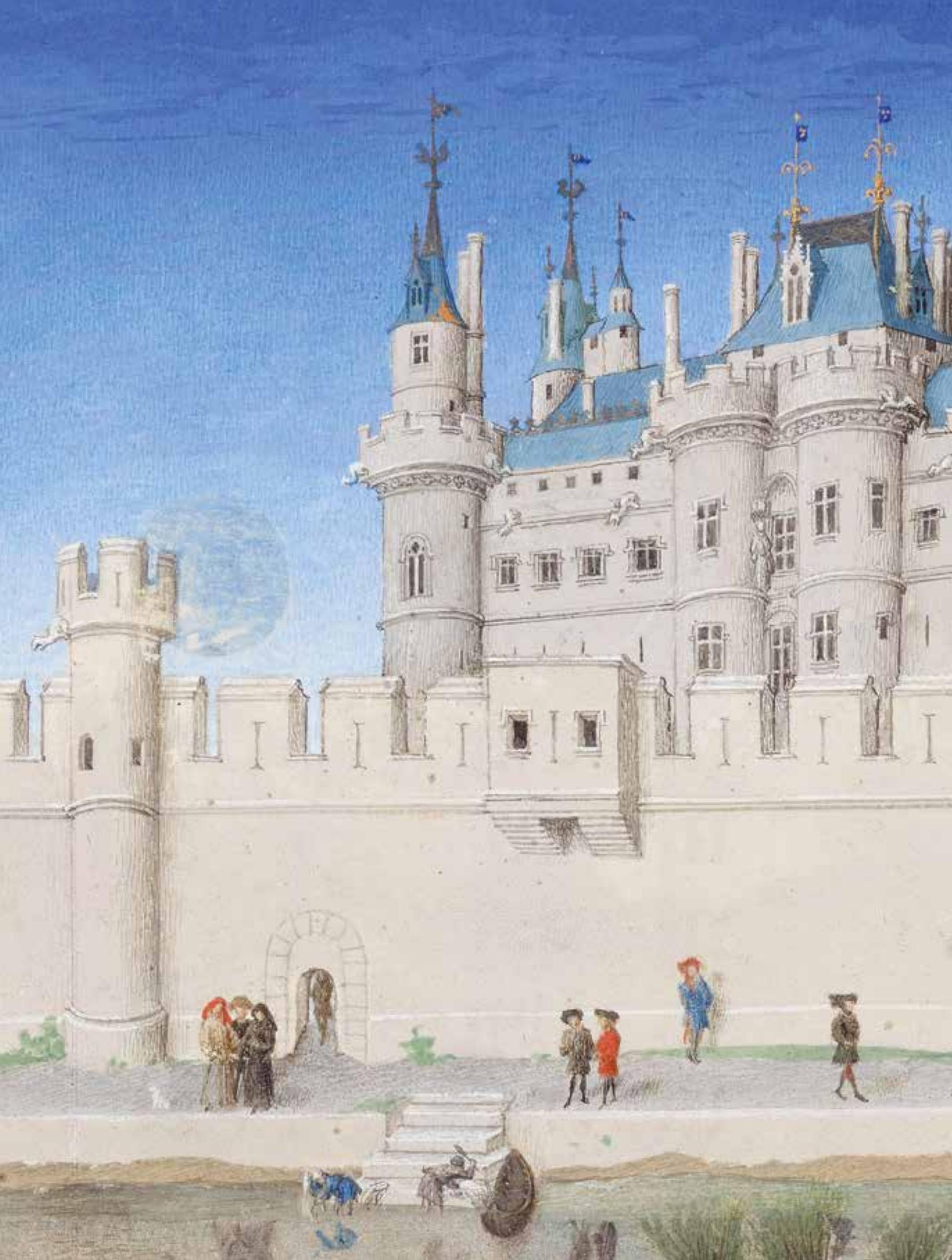


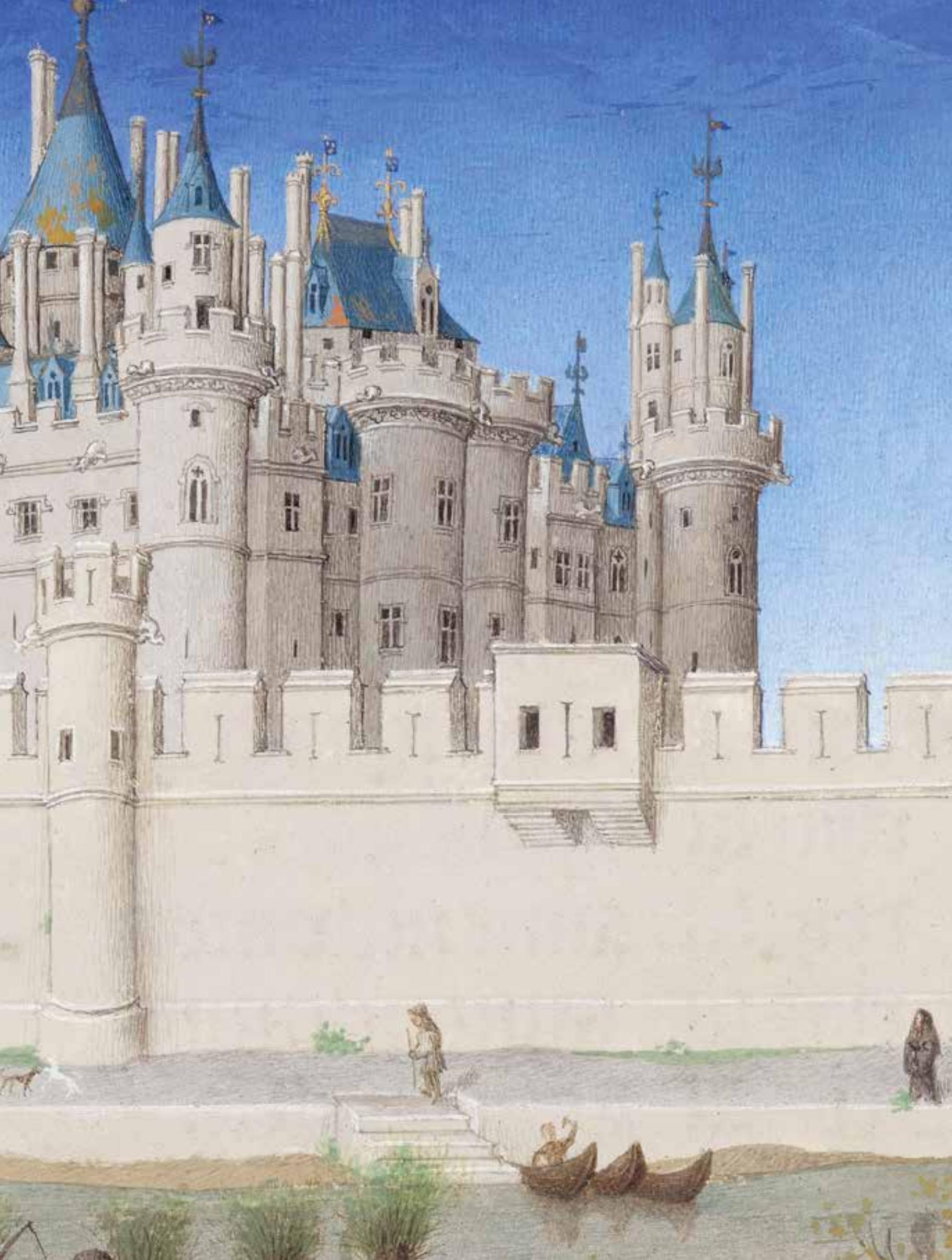
**THE TRÈS RICHES HEURES
OF JEAN, DUKE OF BERRY**

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RICHES
HEURES
OF JEAN,
DUKE OF
BERRY**

Edited by Mathieu Deldicque

HANNIBAL





Forewords

The exhibition *Les Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry* reveals both an absolute masterpiece and, through it, the apogee of a golden age of princely patronage. One of the most fruitful and innovative periods in the art of the Middle Ages flourished at the courts of the brothers of King Charles V—the dukes of Berry, Burgundy, and Anjou. The result of the meeting between the audacious vision of a patron and the inventiveness of exceptional artists, the *Très Riches Heures* stands out as a high point of the art that blossomed in a France at the crossroads of diverse inspirations—a symbol of a prosperous and interconnected Europe. The book was a daring commission given to the three Van Limbourg brothers, nephews of the painter Johan Maelwael, by the Duke of Berry towards the end of his life, around 1411. But its creation continued well beyond the duke's death; it was only completed around 1485—a remarkable act of endurance that bears witness to the power of the initial design.

Today, bringing together works that belonged to the Duke of Berry—paintings, sculptures, manuscripts (in particular, all his books of hours), gold and silver objects, and pieces of embroidery—makes it possible for us to gauge the scale of his ambitions, the creative energy of the workshops he inspired, and the movement of artistic ideas across Europe. Above all, this exhibition is a unique opportunity to admire twenty-six leaves and their miniatures from the *Très Riches Heures* as well as two illuminated pages that will be changed every two weeks, thus revealing one of the highlights of medieval illumination in all its splendor, as never seen before.

But what else could be revealed about such a famous work, reproduced over and over again, so familiar to us that we think we know it without ever having really looked at it? One of the great merits of this exhibition is that it shows the manuscript in a different light, partly unbound, in light of the discoveries made by restorers and the analyses carried out by the Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musées de France (C2RMF). These interventions shed light on the abundance of techniques and materials used and, by drawing attention to the finer details, make it possible to identify the hands of the various artists who worked on the manuscript.

Supported by leading scientific collaborations with, among others, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the Musée du Berry, and the Bibliothèque municipale de Bourges, this exhibition has been awarded the label “Exposition d'intérêt national” (exhibition of national interest) by the French Ministry of Culture. This label recognizes its scholarly ambition, the scope of its discoveries, and the exceptional collection of works it makes available to the public. This accompanying catalog reproduces all the works on display, enriched with analyses and new findings, offering a major contribution to the historiography of the manuscript.

We wish to thank and congratulate all those who have worked to make this project a success, in particular its leaders, Mathieu Deldicque, curator and director of the Musée Condé, and Marie-Pierre Dion, general curator of the museum's library.

Bertrand Gaume

Prefect of the North and the Hauts-de-France region

To say that the Duke of Aumale, who donated the Musée Condé to the Institut de France, showed flair in amassing his art collection is an understatement. It is still something of a surprise to learn that he established the most important museum of ancient art in France after the Louvre in Paris. Integrated into this museum is an equally exceptional library, one of our country's richest, where illuminated manuscripts are like the ancestors of the later paintings on display nearby. Among these manuscripts, one in particular has been the source of many dreams and fantasies. It is the most famous in the world, the one that is used to provide illustrations whenever the Middle Ages are mentioned. Its name alone is enough to fire the imagination: the *Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry* (The Très Riches Heures of Jean, Duke of Berry).

A masterpiece that is as famous as it is inaccessible, this work is more than a mere book. It is a world unto itself, a manuscript commissioned by a brilliant patron of the arts who entrusted three young illuminators with the task of realizing his bibliophilic dream, in the evening of his life. Sadly, all four breathed their last only a few months apart, in 1416, leaving it to other patrons and other renowned miniaturists to complete, over the course of much of the fifteenth century, a work that instantly became an inspiring icon. We owe it to the Duke of Aumale not only to have grasped the importance of this treasure when he acquired it in 1856, but also to have immediately ensured it was studied and promoted.

It is the destiny of the most incredible of manuscripts that this exhibition and its catalog honor, under the leadership of Mathieu Deldicque, assisted by Marie-Pierre Dion. I am grateful to them both for their efforts to look after this admirable work of art, to preserve it and to showcase it in such an exceptional manner. For it is a truly historic event that we are celebrating here. The *Très Riches Heures* was in need of restoration, as experts had long agreed. The curators of the Musée Condé took every possible precaution and asked the best specialists to carry out preliminary analyses and determine a careful approach to any restoration. This operation involved, among other things, removing the binding from the first two quires—those of the famous calendar—which will enable visitors to the Château de Chantilly to see all the miniatures of the twelve months in this landmark exhibition. Indeed, for the first time since the death of the Duke of Berry and the dispersal of his collection, all his books of hours are reunited here, temporarily, around the *Très Riches Heures*. The exhibition has benefited from many other exceptional loans that make it possible to place the manuscript in context, and I wish to thank all the lenders, who Mathieu Deldicque was able to convince of the historical nature of this event. I also wish to acknowledge the numerous and generous patrons of this truly unique project. This catalog bears lasting witness to this undertaking, thanks to the contributions of many scholars. After the exhibition, the restored and rebound manuscript will be returned to the storerooms of the library of the Musée Condé—for a long time. We can be sure that interest in the library and its precious Cabinet des livres, which is itself in need of restoration, will remain strong: it is one of the greatest treasures of humanity.

Xavier Darcos

Chancellor, Institut de France

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**“This book occupies
a significant place
in the history of art;
I dare say it has no rival.”**

– Henri d’Orléans, Duke of Aumale

At the start of this work, it's only fitting to remember the words of Henri d'Orléans, Duke of Aumale, who discovered the *Très Riches Heures* in 1856. While writing the catalog of his manuscripts—works that would soon make up the exceptional collection of the library of the Musée Condé—the duke was full of praise for one of his most amazing acquisitions: “This book occupies a significant place in the history of art; I dare say it has no rival.”¹ Aware of the magnitude of this monument of illumination, the prince congratulated himself on a more than opportune purchase and shared “several indications” about Jean of Berry, the book’s fate, its decoration, and the buildings illustrated in its calendar, leaving it to future scholars to compose the magnum opus devoted to this most prodigious of manuscripts.

“These *Heures* deserve a complete description, a thorough critique; others will accomplish this task,” wrote the Duke of Aumale. It was high time to fulfill his wish. Shown to visitors to the Musée Condé twice over the past hundred years, in special exhibitions in 1956 and 2004, the *Très Riches Heures* was patiently waiting for its own hour to come. It was in 2012 that the idea of such an exhibition took root. I was then a trainee curator at the Musée Condé, and a new space designed specifically for the manuscript, the Jeu de Paume, had just been inaugurated. Exposure to this fascinating yet intimidating masterpiece led to the gradual conception of a plan: a major study and exhibition that would make this manuscript and it alone—not its first patron nor its artists—the center of attention. The aim would be to demonstrate why this work, whose evocative title of *Très Riches Heures* was discovered in 1881 by Léopold Delisle in the 1416 estate inventory of the Duke of Berry, was, despite its state of incompleteness, so much admired, so widely studied, and such a source of inspiration to the greatest artists of the time, from its inception to the early sixteenth century. The subject of countless reproductions since the time of the Duke of Aumale, this manuscript largely shaped the view we have of the medieval landscape—enchanted castles, sumptuous lords, beautiful ladies, workers laboring on the land throughout the seasons—via the images of its calendar that have been used and reused right up to the present day.

Since its reappearance in the 1850s, this fabulous work has inevitably been the subject of ongoing research. Following the essential studies of Léopold Delisle and Paul Durrieu, the great work of Millard Meiss on the Van Lymborch brothers and illumination at the time of the Duke of Berry remains unsurpassed.² Others have followed in their footsteps and added their own stone to this scholarly edifice. Luciano Bellosi was the first to identify the contribution of Barthélemy d'Eyck to the calendar.³ Drawing on these studies, Raymond Cazelles, curator of the Musée Condé, published several monographs in the twentieth century,⁴ which were only updated at the beginning of the twenty-first century, when interest in the manuscript was rekindled with the exhibition at Chantilly,⁵ the release of a CD-ROM accompanying a new digitization of the manuscript (and again in 2020), and studies by Patricia Stirnemann and Inès Villela-Petit.⁶ Meanwhile, the art of the Van Lymborch brothers and their great masterpieces have been the subject of several comprehensive studies published between 2005 and 2017,⁷ and even prompted the establishment of the Maelwael Van Lymborch Foundation (based in Nijmegen, the brothers' birthplace, and dedicated to researching, promoting, and preserving their legacy) and a series of multidisciplinary studies.⁸ But academic interest aside, the appeal of the *Très Riches Heures* lies in the very special aura that makes it *the* absolute manuscript, the Holy Grail of anyone with an interest in the Middle Ages. Umberto Eco, who was often inspired by the medieval world, confided in the preface to Raymond Cazelles's book that the miniatures of the *Très Riches Heures* were “one of the paths that enabled [him] to approach the Middle Ages,”⁹ a sentiment shared by many that explains the fascination and desire aroused by this masterpiece. A largely frustrated desire, however: As Christopher de Hamel notes mischievously, it is “easier to meet the Pope or the President of the US than to hold the *Très Riches Heures*.”¹⁰

In the past, however, the manuscript was widely consulted, perhaps too much, since it still bears the traces of such handlings. These increasingly visible marks of time gradually convinced me that it was necessary to carry out a restoration. Marie-Pierre Dion's appointment as head of the Musée Condé's library and archives in 2019 further strengthened my conviction. The

backgrounds of the first quires showed inelegant stains; the parchment was disintegrating at the folds; the stitching was weakening at the joints; the margins of the calendar, the most admired pages, were soiled; above all, some flaking of the pictorial layer could be observed, notably on one of the famous double pages of the manuscript. After an initial appraisal carried out by the manuscripts department of the Bibliothèque nationale de France in early 2022, the need for comprehensive preliminary studies became apparent. French heritage conservator Coralie Barbe and her team then carried out the first true material analysis of the manuscript. This study was complemented by two analytical investigations—the first ever!—undertaken by the Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musées de France (C2RMF) in 2022 and 2023, coordinated by Élisabeth Ravaud. A wealth of new and diverse imaging, covering a considerable number of pages of the manuscript, was gathered. The relocation of the manuscript to the C2RMF at the Palais du Louvre (itself illustrated in the month of October) in 2023 was an ideal opportunity to physically compare it with the only painting currently attributed to the Van Lymborch brothers, *Man of Sorrows* (Musée du Louvre), and thus confirm this recent attribution, as explained in this volume.

While these investigations greatly advanced our knowledge of the *Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry*, the other studies confirmed that the manuscript was indeed in need of restoration. But working on the Mona Lisa of manuscripts is no light matter. The results of various analyses and our discussions with Coralie Barbe led us to take cautious but resolute decisions. To do nothing was to take a risk; to unbind the entire manuscript in order to be able to bind it again after carrying out the restoration work, even if its stitching had already been changed in the early twentieth century, was to expose ourselves to the possibility of no longer being able to replace the body of the work in its eighteenth-century binding. The decision was made to unbind the two quires of the calendar, the most damaged, a prudent solution that was to be accompanied by campaigns to fix the paint flakes that were falling off, and other necessary interventions described in this catalog.

