, all in German, and all copied from printed books. The first section is a devotional work on the Eucharist, combined with a Prayer Book. This is followed by a treatise on the history of the conflicts between the Protestant confessions through 1620 and a sermon by Martin Luther. The German translation of the medieval treatise on the Eucharist, *On the Body and Blood of the Lord* by Ratramnus, abbot of Corbie (d. after 868) became popular in Protestant circles because it interpreted the Eucharist as a spiritual, rather than as an actual physical transformation (and this copy includes a polemical Protestant introduction). The final text, the *Calendarium biblicum perpetuum*, is principally a guide to enable the systematic reading of the whole Bible in the space of one year. It is accompanied by meticulously copied compass-roundels diagramming the calendar sections, as well as by a table of the winds.

This manuscript is a witness to the interests of one person, Andre Wecheln (d. 1637), a native German from Hamburg, who had entered Swedish royal service during the Thirty Years' War by 1632. After the peace of Prague in 1635, he was appointed the first Postmaster-General in Sweden. His skill as a calligrapher is a fascinating, if understudied, part of his life. He meticulously copied and decorated the texts in this manuscript, presumably for his own use. The care taken suggests he chose texts he found especially meaningful, and the resulting book is not only a beautiful example of seventeenth-century craftsmanship, but also a testimony to the beliefs of an educated Protestant layman of the period (see also nos. 19 and 36). Wecheln's work as a scribe is known in one other manuscript, a copy of Ambrosius Lobwasser's Psalter (formerly Les Enluminures, TM 634). **[TM 514]**

**DESCRIPTION:** 178 folios on parchment, lacking one leaf after f. 36, written in a German *Fraktur* on up to 39 lines; penwork initials and title-pages, gold-tooled 17<sup>th</sup>-century binding. Dimensions 108 x 70 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Sten G. Lindberg, *Swedish Books 1280-1967. Illuminated Manuscripts, Illustrated Printed Books & Fine Book Bindings & A Select Guide to Reference Literature on Sweden*, Stockholm, 1968; Martin Luther, *Weimarer Ausgabe*, vol. 10/iii, pp. 67-71 (Luther's Sermon); VD 17 39:145372W; VD17 23:280492H.



## 26.

## Schembart ("hiding beard") Carnival Book

In German, illuminated manuscript on paper

Germany (Nuremberg), c. 1540-1550

64 pen and ink with watercolor drawings, 22 additional pen and ink drawings

This remarkable manuscript is a record of the parade known as the *Schembartlauf* that took place in Nuremberg on Shrove Tuesday from 1449 to 1539. "Schembart," which literally means "hiding beard," refers to the masks worn by the captains of the parade; "lauf" is German for a run. About eighty Carnival books of this sort are known to survive (the vast majority still in Germany; only three copies in the United States) dating from the sixteenth through eighteenth century. This is one of the earliest copies. This impressive corpus of Schembart manuscripts is a witness to the link between civic identity and pride and vernacular history. Although visually quite different, the Schembart books were copied and preserved for many of the same reasons as the vernacular histories of the French kings (no. 9), and the genealogies of noble families in France and elsewhere (no. 11).

Certainly, what delights us today about these manuscripts are their illustrations. The large drawings of each year's masked runner, the *Hauptmann*, usually identified by coats of arms, are far more prominent than the short texts. The *Hauptmänner* wore not only masks, but newly designed and extravagant costumes, richly decorated with embroidery and ribbons, and bells that jingled as they ran. They held boughs of leaves that look like artichokes – known as *Lebensrute* – that concealed fireworks. While the details of costume are faithfully repeated in each surviving copy, they are very differently represented, and the 64 drawings here are particularly fine. This manuscript also includes 22 additional pen and ink drawings without washes depicting the floats (known as "Holle" or Hells) that were part of the pageant from 1475. The first floats were mounted on sledges, and later they were on wagons with wheels. Twice an actual elephant paraded with the carnival figures, all faithfully recorded in these vivid drawings. This is not only one of the earliest of the Schembart manuscripts, but it is also one of the few to contain the drawings of the floats, the work of an experienced illustrator, who trained in the Augsburg-Nuremberg area with artists like Hans Schäufelein, Hans Sebald Beham, or Jörg Breu the Younger and who transmits the legacy of Albrecht Dürer (we are grateful to Fritz Koreny for his expertise).

**DESCRIPTION:** 88 folios on paper, watermarks, many unidentified, one dating 1648, complete, copied in German cursive scripts, 64 full-figure pen and ink drawings colored with washes, 22 smaller pen and ink drawings, probably added only slightly later, contemporary limp vellum binding with flap, loose in binding. Dimensions 310 x 205 mm.

**LITERATURE:** S. Sumberg, *The Nuremberg Schembart Carnival*, New York, 1941; H.-U. Roller, *Der Nürnberger Schembartlauf. Studium zum Fest- und Maskenwesen des späten Mittelalters*, Tübingen, 1965; Samuel Kinser, "Presentation and Representation: Carnival at Nuremberg, 1450-1550," *Representations* 13 (1986), pp. 1-41.





1463 Jar weyden zween Orghenpörrer Do:  
 Baldet Galtwarg was Hauptman in ystoll  
 plab vnd waren xxxij Arundlein waarten  
 auff die Arzeler.

Mer wardt ystollt Panngarner von pfenpörrer  
 von sinem Luben Varg zu laubt vnd waren  
 xv xxxij manndlein vnd Lufften in ystoll  
 von gollt

Item zu dieser fastnacht Comytten die  
 Diener auß in der Stadt vnd:

~~zum dieser dar hienig man ein Juden zu  
 Nürnberg auß an dem gallgeny:~~



1511 Jar war Hanns Trüger und Babriol  
 y Poplar faubertleit im Jfamporrt und  
 waren der mundlein hejden goldt gold,  
 und luffen auß zum haubtlein den  
 Obmanche ins Horn fangt von moylein  
 beyrunden und ey gülden, und war  
 die hell ein Lutz wüend mit Drogen  
 Popfforn.

Und zu dieser Fastnacht <sup>hals</sup> ~~hals~~ die  
 messer auß dem Vüney.

Im Dreyen Jar wandt in mitter fasten ein  
 grosser wüend den man sie zu Alwin  
 kong empfanndt





# VERNACULAR MANUSCRIPTS IN THE LOW COUNTRIES

John Van Engen

THE MEDIEVAL LOW COUNTRIES ENCOMPASSED THE LANDS OF PRESENT-DAY BELGIUM and the Netherlands together with regions to the south now in France and to the east in Germany. Over the years between 1250 and 1550 these lands would generate a distinctive Netherlandish culture set out in a variety of media, not just those famous paintings of the so-called Flemish primitives or a northern Renaissance. Their native tongue was mostly a medieval form of Dutch, and that culture was centered in princely courts and thriving towns but no less in religious houses. Many of those were associated with a movement called the Modern Devotion, which included Sisters and Brothers of the Common life, Third Order Franciscans (both groups overwhelmingly women), and canons and canonesses of the Windesheim Congregation (predominantly men), all allied in spirit with urban Carthusians (hermits) and the Observant or strict wing in other religious orders. Their piety presumed two fundamentals, one of content, another of form. At the center of their religious “exercises,” as they called them, was the Passion of Jesus, to be appropriated by a person in sweet transport or in all its bloody detail (or both). And central to that appropriation were books and reading, images certainly too, sometimes in the books (as in Books of Hours), but quite especially all those words written out, read, and meditated upon.

