

Medieval Mastery

Book Illumination from Charlemagne
to Charles the Bold | 800-1475

BREPOLS

Dauidsfonds/Leuven

Dnica pma aduentus dñi
ad utralque vespas laud' et
terciam. Capitulum.



Ecce dies ueniunt dicit dñs.
i suscitabo dauid germen
iustum. i regnabit rex i sa
piens erit. i faciet iudiciū
i iusticiam in terra. **R.**

Illus est gabriel angelus
ymnus. **C**onditor alme sy
deri. **V.** Exorate celi desuper et
nubes pluant iustū aperiatu
terra i germinet saluatore. **A**
magt a. Ecce nomen dñi ve
nit de longinquo i claritas ei
replet orbem terrarū. **Collca**

Gratia dñe q̄s poten
tiam tuam i ueni:
ut ab imminentibus pecca
torū nrorū picul te meream.

protegente eripi. te liberate
saluari. Qui uiuis i regnū.
Hic omittitur memoria sc̄
crucas ulq; oct' ephie. **A**
matutinas inuitatorū

Ecce uenit rex occurramus
obuiam saluatori nro ps **De**
nite. **ym.** **U**erbu' supernū.
In pmo n. a. Dñe in uirtute
ps **ipm.** **V.** Ex syon sp̄s decons
eius deus nr̄ manifeste ueniet.

Lectio puma
Ilio plare. **pphe**
fily amos quā
uidit sc̄ iuda
i iherlm̄ in diebus ozie ioa
than achaz ezechie regum
iuda. Audite celi i auribus
pape terra: qm̄ dñs locut'
est: filios enutruū i eral
taui. illi autē spreuerunt
me. Tu autem dñe. **R.**

Aspiciens a longe
ecce uides dei potē
tiā ueniētē i ne
bulā totā terrā
tegentē. **Ite** obuiā ei i dicite.
Nūcia nobis si tu es ipse. **Q**
regnaturus es in p̄lo israel.
V. Quisq; terrigene i filij ho

75 Benedictine breviary in four volumes, for the Use of the Abbey of Grammont

Southern Netherlands, around 1449-1450.—Denée, Bibliothèque de l'abbaye de Maredsous, Ms. F°/3/1-4.

MANUSCRIPT Parchment; Vol. 3/1: II + 190 + II fol.; 340 x 240 mm; 4 historiated initials. Vol. 3/2: II + 244 + II fol.; 337 x 240 mm; 7 historiated initials. Vol. 3/3: II + 205 + II fol.; 355 x 255 mm; 21 historiated initials. Vol. 3/4: II + 211 + II fol.; 355 x 255 mm; 32 historiated initials, with medallion pages; Gothic book script.

CONTENT Vol. 3/1 and 3/2, Winter section of the breviary; Vol. 3/3 and 3/4, Summer section.

BINDING Modern binding.

PROVENANCE Intended for the Benedictine Abbey of St Adrian of Grammont: *ex ibris Monasterii S. Adriani Gerardim*. (Ms. F°/3/1, fol. 1); donated in 1912, to Maredsous Abbey by Count Paul de Hemptinne, brother of Abbot Hildebrand.

BIBLIOGRAPHY Delforge 1958; Delaissé 1958b; Smeyers 1969; Wolf 1996: 261-266; Poswick 1997; Knapen 1997: 8-12. In the St Petersburg Book of Hours: Dolgodrova 1983 (reference given by François Avril). Klaas van der Hoek and James Marrow are preparing information with regard to Antonis Utenbroec.

vol. 3/1, fol. 141r:
Tree of Jesse.

vol. 3/2, fol. 156v-157r:
Presentation at the Temple.

vol. 3/3, fol. 141r:
Throne of Grace.

vol. 3/4, fol. 91r:
Birth of the Virgin Mary; in the medallions:
Balaam halted by the Angel and the Closed Door
of Ezekiel.