This restoration offered a unique opportunity to show visitors to Chantilly the manuscript almost stripped bare, a state it had not been in since the fifteenth century, before it was first bound. The famous miniatures of the calendar could be displayed on their own, before being returned to the book's binding. This truly exceptional event was an invitation to examine the manuscript once again from start to finish, to capitalize on the countless studies about it, and to renew our approach to it on the basis of previously unpublished information gathered during the preparation of this project.

Of course, to take an interest in the *Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry* is also to look beyond the miracle of their creation, extraordinary though it was. The fruit of a meeting between the greatest patron of the arts of the late French Middle Ages and three brothers who revolutionized the art of illumination, the manuscript is one of the founding works of the history of Western art. It represents a veritable paradox: it was born in an era that, although troubled by the Hundred Years' War, fratricidal conflicts between princely factions, popular revolts, political assassinations, the Great Schism, and many other scourges, provided a wealth of resources when it came to artistic creation.

This wildly ambitious book was the result of a meeting between, on the one hand, an elderly man eager to pass on the memory of an intense political life and a consuming passion for the arts and also to push experimentation even further, within his very last book of hours, and, on the other, young prodigies ready to show all the audacity they were capable of. Despite the death of these four figures in 1416, leaving the work unfinished, the manuscript was already worthy of every superlative. A world unto itself, the *Très Riches Heures* is a melting pot of iconographies, styles, and references that reach far beyond what is usually found in a book of hours. A cathedral-like book, the *Très Riches Heures* was not only ornamented by a reliable team, renewed three times, of scribes and illuminators headed by the Van Lymborch brothers, but completed by two other illumination campaigns carried out during the fifteenth century by two of the greatest artists in the field, Barthélemy d'Eyck and then Jean Colombe. It took more than seventy years to complete the decoration of the manuscript—as long as it takes to finish a cathedral!

Before we step into this monument to illumination, let us point out that the essays gathered here, the reflection of a multidisciplinary approach, are only the beginning of the revival of the rich history of the most fabulous of manuscripts.

1 Aumale 1900–11, I, 59–71.

2 Meiss 1968 and 1974a.

3 Bellosi 1975.

4 Longnon and Cazelles 1969a; Cazelles and Rathofer 1984.

5 Chantilly 2004.

6 See, among others, Stirnemann and Villeda-Petit 2013.

7 Nijmegen 2005; Los Angeles and New York 2008–10; Paris 2012; Amsterdam 2017–18.

8 *Maelwael Van Lymborch Studies*, I, 2018 and II, 2022.

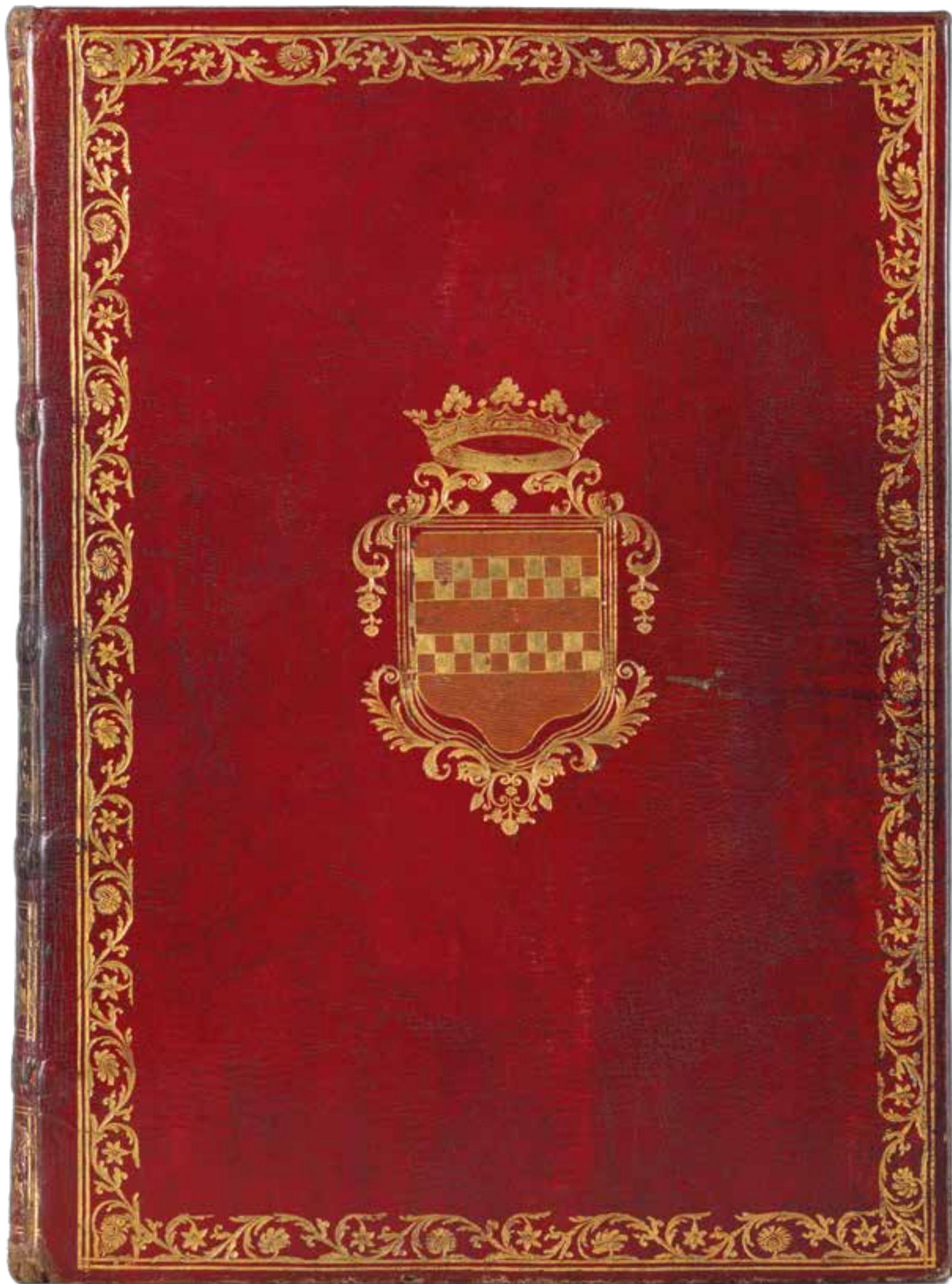
9 Cazelles 1988a, 7.

10 De Hamel 2016, 2.

Paul, Johan, and Herman Van Lymborch
Breviary Master of John the Fearless
Pseudo-Jacquemart (Jeannin Petit?)
Egerton Master
Haincelin de Haguenau (Bedford Master)
Master of the KL of January
Master of the KL of August
Master of the Saracen
Pierre Gilbert and his workshop
Barthélemy d'Eyck
Jean Colombe
and an assistant (Jacquelin de Montluçon or Philibert Colombe?)

TRÈS RICHES HEURES DU DUC DE BERRY

Paris and Bourges, c. 1411–16 (Van Lymborch brothers)
Anjou, c. 1446 (Barthélemy d'Eyck)
Bourges, c. 1485 (Jean Colombe)
Parchment, 206 folios, 290 × 210 mm
(Chantilly, Bibliothèque du musée Condé, ms. 65)







fevrier a rebuy-jours
Et la lune. xxx.

		la q̄inte des jours l'ore. m̄.ii.	le n̄ob. dor. nouel
	d	sainte brude.	ix. xlv.
x.	e. iij. n̄.	La purification.	ix. xlviij.
xx.	f. iij. n̄.	saint blaize.	ix. li.
viiij.	g. ij. n̄.	saint auentan.	ix. liiij.
	F onas.	sainte agathe.	ix. lviij.
xvi.	b. viij. id̄.	saint amant.	x. i.
v.	c. viij. id̄.	sainte telaine.	x. v.
	d. vi. id̄.	saint salomon.	x. ix.
iiiiij.	e. v. id̄.	sainte appoline.	x. xiiij.
ij.	f. iij. id̄.	sainte scolastique.	x. xviij.
	g. iij. id̄.	saint desier.	x. xx.
x.	F ij. id̄.	sainte cularie.	x. xxiiij.
	b. jous.	saint luaci.	x. xxx.
xviij.	c. xiiij. id̄.	saint ualentan.	x. xxxiiij.
viiij.	d. xiiij. id̄.	saint marcel.	x. xxxviij.
	e. iij. id̄.	sainte uulienne.	x. xxxix.
xv.	f. iij. id̄.	saint donace.	x. xlviij.
iiiiij.	g. iij. id̄.	saint symeon.	x. xlv.
	F ij. id̄.	sainte lulanne.	x. xliij.
xiiij.	b. x. id̄.	saint cleudere.	x. lviij.
ij.	c. ix. id̄.	saint uictor.	x. lxx.
	d. viij. id̄.	saint pierre.	x. lxxiiij.
xv.	e. viij. id̄.	saint polycarpe.	x. lxxviij.
	f. vi. id̄.	saint mathias.	x. lxxx.
xviij.	g. v. id̄.	saint uictour.	x. lxxxiiij.
iiiiij.	F ij. id̄.	saint uence.	x. lxxxviij.
	b. iij. id̄.	sainte honore.	x. lxxxix.
xiiij.	c. ij. id̄.	saint uist.	x. lxxxx.





Septembre a. xxx. iours. laquātite. le nōbre
 Et la lune xxx. Des iours dor.
 lxxviii. nouuel.

			laquātite.	le nōbre
			Des iours	dor.
			lxxviii.	nouuel.
vi	f	saīct leu. saīct Gille.	xj. xliij.	
v	g	saīct ancoyne.	xij. xliij.	ij
	h	saīct godegram.	xij. xliij.	ii
xij	b	saīct marcel.	xij. xliij.	
ij	c	saīct uictor.	xij. xliij.	xviiij
	d	saīct donaaen.	xij. xxxviij.	
x	e	saīct doust.	xij. xxxviij.	vij
	f	saīct rostre dame.	xij. xxxviij.	xv.
xviiij	g	saīct omer.	xij. xxxviij.	iiij
viiij	h	saīct gobert.	xij. xxxviij.	
	b	saīct prothm.	xij. xxxviij.	xij
xv.	c	saīct saur.	xij. xxxviij.	
iiij	d	saīct regnalt.	xij. viij.	i.
	e	saīct ams.	xij. iiij.	ix
xij	f	saīct nichomed.	xij. o.	
i.	g	saīct eufemie.	xij. lviij.	xviij
	h	saīct lambr.	xij. lvij.	vi.
x.	b	saīct fenol.	xij. l.	
	c	saīct signe.	xij. xlvij.	xiiij
xviij	d	vigille.	xij. xliij.	
vi.	e	saīct mathieu.	xij. xxxix.	iiij.
	f	saīct mouise.	xij. xxxviij.	ii.
xiiij	g	saīct egle.	xij. xxxviij.	
iiij	h	saīct lic.	xij. xxxviij.	xix
	b	saīct firmin.	xij. xxxviij.	viiij
x.	c	saīct aprien.	xij. xxiij.	xviij
xix	d	saīct colme.	xij. xxiij.	
	e	saīct preme.	xij. xv.	v.
viiij	f	saīct michel.	xij. xij.	
	g	saīct geroume.	xij. ix.	xiiij.

Maelwael – Van Lymborch

The Standardized Form of Their Name

Pieter Roelofs

The Regional Archives in Nijmegen, the birthplace of Herman, Paul, and Johan van Lymborch in the Dutch province of Guelders, hold a series of 600-year-old aldermen's protocols. At first glance, these booklets may not seem very appealing, but they offer a wealth of historical information, not least about the world-famous book illuminators and their family.¹ From the last years of the fourteenth century onward, we come across their names quite regularly in these northern sources. Most of these entries were recorded in formal Latin with a pen and brown ink and refer to the “de Lymborch” family. However, a few sparse notes in the vernacular bring us even closer to the brothers and the way in which they were personally designated by their contemporaries. In the years around 1400, Herman, Paul, and Johan were known as the “Van Lymborch gebrueder” (Van Lymborch brothers), as recorded in the Nijmegen protocols.²

Ever since their rediscovery in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Van Lymborch brothers have been the subject of countless scholarly and popular books, catalogues, and articles. In recent decades, visitors have been offered the opportunity to see their innovative miniatures with their own eyes at exceptional exhibitions in Chantilly (2004, 2025), Nijmegen (2005), Los Angeles (2008–09), New York (2010), Paris (2004, 2012), and Amsterdam (2017).³ While there is a broad consensus in the international art-historical literature on the importance and significance of the brothers' book illumination, until recently there was no unanimity regarding the spelling of their name.

The conventional English spelling of the name “Limbourg brothers,” traditionally written without the preposition, in fact straddles two languages. More than a century ago, the name was based on the French appropriation “frères de Limbourg” and as a result it is still pronounced the French way—[Lemburg]—and not Limburg [Limborg]. The Dutch name “Van Limburg” [Limborg], which was still commonplace in the Netherlands and Belgium until a few years ago, was introduced into scholarly literature in 1919 by historian Johan Huizinga in his famous book *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen* (*The Waning of the Middle Ages*), but does not refer back to any historical source.⁴ The same observation holds for the German variant “die Brüder Limburg” [Limborg], without the preposition, which became widespread in the German literature after the Cleves city archivist Friederich Gorissen used the spelling in two articles in 1954 and 1957.⁵ Both spellings have led to confusion among experts to this day. For example, it has been noted in recent literature that the brothers' name derives from the Dutch province of Limburg, because their hometown of Nijmegen is said to have been located in this area.⁶ This claim is incorrect: after all, the region as a whole is not related to the brothers' name. In the Late Middle Ages, Nijmegen belonged to the Duchy of Guelders and the geographical name Limburg did not come into use for the southern province until the nineteenth century.

The traditional multiple forms that are used to refer to the brothers require uniformity in an international context. That is why, in this book, we use the internationally standardized spelling “Van Lymborch brothers” [van Limborg], based on the historical sources. The actual origin of the name of the three illuminators can be traced back to the city of Lymborch—now called Limbourg—the most important city in the duchy of the same name, located on the Vesdre river between Aachen and Liège in present-day Belgium.⁷ Herman, Paul, and Johan were the three eldest children (of six) of Mechteld Maelwael and Arnold van Lymborch; the latter was referred to in Middle Dutch sources as “Arnt den beeltsnijder” (Arnt the sculptor) and in Latin sources as “Arnt de Aquis” (Arnt of Aachen) on account of his craft and origin. From 1389 onward, his name appears fifteen times in the Nijmegen aldermen's protocols and the archives of the Duke of Guelders.⁸ Johannes van Lymborch, who came from the Duchy of Lymborch, as it was called in the late fourteenth century, and was registered as a citizen of Nijmegen in 1366, is believed to have been the brothers' grandfather.⁹

For centuries, the use of a toponym as part of a name was useful for people to identify themselves outside their region of origin. Until well into the fifteenth century, the descendants of Arnold van Lymborch used the toponym “Lymborch,” combined with the preposition “van” as a reference to the origin of their ancestry. As sons of Nijmegen, it is remarkable that Herman, Paul, and Johan

did not opt for the addition “de Nimègue” in France. In Paris, the Duchy of Berry, and the Duchy of Guelders, on the other hand, they regularly used the surname of their mother Mechteld, also known as Metta Maelwael, daughter of the productive and successful local painter Willem Maelwael. For example, in 1400, Herman and Johan are mentioned in ducal sources in Burgundy as “Hermant Maleuel” and “Jacquemin Malaueel, brothers, young children and cousins of Jehan Maleuel, painter and varlet de chambre” of Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy.¹⁰ The good reputation of their uncle Johan Maelwael seems to have opened doors for the teenagers. Accordingly, Johan, the youngest of the three brothers, was mentioned in Nijmegen in 1413 as “Johannes dictus Jenneken Maelwael,” the name under which his death was also recorded three years later.¹¹

The majority of the Latin sources in Nijmegen—fifteen in total—refer to the three brothers, their father, and their younger brother Arnold as “de Lymborch.” In the French archives of the Duke of Berry, the variants “de Limbourc” (thrice), “de Lumbourc” (once), and “de Limbourg” (once) were used between 1408 and 1415. The guidelines of the United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSSG) serve as a starting point for the standardization of their names, including toponyms. The UN bases geographical names as much as possible on the original, local spelling, whereby it is important that the name can also be recognized and understood internationally.

Both their birthplace Nijmegen and the Duchy of Lymborch, as it was called around 1400, were part of the Middle Dutch-speaking area in the Late Middle Ages. Although there were different dialects and vernaculars, their name was written and pronounced more or less the same in both areas. “De Lymborch,” the most common spelling in the northern documents, is, as mentioned, Latin. The preposition “de” indicates a person’s origin and therefore has the same meaning as the Dutch “van” related to a toponym, as in such Dutch names as Van Eyck, Van Gogh, and Van Gaal.¹² In the period in which the brothers were active, the spelling “Van Lymborch” was common in everyday Middle Dutch, as illustrated by the fourteenth-century romance of Heinric and Margariete van Lymborch.¹³ In the “Wapenboek Gelre” (Gelre Armorial) by herald Claes Heynenzoon, between around 1393 and 1402, a scribe added these words above the coat of arms of the Duke of Lymborch: “die hé[rtoge] vā[n] Lymborch” (meaning, the duke of Lymborch). Completed in 1405 by the same herald, the “Wapenboek Beyeren” (Beyeren Armorial) contains the same phrase, this time in full: “die hertoge van Lymborch.” We also come across the form “Van Lymborch” in combination with a first name. For example, in 1419 the name “Derich van Lymborch” was recorded in a charter of the Duke of Guelders and, as mentioned above, the Nijmegen aldermen’s protocols also refer to Herman, Paul, and Johan as the “Van Lymborch gebrueder.”