THE RESULT WAS A VERITABLE EXPLOSION OF HANDWRITTEN BOOKS IN THE VERNACULAR for about two hundred years. To write these out for one’s self, thereby to achieve inner focus, likewise to make copies for reading out in a devout circle, all this now became integral to their exercising, disciplining, and deepening an inner self. While we have grand and stunningly beautiful books from this era, volumes full of secular romance or encyclopedic learning, we have in far larger numbers religious books, the surviving testaments to that interior spiritual formation – also now for us artefacts of an intense culture which we can literally still take in hand.

SUCH HANDWRITTEN BOOKS WERE MADE IN VARIED SIZES, SOME FITTING INTO THE PALM of a hand, others opening nicely into two hands. Several of these texts had started out in Latin, then quickly turned into the vernacular. Such is Gerhart Zerbolt’s volume on *Spiritual Ascents*, which became the go-to manual for interior religious formation in Devout circles, here beautifully written



out on parchment, suggesting a very serious house or a wealthy individual (no. 27). While male clerics were expected still to use Latin, lay sisters and brothers, women religious, and lay people copied out such religious expositions and exercises in their native tongue. Some codices contain a single work, such as a widely circulated meditation on the life and Passion of Christ which contemporaries believed came from the Franciscan writer Bonaventure (no. 30), or another with stories of the Desert Fathers of Egypt which the Devout saw themselves as trying to emulate (no. 29). These were written on paper, the cheaper support, as were the great majority of books in this era, and probably meant for common usage.

THE BOOKS THEY MADE ARE FASCINATING IN YET ANOTHER WAY: WRITTEN OUT A QUIRE at a time, in loose gatherings, not initially the bound volumes we now see. So we can also at times glimpse what one person put together, possibly even over a lifetime, what reading choices they made, what a librarian in the house gathered into one volume as somehow fitting. One sees this most often in usages of the book we now call Thomas of Kempen’s *Imitation of Christ*, in origin four distinct booklets which often traveled separately or in differing combinations, on the way to becoming the fifteenth century’s most widely copied new religious text (no. 23). In short, these books have “personality.” Some come closer to “commonplace” books, that is, personal spiritual notebooks assembled over time. One may see that at work with the insertion of “dicta” from the famous preacher Jan (John) Brugman, such “dicta” being the memorable “take-away” or “summary” of a sermon. Here they were added to a widely circulated guide to the Christian life (*La somme le Roi*, or *The King’s Summa*) composed in French in the thirteenth century for King Phillip the Bold of France by the Dominican friar Laurent d’Orléans, then translated into Dutch by a lay Carthusian brother at Zelem in 1408, and then copied out in 1487 by a lay *redditus* (servant) in the Carthusian house at Utrecht (no. 31). Intriguing too is a set of prayers for a wine-tappers’s guild (wine-servers), those prayers probably for reading out by a leader when the guild gathered on occasion or to remember a departed colleague (no. 32). All this is the imaginative power still to be found in these Dutch religious books handwritten in such numbers between the mid-fourteenth and the mid-sixteenth century.



## 27.

GERARD ZERBOLT OF ZUTPHEN, *Vanden gheesteliken opclimminghen*,  
Dutch translation of *De Spiritualibus ascensionibus* (On the Spiritual Ascents)

In Dutch, decorated manuscript on parchment  
Northern Netherlands, c. 1425-1475

The spiritual movement begun by Geert Groote (d. 1384) in Deventer in 1374, known as the *Devotio Moderna* (or the Modern Devout), fundamentally changed religious life in the late Middle Ages in the Netherlands and the surrounding regions. Texts associated with the Modern Devotion were widely copied and read, and the broad dissemination of their teachings in written form inspired religious reform across Europe. Central to their teachings was the call to spiritual renewal, drawing on a program of interior contemplation and religious reading in the vernacular. Their influence can be seen to some extent in all the Dutch manuscripts discussed here (see also no. 23).

Gerard Zerbolt (1367-1398) was one of the earliest followers of the Modern Devotion, and one of their most important and intellectually influential authors. *On the Ascent of the Spirit*, here in Dutch, served as a handbook of religious life and mystical thought, showing how the spirit can come closer to God by a process of imitation, through thought, prayer, and action. The text is an account of the progress in virtue – the spiritual ascent – that was at the heart of the New Devotion, describing the path of turning back from sin through contrition, confession, and satisfaction, and the restoration of the original purity of the heart. Gerard successfully summarized the teachings of the first generation of the Modern Devotion in this relatively brief and readable approach to spirituality, and transmitted these ideals to the succeeding generations. A copy of this text, which survives in hundreds of manuscripts, must have been found in every house of the Modern-day Devout. Intriguingly, although the Latin version survives in hundreds of manuscripts, the Dutch version, also by Zerbolt himself, is relatively rare, surviving in only twenty manuscripts, all but two in institutional collections. [TM 544]

**DESCRIPTION:** 151 folios on parchment, lacking a leaf at the end, written in a gothic bookhand in 24 long lines, red initials, 18th-century brown leather binding. Dimensions 176 x 113 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Gerard Zerbolt van Zutphen, *Van geestelijke opclimmingen*. Een aloude vertaling opnieuw gedrukt en bezorgd door J. Mahieu, Bruges, 1941; Francis Joseph Legrand, ed. and trans. Gerard Zerbolt de Zutphen, *La montée du cœur; De spiritualibus ascensionibus*, introduction by Nikolaus Staubach, Turnhout, 2006; Van Dijk, 2011; Van Engen, 1988.



catuſ uir qui non abiit in concilio  
impiorum et in uia peccatorum non ſit

# 28.

## Anonymous Dutch translation of the Psalter (Calendar, Psalms, Canticles, and Prayers)

In Dutch, decorated manuscript on parchment  
Southern Netherlands (Limburg), c. 1450-1500

It was once commonplace to say that it was Martin Luther and the other leaders of the Protestant Reformation that brought the Bible in the vernacular to believers. But modern scholarship has taught us that in fact the Bible was often translated into the vernacular during the Middle Ages. This was certainly true in the Netherlands. The first Middle Dutch translation of the psalms was probably disseminated in the first half of the fourteenth century from West-Flanders to the Brabant, possibly from a Charterhouse in Bruges. Around the middle of the fifteenth century, the Brabant adaptations underwent further developments, including the translation associated with the tertiary convent of Catharinadal in Hasselt, the "Hasseltse Catharinadal-vertaling" (the Hasselt translation of Saint-Catherine's) (Desplenter, 2012, pp. 45-49). Our manuscript contains one of the earliest copies of this version, which survives in six manuscripts, and one of only two that can be linked to Sint-Catharinadal with certainty.

The convent of Sint-Catharinadal in Hasselt, Belgium, a house of Third Order Franciscan nuns, was founded in 1426 with only five sisters, growing into an important house in the second half of the fifteenth century. Scholars have identified nineteen manuscripts from their library (Stooker and Verbeij, 1997, nos. 563-581); the present manuscript is the twentieth. Some of the manuscripts were copied by the sisters themselves, probably for their own use. Two scribes from the convent are known by name, Catharina van der Molen (d. 1526), who was subprioress, and Anna Swilden (d. 1513). It is Anna, acting in her role as the convent's librarian, who probably wrote the ownership note in red in our manuscript. Sint-Catharinadal also owned manuscripts copied elsewhere, such as the vernacular History Bible now in the British Library, Additional MS 15310-15311. [TM 903]

**DESCRIPTION:** 222 leaves on parchment, apparently complete, written by 4 scribes in gothic bookhands or hybrid scripts on 22-23 long lines, red and blue initials, several with pen decoration (one with small flowers), original blind-stamped brown calf binding over wooden boards. Dimensions 139 x 100 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Biemans, 1984; Deschamps, 1954; J. Deschamps, "Middel nederlandse bijbelhandschriften uit het klooster Sint-Catharinadal te Hasselt," in *Liber amicorum aangeboden aan Jan Gruyters ter gelegenheid van zijn 70<sup>e</sup> verjaardag 28 januari 1957*, Hasselt, 1957, pp. 197-211; Desplenter, 2012; Desplenter, 2013; Stooker and Verbeij, 1997.