This superb collection of four manuscripts represents the Winter and Summer sections of a large format breviary intended for the Benedictine abbey of Grammont (Geraardsbergen). Their importance was recognized very early, as the involvement of numerous illuminators—five 'hands' have been distinguished—gives these volumes a central place on the cusp between two ages and two regions. Two generations work side by side among these illuminators who shared the breviary illustrations: one is traditionalist and remains faithful to formulae established in the 1420s; the other, definitely progressive, presents affinities with artists working around 1450 for the highest social level possible: the ducal court. The Breviary of Grammont is also a transitional manuscript in geographical terms, as according to current research the five distinctive styles can be situated around two important centres: Flanders and Brabant. It is clear that an in-depth study of this important work is necessary to gain an understanding of the way the 'Burgundian' style developed from a traditional art, largely influenced by French art.

A comparison of the four volumes clearly shows that there is a gradual transition from one generation to another. The relative homogeneity and general unity of tone is immediately striking whether it is by volume, between different hands or on each page, between the historiated scenes and the marginal decorations.

The *Tree of Jesse* in the first volume shows a perfect example of aesthetic and thematic integration. This large initial, which introduces the offices for the first Sunday of Advent, is constructed around a tonal harmony where blue, orangey-red and both burnished and matt gold predominate. The green of the tree links these coloured areas and relieves the extreme contrast of the juxtaposed shades. The margins are in perfect harmony with the central scene. Produced in the same colours, they are a decorative reminder of the *Tree of Jesse*, the central motif on the page. The

dne gratia tua qui iul
 ta symeonis expectacoem
 implesti. ut sicut ille mor
 tem non uidit priusq
 xpm dnm uidere mere
 tur ita i nos uita opti
 neamus eterna. p eud
Inuitator. Ecce uenit ad
 templi scm sui dnator do
 minus gaude et letare syon
 occurrens deo tuo **p** Venite
ymus. Quem terra. **In**
p. n. a. **B**enedicta tu in
 mulierib; i benedictus frs
 uentris tui **p** Dne dñs **A**
 Sicut mirra elca odorem de
 dista suauitatis sca dei geni
 trix **p** Celi enarr **A** Hec e
 q nesciuit dhor in delicto ha
 bebic fructu in respectu eia
 ru scaru **p** Dni est terra. **A**
 Spectiosa sca es i suauis in
 delictis tuis sca dei genitrix
p Erudauit **A** Dignare me
 laudare te uirgo sacra da
 michi uirtute contra hostes
 tuos **p** Ds nr **A** Sulcepi
 deus misericordia tua in medio
 templi tui **p** Magnus dñs
Benedicta tu. **lco pma**



Odierni di
 ei frs kmu
 nota sollemp
 nitas ad hi
 benda spem
 uite eterne
 magnu gaudiu cotulit
 generi humano: in quo
 xps infans in templo est
 presentatus. Exultet g
 uirgines: uirgo peperit
 xpm. Nichil in eo qd no
 uit putent exterminatu.
 mansit uirgo post ptum
 i uirgata post filiu. **Rm**
Adorna thalamu tuu sy
 on i suscipe regē xpm. Que
 uirgo concepit uirgo pepit
 uirgo post ptu que genuit a
 dorauit **V** Inducere ueltime
 tis glie tue ciuitas sancti. **G**
Exultent lco loda
Euiduc infantem
 xpm uidua ama cognouit.
 Exultet conuigate nal
 aturu xpm dnm elyza
 beth nupta pphetauit.
 Nullus gradus pñ null
 est de quo habet testioni
 um salus dñi. Niquid



resonance is also thematic, as the tree that bears the ascendancy of the Virgin Mary has a formal echo in the pulpy acanthus decorating the margins: in both cases these floral heads, these leaves with the woody stems underlined with a gold or white dotted line. The illuminator is again largely influenced by the art of the second quarter of the fifteenth century, with its supple forms and its tendency towards abstraction, in the choice of united backgrounds, for example, which gives the composition an iconic value. However, despite his rather limited painting skills, he succeeds in creating a very attractive page through the quality of his colours and the brilliance that the gold gives to the whole.