Based on these historical arguments and the original sources, in 2018 the Maelwael van Lymborch Foundation and the Maelwael van Lymborch Studies Foundation proposed the use of the international, uniform variant, “Van Lymborch,” instead of the multiple national forms. This naming has since become commonplace in several international publications, setting the standard for the future. In English, the full name is “Van Lymborch brothers;” in German, “Brüder Van Lymborch.” This spelling restores the loss of the preposition “van” in both languages. In recent years, the actual historical name of Johan Maelwael has been embraced in the international scientific literature; now, Herman, Paul, and Johan van Lymborch have also been given back their original names.¹⁴

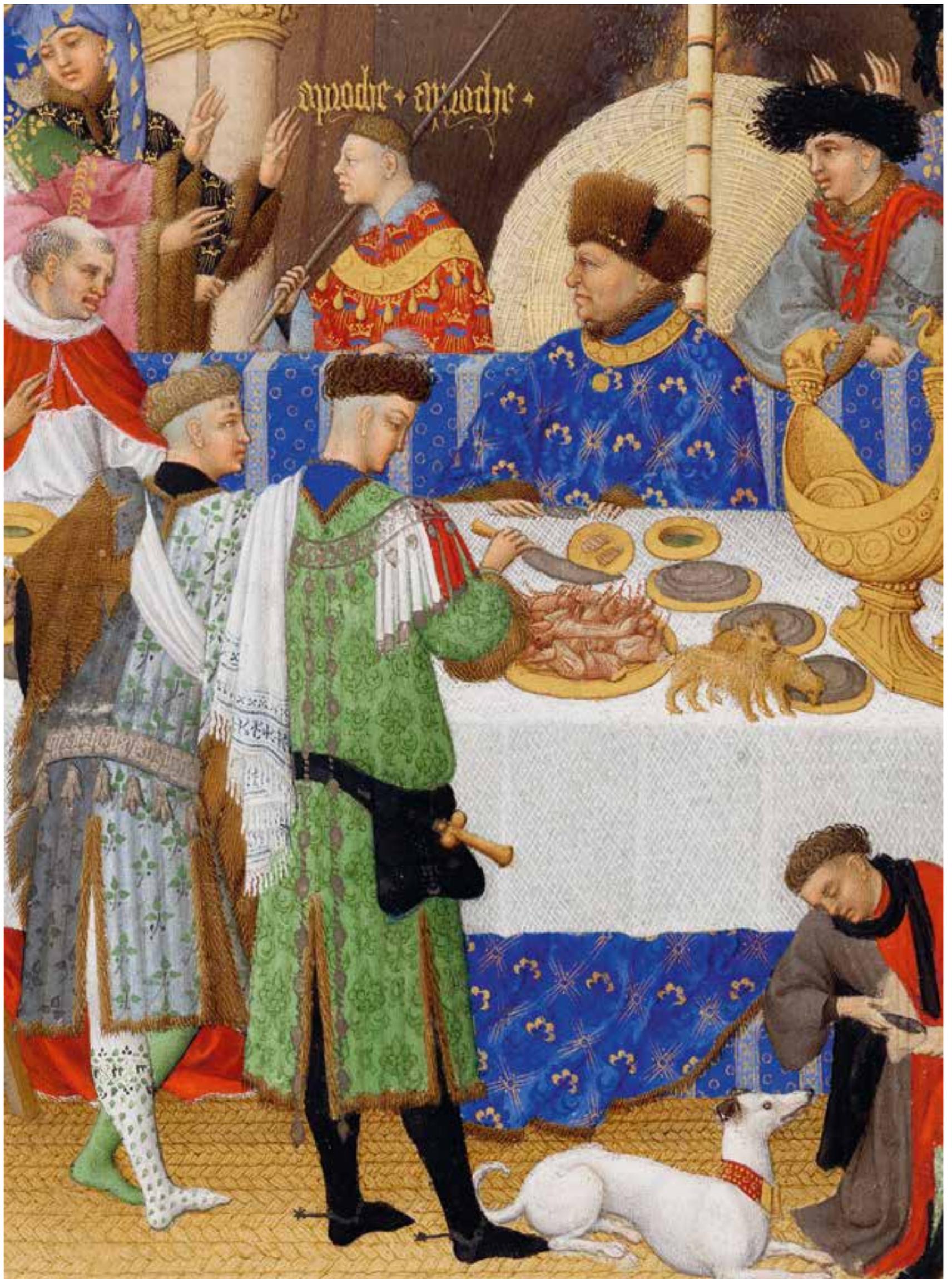
1 This text is a revised and greatly abbreviated version of Roelofs 2018. For the aldermen’s protocols, see Gorissen 1954; Gorissen 1957; Niessen, Roelofs, and van Veen-Liefink 2005; Roelofs 2005; Roelofs 2017a.
2 See, for example, a record in the Nijmegen aldermen’s protocols of June 20, 1419. Gorissen 1954, no. 156.
3 See Chantilly 2004; Paris 2004b; Nijmegen 2005; Husband 2008; Paris 2012; Amsterdam 2017–18; Chantilly 2025.

4 Huizinga 1919, 445, 448, 496.
5 Gorissen 1954; Gorissen 1957.
6 König 2003, 39–40; Stumpel 2016, 12–13.
7 On this origin, see Meiss 1974, I, 67; Niessen, Roelofs, and van Veen-Liefink 2005, 14.
8 Niessen, Roelofs, and van Veen-Liefink 2005, 14–15.
9 Ibid., 14.
10 Deshaisnes 1886, II, 790–91 (“Hermant Maleuel et Jacquemin Malaueel frères, jannes enfans et nepveus de Jehan Maleuel peintre et varlet de chambre

de mondit seigneur,” Archives Départementales de la Côte d’Or, Dijon (ADCO), inv.no. B 1519, fols 158v-159r); Roelofs 2017a, 15. In the early fifteenth century, French sources also refer to the brothers as “Manuel” and “Maluel” on several occasions.
11 Niessen, Roelofs, and van Veen-Liefink 2005, 24. A similar identification was also used for their father, who was referred to as “Arnoldi de Lymborch dicti Maelwael” in two Latin documents in 1415. See Ibid., 15.

12 With special thanks to Jef Janssens, Prof. emer. of medieval literature, Brussels, who has published extensively on the *Roman van Lymborch*, among other subjects.
13 Schellart 1952.
14 Johan Maelwael, long known in international scholarly literature by his Frenchified name “Jean Malouel,” had his original name restored in Nijmegen 2005, followed by an exhibition at the Rijksmuseum in 2017. See Amsterdam 2017–18.

**JEAN,
DUKE OF
BERRY**



1.

The Duke of Berry in the Mirror of His *Très Riches Heures*

Mathieu Deldicque

Would Jean of Berry be remembered today if it were not for his fabulous book of hours? Didn't the precious manuscript, in a sense, make the duke? Rarely have a book and its patron been so closely associated in the collective unconscious.

Son, brother, and uncle of a king, as he himself liked to proclaim, Jean of Berry, "filz de roy de France, duc de Berry et d'Auvergne, comte de Poictou, d'Estampes, de Boullongne et d'Auvergne,"¹ was one of the most brilliant "princes des fleurs de lis."² Gifted with a strong personality, a shrewd diplomat rather than a man of war, he lived a particularly long life—dying at the age of seventy-six—and left his mark on his time and his peers. Above all, the duke was a wise patron of the arts. His two sons predeceased him, and he used his extensive artistic patronage to consolidate his political activity and ultimately memorialize a life that, although unsettled by trials of all kinds, was rich in achievements. He undertook the *Très Riches Heures* against a backdrop of political and military upheaval. The work's pages include many depictions of the duke's possessions and places that were dear to him, and also evocations of certain family events. At times, the famous manuscript is an unconscious mirror of the duke's life (figs. 1 and 2) and especially of ambitions that remained unfulfilled, just as the book itself was left unfinished.



Fig. 2 Van Lymborch brothers,
Très Riches Heures, fol. 1v: January

Fig. 1 Van Lymborch brothers, *Très Riches Heures*,
fol. 1v: January, detail

THE BEAR VS THE LION

In the bottom right-hand corner of the Temptation of Christ, a lion (of Flanders?) sits watching a bear (of Berry?) up in a tree (fig. 9). The creation of the *Très Riches Heures* took place against the backdrop of the tumultuous struggle between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians, during which Jean of Berry repeatedly strove to maintain a balance between the two sides.¹⁵

The attack of madness suffered by King Charles VI in the forest of Le Mans on August 5, 1392 triggered a profound political crisis. The sometimes lengthy absences of the indispensable but now useless sovereign¹⁶ placed his brother (the Duke of Orléans), his uncles (the Dukes of Berry and Burgundy), and his cousin (the Duke of Anjou) at the center of power. Opposing views of government sometimes had to coexist and the Duke of Berry, who held a central position in the king's council, now spent more time in Paris, a capital that is well represented in the *Très Riches Heures* (fol. 6v). The scene showing the Healing of the Possessed (fig. 10) could be a reminder of the terrible illness that deprived the kingdom of its head and whose cure remained unlikely. The hopes raised by a short-lived improvement in the condition of Charles VI—who made a vow to the archangel during a pilgrimage to Mont Saint-Michel in February 1394 (depicted on fol. 195; see fig. 8), a pilgrimage that the pious Duke of Berry took part in—were soon dashed.

The death of the Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Bold, in 1404 placed his son John the Fearless at the head of this powerful family. John soon set himself against his cousin, Louis, the Duke of Orléans, in almost every area. The Duke of Berry, who was tasked with creating a counterweight with Queen Isabeau of Bavaria and the Duke of Bourbon (who were looking after the Dauphin, Louis of Guyenne), was compelled to mobilize the king's army to avoid a fratricidal conflict. He was driven to join the Orléans side, soon to be known as the Armagnac side, after the assassination of the Duke of Orléans in Paris by John's agents on November 23, 1407.¹⁷

Jean of Berry tried his best to avoid a civil war, orchestrating a reconciliation ceremony between the Duke of Burgundy and the son of the Duke of Orléans in Chartres in 1409, but his efforts were in vain. A few months later, Jean de Montaigu, a loyal follower of both Orléans and Berry, was executed on the orders of John the Fearless. In 1410, the Count of Armagnac, the head of the party that took his name (and whose members were recognizable by the white band or scarf they wore, as in the January miniature), joined with other princes to form the League of Gien. In opposition to this alliance, John the Fearless, followed by the population of Paris, gained the support of Charles VI, who had temporarily regained his health.

The Peace of Bicêtre in 1410 was followed by more conflicts in 1411, which led to the burning of Jean of Berry's castle in... Bicêtre. The Englishmen of King Henry IV, jumping at the chance, were called in by both sides. The towns of Étampes and Dourdan, which feature prominently in the *Très Riches Heures* (fols. 8v and 4v), were seized in November and December 1411.

The royal army, led de facto by the Duke of Burgundy, laid siege to Bourges from June 11 to July 14, 1412; most of the treasures of the Sainte-Chapelle were melted down to mint



Fig. 8 Van Lymborch brothers, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 195: St. Michael Slaying the Dragon, detail



Fig. 9 Van Lymborch brothers, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 161v: The Temptation of Christ, detail

Fig. 10 Van Lymborch brothers, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 166: The Healing of the Possessed

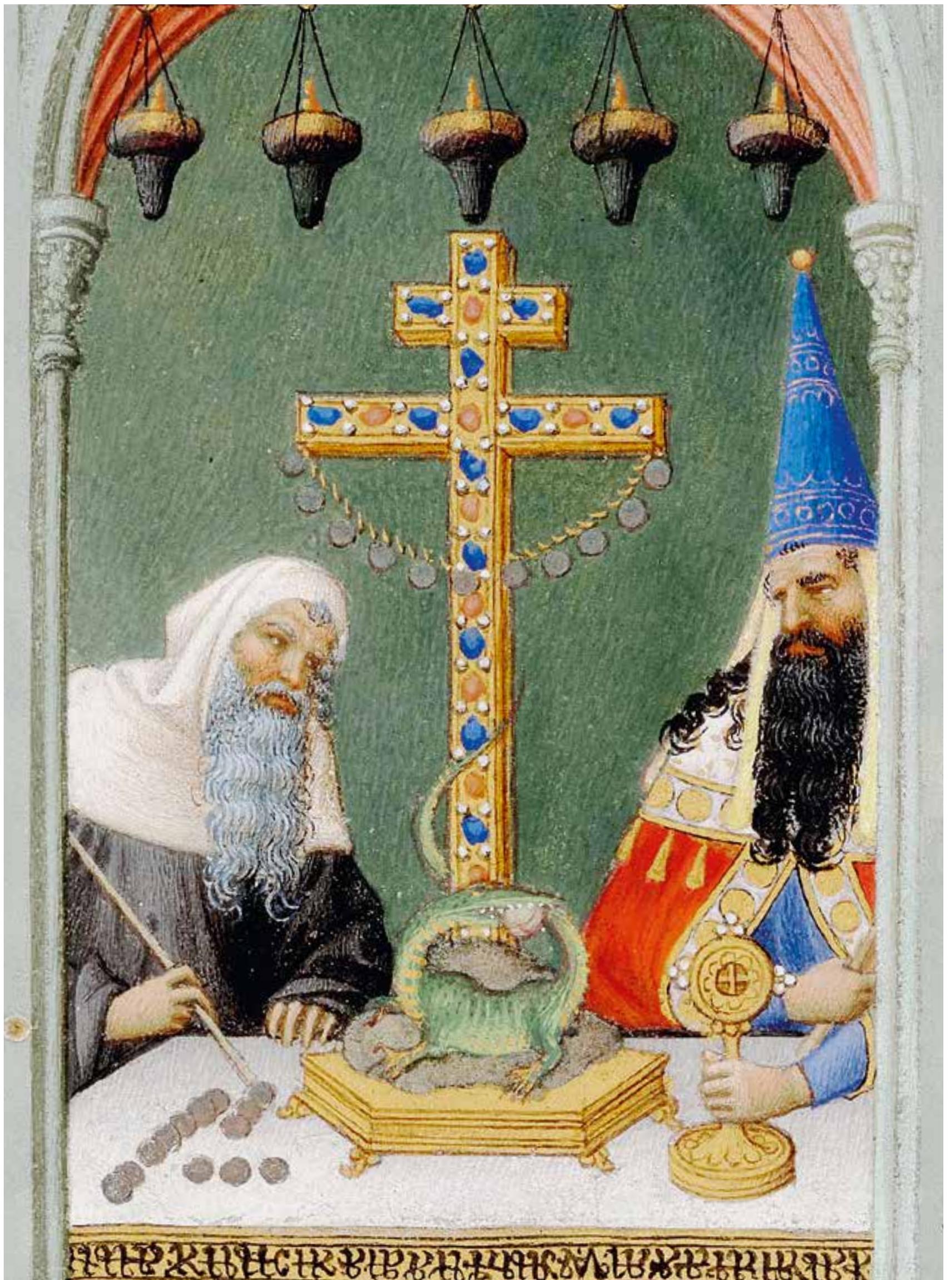


Comunica tertia in xl.



culi mei semper
ad dominum quia
ipse euellit de laqueo

pedes meos respice in me et
misere mei quoniam in
inuis et pauper sum ego. **p**
Ad te domine levavi ai



4.

Splendor principis: Jean, Duke of Berry and Gemstones

Philippe Malgouyres

Reading the various surviving inventories of the Duke of Berry's treasures is enough to boggle the mind, leaving one at a loss for words to even begin describing his collections. It is also difficult because there are many of these documents and they largely overlap because the list of the duke's belongings was constantly being updated, in time with the purchases he made, the gifts he received or granted, and the major donations he made to shrines, first and foremost to the Sainte-Chapelle in Bourges. Simply describing his passion for gemstone objects and glyptics is an arduous task. Let us try to give some figures—to be treated with caution, given the gaps in these inventories and the repetitions. Leaving aside reliquaries and crosses, there are more than two hundred entries for hardstone objects, twice the number owned by the duke's brother, Charles V.¹ Most of these are secular, if we are to rely on the terminology used, and were intended to embellish the duke's dining table: some twenty ewers, as many goblets and hanaps, around forty salt cellars, some twenty pieces of cutlery (forks and spoons), to which we must add around twenty-five "pots" and vases. Liturgical objects were far fewer in number: five holy-water buckets and ten pairs of cruets (cruets of this type belonging to the royal collections were reassembled around 1528 by Pierre Mangot) (fig. 3).² In the inventory, the materials are differentiated with precision: rock crystal, agate, chalcedony, jasper, serpentine, porphyry, amethyst, garnet, and in the few cases where the compiler

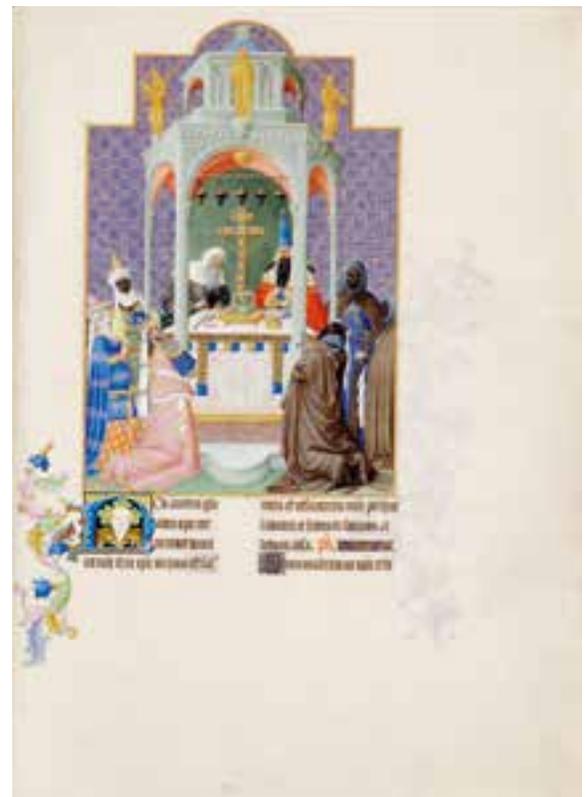


Fig. 2 Van Lymborch brothers, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 193: Mass of the Exaltation of the Cross

Fig. 1 Van Lymborch brothers, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 193: Mass of the Exaltation of the Cross, detail



Fig. 8 Seal of the Sainte-Chapelle in Bourges, impression of an intaglio (?) representing Marcus Aurelius (Bourges, Archives départementales du Cher)



Fig. 9 Icarus, Daedalus, Pasiphae, and Artemis, sardonyx cameo (Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, no. 2, inv. 25838)

sardonyx. A distinction must be made between “camahieux” in which there is an image (“un grant camahieu ouquel sont deux beaux visages” [a large ‘camahieu’ with two fine faces])²⁵ and various subjects “en camahieu.” The latter are not cameos, but often works in stone commesso, contemporaneous to the duke (“un petit tableau d’or... ouquel a un petit ymaige de Nostre Dame qui a le visage et mains de camahieu, le corps jusqu’à la ceinture d’un saphir, tenant son enfant nu fait de camahieu” [a small golden painting . . . with a small picture of Our Lady whose face and hands are ‘de camahieu,’ whose body to the waist is a sapphire, and who holds her bare Child made ‘de camahieu’]).²⁶ In many cases, it is impossible to tell: What is to be understood by “a teste de camahieu”?²⁷ Furthermore, it may also be an intaglio, despite the mention of “camahieu”: We have a clear example of this in the case of the “camayeu assis sur un cassidoyne, et oudit camayeu a une teste d’omme gravée à une main qui tient une espée, sur le bout de laquelle a un oisseaul volant” (‘camahieu’ placed on a chalcedony, and the said ‘camahieu’ shows the head of a man engraved, with a hand holding a sword with a bird in flight at its tip).²⁸ It is specified that this “camahieu” was mounted to form the seal of the chapter of the Sainte-Chapelle in Bourges.²⁹ The impression of this seal has been preserved³⁰ and shows that it was not a cameo but an intaglio, which is logical for a seal but contradicts the inventory. It depicts a bearded man in profile holding a scepter topped by an eagle (fig. 8).³¹ We suggest this might be Marcus Aurelius; this lost stone can be tied to various bronze medallions of the same size in which the emperor holds a scepter.³² On the other hand, it is very difficult to find anything approaching this large octagonal intaglio (about 4 cm per side) in the ancient stones that have survived.