## 29.

*Vaderboec*, second Dutch translation of the *Vitae Patrum* (Lives of the Fathers)

In Middle Dutch, decorated manuscript on paper  
Southern Netherlands (probably Limburg), c. 1475-1500

The importance of vernacular texts to the *Devotio Moderna* is well-illustrated by this volume, which certainly was copied for use in those circles. As an artifact it has all the hallmarks of their books, with its careful, very legible script and restrained decoration limited to (very beautiful) pen initials. There were two Dutch translations of this text (for a German translation see no. 21). The first, a translation into Southern Middle Dutch, was made in the third quarter of the fourteenth century by the so-called "Bijbelvertaler van 1360" (Bible translator of 1360), possibly the Carthusian monk Petrus Naghel. A second Dutch translation – found in this manuscript – was made in the Northern Netherlands in the early fifteenth century. This version was mostly transmitted in the context of the *Devotio Moderna*. Like the previous manuscript (no. 28), this volume was probably made in the southern part of the Northern Netherlands; its dialect shows the influence of the Northern Netherlands, the Southern Netherlands, and Germany.

The text tells the stories of the earliest monks and hermits who lived in the desert of Egypt in the third and fourth centuries. These texts were treasured in monastic circles throughout the Middle Ages as an example of the purity of life of the early Church, and they were an essential text in *Devotio Moderna* circles, frequently appearing near the beginning of their lists of recommended devotional reading. In the *Imitation of Christ*, Thomas a Kempis devoted a chapter to "The Examples of the Holy Fathers," (book one, chapter 18), extolling the austerity of their lives, their long days and nights spent in prayer, their patience and obedience to their superiors, and concluding by comparing this early purity and fervor with the lukewarm religion of his own day. [TM 539]

**DESCRIPTION:** 188 folios on paper, no discernible watermarks, 2 leaves lacking at the end, written in a hybrida script on 26-27 long lines, red, blue, and red and blue parted initials, some loose folios, original blind-tooled brown leather binding. Dimensions 207 x 140 mm.

**LITERATURE:** W. Hoffmann, "Die ripuarische und niederdeutsche 'Vitaspatrum'-Überlieferung im 15. Jahrhundert," *Niederdeutsches Jahrbuch* 116 (1993), pp. 72-108; Ulla Williams and Werner Hoffmann, "Vitaspatrum," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 16 (1994), col. 1043-1048 and "Vitaspatrum (Vitae patrum)," *Verfasserlexikon*, 1999, vol. 10, pp. 449-466.



## 30.

*Leven von Jezus*, Middle-Dutch translation of the PS.-BONAVENTURAN-LUDOLPHIAN, *Life of Jesus*

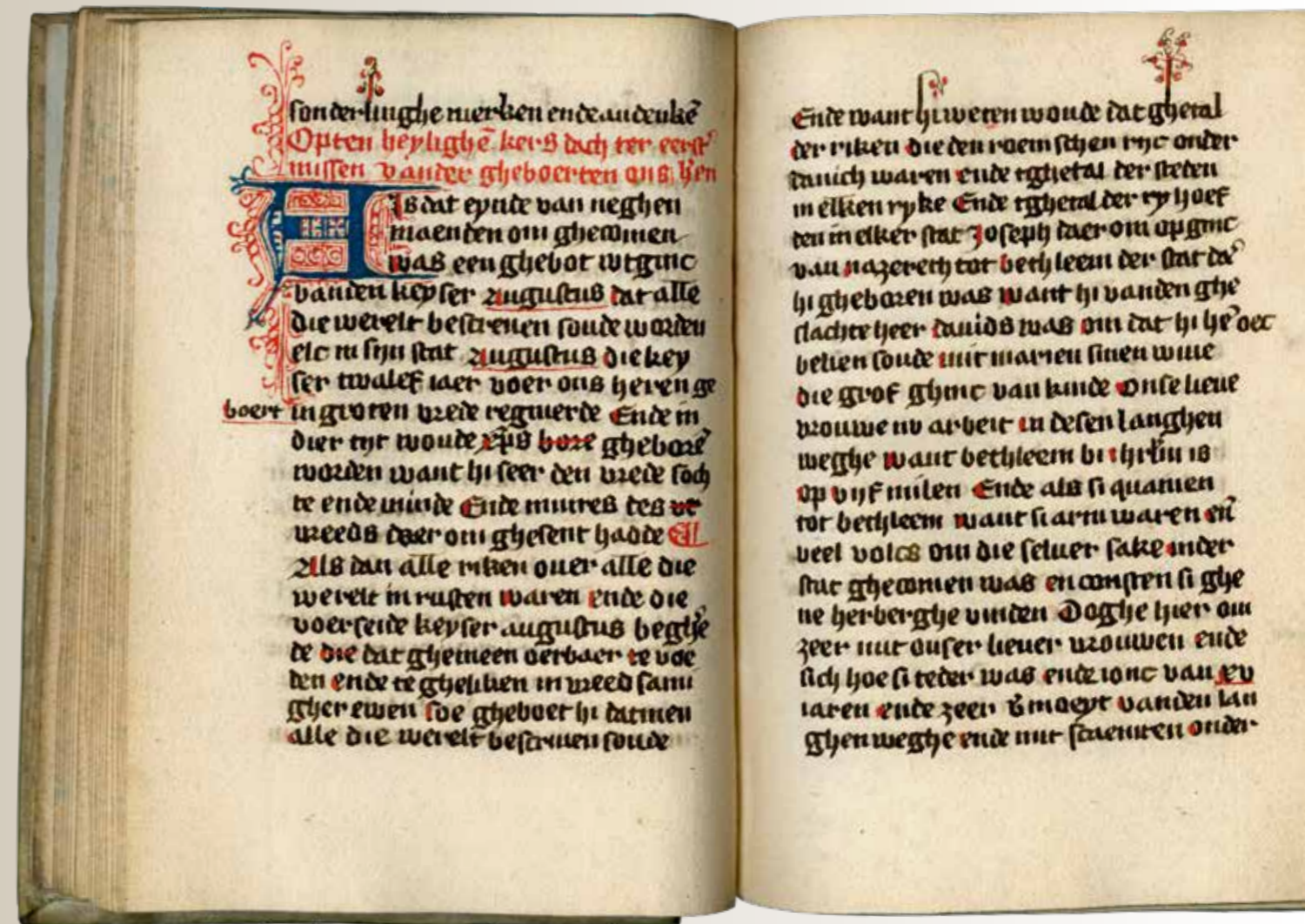
In Dutch, decorated manuscript on paper  
Southern part of the Northern Netherlands (North-Brabant?), c. 1475-1500

From the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries and beyond, vernacular texts inspired by the *Meditationes vitae Christi* widely (but incorrectly) attributed to St. Bonaventure, allowed believers to imagine themselves present within the Gospel narrative. As recent scholarly studies have shown, these texts influenced late medieval religious life and culture across the board from literature, to drama, to the visual arts. More than forty manuscripts of this Dutch version survive, evidence of the desire among both religious and lay people in the fifteenth century for devotional and meditative texts in the vernacular. Once again, we can point to the influence of the Modern Devotion.