The same artist painted the *Presentation at the Temple* in vol. 2. His favourite motifs can be found in the margin—those large fibrous acanthus leaves punctuating the page angles and axes. When comparing the two pages, it very quickly becomes obvious that the *Presentation* does not have the same brilliance as the *Tree of Jesse*. So-called decorated initials, gold letters on a red and blue background are not present, but simple initials are drawn in ink. The size is reduced. In addition, the bright colours like the orangey-red are much more subtle and do not set the page alight. There is a structural explanation for this difference of 'tone': the *Tree of Jesse* is used as the initial for an essential section of the breviary, the Temporal (which includes the offices celebrated on movable dates), while the *Presentation* is only used to open one office among the others in a different section of the breviary, the Sanctoral (offices on fixed dates). The images follow a strict hierarchical system in this way, which quantitatively reflects the great divisions and sub-divisions of the text through differences in size, and offers the reader visual reference points by these means. The page faces a folio decorated with filigreed initials, which clearly show how grotesque figures can spontaneously spring from these red or blue extensions expertly drawn by pen. There is a flexibility, inventiveness, rhythm, slenderness that a more controlled illuminated border has lost.

The *Trinity* of the third volume must have been given to a second master; he was also a tributary to the traditional trend. His stocky figures, with large heads and frames, with precise contours, are directly based on the style of the Master of Guillebert de Mets and his follower, the Master of Privileges of Ghent and Flanders. He owes the extraordinary grace and imagination of his drawing, particularly visible in the series of marginal sketches scattered through the pages he illustrated, to the first, undoubtedly active in the Ghent region between 1410-1445. He also borrows the general border design and certain ornamental

motifs from him. Luxurious acanthuses, bursting with sap, punctuate the corners of the margin. They are folded in on themselves and are completely decorated with grid pattern motifs that pierce the surface of the parchment and appear as numerous means of access to subterranean worlds. The hunting group running across the bottom of the page seem to spring from these. The fleeing hare rushes towards the other end of the folio, in a sombre opening which suggests the entrance of a terrier. The network of black filigrees, which winds through the borders, is more spaced out than in the first two books, but the margins retain the same coloured richness. A relatively noticeable evolution may be ascertained from a formal point of view with this follower when compared to the still very conventional and frozen art of the Master of Guillebert de Mets. This evolution is particularly noticeable in the forms of the bodies and the emphasis on their structure and mass, as demonstrated in a particularly striking manner in the image of Christ's torso. The dark rings that emphasize the figures and draped clothing of the Mets group have largely disappeared, which allows a smoother transition through the levels. Some decorative motifs like the fleur-de-lis used to embellish the background, or the halos shaped like encircled cogged wheels, come from the repertory of the Master of Privileges. The Grammont manuscript may have been illuminated by a local artist who was directly influenced or who perhaps followed some training from this group operating between Tournai and Ghent between around 1440-1460. It is useful to remember that the Master of Guillebert de Mets owes his name to a well-established scribe at Grammont, where he was resident and where he was municipal magistrate in 1425 and 1434. In any event, Ghent is nearby and realization in this important centre cannot be excluded.

With the artist of the fourth volume we find ourselves in an entirely new age. Despite its reduced size, the *Birth of the Virgin Mary* is drawn three-dimensionally. The bed, placed at three quarters, introduces an effect of depth which is entirely absent from miniatures that we have studied thus far. The *Meeting of Balaam with the Angel* depicted in the medallion in the right margin happens on a landscaped background, which is not abstract in any way: a rock formation ensures the transition between the foreground and the castle at the top of the hill in the background. A small tree suggests the depth of the scene. There is no longer any convention here but the first attempts at a realistic representation of nature. This concern is also apparent in the new way the faces and clothes are drawn. This is the work of a forthright and self-confident painter, created by small strokes of