What is immediately striking is the large number of medieval pieces, less biblical subjects than rings bearing the duke’s emblems: bear, fleur-de-lis, even his effigy. Among the stones that could be considered antique given their description, we suggested recognizing in the “camahieu plat, longuet sur le roont, en façon de fons de cuve, où il a un petit ymaige nu sur un pillier en maniere d’une ydole et trois autres ymaiges” (flat ‘camahieu,’ somewhat elongated in a round way, like the bottom of a vat, where there is a small naked image on a pillar after the manner of an idol and three other images),³³ a well-known cameo from the collection of Lorenzo de’ Medici with the story of Icarus (fig. 9).³⁴ Although a reading of the inventory is less rewarding here than its for the stone vases, we can grasp the importance of the duke’s glyptic collection from the works preserved. The duke had two works of goldsmithery enriched with cameos, the stones of which still exist: the reliquary bust of St. Benedict donated to the Basilica of Saint-Denis, and the cameo cross intended for the Sainte-Chapelle in Bourges (figs. 10 and 12). The cameos stemming from these two works, which were destroyed during the Revolution, are all in the Musée du Louvre.³⁵ Some are antique,³⁶ others medieval. Of the latter, leaving aside the few Byzantine stones, it is clear that these cameos are highly skillful imitations, genuine fake antiquities.³⁷ We will give just one example, the most masterly (fig. 11). This laurelled profile is one of the nine cameos that adorned the Bourges cross. Commissioned from the goldsmith Hermann Rince and unfinished on the duke’s death, it replaced a stau-rotheke reliquary that the duke was forced to surrender during the siege of Bourges in 1412.³⁸ It is known to us from various

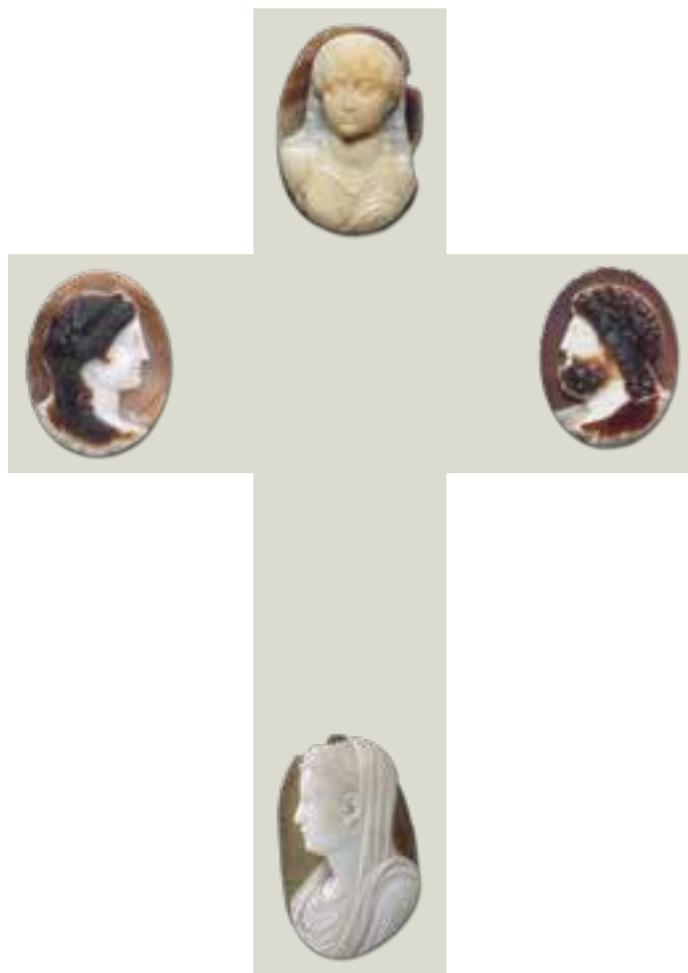


Fig. 10 Reconstruction of the cameo cross at Bourges (front) (Paris, musée du Louvre, département des Objets d'art. Top: Agrippina the Elder (?), inv. MR 56. Left: Juno [Livilla (?)], inv. MR 49. Right: Jupiter [Drusus the Elder (?)], inv. MR 48. Bottom: Laurelled profile, inv. MR 54)



Fig. 12 Reconstruction of the cameo cross at Bourges (back) (Paris, musée du Louvre, département des Objets d'art. Top: Serapis, front view, inv. MR 58. Left: Tiberius and Drusus the Younger (?), inv. MR 53. Right: Serapis in profile, inv. MR 59. Center: Christ enthroned and crowned by two angels, inv. MR 80. Bottom: Minerva, inv. MR 60)

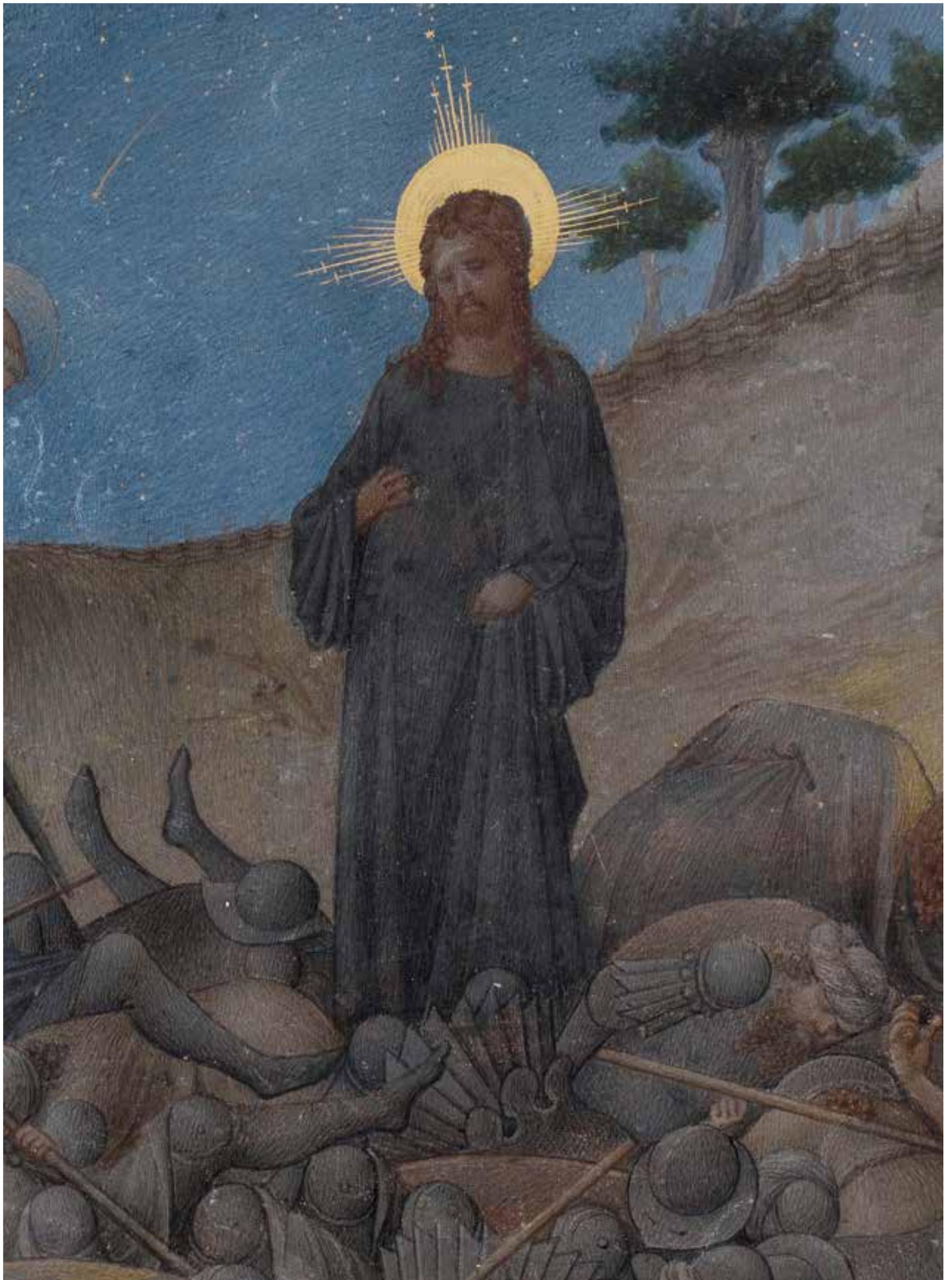


Fig. 11 Laurelled profile, one of the nine cameos of the cross at Bourges (Paris, musée du Louvre, département des Objets d'art, inv. MR 54)



Fig. 13 *Christ Enthroned and Crowned by Two Angels*, sardonyx cameo (Paris, musée du Louvre, département des Objets d'art, inv. MR 80)

**THE VAN
LYMBORCH
BROTHERS**



7.

The Ultimate Masterpiece of the Van Lymborch Brothers

Mathieu Deldicque

The acquisition of the *Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry* by the Duke of Aumale in 1856 played a fundamental role in the rediscovery of the Van Lymborch brothers, a role that is often overlooked. In fact, it was only in 1881, when Léopold Delisle linked their final and most extraordinary masterpiece to the record of “unes très riches heures” (a very rich book of hours) in the inventory drawn up after the Duke of Berry’s death that “Pol and his brothers” (also mentioned in the inventory) began to recover their artistic identity. In 1904, following the first archival study devoted to them a few years earlier,¹ another expert in the Musée Condé collections, Paul Durrieu, a graduate of the École Nationale des Chartes and a member of L’Institut de France, published the first monograph on the three brothers.² However, it was not until Millard Meiss’s magnum opus, seventy years later, that the three painters were properly contextualized, their body of work enriched, and, above all, the pictorial revolution they set in motion understood.³ The exhibitions devoted over the last twenty years to the *Très Riches Heures*⁴ and the *Belles Heures*⁵ in addition to the *Maelwael Van Lymborch Studies*⁶ have helped to deepen our knowledge of the brothers, so much so that they are now among the most-studied artists of the French Middle Ages. No doubt the most recent analyses of their final masterpiece presented in this book will shed even more light on these prodigies of illumination.

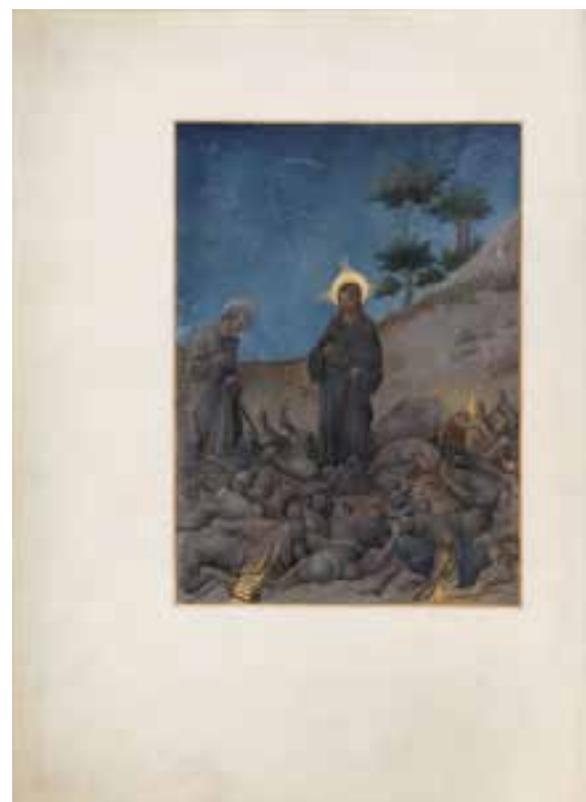


Fig. 2 Van Lymborch brothers, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 142v: The Arrest of Christ

Fig. 1 Van Lymborch brothers, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 142v: The Arrest of Christ, detail

Fig. 3 Following pages: Van Lymborch brothers and Jean Colombe, *Très Riches Heures*, fols. 71v–72: The Procession of St. Gregory or The Institution of the Great Litany

The other contributions of the three brothers were more sporadic: Consider the isolated miniature of St. Christopher Carrying the Christ Child, from an unknown book of hours (fig. 16),²⁵ which is similar to the *Belles Heures* (c. 1408–10), or the page added around 1412 to the *Petites Heures* showing Jean of Berry setting off on a pilgrimage (fol. 288). In addition to the illuminated charter mentioned above and the page from the lost *Belles Heures de Notre-Dame*, the latter miniature shows that the Van Lymborch brothers also specialized in portraying their duke, including in group scenes where the other figures are not singled out, as in the month of January in the *Très Riches Heures*.²⁴ Following the example of Jean de Cambrai, whose portraits, given their realism, are the sculpted equivalents of those of the Van Lymborch brothers, the brothers went along with Jean of Berry's fascination with his own image and the abundant use he made of it. This pronounced interest in portraiture did not stop there: in November 1408, Paul van Lymborch, who we know was an easel painter,²⁵ was working

at the duke's château in Bicêtre, no doubt on the series of portraits of French kings and Roman emperors that could be admired there. For his part, Johan Maelwael painted a likeness of John the Fearless in 1413 for King John I of Portugal.

The oeuvre of the Van Lymborch brothers has recently been enriched by several drawings formerly attributed to the Master of St. Jerome, an artist once considered a member of the Van Lymborch entourage or one of their followers, but who today is readily identified with one of the three brothers.²⁶ In addition to the frontispiece of the *Bible moralisée* (Moralized bible) (fol. A; fig. 17), which is more accomplished than the illuminations of the quires of the same work executed by Paul and Johan between 1402 and 1404, and probably dating from around 1410, we can now add four marginal drawings from the *Heures Douces* (fols. 105, 108v–109, 110), completed in 1409, and preparatory drawings for miniatures painted afterwards for the *Psalter of Henry VI*, begun before 1415).²⁷ As for the frontispiece of the Valerius Maximus manuscript,²⁸ perhaps intended



Fig. 15 Van Lymborch brothers, *Belles Heures*, fol. 54v: The Adoration of the Magi



Fig. 16 Van Lymborch brothers, *St. Christopher Carrying the Christ Child*, leaf from a book of hours (Washington, National Gallery of Art, Acc. No. B-13, 520)



Fig. 17 Van Lymborch brothers, *Bible moralisée*, fol. A: St. Jerome in His Study (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département des Manuscrits, Français 166)



Fig. 18 Entourage or follower of the Van Lymborch brothers (?), Valerius Maximus, *Facta et dicta memorabilia*, fol. 1 (Rome, Vatican Library, Cod. Reg. Lat. 939)

for Jean of Berry or at any rate for a member of the royal family (fig. 18), it has been attributed both to the Van Lymborch studio and to the Van Lymborch brothers themselves. This miniature seems to us to be a little earlier than the generally accepted date of around 1410²⁹ and should rather be compared with those of the *Bible moralisée* of 1402–04 (excluding the frontispiece, which is later, as we have seen). The interior of the study, with its paneled barrel vault, can be seen, for example, on folio 7v. Rather than an echo of the miniature in the *Belles Heures* depicting St. Jerome translating the bible (fol. 187v), the illumination of the Valerius Maximus is either the result of an earlier inspiration, featuring a shortish figure—a motif destined for a brilliant development, culminating in the frontispiece of the *Bible moralisée*—or the work of a collaborator or follower not far removed from the Spitz Master.

MONSEIGNEUR WANTS HIS PEOPLE TO BECOME RICH

However, this list obscures one fact: The *Belles Heures* is the only manuscript whose decoration was completed by the Van Lymborch brothers. The relative slowness in completing

a rather small undertaking can be explained by the fact that these illuminators, some of whom were also painters or goldsmiths, had other tasks. They regularly returned to Nijmegen on business or for family reasons. As court artists, and as such exempt from the constraints of the market and the constant pursuit of clients, they were among Jean of Berry's regular entourage, taking part in the duke's life and sometimes accompanying him on his travels.

In fact, the duke wanted "his people to become rich," as his treasurer Jean de Bétizac told the king's council, which reproached him for enriching himself at the expense of the inhabitants of Béziers.³⁰ Like the treasurer, the Van Lymborch brothers were greatly favored by their patron, Paul, in particular, who enjoyed a special place in the ducal entourage. The Duke of Berry, who liked to marry his entourage off to eligible parties, took it upon himself to provide Paul with a rich heiress. The duke considered giving him the very young Gillette, daughter of the late Gilles Le Mercier, a wealthy merchant from Bourges.³¹ The duke had housed the young girl in his château at Étampes (the same one depicted in the month of August); she had been subjected to a particularly gruesome abduction, probably committed as early as August 1406 by the



Fig. 23 Taddeo Gaddi, *The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*. c. 1330 (Paris, musée du Louvre, département des Arts graphiques, inv. 1222)

similar to the *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple* frescoed by Taddeo Gaddi in the Baroncelli chapel in Santa Croce church, Florence (1328–38; fig. 24), which was known from certain graphic documents, such as the presentation drawing in the Louvre (fig. 23).⁵³ Other motifs may have circulated thanks to sketchbooks, such as the dogs mauling their prey (fol. 12v), a motif disseminated by means of manuscripts (*Livre d'Heures et Missel à l'usage des Frères Mineurs*)⁵⁴ and drawings (fig. 11, p. 252).⁵⁵

One of the most remarkable images in the *Très Riches Heures* shows a bird's-eye view of Rome reduced to its ancient and Christian monuments, as described in the twelfth-century guide to the *Mirabilia urbis romae*: the tomb of Romulus and Remus, the columns of Trajan and Antoninus Pius, the Dioscuri, the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, and more (fol. 141v;



Fig. 24 Taddeo Gaddi, *The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*. 1328–38 (Florence, Church of Santa Croce, Baroncelli Chapel)



Fig. 25 Van Lymborch brothers, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 54v: Purification of the Virgin

Fig. 26 Following pages: Van Lymborch brothers, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 54v: Purification of the Virgin, detail



or significant details—such as the angel’s crown hidden under a piece of the shroud, and St. John’s hands veiled as a sign of concern and respect—reveal the imagination of the painter of Vic. There are no pathetic gestures here—consider the apostle and the angels of the *Large Round Pietà*—but rather a subtle and hypersensitive emotion, tending toward greater gentleness and serenity: Christ’s already sallow face expresses not suffering, but inner peace (figs. 4 and 10).