The strong identification with the life of Christ and with His Passion known as affective piety or affective meditation had a special importance to medieval women, both lay and religious. Although many of the classic medieval texts of affective meditation were written by men for women, the identification medieval nuns felt for the life of Christ is manifested in much of the art produced in convents by the nuns themselves. McNamer has argued that this was a form of religious devotion created by women, and in particular, by nuns (McNamer, 2010), and we know that this particular Dutch 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. The complex title of this text reflects the scholarly debates about its possible sources, the *Meditationes vitae Christi*, once attributed to St. Bonaventure, and the influential (but later) *Life of Christ* by Ludolph of Saxony. Many modern scholars now suggest it was written in the early fourteenth century by an Italian Franciscan, Johannes de Caulibus, for a Franciscan nun. [TM 753]

**DESCRIPTION:** 197 folios on paper, no watermarks discernible, complete, written in a hybrida script on 21-23 long lines, red or blue initials, one drawing in green and red, 18<sup>th</sup>-century vellum binding. Dimensions 135 x 100 mm.

**LITERATURE:** C. C. de Bruin, ed., *Leven Ons Heren Ihesu Christi = Vita Ihesu Christi : het pseudo-Bonaventura-Ludolfiaanse leven van Jesus*, Leiden, 1980; S. Kelly and R. Perry, eds., *Devotional Culture in Late Medieval England and Europe: Diverse Imaginations of Christ's Life*, Turnhout, 2014; I. Johnson and A. F. Wespall, eds., *The Pseudo-Bonaventuran Lives of Christ: Exploring the Middle English Tradition*, Turnhout, 2013; Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion*, Philadelphia, 2010.



## 31.

JAN VAN BREDERODE, *Des Coninx Summe*, Dutch translation of LAURENT D'ORLÉANS, *La somme le Roy* (The King's Summa); *Die passy vur ene[n] corte sey[?]* and *Die heilighe passy zeer cort en[de] goet* (Two Texts on the Passion of Christ); JOHANNES BRUGMAN, *XV Goede punte ende leringhe* (Fifteen Good and Learned Points); Three Rhymed Exempla

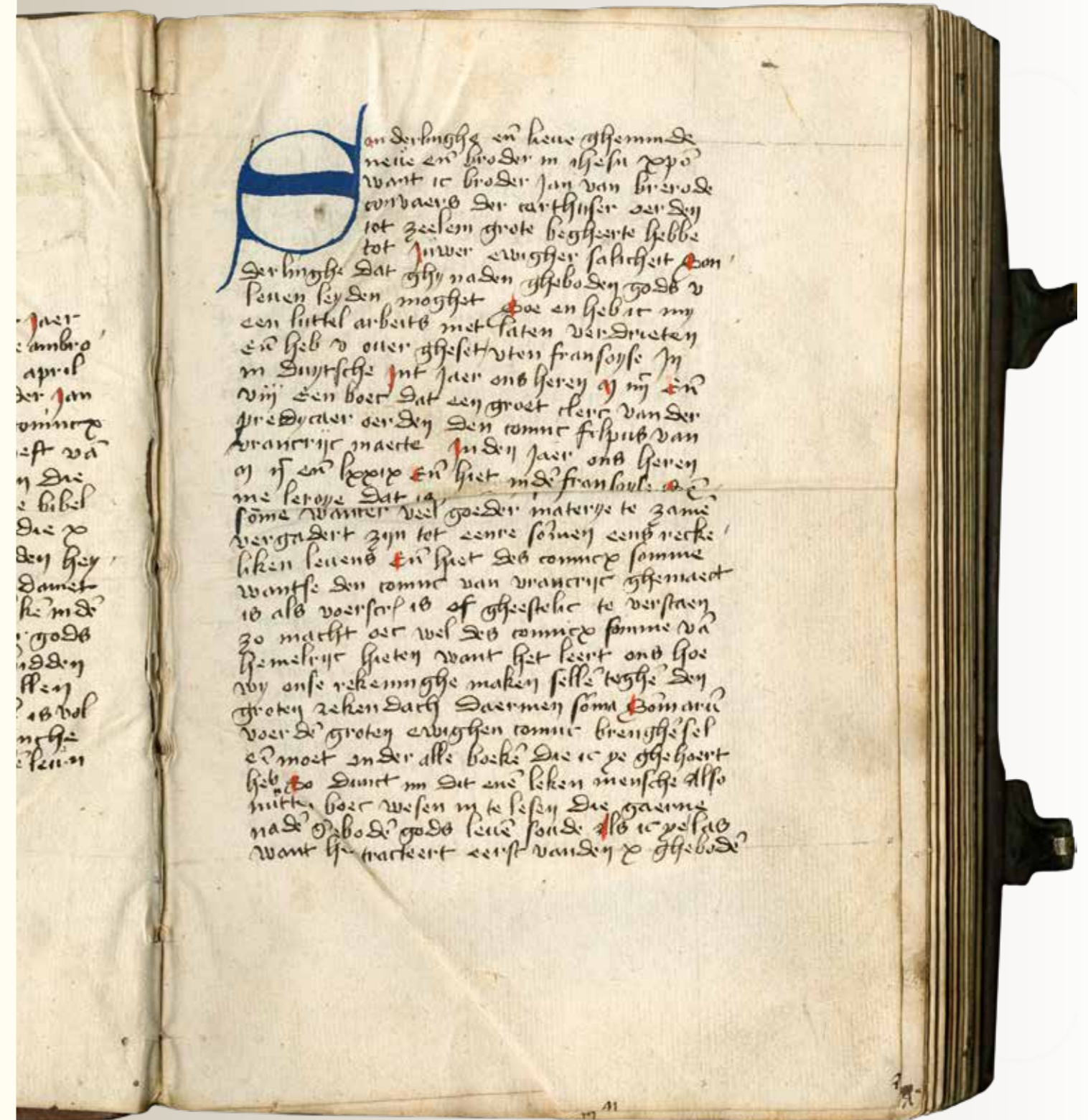
In Dutch, decorated manuscript on paper.  
Northern Netherlands (near Utrecht), 1487

The cosmopolitan nature of European culture in the later Middle Ages is demonstrated again and again by the retranslation of popular vernacular texts into other vernacular languages (see also no. 23). This is the Middle Dutch translation of *La somme le roy*, a series of moral lessons written in 1279 for King Philip III of France by his confessor, the Dominican friar Laurent d'Orléans. Laurent's text was very popular, surviving in numerous manuscripts, some exquisitely illuminated. It circulated throughout Europe in several languages, including in an English translation printed by Caxton. The Dutch translation in this manuscript was the work of the adventurous nobleman Jan van Brederode (c.1372-1415), whose life has recently been vividly re-created in the popularly-acclaimed book by Frits Pieter Van Oostrom. Jan was from a noble family in Holland; although married, for a time his wife lived as a Dominican nun. He was living with the Carthusians at Zelem, near Hasselt, when he translated *La somme le roy* in 1408. The couple re-united after the death of her father, when Jan dramatically removed his wife from her convent. Jan died in the Battle of Agincourt in 1415. His translation, which can more properly be called an adaptation of the French original, survives in ten manuscripts.

Our manuscript is signed and dated by the scribe, Jan Symoensz, a Carthusian monk in the monastery Nieuwlicht, near Utrecht. The manuscript is carefully copied and modestly decorated with colored initials in keeping with a monastic audience. The reception of *Des Coninx Summe* in this copy can also be discerned from the texts that follow, especially *XV goede punten ende leringhe* by Johannes Brugman, and three rhymed exempla, all of which are known only in this manuscript. Johannes or Jan Brugman (c. 1400-1473) was a Franciscan friar, who was famous for his preaching. His sermons were known throughout the Northern Netherlands for their egalitarian character and eloquence. Our manuscript records important points ("dicta") or summaries of his sermons. [TM 933]

**DESCRIPTION:** 124 folios on paper, watermarks dating from the 1480s, missing 4 leaves, written in a cursive gothic bookhand in 29-32 long lines, red and blue initials, original blind-tooled leather binding over wooden boards, hinges weak. Dimensions 207 x 145 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Jozef Geldhof, "Een onbekend handschrift van *Des Coninx Somme*. De vijftien punten van pater Jan Brugman, 1487," *Biekorf*, 61 (1960), pp. 261-265; Frits van Oostrom, *Nobel streven. Het onwaarschijnlijke maar waargebeurde verhaal van ridder Jan van Brederode*, Amsterdam, 2017; D. C. Tinbergen, ed., *Des coninx summe*, Leiden, 1907.



## 32.

## Wine Tappers's Prayer Book

In Dutch, decorated manuscript on paper  
Low Countries (East central), c. 1550-1565

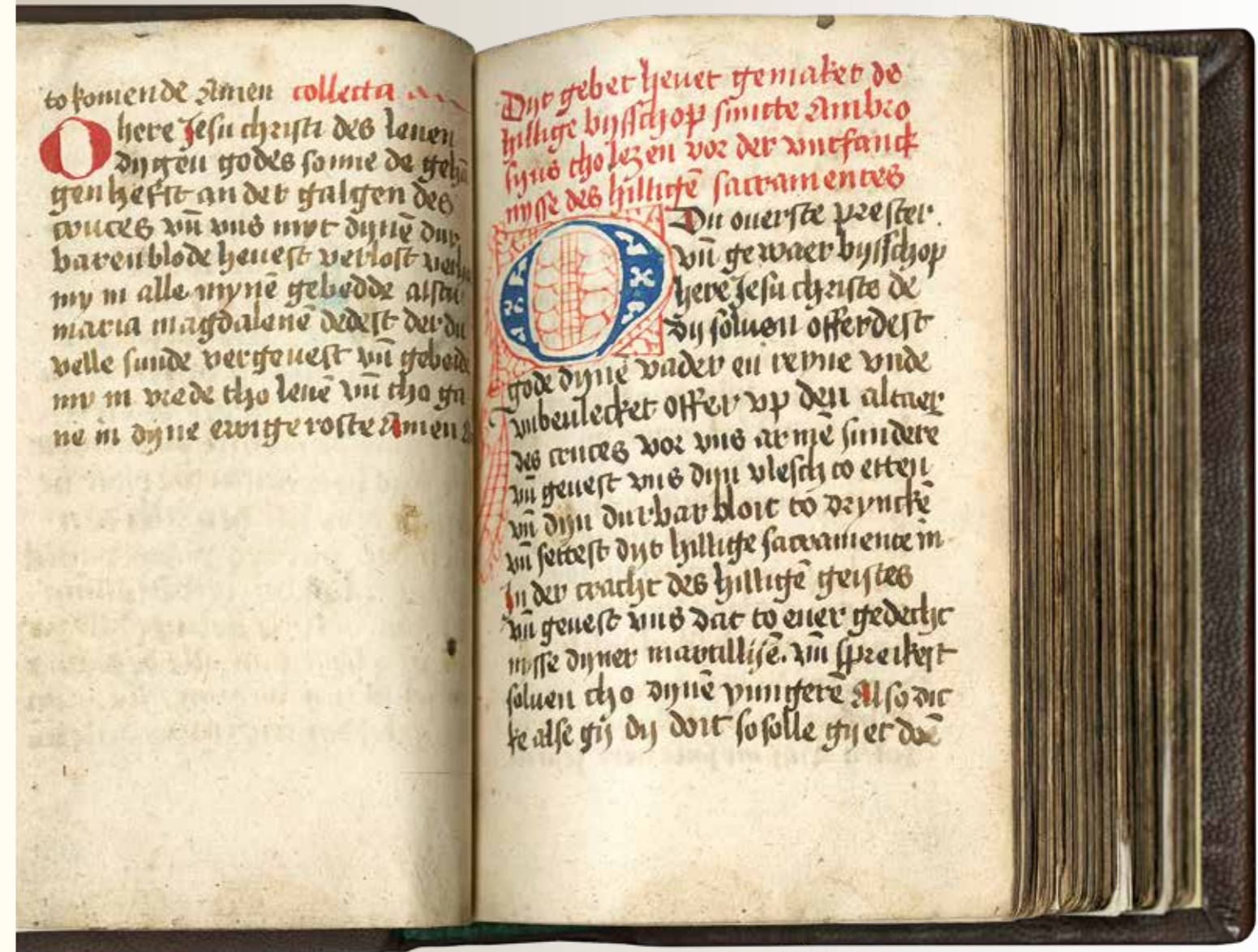
Vernacular Prayer Books during the Middle Ages were used both by monks and nuns, and other religious (no. 24), and by the laity (in general, see 4, 16, 36), and it is often difficult to determine a given book's primary audience. This volume of prayers in Dutch, however, includes very interesting evidence of its first owners. A contemporary inscription offers a reward (literally, "one good drink penny") for the book's safe return to the "graveschen" of the wine tappers, situated near the churchyard of the Church of Saint Lambert: "Item[?] der graeveschen der wynteperschen by sunth lambertus kerckhaue hoert dyt boeck to we dat vynth de brenget eer wedder vnd he sal enen gueden drynck pennynck hebben (Item: this book belongs to the "graveschen" [probably a senior officer of the guild] of the winetappers by the churchyard of Saint Lambert; whoever finds it brings it again and he shall have one good drink penny)."

Wine tappers served wine, often in the capacity of innkeepers, and guilds of wine tappers (or innkeepers) are well documented in Konstanz, Florence, and Antwerp, for example. Medieval guilds, like confraternities, played an important part in the social and religious lives of their members, and this Prayer Book could have been used for meetings of the wine-tappers's guild, in particular when they gathered to remember and pray for their departed members. Several of the saints given special attention in the book's rubrics seem appropriate for a guild connected with the wine trade. Martin, bishop of Tours, is the patron saint of vintners, while Dorothea and Agnes are both patron saints of gardeners (and, in Dorothea's case, of brewers as well). In addition to its interest as a book directly linked to a medieval guild, the mixture of private devotional prayers and liturgical prayers here, including prayers to be said during Mass, all in the vernacular, is intriguing, and this Prayer Book certainly warrants further study. [TM 852]

**DESCRIPTION:** 228 folios on paper, watermarks 1553-1564, lacking 6 leaves, written in a hybrida script on 17-23 long lines, red and blue initials, some with penwork, water stains and soiling, modern repairs, modern blind-tooled leather binding. Dimensions 149-152 x 100 mm.

**LITERATURE:** *Craft Guilds in the Early Modern Low Countries: Work, Power and Representation*, ed. Maarten Prak, Catharina Lis, Jan Lucassen, and Hugo Soly, Aldershot, 2006; David Nicholas, *The Later Medieval City: 1300-1500*, London, 1997.