From a technical perspective, the analysis of the scientific documents has proven disappointing,⁵² both in terms of refuting the identity of the maker of this work with that of the *tondo* and supporting the attribution of the painting to one of the Van Lymborchs. On the basis of infrared photographs and infrared reflectography (figs. 16–18), the underdrawing hardly differs from one painting to another: Linear in each case, though it appears more supple in the *Christ of Vic*

and has a specific line around the eyebrows, which curiously end in a comma, an element that we would tend to regard as a signature of the “Vic Master” (fig. 18). However, there is no visible trace of this unusual detail on the infrared photographs of the *Belles Heures*,⁵⁵ nor on those of the *Très Riches Heures* recently taken by the C2RMF (Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musées de France), perhaps because of the reduced size of the images. The underdrawing of the Chantilly miniatures shows pronounced cross-hatching and particularly abundant decorative patterns at this stage, which contrast with the more simplified outline of the two painted panels.⁵⁴ Conversely, the *Christ of Vic* and several pages from the *Belles Heures*⁵⁵ and the *Très Riches Heures*⁵⁶ exhibit the same masterful and varied use of silver and, especially, gold. Whether matt or burnished—these two decorative techniques are sometimes combined, as seen in Christ’s halo (fig. 17),⁵⁷—gold



Fig. 16 Attributed to Johan Maelwael, *Large Round Pietà*: detail of the face of Christ, infrared reflectography. Photo E. Lambert, J.-L. Bellec – C2RMF



Fig. 17 Attributed to the Van Lymborch brothers (Paul?), *Man of Sorrows*: detail of the face of Christ, infrared reflectography. Photo E. Lambert, J.-L. Bellec – C2RMF



Fig. 5 Van Lymborch brothers, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 26, detail: angel musicians emerging from a crown of petals. 1412–16



Fig. 6 Van Lymborch brothers, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 38v, detail: drolleries. 1412–16

This manuscript may have been in France—perhaps through Valentina Visconti (d. 1408), Duchess of Orléans, or Isabelle de Valois (d. 1409), courted in 1403 by Giovanni Maria Visconti, the new Duke of Milan—since its Adoration of the Magi (fol. 6v) also seems to have inspired several details in that of the *Très Riches Heures* (fol. 52).¹⁰ Lastly, the wisps of smoke rising from the furnace (fol. 40v; fig. 7) and the dark clouds casting golden rays around Mont Saint-Michel (fol. 195; fig. 2, p. 231) are a highly original form of marginal decoration that plays on the materiality of the image's frame.

VARIATIONS ON THE ACANTHUS

The involvement of the Van Lymborch brothers as ornamentalists remained limited, however, and the ornamented or historiated initials in the *Très Riches Heures* were entrusted to several other hands.¹¹ The first was the Master of the Breviary of John the Fearless, who invented acanthus leaves with composite florets, inspired by Prague manuscripts from the time of Kings Wenceslas and Sigismund of Luxembourg, perhaps via the initials of the Orosius Master¹² and the florets of another Bohemian master who, around

Fig. 7 Van Lymborch brothers (miniature) and Master of the Breviary (initials), *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 40v: Three Hebrews in the Furnace. 1412–16



Deus miserat
nū et benedicat
nobis illuminet uul
tum suum super nos
et miseratur nū.

Ut agnoscamus in
terra uiam tuam in
omnibus gentibus
salutare tuum.

Confiteantur tibi
populi deus: confitean
tur tibi populi omnes.

Extentur et exultet
gentes qm iudica popu
los in equitate et gentē
in terra dirigis.

Confiteantur tibi
populi deus: confiteā
tur tibi populi omne
terra dedit fructum su
um.

Benedicat nos deus

deus nr benedicat nos
deus et metuant eum
omnes fines terre.

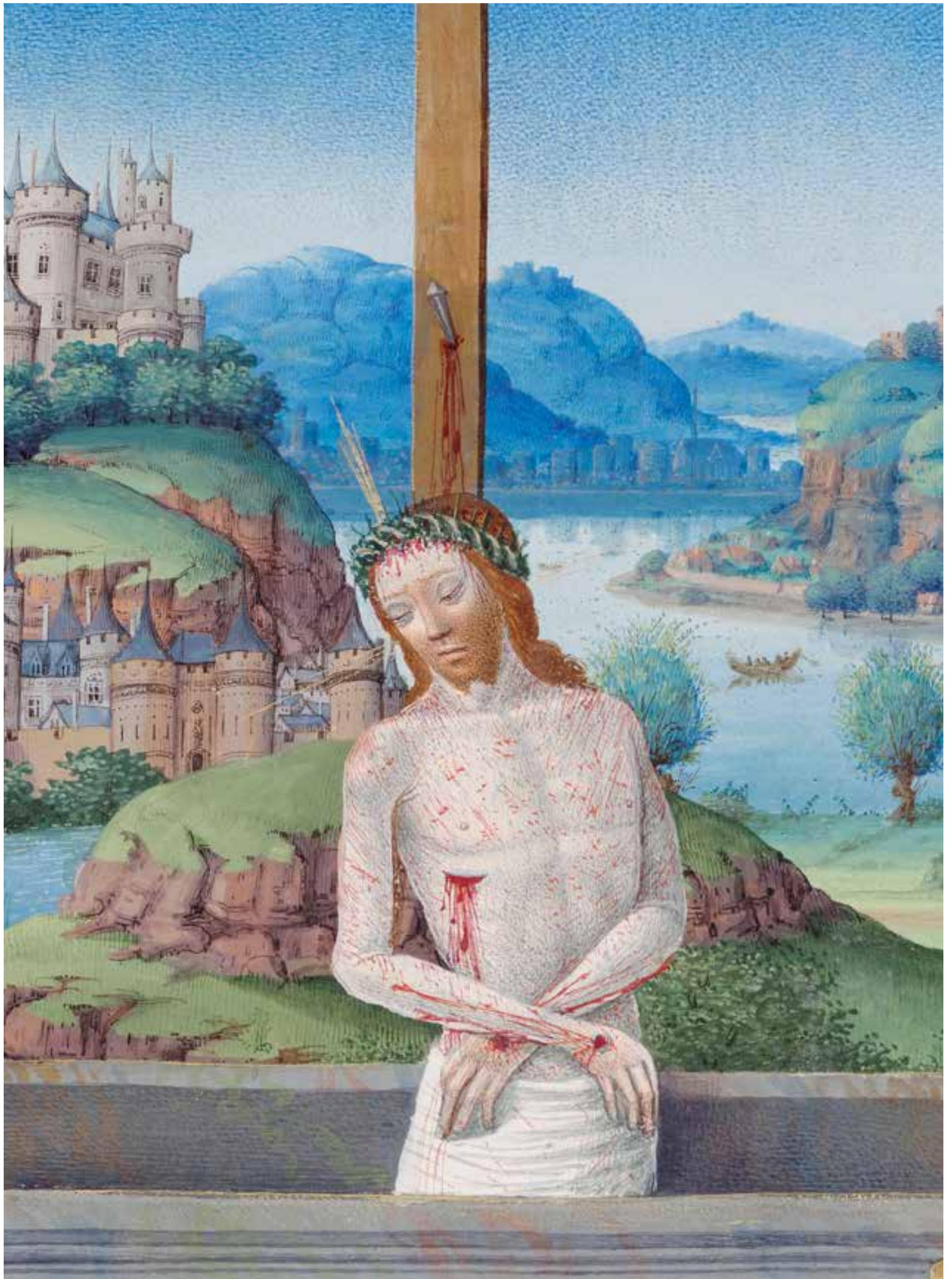
Gloria patri et filio.



Benedicite omnia
opera domini
domino: laudate et su
perexaltate eum in se
cula.



THE OTHER DECORATION CAMPAIGNS



14.

The Contribution of Jean Colombe and the Influence of the *Très Riches Heures* on Berry Illumination

Marie Jacob-Yapi

When the young Duke of Savoy Charles I (fig. 1) hired the Bourges illuminator Jean Colombe in 1485 to complete the decoration of the book of hours he had possibly inherited from his late aunt, the Queen of France, Charlotte of Savoy (d. 1483), some sixty miniatures, including twenty-four full-page ones, and more than 300 initials containing figures had still to be painted or finished.¹ Some were already well underway. Among the big “hystoires” (narrative scenes), the Funeral of Raymond Diocrès (fol. 86v) and the Christmas Mass (fol. 158v; fig. 3) had already been drawn by the Van Limborch brothers.² The latter had also probably sketched some elements of the Resurrection (fol. 182), as the motif of the huge oblong tomb running diagonally across the miniature and the soldier flat on his back in the foreground is to be found in another of their works for Jean of Berry, the *Belles Heures*, dated between around 1405 and around 1408–09 (fols. 73v and 152v). The painting of the month of September in the calendar (fol. 9v) had already been started in the 1440s by Barthélemy d’Eyck, who had had time to complete the château of Saumur in the background, including the tilt barrier and the cluster of columns.

When this work was commissioned, Jean Colombe (c. 1440–93) was at the height of his career. Since 1470, he had been called upon by the highest officials in the kingdom of France, including Jean Robertet (secretary to Louis XI), Louis de Laval-Châtillon (Grand Master of the Waters and Forests), Louis, Bâtard de Bourbon (Admiral of France), and many others.



Fig. 2 Jean Colombe, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 75: Man of Sorrows with Charles of Savoy and Blanche of Montferrat

Fig. 1 Jean Colombe, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 75: Man of Sorrows with Charles of Savoy and Blanche of Montferrat, detail

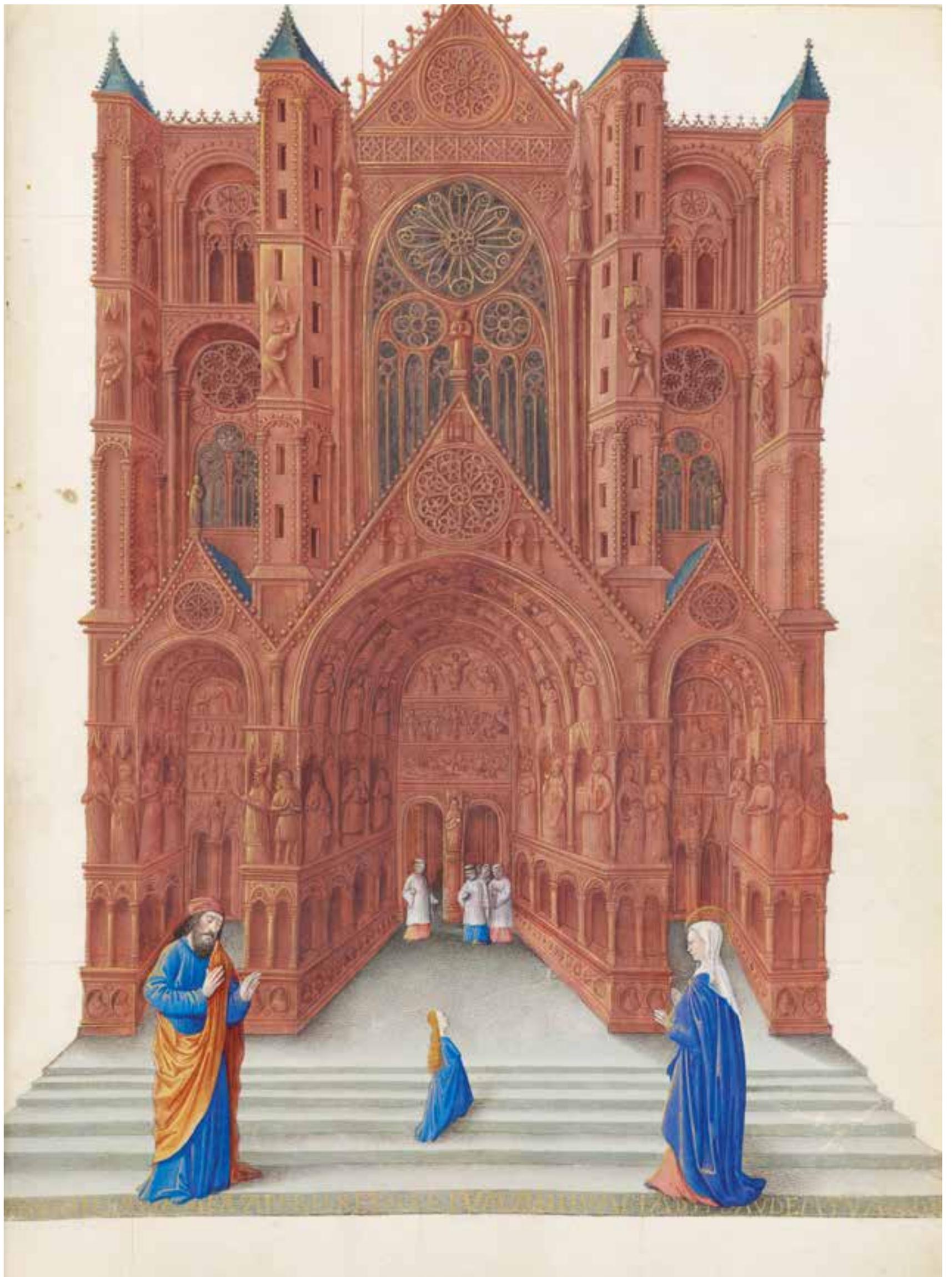




Fig. 7 Jean Colombe, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 79: Pentecost



Fig. 8 Jean Colombe, with the collaboration of the Montluçon workshop, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 126: The Celestial Court

in the *Bureau Hours*⁸ and then developed in the *Hours of Louis de Laval*, most of his large paintings are set in impressive, gilded, Gothic architectural frames surmounted by ogee arches that give them the appearance of tabernacles. He had borrowed the idea from an Angevin illuminator, the Master of Smith-Lesouëf 30, who had introduced the motif in the early 1460s in the hours known as the *Hours of Mary Stuart*⁹ and in the book of hours in the Bibliothèque nationale de France that earned him his nickname.¹⁰ But Jean Colombe gave his frames a singular monumentality by adorning them with a lot of bas-reliefs and statues nestling beneath tapering pinnacles. This sensitivity to sculpture, which he had inherited from his father Philippe and his brother Michel Colombe, was given majestic expression in the double portrait of Charles I of Savoy and his wife Blanche of Montferrat kneeling in prayer beneath historiated high canopies on either side of the *Man of Sorrows* (fig. 2). To leave as much room as possible for his large paintings, the illuminator from Bourges rewrote the first lines of the text, now with capitals engraved on the base of his frames,

now on a fictitious parchment scroll, two methods he had learned in the late 1460s from Jean Fouquet when he completed Fouquet's *Robertet Hours*. He then used them in several of his books of hours, but in the *Très Riches Heures*, unlike the other manuscripts, he indulged more freely in trompe-l'oeil effects. The fragment of parchment hanging casually from the border of the frame depicting Christ and the Canaanite Woman (fol. 164), with its initial "R" in relief imitating an ancient inscription, is particularly successful in this respect.

His leaves feature several compositions that are typical of his repertoire. The Pentecost scene (fol. 79; fig. 7)—with the dove of the Holy Spirit descending upon the Virgin kneeling in the center among the Holy Women, the apostles, and other disciples, in a sumptuous architectural setting adorned with a sculpted colonnade and a semi-dome—follows a pattern that he returned to throughout his career. Further on, the depiction of the Celestial Court, for the week's Wednesday Office (fol. 126; fig. 8), blends the two visions of Paradise he had developed in the *Hours of Louis de Laval* on folios 177v and 320,

Fig. 6 Jean Colombe, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 137: The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple

Fig. 9 Following pages: Jean Colombe, with the collaboration of the Montluçon workshop, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 126: The Celestial Court, detail



15.

The *Très Riches Heures* and Calendars in Flemish Manuscripts from the 1520s

Till-Holger Borchert

In the early decades of the sixteenth century, Gerard Horenbout, one of the most accomplished Flemish artists of the time, had the opportunity to study the famous calendar and other miniatures executed by the Van Lymborch brothers and later illuminators including Barthélemy d’Eyck and Jean Colombe in the *Très Riches Heures* of Jean of France, Duke of Berry. Although these miniatures had been painted more than a century earlier, their innovative character and unusual format—they were the first full-page calendar illustrations—prompted the artist to reconsider his own work. They were a source of inspiration for the miniatures that Horenbout contributed to the calendar of the famous *Grimani Breviary*, unquestionably the most ambitious manuscript in early sixteenth-century illumination in Flanders (figs. 6–9).¹

Horenbout gives his own version of what he saw.² His miniature for the month of January, for example, depicts a gentleman’s supper, echoing the Van Lymborch image of the Duke of Berry’s supper. However, Horenbout reorganizes the interior while taking care to retain several details, such as the dresser on the left, on which the precious tableware is displayed. Although he replaces the tournament tapestry in the duke’s manuscript with a “millefleurs” tapestry, he retains the tournament motif, which he turns into a stone bas-relief on the lintel of the fireplace. Horenbout also took liberties with the representation of the figures. He altered their arrangement, but without changing the overall character of the image.

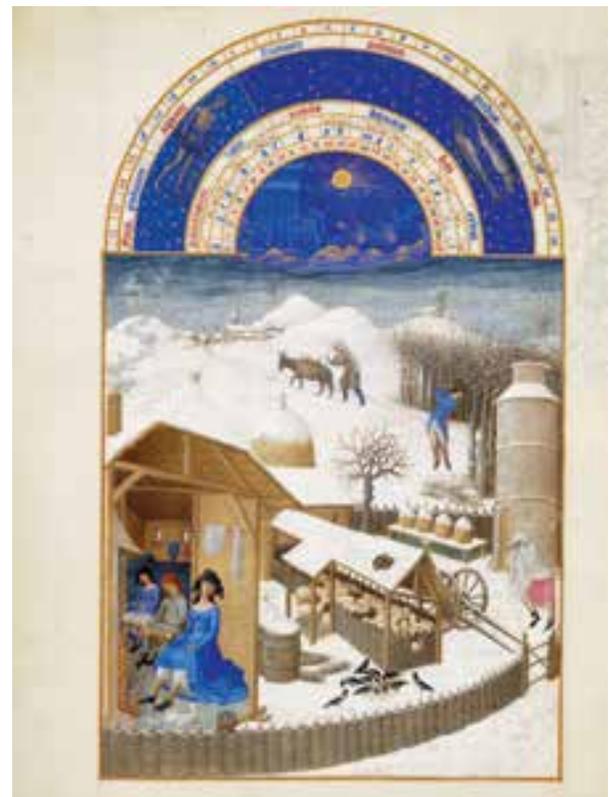


Fig. 2 Van Lymborch brothers, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 2v: February



Fig. 6 Alexandre Bening, Simon Bening, and Gerard Horenbout, *Grimani Breviary*, fol. 1v: January, c. 1510–20 (Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, cod. Lat. I, 99)



Fig. 7 Alexandre Bening, Simon Bening, and Gerard Horenbout, *Grimani Breviary*, fol. 2v: February, c. 1510–20 (Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, cod. Lat. I, 99)



Fig. 8 Alexandre Bening, Simon Bening, and Gerard Horenbout, *Grimani Breviary*, fol. 6v: June, c. 1510–20 (Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, cod. Lat. I, 99)



Fig. 9 Alexandre Bening, Simon Bening, and Gerard Horenbout, *Grimani Breviary*, fol. 10v: October, c. 1510–20 (Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, cod. Lat. I, 99)

By adapting certain miniatures from the calendar of the *Très Riches Heures* in his work, Horenbout unwittingly made an essential contribution to the homogenization of Flemish calendar iconography. The motifs and compositions by the Van Lymborch brothers that he revisited in the calendar of the *Grimani Breviary* present features that were to become increasingly common in the representation of the months and seasons found in Flemish art. Through the models used in various manuscripts executed by Simon Bening's workshop in Bruges, these elements were another source of influence for Pieter Bruegel in his *Four Seasons*.⁴²

- 1 Venice, Bibl. Marciana, cod. Lat I, 99, fols. 1v–13r.
- 2 For a detailed comparison of the Horenbout miniatures with those of the Van Lymborch brothers, see König and Heyder 2016, 71–95.
- 3 Frimmel 1886 (1974), 104.
- 4 Los Angeles and London 2003–04, 313–487.
- 5 Borchert 2024, 22.
- 6 Villela-Petit 2018b.
- 7 Pearsall and Salter 1973, 152–60; Hansen 1984, 33–60; Kren and Rathofer 1988; Kren 1988, 350–61, 376–81.
- 8 See, e.g., the *Hennessy Hours* (Brussels, KBR, Ms. II 15), fol. 1v; the *Petites Heures* (London, BL, Ms. Egerton 1147), fol. 6v; and the calendar fragment held in Munich (BSB, Ms. Clm 236737), fol. 2v (see Wolf 2006, 95).
- 9 Los Angeles and London 2003–04, 190–91 (note by Th. Kren).
- 10 Eichberger 2002, *passim*, especially 145–63; Eichberger 2018.
- 11 Lille, Arch. dép. du Nord, Chambre des Comptes de Lille no. 123925, 4 (fragment of an inventory of the library of c. 1520); Paris, BnF, Cinq cents de Colbert 128, fol. 5v (inventory of 1523–24). Checa Cremades 2010, III, 2412 (no. 1520) & 2429 (nos. 1523/4).
- 12 Debae 1995, *passim*; Eichberger 2002, 124–33, 167–75; Legaré 2005, 217–18.
- 13 Legaré 2005, 214–15; Rivière Ciavaldini 2018, 94–96.
- 14 Zimmermann 1883; Legaré 2005, 219.
- 15 Blockmans 1992, 33–44; Morgan 1992; Legaré 2005, 207–14.
- 16 Debae 1995, x–xi; Legaré 2005, 216–17.
- 17 On the library of Amadeus VIII, see Saroni 2004, *passim*; on Colombe's work for the House of Savoy, see Seidel 2011.
- 18 Lille, Arch. dép. du Nord, B 434 no. 17892, cited by Debae 1995, xi.
- 19 San Lorenzo, Real Bibl. de Escorial, Vitr. 1, see Bartz and Seidel 2011.
- 20 Brussels, KBR, Ms. 9246, see Debae 1995, 70–77 (no. 45); Paris, BnF, Arsenal, Ms. 3479, see Debae 1995, 30–35 (no. 30).
- 21 On the provenance of the *Très Riches Heures*, see Villela-Petit 2018b, and essay by M. Deldicque, pp. 283–89.
- 22 Debae 1995, 3–8 (Paris, BnF, Colbert 128, Chapelle, 3).
- 23 *Ibid.*, 494 (no. 367); identification proposed by Eichberger 2002, 197–98.
- 24 Eichberger 2002, 195–205, 372–88.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 373–74; Eichberger 2021, 145–46.
- 26 Campbell and Foister 1986, 719–21; Krieger 2012, 41–72.
- 27 London, BL, Ms. Add. 34294; see Evans and Brinkmann 1995, 566–86; Los Angeles and London 2003–04, 429–31; Krieger 2012, 67–72, 439–58.
- 28 The other two artists mentioned—erroneously—by Michiel are Zuan Memelin (Hans Memling) and Livieno da Anversa (Lieven van Lathem); see Frimmel 1886 (1974), 104; König and Heyder 2016, 14–15, 19–20; on the reliability or not of Marcantonio Michiel's *Notizie*, see Campbell 1981, 468.
- 29 Los Angeles and London 2003–04, 166–67; Krieger 2012, 438–39; König and Heyder 2016, 25–31.
- 30 Vienna, ÖNB, Ms. 1897; see Los Angeles and London 2003–04, 371–73; Krieger 2012, 48–60.
- 31 London, BL, Ms. Add. 18851; see Los Angeles and London 2003–04, 347–51.
- 32 New York, Morgan Library, Ms. M 52; see Los Angeles and London 2003–04, 321–24; Krieger 2012, 169–208.
- 33 Cleveland Museum of Art, inv. 1963.256; see Los Angeles and London 2003–04, 358–61.
- 34 Antwerp, Museum Mayer van den Bergh, inv. 946; see Los Angeles and London 2003–04, 324–28; Dekeyzer 2004, *passim*; Krieger 2012, 208–26.
- 35 Dekeyzer 2004, 157–80.
- 36 J.C. Heyder, in König and Heyder 2016, 48–59; As-Vijvers 2013, 303–18.
- 37 Los Angeles and London 2003–04, 383–85 (note by E. Morrison); Morrison 2006, 149–57.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 344–45 (note by M.W. Ainsworth).
- 39 König and Heyder 2016, 16, 220.
- 40 Frimmel 1886 (1974), 104.
- 41 Hansen 1984, 193–203, 223–26, 229–46; Kren 1988, 357–58.
- 42 Borchert 2019, 96–108.

REDISCOVERY & RECOGNITION



17.

From Genoa to Chantilly: The Invention of the *Très Riches Heures* of the Duke of Berry

Marie-Pierre Dion

“Je suis en marché pour acheter à Gênes le plus beau manuscrit que j’aye vu, au point de vue de l’art, après le Julio Clovio du roi de Naples” (I am seeking to buy in Genoa the most beautiful manuscript I have seen, in terms of the art, after the Giulio Clovio of the King of Naples), wrote Henri d’Orléans, Duke of Aumale, on January 11, 1856, referring for the first time to the *Très Riches Heures*.¹ Forty years later, his preference for the *Farnese Hours* composed by Giulio Clovio, described as the “Michelangelo of Miniatures,” had melted away. The Duke of Aumale devoted twelve pages to a note on the book of hours he still called the “Heures du duc de Berry.” “Ce livre tient une grande place dans l’histoire de l’art: j’ose dire qu’il n’a pas de rival” (This book occupies a significant place in the history of art; I dare say it has no rival), he emphasized as he finished writing the note on the manuscript, a few months before his death in 1897. The prince was only thirty-three when he discovered the manuscript, but was already one of the most important private bibliophiles in England, where he was living in exile. The acquisition, which was no accident, endowed his collection with an unrivalled prestige, which the prince would strive to preserve at his estate in Chantilly, located about forty kilometers above Paris.



Fig. 2 Van Lymborch brothers, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 17: St. John at Patmos



Fig. 4 Chantilly, Cabinet des livres rebuilt in 1875–77, display cases in the eastern section. Photo c. 1900 Chantilly, Musée Condé, inv. 2016-6-71 (Chantilly, musée Condé, inv. 2016-6-71)



Fig. 5 Hughes & Mullins, *Antonio Panizzi*. Ryde, UK, 1888, after an original dated c. 1860 (Florence, Alinari Foundation)

THE ACQUISITION OF THE *TRÈS RICHES HEURES*

While he was seeking to buy the *Très Riches Heures* in January 1856, Aumale was also negotiating the purchase, in Brussels, of the *Livre des propriétés des choses* (On the properties of things) by Bartholomew the Englishman, which he suspected also came from the Duke of Berry. One might assume that he immediately recognized the Duke of Berry in the illumination of January in the *Très Riches Heures* and immediately decided to acquire a book that was princely in every respect. However, the ties he had forged since 1848 with Antonio (known as Anthony) Panizzi, an Italian patriot and political refugee in London who had been appointed chief librarian of the British Museum, were decisive (fig. 5).²¹

In a famous passage from his catalog, which contributed to the legend of the manuscript, the Duke of Aumale set the scene:

In December 1855, I left Twickenham to go and visit my mother, who was ill at the time in Nervi, near Genoa. Panizzi had enabled me to view an interesting manuscript that had been brought to his attention by a friend of his in Turin. I was introduced to the ‘Hours of the Duke of Berry,’ kept at the time in a boarding school for young ladies at Villa Pallavicini, on the outskirts of Genoa. A quick inspection allowed me to appreciate the beauty, style, and originality of the miniatures and all the decoration. I recognized the portrait of the prince, his arms, the dungeon at Vincennes, etc. I was told, as was customary, that my competitors were serious; I did

not respond to this warning, which seemed banal and which was, however, more legitimate than I thought. My mind was made up, and I put the matter in Panizzi’s hands. Within a month, the ‘book of hours with miniatures, bearing on the cover the Serra and Spinola arms of Genoa’ (as described in the receipt), was in my possession, sold by Baron Felix de Margherita, of Turin, who himself had inherited it from Marquis Jean-Baptiste Serra, for the principal sum of 18,000 francs. Adding 1,280 francs, commission, appraisal, and shipping costs, we arrive at the total price of 19,280 francs, which I actually paid. (fig. 6)²²

What did a French prince, linked to the Bourbons-Sicilies by his mother and wife, have in common with the ardent, pro-Risorgimento, Italian activist who had had to flee the Duchy of Modena in 1823? Aumale had been a regular visitor to the British Museum’s library since 1849: John Holmes, a prominent bibliographer and curator of manuscripts, gave him J. Barrois’s *Bibliothèque protypographique* (1830), a book that, wrote Aumale, “introduced us to the libraries of Charles V and his brothers.”²³ Panizzi, who was in charge of the printed collections, was one of Aumale’s close advisors from 1850, when the Standish collection was sold, and was a regular guest at Orleans House.²⁴ Nicolas Barber has shown how real bonds of friendship were forged between the two men, both exiles who loved their respective homelands and shared many links with Italy and a taste for books; the sympathy felt by the duke, a liberal faithful to the ideals of the Enlightenment, for the Italian patriot is clearly apparent in the collections at Chantilly.²⁵ On

his return from Turin, Panizzi told Aumale about the sale of the manuscript, and supported the duke's dealings with Chevalier Angelo de Mengaldo, a former friend of Byron and a fervent nationalist, who acted as intermediary between buyer and seller.

Some twenty kilometers separated Nervi, where Aumale was visiting his mother, from Pegli, where a meeting was organized at Villa Pallavicini. The manuscript Aumale discovered was covered in a red morocco Italian binding and belonged to a number of prominent Francophile families. Vincenzo Spinola di San Luca, a minister plenipotentiary of the Republic of Genoa in Paris, divided the succession to his immense estate between his four cousins, sons of Giacomo Serra. One of them, Gian Battista Serra, known as Serra the Jacobin, senator of the short-lived Ligurian Republic (1799), inherited the manuscript. Baron Felice de Margherita, for his part, asserted that he owned the book, thanks to his father, Luigi de Margherita, former mayor of Turin and a magistrate. The latter had a personal connection to Serra's family, having legitimized his daughter before she married Felice.

Were there other factors in the Duke of Aumale's favor? His mother, Queen Maria Amalia, came to visit what the duke described as a "boarding school for young girls," a philanthropic foundation created in 1850 by Bianca De Simoni Rebizzo, another Risorgimento figure. In any case, the Duke of Aumale won out over Adolphe de Rothschild, who would later acquire the *Belles Heures*. This manuscript was also offered to the Duke of Aumale, who noted in his diary on April 14, 1880: "pas de vues" (no views), namely, nothing comparable to the images in the Van Lymborch calendar.²⁶

THE VALORIZATION OF THE MANUSCRIPT

Henri d'Orléans soon became aware that "the manuscript bought in Genoa"—the "wonderful book," as the curators of the British Museum called it—would be the jewel of his collection. Shipped on February 3, 1856 from Genoa to London, where it arrived at the British Museum, the manuscript was unpacked on February 15. It immediately raised a number of questions for the prince, as Aumale pointed out to Cuvillier-Fleury on February 18: "Je vais préparer une série de notes et questions que je vous enverrai en vous priant de les soumettre aux conservateurs de la Bibliothèque que je m'obstine à appeler nationale bien qu'elle soit l'œuvre des rois, parce que cela met tout le monde d'accord" (I shall prepare a series of notes and questions that I will send to you, asking you to submit them to the curators of the Library, which I insist on calling national, even though it is the work of kings, because that puts everyone in agreement).²⁷ On February 25, he said he has already been to the photographer's twice, despite the bad weather.²⁸ On February 26, the manuscript was presented to Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace. Word spread: "Je suis écrasé de demandes de gens qui veulent voir mon manuscrit de Gênes" (I am overwhelmed with requests from people who want to see my manuscript from Genoa), Aumale wrote on March 16.²⁹ New forms of presentation emerged when the Aumale hosted the Fine Arts Club at Orleans House on May 21, 1862, perhaps the first exhibition organized by a bibliophile (fig. 7).³⁰



Fig. 6 Angelo de Mengaldo, *Account of the use of the 22,000 francs received from Louis Wüst by order of HRH the Duke of Aumale for the acquisition of the manuscript bearing the arms of the Spinola and Serra families.* Genoa, February 21, 1856 (Chantilly, Bibliothèque du musée Condé, Na 10-161)



Fig. 7 Henri d'Orléans, *Description sommaire des objets d'art faisant partie des collections du duc d'Aumale, exposés...* [at Orleans House, Twickenham, May 21, 1862: one of the first private presentations of the *Très Riches Heures* du duc de Berry]. (Chantilly, Bibliothèque du musée Condé, V-G-24)



18.

From “Wonderful Book” to Mythical Manuscript

Marie-Pierre Dion

The *Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry* changed hands several times before any trace of it was lost in the early sixteenth century. The prestigious red morocco binding decorated with the Spinola arms, in which the book resurfaced two and a half centuries later, is typical of the 1760s. It was from this period onward that books of hours, once disparaged by bibliophiles, became an object of admiration and particular distinction in the world of book collectors.

“The fact is that it is one of the most beautiful things to be seen,”¹ wrote the Duke of Aumale after familiarizing himself with his new manuscript. The arrival of the “wonderful book”—as the curators of the British Museum call it—at Twickenham, on the outskirts of London, marked the start of its ever-growing reputation. Thanks to several factors, the *Très Riches Heures* acquired an unprecedented reference value as a resource—as the quintessential manuscript of fifteenth-century France for historians, as a masterpiece to be admired by the public, and as an exceptional work accompanied by a multitude of reproductions and citations.

The reputation of the *Très Riches Heures* in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is now an area of research in its own right. It was initiated in 1990 by Michael Camille, echoing Walter Benjamin’s famous essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.”² Pursued further by Emmanuelle Toulet, Laurent Ferri and Hélène Jacquemard, as well as Fabienne Henryot,³ this field questions the uses to which heritage is put, yesterday and today.

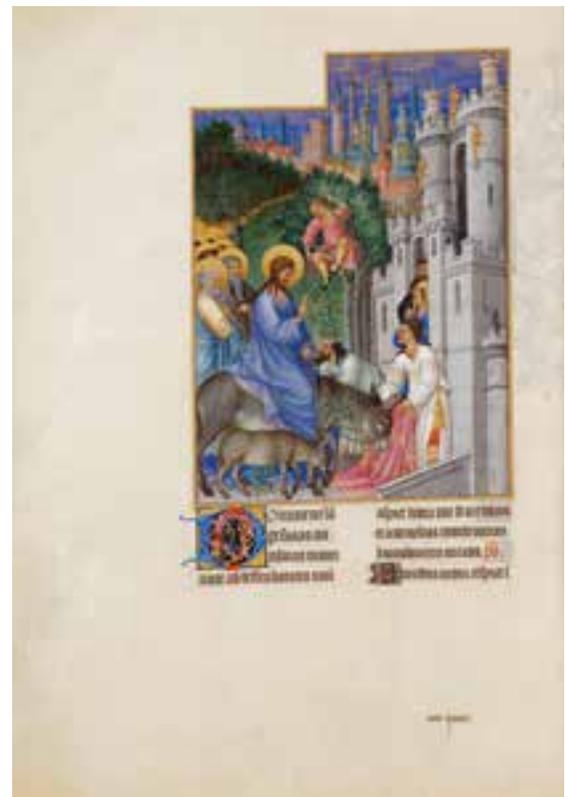


Fig. 2 Van Lymborch brothers, *Les Très Riches Heures*, fol. 173v: The Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (Mass for Palm Sunday)

Fig. 1 Van Lymborch brothers, *Les Très Riches Heures*, fol. 173v: The Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (Mass for Palm Sunday), detail

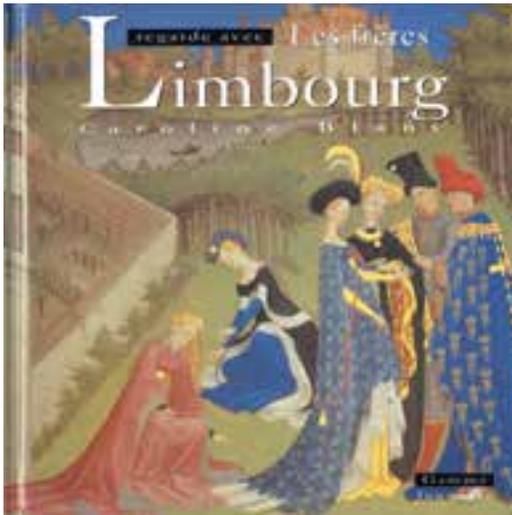


Fig. 18 Cover image (reversed from the original), Caroline Blanc, *Les Frères Limbourg*, Paris, Gamma Jeunesse, 1993 (private collection)

exploring the lives of people in the Middle Ages and the history of medieval art. An object of cultural consumption and sharing on social media, the manuscript is now subjected to fragmentation, rapid visualization, and erratic browsing (fig. 18).