Item der graeveschen der wynteperschen by sunth lambertus kerckhaue hoert dyt boeck to we dat vynth de brenget eer wedder vnd he sal enen gueden drynck pennynck hebben





# VERNACULAR MANUSCRIPTS IN BRITAIN

Emily Runde

**IN THE MIDDLE AGES, A VERITABLE BABEL OF TONGUES RESOUNDED THROUGHOUT THE** island of Britain. Reckoning with medieval British vernaculars thus entails tracing the shifting usages, prestige, and accessibility of several languages over those centuries.

**LATIN, FRENCH, AND ENGLISH TEND TO DOMINATE DISCUSSIONS OF MULTILINGUAL** medieval Britain, but they were not the only languages in use. Celtic peoples inhabited the land long before the dawn of the common era, and they continued to speak and write their languages (eg. Welsh, Cornish, Gaelic) after Germanic tribes began pushing them to the island's peripheries in the fifth century. These Anglo-Saxons invaders spoke Old English, which served them as a language of literature, science, history writing, political administration, and, with the advent of Christianity, devotional writing; even parts of the Bible were translated into English. With Christianity came Latin, which served as a language of a broader intellectual exchange across Europe and beyond.

**THE ELEVENTH-CENTURY CONQUEST OF BRITAIN BY FRENCH-SPEAKING NORMANS SHIFTED** the island's linguistic practices. Latin persisted as a language of intellectual and religious exchange, but also superseded Old English as the language of management. The Normans seized the lands and positions of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy, and for the next two centuries an aristocratic minority spoke Anglo-French as a native language. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw the emergence of French as a written language, used in literature composed for aristocratic patrons, but also in law courts, guilds, and court and household accounts. Meanwhile, the island's Jewish inhabitants wrote in Hebrew and passed it along as a native tongue.

**AT THE SAME TIME, ENGLISH PERSISTED AS BRITAIN'S DOMINANT SPOKEN LANGUAGE.** It was, as poet William of Nassington observed in his fourteenth-century *Speculum Vitae*, a “kynde langage / ... That can ilk man vnderstande / That es borne in Ingelande (natural language ... that each person who is born in England can best understand)” (Hanna, ed., 2008, pp. 6-7, ll. 65, 67-68). By the time William wrote this, English was making a resurgence as a written language as well.

**THREE OF THE MANUSCRIPTS FEATURED IN THIS CATALOGUE PERMIT US TO OBSERVE THE** transition from Latin to French to English in a single kind of writing. The *Old Statutes* (no. 33) and *New Statutes of England* (no. 34), are both bilingual collections of royal statutes. The *Old Statutes*

comprise mainly thirteenth-century legislation – including Magna Carta – in Latin; just over twenty-five percent of the manuscript's contents are written in French, beginning with a royal statute from 1275. French is the dominant language of the *New Statutes*, however, reflecting the shift that had taken place in the language of royal legislation during the fourteenth century.

**THE THIRD MANUSCRIPT, A COLLECTION OF LATIN CHRONICLES (NO. 35), FEATURES A** fifteenth-century parliamentary statute, the 1460 Act of Accord, composed in Middle English. It appears in English here, even though the manuscript's other contents are all in Latin and the volume appears to have been compiled in Germany. While the statute's inclusion is a bit of a mystery, its Englishness attests clearly enough that English was by then a language of record.

**MANUSCRIPTS CONTAINING LITERARY WORKS REVEAL A SIMILAR PATTERN, ALBEIT** beginning earlier. The appearance of Middle English poetry alongside French and even Latin texts in the thirteenth century indicates that even those who could read Latin and French were developing a taste for literature in English and considered it worthy of being recorded and shared. By the end of the fourteenth century, esteemed poets like Geoffrey Chaucer, William Langland, the Pearl Poet, and John Gower were writing monumental literary works in English.

**THE SAME CENTURIES ALSO SAW THE INCREASING USE OF MIDDLE ENGLISH IN WORKS** of religious instruction and devotion. Thirteenth-century efforts to cultivate lay piety would have made it a priority to reach the broadest possible audience. Translating the Bible remained a far more controversial proposition – a late fourteenth-century translation spearheaded by Oxford scholar John Wycliffe met with a swift backlash – and Latin remained the dominant language of the Bible and liturgy. Over a century later, a bilingual Book of Hours (cat. 36) preserves these distinctions, with basic catechetical texts like a manual for confession and the Ten Commandments in English and the prayers for the Hours in Latin. Even as printers eagerly supplied a growing market of English readers, British books remained sites of multilingualism and careful negotiations of what could and should be expressed in the vernacular.



# 33.

## Vetera Statuta Angliae (Old Statutes of England), including the Magna Carta and other Statutes of the Realm

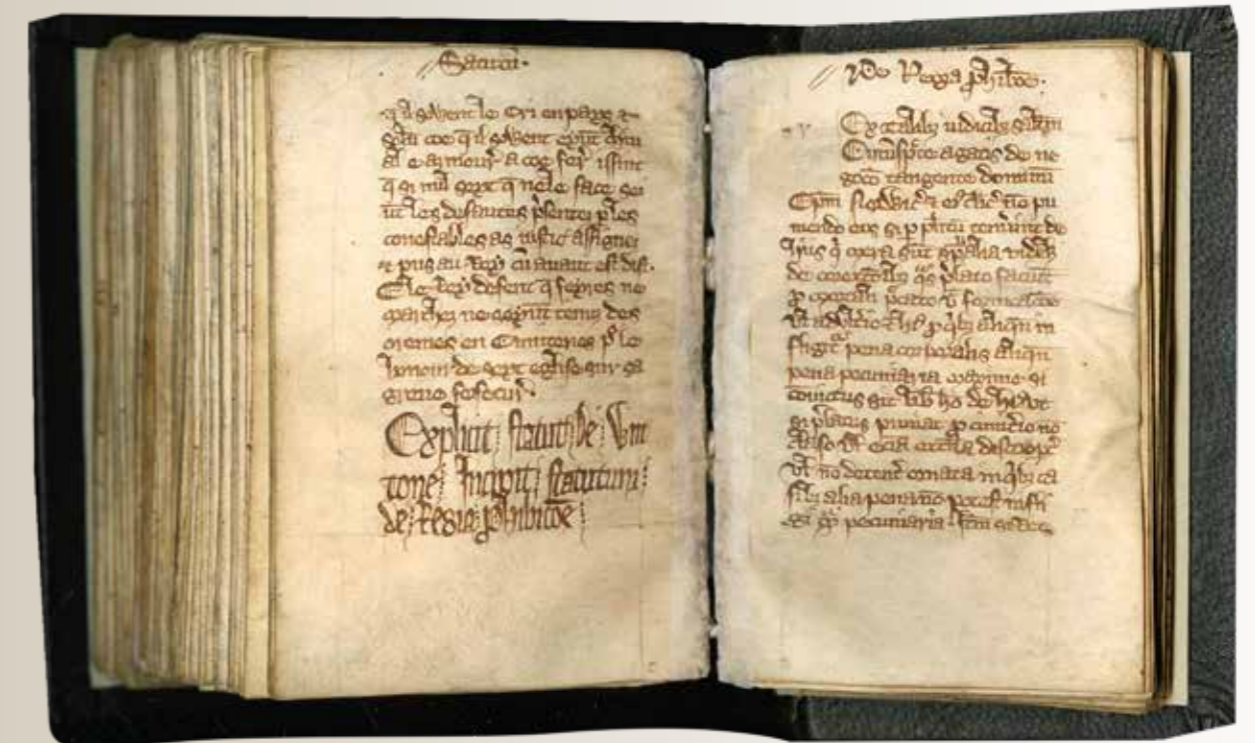
In Latin and Law French, decorated manuscript on parchment  
England, after 1305 and probably before 1327