The images of the calendar months have frequently captured the attention of the media. On January 5, 1948, *Life* magazine printed several hundred thousand cheap copies of “the world’s most famous calendar” in twelve full-page color photographs, slightly larger than the original illuminations, and censoring the genitals of the peasants in the month of February (fig. 19).³⁶

The French government commissioned large posters of the magnificent view of the month of September to promote the châteaux of the Loire and tourism in France (fig. 20), while the French postal service issued two stamps in 1965 and 2013 with print runs of over seven and five million, respectively (fig. 21).

School textbooks have been another important vector. Fabienne Henryot notes that as early as 1908, images from the *Très Riches Heures* were featured on magic lantern slides for schools, as part of a series dedicated to the history of miniature art. Textbooks and teaching materials have frequently used images from the *Très Riches Heures* calendar, especially after 1975 and 2000, when French teaching methods promoted the use of images (fig. 22). In the twentieth century, the two most frequently used illuminations were those depicting agricultural work in March and June. The very brief accompanying information made it difficult to contextualize them or to



Fig. 19 The Book of Hours . . . , *Life*, January 5, 1948, 22 (Chantilly, Musée Condé, 2-NF-148)

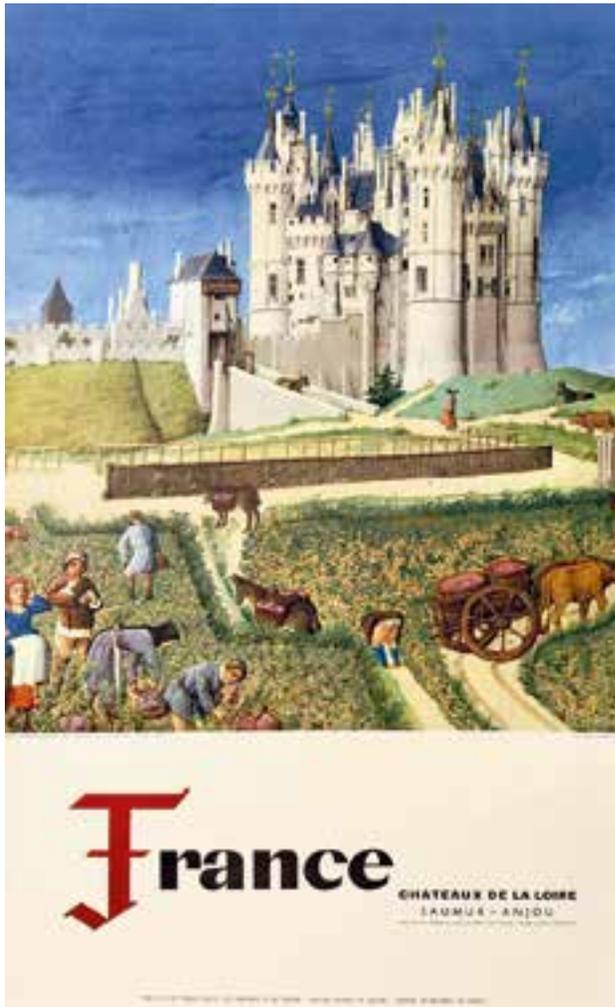


Fig. 20 *France. Châteaux de la Loire*, poster designed by Jacques Dubois, printed by Draeger. Paris, Ministère des travaux publics, Direction du tourisme, 1956 (private collection)



Fig. 21 “First Day” envelope of the stamp designed and engraved by René Cottet, based on a detail from the illumination of August. Chantilly, 1965 (private collection)

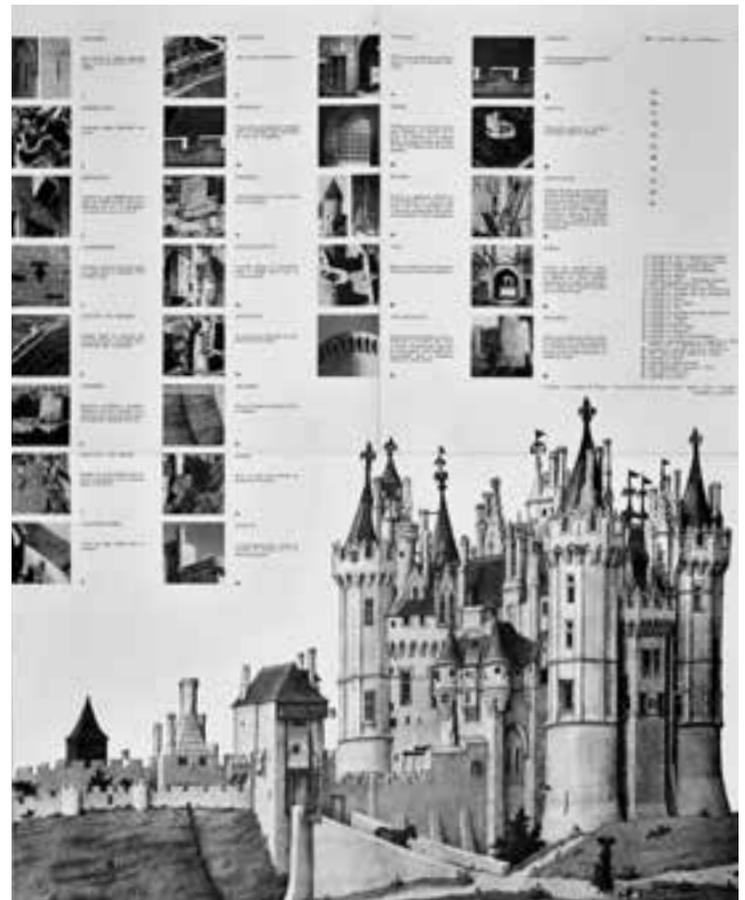


Fig. 22 *Le Château fort*, educational file by Jean and Marie-Clotilde Hubert, illustrated fold-out board, Paris, *La Documentation photographique*, no. 5-253, March 1965 (private collection)

ANALYSES & RESTORATION



20.

Defining the Preservation-restoration and Exhibition of the *Très Riches Heures*

Coralie Barbe and Florence Malo

“Révélez ; je ne suis nullement disposé au mystère en ce qui concerne mes raretés et d’ailleurs, le livre ne peut qu’y gagner” (Reveal; I am not at all inclined to mystery when it comes to my rarities, and besides, the book can only gain from it), wrote the Duke of Aumale to his former tutor, Alfred-Auguste Cuvillier-Fleury, who became his Parisian representative in 1856, the year he acquired the *Très Riches Heures*.¹

What did the Duke of Aumale mean by the injunction “reveal”? If we put aside the religious meaning of the notion of revelation, we are left with two explanations: on the one hand, it can mean bringing to light what is unknown, and on the other, making someone or something suddenly known.

It was in the midst of this reflection that we were contacted in 2022 by the curators of the Musée Condé at Chantilly, who were concerned about the state of deterioration of the *Très Riches Heures* and were contemplating a research and development project for the manuscript. Several tears and dark stains visible on the first bifolia of the book were a cause for concern. In addition, several of the miniatures showed lifting of the pictorial layer, visible to the naked eye. Finally, the Bibliothèque nationale de France had already expressed concern about the preservation of the illuminations in this bound form, given the considerable undulations of the parchment leading to the embrittlement of the pictorial layers. How could the material preservation of the manuscript be improved over the long term? What was the actual condition



Fig. 2 Van Lymborch brothers, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 171: The Resurrection of Lazarus

Fig. 1 Van Lymborch brothers, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 171: The Resurrection of Lazarus, detail



Fig. 3 *Grimani Breviary*, front cover
(Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, cod. Lat. I, 99)

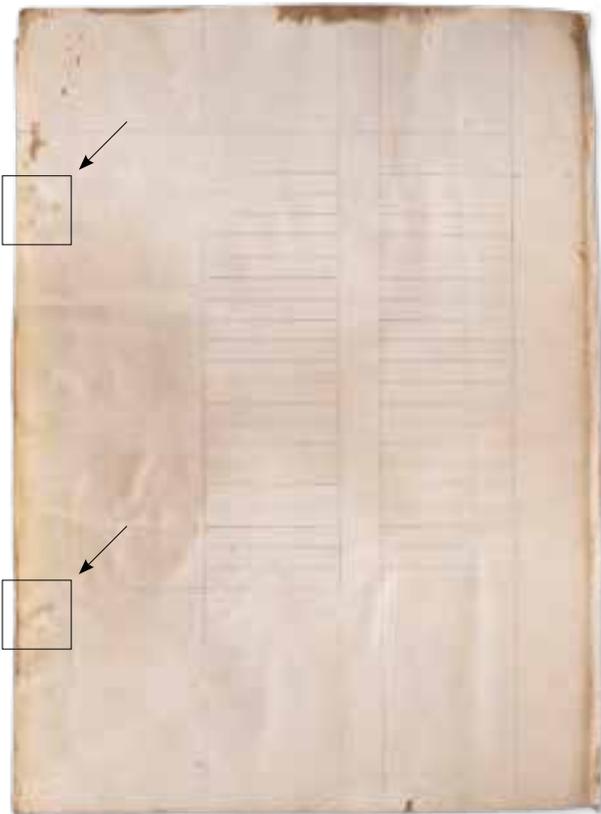


Fig. 4 Traces left by the clasps of the *Très Riches Heures*

of the miniatures? And as for the binding, which was evidently carried out at a later date, was it detrimental to their preservation, as is often the case with manuscripts bound later? Finally, was it possible to optimize the display of this precious manuscript without denaturing it?

As this catalog goes to press, the restoration of the manuscript is not yet complete and will not be finished until after the exhibition. However, in order to satisfy the requirements of the Duke of Aumale, we shall “reveal” the necessary elements of historical, stylistic, and technical reflection that have gone into developing the preservation-restoration project for the masterpiece of the Van Lymborch brothers.

A BRIEF MATERIAL HISTORY OF THE *TRÈS RICHES HEURES*

The Duke of Berry’s estate inventory of 1416 established that the manuscript was still in progress and consisted of a set of loose quires, simply enclosed in a wooden case.² Paul Durrieu concluded from the mention of the manuscript in the 1523 inventory that it was then present in the Chapel of the Dukes at Margaret of Austria’s palace in Mechelen. This inventory mentions, among other things, a “grand heure escripte à la main lesquelles n’ont pas de couvert ne fermeilletz” (a large book of hours written by hand with neither cover nor clasps), “depuis couvert de velours et y mis ung fermilet d’argent” (since then, covered in velvet and fitted with a silver clasp).³ According to Christopher de Hamel, it was Martin des Ableaux, one of the jewelers at the court of Margaret of Austria, who first bound this precious manuscript.⁴ The presence of the manuscript at the Mechelen court can also be deduced from the similarities between the *Très Riches Heures* and the *Grimani Breviary*, now kept in Venice.⁵ As the inventory indicates, this initial binding may have resembled that of the *Grimani Breviary*, namely a binding covered in red velvet, decorated with various metal clasps (fig. 3). Indeed, the manuscripts of the princes of the time were frequently adorned with precious oriental and Italian silks. Jean of Berry’s library contained 309 manuscripts, nearly half of which were decorated with fabric.⁶ To prevent the parchment leaves from becoming distorted, metal clasps were attached to the boards. The metallic traces (probably silver) observed on the last leaf of the manuscript would have been left by the clasps of the binding, which has now disappeared (fig. 4).

On the death of Margaret of Austria in 1530, the manuscript was held by Jean Raffault, Lord of Neufville, her treasurer general of finances. It is likely that it was then brought from the Netherlands by Ambrogio Spinola, commander-in-chief of the Spanish forces in the Netherlands; indeed, it bears the Spinola arms on its back cover. In the 1830s, the manuscript passed to the Serras, a Genoese family allied to the Spinolas, whose arms were placed over those of the Spinolas on the front cover.⁷ The Duke of Aumale, who acquired the manuscript in 1856, was probably careful to preserve it intact, keeping it in its full red morocco binding adorned with armorial bearings. To protect and enhance the book, he commissioned renowned jeweler Antoine Vechte to make a case in burr walnut covered with a chased and repoussé silver plate (fig. 5).⁸



Fig. 5 The manuscript in a case decorated with a goldsmith's plaque crafted by Antoine Vechte

the body of the book was reinserted into the covers, and an extra thickness, due to the cardboard of the cover, is perceptible at the upper clasp. The spine of the binding is blackened in the center, probably as a result of the humidity made necessary by its temporary detachment. The sewing, redone using hemp threads, is quite tight, and the layer of adhesive that was applied to the spines of the quires to facilitate their cohesion has caused the inner margins of the parchment leaves to crinkle. Conversely, the disassembling of the morocco spine from the quires makes it easier to open the volume (figs. 10 and 11). The new sewing is still strong and holds all the sections together properly, with the exception of the first, which is in danger of coming loose. This loosening is accentuated by the fact that the bottoms of the first two bifolia show breaks, tears, and gaps linked to brown stains (fig. 16) whose nature, yet to be identified, could be tannic, coming from the wood or leather of an earlier binding.

The 206 leaves are made of parchment, a hygroscopic material whose dimensions vary with thermo-hygrometric (temperature and humidity) fluctuations. To limit this deformation, medieval bookbinders placed clasps on the covers; these exerted pressure and kept the leaves relatively flat. In fact, most illuminated manuscripts still in their original binding feature miniatures that are in a very good state of preservation. When paper replaced parchment, this habit was lost, and bookbinders simplified materials and techniques. Thus, the bookbinder responsible for making the new binding of the *Très Riches Heures* did not feel it necessary to add these protective elements. As a result, this medieval manuscript includes several relatively deformed leaves, the causes of which, in addition to the above, are manifold. The first is inherent to the material itself, a parchment made of more or less homogeneous collagen fibers (the fibers on the animal's spine being thicker and denser than those on the sides). In the case of the *Très Riches Heures*,



Fig. 16 First quire of the manuscript, loose and showing large brown stains (Photo RMN)

the leaves are crossed perpendicularly by the spine. The most heterogeneous areas, namely the neck and lower edges, are located on the manuscript's outer margins, which show pronounced undulations. Conversely, the gutter should, in theory, be more homogeneous and therefore mechanically more stable. The history of this manuscript decided otherwise, and the deformation of this margin, often observed in medieval manuscripts, can here be attributed to the following operations:

- The three successive “bindings” or assemblies undergone by these leaves, in the form of seams and important moisture deposits due to the application of layers of adhesive.
- The assembly by gluing of independent leaves, carried out during the binding in the sixteenth century, and potentially performed again by the bookbinder in the eighteenth century, then by Gustave Macon.
- Successive additions and removals of tissue papers by gluing.

Once this diagnosis had been made, it was necessary to assess the impact of the parchment's undulations on the pictorial layers of the large miniatures. Indeed, a paint layer will be better preserved and will therefore adhere more to its support if the latter is flat and moderately deformed during consultation.

To do this, we estimated the amplitude (“thickness”) and penetration (“length”) of these undulations empirically, namely by using a ruler placed on the surface of the manuscript's gutters. The amplitudes of the undulations vary approximately between 1 mm and 4 mm, while their penetration varies between 3 cm and 6 cm, subsiding along the length. Since the margins of the miniatures range from 3 cm to 4.5 cm, we estimated that a range of 1 cm to 3 cm from the left or right edges of the miniatures is likely to be affected by these deformations. Moreover, these undulations, relatively pronounced at the beginning of the volume, diminish from folio 96 onward (that is, halfway through the work). In all, there are eight large miniatures for which the impact of these marginal undulations on the adhesion of the paint layer to the support has been deemed serious. These are the months of September and December and the Meeting of the Three Magi (fol. 51), as well as miniatures with little or no margins, namely Zodiacal Man (fol. 14), Terrestrial Paradise (fol. 25), the Procession of St. Gregory (fols. 71 and 72), Job on the Dung Hill (fol. 82), and the Funeral of Raymond Diocrès (fol. 86). No impact was deemed alarming. Similarly, the undulations visible on the outer margin, which are relatively pronounced on some leaves, have little impact on the pictorial layer at the left or right edges of the miniatures (fig. 17).

To complete this assessment, we carried out a rigorous examination of the pictorial layers of the miniatures, exposed for this purpose under a binocular loupe (fig. 18).³¹ To do this, all the leaves, whether loose or bound, had to be properly fixed. A stainless steel plate, sheathed in new parchment, was used, along with a set of magnets whose interface was protected by alum-tanned skin. Weakened areas (chipped or flaked) were assessed for strength using a paper point,³² following the method described by conservators Debora D. Mayer and Alan Puglia,³³ and a complete mapping of the state of conservation of each miniature tested was carried out.