Although this fact may be surprising to modern readers, collections of legal statutes were among the most popular secular books read in England during the Middle Ages. Over four hundred manuscripts of this sort, usually including either the “Old Statutes,” found in this manuscript, with statutes from the early thirteenth century through the reign of Edward II (reigned 1307-1327), or the “New Statutes,” with texts beginning with the reign of Kings Edward III (reigned 1327-1377) (no. 34). However unfamiliar many of us are with this genre of manuscript, all of us know the text copied first in the “Old Statutes,” the Magna Carta. First issued in 1215 after an angry encounter on the plains of Runnymede between an assembly of barons and King John over the right of the king to obtain funds from a few powerful families, the principles set forth in the Magna Carta were destined to be invoked down through the centuries as a weapon against oppressive government, from the Declaration of Independence to the United Nations’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In this fourteenth-century copy of mostly thirteenth-century statutes, Latin still predominates. Just over twenty-five percent of the texts are written in Law French (a language of law courts and legal documents in medieval England that showed the combined influences of Anglo-Norman and Parisian French dialects and even Middle English). These statutes laid down the fundamental principles upon which English common law was based; they could not be revoked by any subsequent Act of Parliament. The core texts in this manuscript were essential reading in late medieval England for lawyers, but also for others invested in the law, including landowners, members of the clergy, merchants, public officials, and law students. Pocket-format copies of the *Old Statutes*, like the present manuscript, were not uncommon, and call to mind modern pocket Constitutions. [TM 917]

**DESCRIPTION:** 204 folios on parchment, complete, written in Anglicana script on 16-20 long lines, one red penwork initial, otherwise blank spaces, some damage, but minor loss of text only on three folios, modern blind-tooled brown leather binding. Dimensions 89 x 54-57 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Claire Breay, *Magna Carta: Manuscripts and Myths*, London, 2002; Claire Breay and Julian Harrison, eds., *Magna Carta: Law, Liberty, Legacy*, London, 2015; Skemer, 1997; Skemer, 1999.



# 34.

## *Nova Statuta Angliae* (New Statutes of England)

In Anglo-Norman and Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment  
 England, probably London, c. 1450

Physically this relatively large manuscript with its lovely illuminated first page could not be more different than our earlier copy of the “Old Statutes” (cat. 33). We see a decided linguistic shift as well, since in this manuscript French is the dominant language, reflecting the shift that had taken place in the language of royal legislation during the fourteenth century. The *Nova Statuta*, or *New Statutes of England*, contain legislation from the beginning of the reign of Edward III onwards, picking up where copies of the “Old Statutes” stop (no. 33). They survive in as many as 125 manuscripts, an indication of their popularity, and manuscript copies continued to be made after the Middle Ages, as late as the reign of Henry VIII (reigned 1509-1547), since lawyers had a constant need for copies with the latest legislation. This manuscript includes statutes from the first year of the reign of Edward III (reigned 1327-1377) to 25 February in the twenty-third year of the reign of Henry VI (1445; he reigned 1422-1461, 1470-1471). The division of English law between the “Old Statutes” and the “New Statutes” followed in the two manuscripts included here (nos. 33 and 34) reflects an actual difference in the nature of the laws they contain. The statutes and charters enacted up to the end of Edward II’s reign laid down the fundamental principles upon which Common Law was based and could not be revoked by any subsequent Act of Parliament. With a few exceptions, the same did not hold true of the legislation enacted by Edward III and his successors.

This copy of the *Nova Statuta* was produced during a period of high demand. Henry VI’s long minority and troubled reign resulted in a period of weak central government, compelling aristocratic landowners to resort to their own legal knowledge to defend their interests. In these cases, lawyers and landowners would have turned to statute books like this one. Their legal education and literacy (more extensive than that of their fourteenth-century forebears), as well as the political turmoil of the period, were no doubt driving forces behind the increased production of *Nova Statuta* manuscripts in the third quarter of the fifteenth century. **[TM 768]**

**DESCRIPTION:** 181 folios on parchment, 2 leaves missing, written in multiple anglicana hands, penwork initials, illuminated initial with three-sided foliate border, 18<sup>th</sup>-century speckled brown leather binding, a little worn. Dimensions 285 x 200 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Nicholas and John Taylor Pronay, *Parliamentary Texts of the Later Middle Ages*, Oxford, 1980; Kathleen L. Scott, *Dated and Datable English Manuscript Borders c. 1395-1499*, London, 2002; Skemer, 1999.



reduced

## 35.

**B**lessyd be ihu in alle his  
 & godes blyssed prynces  
 dyction aggreed yt ys ap  
 poynt & myghty prynces kyng  
 of fraunce and lord of  
 flourenghe & myghty prynces

ALEXANDER DE ROES, *Memoriale de prerogativa imperii romani* (Reminder of the Prerogative of the Roman Empire); English Act of Accord of 1460 in Middle English; REGINO OF PRÜM, *Chronicon* (Abridgment); Abbreviated Chronicle of the Archbishops of Cologne (*Kölner Bischofschronik*); Excerpts or Abbreviations of Chronicles of the Archbishops of Trier, Mainz, Tongeren and Liège; ANDREAS VON REGENSBURG, *Chronica de principibus terrae Bavarorum* (Chronicle of the princes of Bavaria)

In Latin and Middle English, illuminated manuscript on paper  
 Germany (Rhineland, Cologne?), partially dated 1457 and c. 1475 with additions until c. 1490

This manuscript, like the previous two (nos. 33 and 34) also includes a legal text, the 1460 Act of Accord, which was composed in Middle English, as it appears here, copied by an English scribe. By this point in England's history, English was a language of record. This is an interesting fact, relevant to our topic, but the presence of the Act of Accord, which was an attempt to solve the War of the Roses by confirming Henry VI (a Lancastrian) as king, but naming Richard Duke of York as his successor, here, in a manuscript copied in Germany for someone with an intense interest in the history of the Holy Roman Empire, is extraordinary.

All the remaining texts are in Latin, including the pro-imperial text by Alexander de Roes, a canon from Cologne, and a series of Chronicles of the archbishops of Cologne, Trier, Mainz, Tongeren, and Liège, among others. This imperial aura is underlined by the opening miniature of Emperor Frederick III (d. 1493) and the ecclesiastical and secular electors. Some of the texts are complete (there are even additions on small inserted slips of paper), but others are works in progress, with brief headings followed by large blank spaces that were never filled in. Several folios include collections of epitaphs, including the epitaph of Sir Hartung von Clux, who died in 1445, and was buried in St Michael Paternoster Royal, London (that is, Whittington College, founded by the mayor of London, remembered in the legends about Dick Whittington and his cat). Sir Hartung, who was Danish or German by birth, served, and was well rewarded, by three English kings, Henry IV, V, and VI. He was also a trusted emissary for Emperor Sigismund. This manuscript dates from after his death, but its unique contents would have made it perfectly suited to someone with vested interests in both the Holy Roman Empire and in England – just like Sir Hartung. [TM 424]

**DESCRIPTION:** 94 folios on paper, watermarks 1455-1479, missing a few leaves, written in very small cursive scripts with ff. 15-17v copied in an insular script, red or blue initials, many colored armorial shields, 2 small miniatures, large heraldic composition and full-page colored drawing, contemporary deerskin binding, not original, here reused. Dimensions 220 x 150 mm.