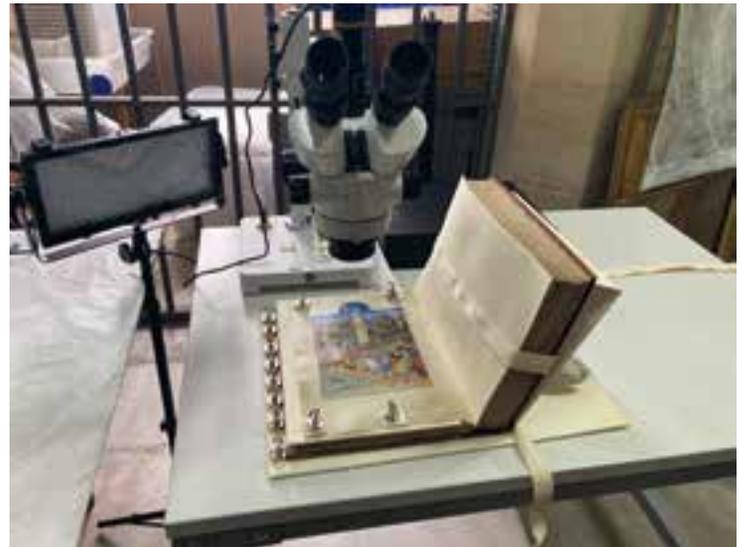
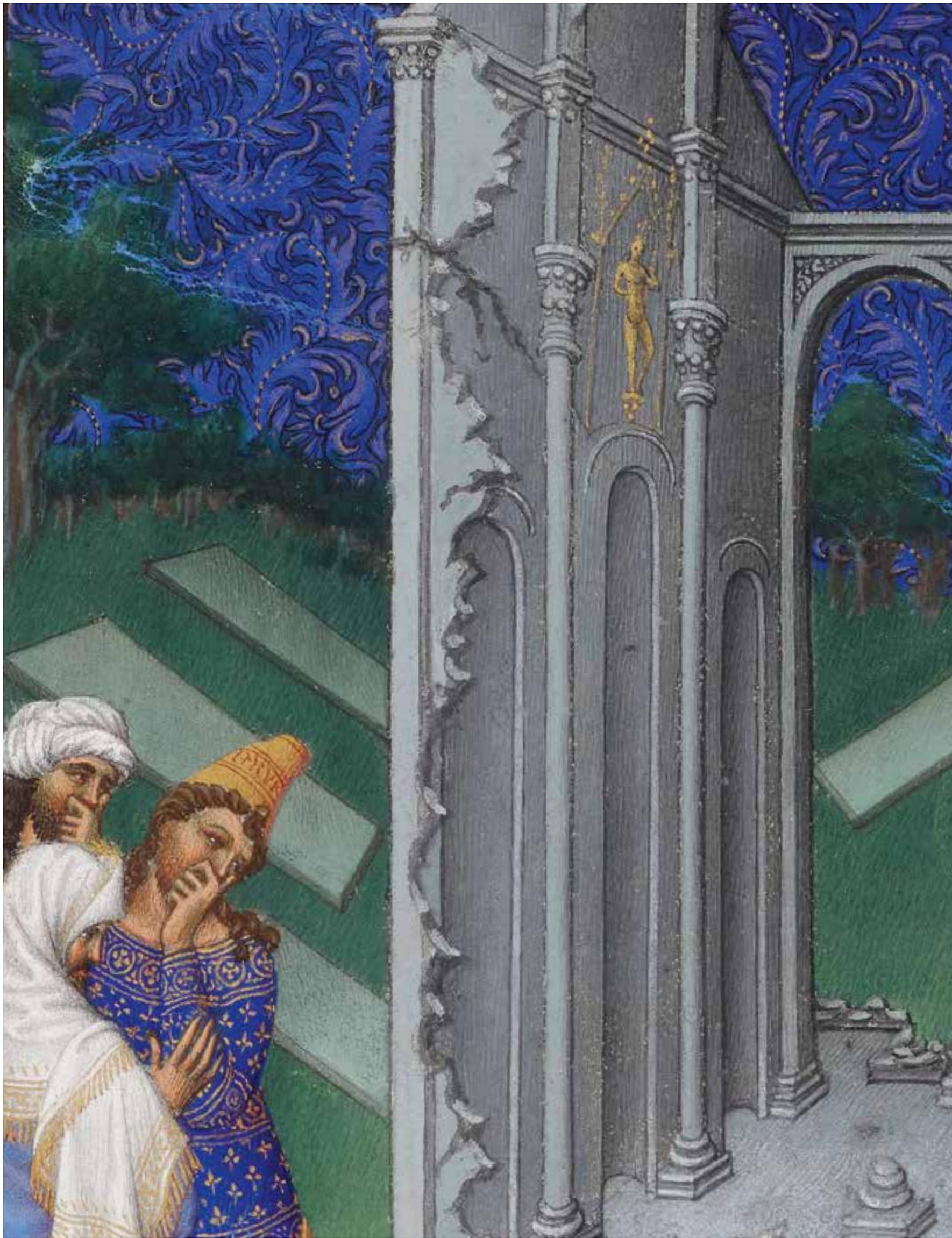


Fig. 17 Diagram showing the amplitude and penetration of the undulations on the leaves



Fig. 18 Setting up the manuscript for examination under binocular loupe





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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BAV (Vatican City): Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
BGE (Geneva): Bibliothèque publique de Genève
Bibl. du musée Condé (Chantilly): Bibliothèque du musée Condé
Bibl. Mazarine (Paris): Bibliothèque Mazarine
BL (London): British Library
BnF, Ms. (Paris): Bibliothèque nationale de France, département des Manuscrits
BM (Angers): Bibliothèque municipale
BM (Bourges): Sainte-Chapelle
BM (Metz): Bibliothèques-Médiathèques de Metz
BMI (Epinal): Bibliothèque multimédia intercommunale d'Épinal,
Bodl. Library (Oxford): Bodleian Library
BSB (Munich): Bayerische Staatsbibliothek
BSG (Paris): Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève
KBR (Brussels): Royal Library of Belgium
KHM (Vienna): Kunsthistorisches Museum
KMSKA (Antwerp): Royal Museums of Fine Arts
KU (Louvain) : Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Met (New York): The Metropolitan Museum
NGA (Washington): National Gallery of Art
ÖNB (Vienna): Österreichische Nationalbibliothek
SBB (Berlin): Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin
UCB (Berkeley): University of California, Berkeley, Bancroft Library
V&A (London): Victoria and Albert Museum

COLOPHON

This book is published on the occasion of the exhibition *Les Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry* organized by the Musée Condé at the Jeu de Paume, Château de Chantilly, from June 7 to October 5, 2025.

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Mathieu Deldicque
Chief heritage curator, Director of the Musée Condé and the Musée vivant du Cheval

In collaboration with

Marie-Pierre Dion
General libraries curator, Head of the Musée Condé library and archives

Exhibition manager

Camille Olivier
Head of documentary resources at the Musée Condé



The exhibition has benefited from the exceptional partnership of the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the Musée du Berry in Bourges.



The scientific analyses of *the Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry* were carried out at the Centre de recherche et de restauration des Musées de France (C2RMF).



The exhibition has been awarded the label "Exhibition of national interest" by the Ministry of Culture.

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Front cover: Van Lymborch brothers, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 9v: September (detail)

Back cover: Van Lymborch brothers, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 14v: Zodiacal Man

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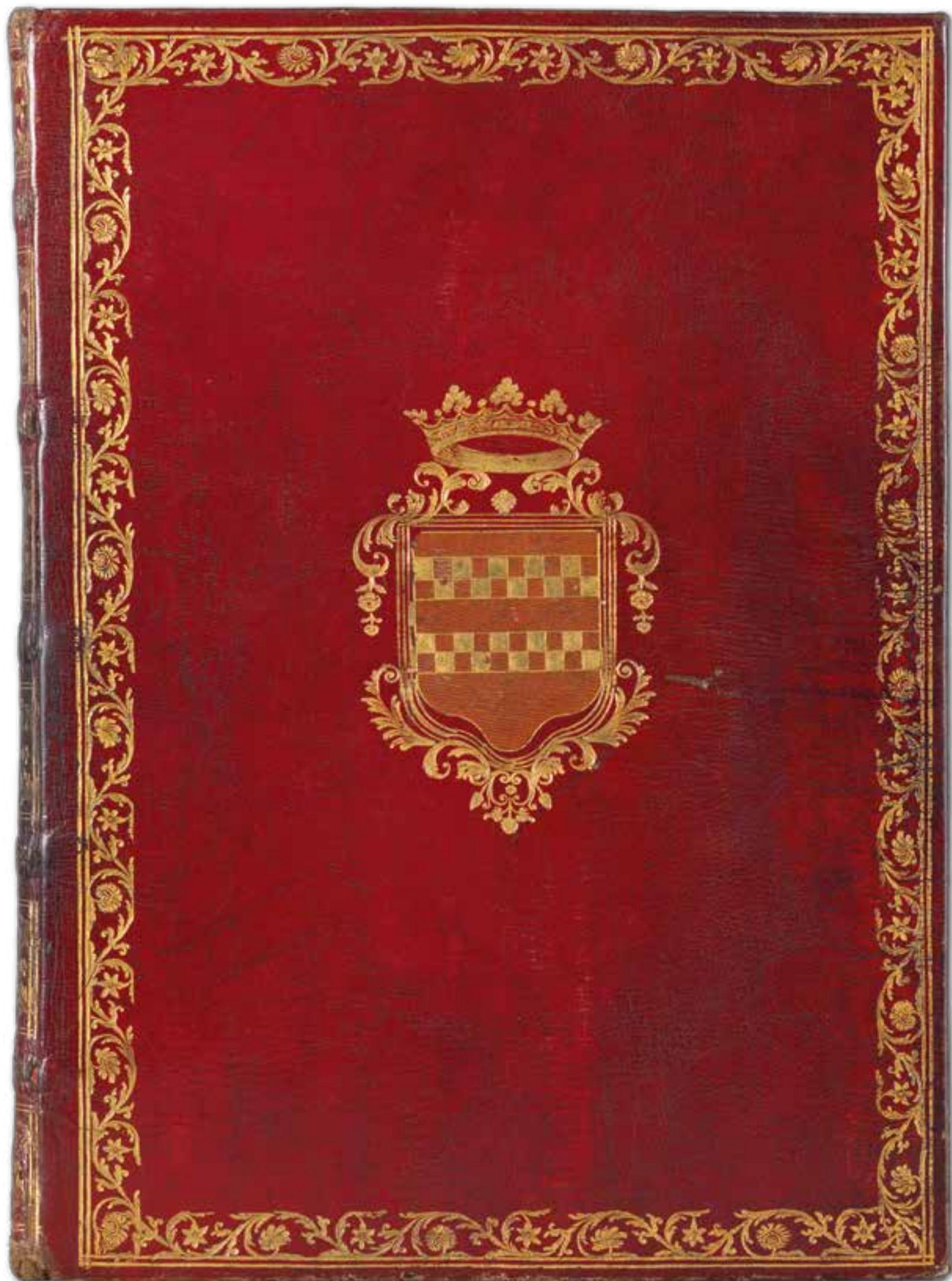
Appendix

The Complete *Très Riches Heures*

Paul, Johan, and Herman Van Lymborch
Breviary Master of John the Fearless
Pseudo-Jacquemart (Jeannin Petit?)
Egerton Master
Haincelin de Hagenau (Bedford Master)
Master of the KL of January
Master of the KL of August
Master of the Saracen
Pierre Gilbert and his workshop
Barthélemy d'Eyck
Jean Colombe
and an assistant (Jacquelin de Montluçon or Philibert Colombe?)

TRÈS RICHES HEURES DU DUC DE BERRY

Paris and Bourges, c. 1411–16 (Van Lymborch brothers)
Anjou, c. 1446 (Barthélemy d'Eyck)
Bourges, c. 1485 (Jean Colombe)
Parchment, 206 folios, 290 × 210 mm
(Chantilly, Bibliothèque du musée Condé, ms. 65)

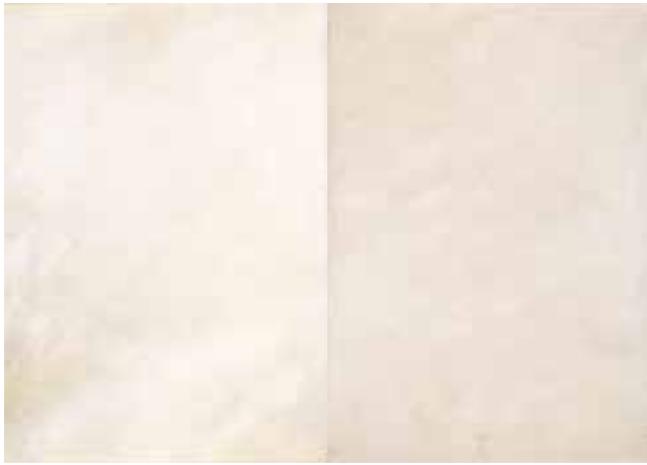




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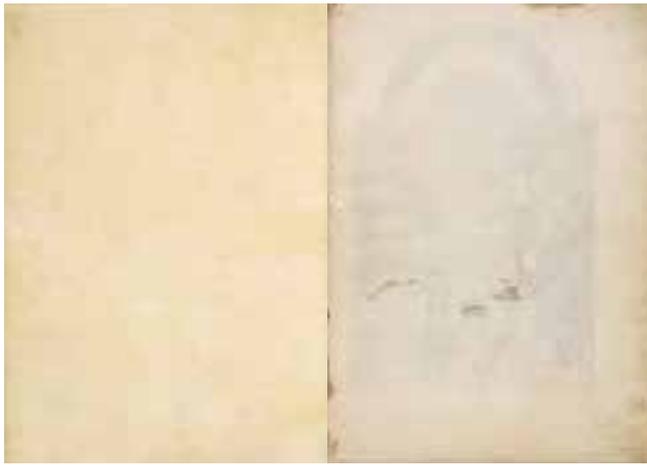
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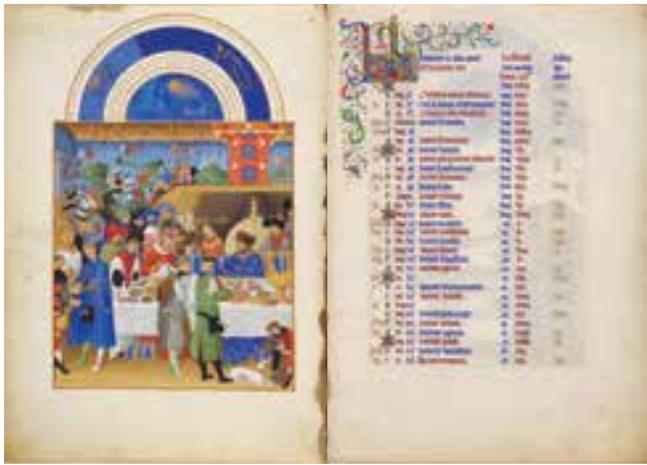
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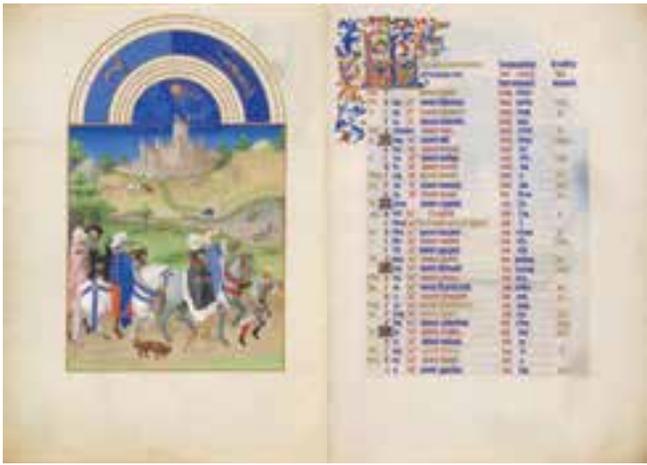
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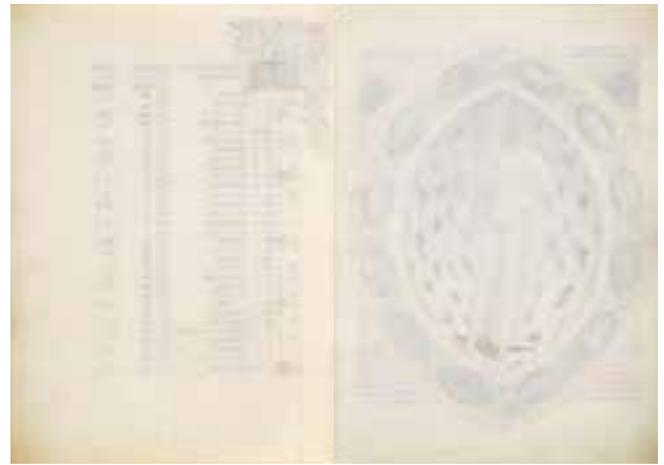
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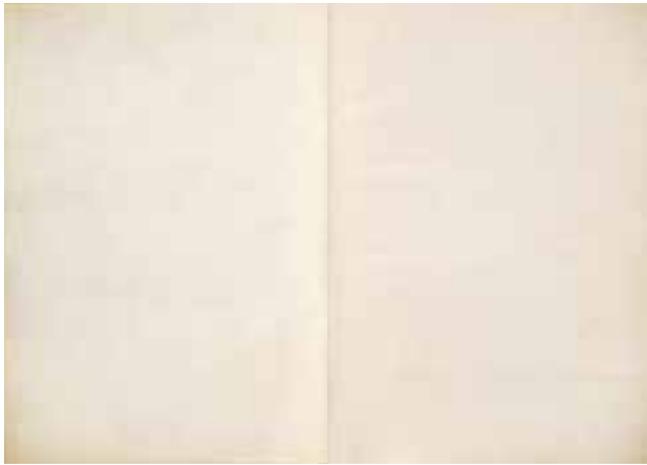
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fol. 22v-23



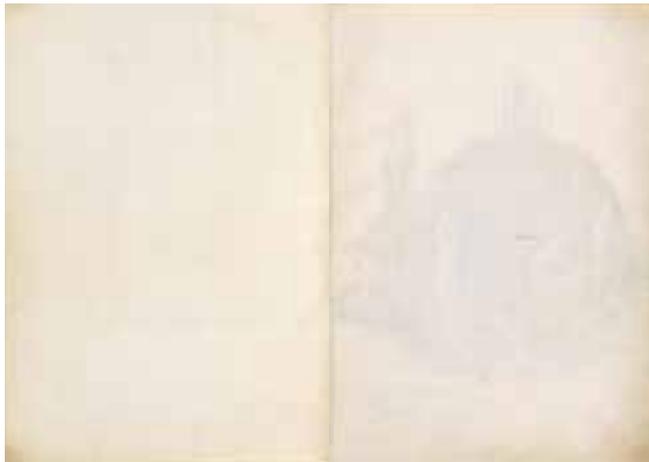
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