**LITERATURE:** H. Grundmann and H. Heimpele, *Die Schriften des Alexander von Roes*, MGH, Stuttgart, 1958; B. Lohse, *Die historischen Handschriften der Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg*, Cod. hist. 1-100, Hamburg, 1968; S. Maclean, *History and Politics in Late Carolingian and Ottonian Empire: The Chronicle of Regino of Prüm and Adalbert of Magdeburg*, Manchester, 2009.





## 36.

## Printed Book of Hours (Use of Sarum)

In Latin and Early Modern English with some French, printed on paper

Paris, Nicolas Prévost, 18 July 1527

17 large metalcuts and 44 small metalcuts by the Master of the Very Small Hours of Anne of Brittany and Jean Pichore

Printed Book of Hours illustrate the transition between the world of the medieval manuscript and the age of the printed book. This book was printed in Paris, but made for use in England. Indications of its intended readers include its liturgical use (Use of Sarum), the saints in the calendar, and significantly, the languages of the prayers – in the midst of the traditional Latin texts, there are prayers and rubrics in English, as well as in French (nos. 4, 16, 24, 32). This volume also illustrates the impact of the Protestant Reformation in England (nos. 19 and 25), arriving in England during the period in which King Henry VIII was initiating his break with the Roman Catholic Church (indeed it was printed in the year that he first requested an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon), and interventions of one or more early readers are evidence of its continued use after England's break with the Catholic Church. In the calendar, for example, the word "pape" (pope) has been blacked out, with the word "episcopi" (bishop) frequently supplied in its place. In accordance with Henry VIII's 1538 decree, references to Saint Thomas Becket, the twelfth-century saint who was martyred in Canterbury cathedral, here have been effaced or crossed out. Rubrics mentioning papal indulgences before various prayers have also been blotted out with thick, black ink strokes. Books of Hours such as these were frequently passed down in English recusant families, who were faithful to Catholic traditions and beliefs long after the English Reformation.

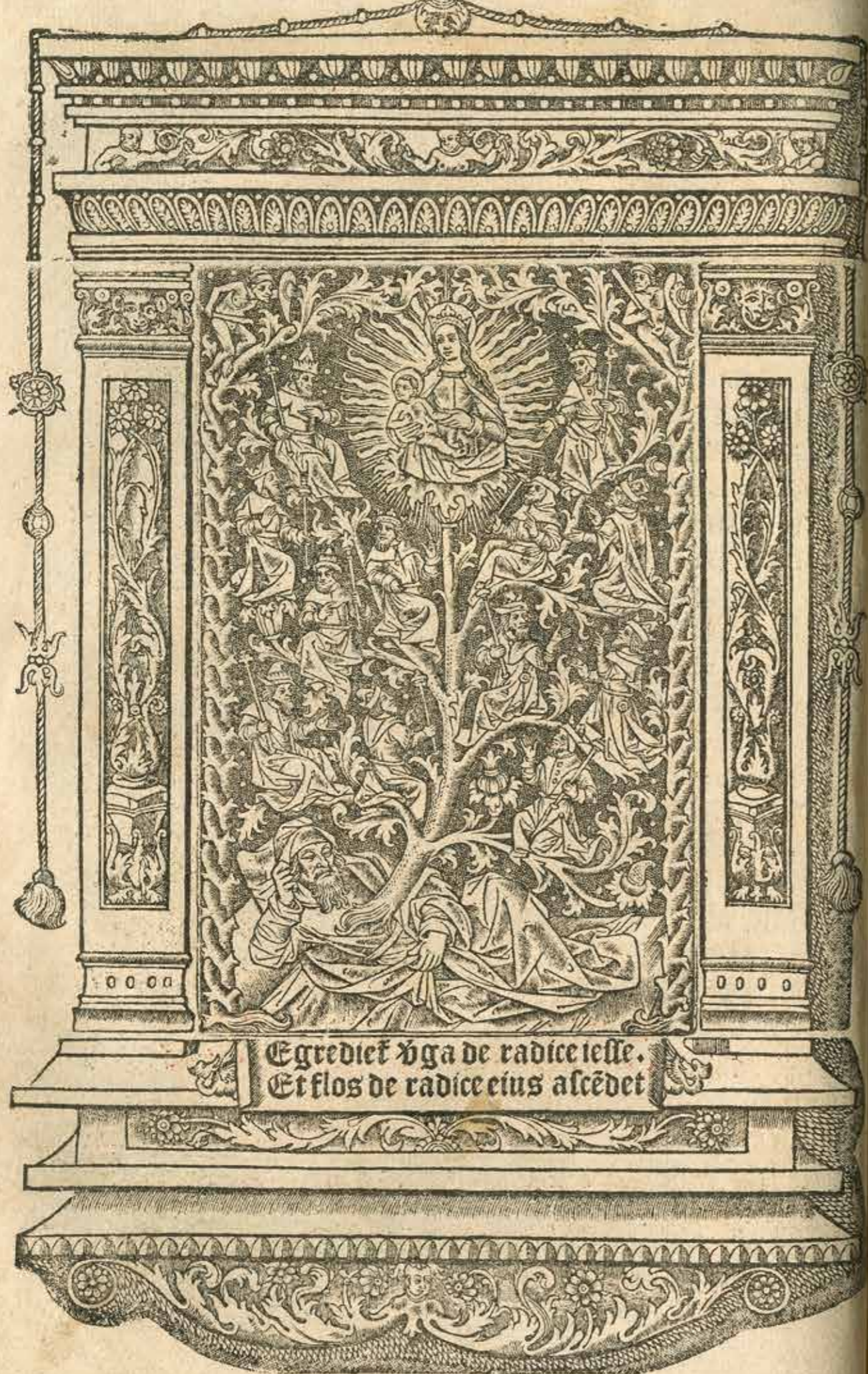
The sixteenth-century book trade was pan-European. This was printed by Nicolas Prévost (fl. 1524-1532), a Parisian printer, who was married to Marie Hopyl, the daughter of the printer, Wolfgang Hopyl, who had been had been printing for the English market since 1494. Prévost took over his business in 1524, and continued the practice, supplying books to booksellers like Franz Birckman (fl. 1511-1527; d. 1529). Birckman, a native of Cologne, had a shop in London, and commissioned books from Paris and Antwerp to be sold in England.

[BOH 145]

**DESCRIPTION:** In-4° format, 7 unnumbered leaves (5 at the beginning, 2 at the end), 219 foliated leaves, on paper, printed in red and black on up to 33 lines, 17 large and 44 small metalcuts, metalcut borders on every page, some text scraped away or crossed out, soiling and staining, modern morocco binding preserving the original blind-tooled leather covers by Nicholas Spierinck of Cambridge. Dimensions 247 x 179 mm.

**LITERATURE:** Peter W. M. Blayney, *The Stationers' Company and the Printers of London, 1501-1557*, Cambridge, 2013; J. Basil Oldham, *English Blind-Stamped Bindings*, Cambridge, 1952; James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade, 1450-1850*, New Haven, 2007.





Egredietur vna de radice iesse.  
Et flos de radice eius ascendet



**D**omine labia mea  
aperies. Et os meum

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gheselschap inden hemel mit al onse gheue-  
ten en begheerten - Duer sel elcked menschen  
Ziele wesen alsoe claer als seuen sonne  
Augustyn seit - Och wat daerheit is daer  
vgheliken heilich bereypt die hem hier en  
clerne tut en tote voeruoedinghe en ende  
wil hiden een roeynich hiden om gods

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