244

De sancta trinitate. *Ad*
ps Antiphona
 Gloria tibi
 trinitas
 equalis
 una dei
 tas et
 omnia
 genita et
 nunc et
 perpetui
ps Confiteamur
 a Laus et
 phemus
 gloria deo
 patri et
 filio sancto
 simul
 in secula
 seculorum
ps Lauda
 a. Gloria
 laudis
 resonet
 in ore
 omnium
 patri
 genitrici
 proli
 spiritu
 sancto
 pariter
 resurget
 laude
 perherem
ps
 Laude
 dim a. Laus
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Lauda ihesum *Cap*
 Credo
 et clar
 tas et
 sapientia
 et gratia
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 actio
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 Benedicimus
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O lux
 beata
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ru
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 virtus
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In em a. *Oratio*
 a. **G**raas
 tibi
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 trinitas
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 et
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 a. *Colla*
Omnipotens
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 adorare
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 omnibus
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 aduersus. *ps*
Inuita. *Deum*
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 nitate. *Venit*
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 oremus. *ps*
 nite. *ps*
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 trinitatis
 vntas. *ps*
Hic
 deo
 deus
 vnus
 omnis
 pater
 et
 filius
 et
 sps
 sanctus. *ps*
 Dni
 dno
 te. *ps*
Te
 vni
 in
 substantia
 trinitate
 in
 p
 sonis
 co
 hitemur
 p
 Celi
 enarrat. *ps*
Te
 semper
 idem
 esse
 viuere
 et
 intelligere
 p
 tatemur. *ps*
Dni
 est
 terra. *ps*
Te
 inuocamus
 te
 adoramus
 te
 laudamus
 o
 beata
 trinitas. *ps*
Affice
 dno. *ps*
 Spes
 nra
 salus

91

De sancta trinitate. *Ad*
ps Antiphona
 Gloria tibi
 trinitas
 equalis
 una dei
 tas et
 omnia
 genita et
 nunc et
 perpetui
ps Confiteamur
 a Laus et
 phemus
 gloria deo
 patri et
 filio sancto
 simul
 in secula
 seculorum
ps Lauda
 a. Gloria
 laudis
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 patri
 genitrici
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 pariter
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Lauda ihesum *Cap*
 Credo
 et clar
 tas et
 sapientia
 et gratia
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 Benedicimus
 dno. *ps*
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 mur. *ps*
De eundem. *Adria*
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 q. *aus*
 Antiphona
Gaudium
 in
 celis. *ps*
Omnis
 deus. *Collecta*
Gloria
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 tuis
 aduano
 loquor
 eius
 ad
 hanc
 gloria
 venen
 di
 copiosum
 munus
 gra
 tie
 contulisti. *da*
 famulus
 tuus
 suorum
 veniam
 de
 lictorum
 ut
 sanctorum
 tuorum
 in
 terceden
 tibus
 meritis
 ab
 omni
 bus
 mercamur
 aduersi
 tibus
 liberari. *ps*
Inui
 tationi. *Orde*
 et
 voce
 si
 mul
 xpulum
 regem
 vener
 mur
 virginis. *De*
 matris
 iubileat
 nobilis
 gatus. *ps*
De nate. *ps*
Quem
 ter
 ra. *In*
 pmo
 n. a. *G*
 ene
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 fructus
 ventris
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 ps
Dni
 dno
 noster. *ps*
Sum
 mura
 electa
 odorem
 debita
 lu
 amantis
 sancta
 dei
 genitrix

91

De sancta trinitate. *Ad*
ps Antiphona
 Gloria tibi
 trinitas
 equalis
 una dei
 tas et
 omnia
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 nunc et
 perpetui
ps Confiteamur
 a Laus et
 phemus
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 a. Gloria
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De eundem. *Adria*
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 Antiphona
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Gloria
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 virginis. *De*
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 iubileat
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De nate. *ps*
Quem
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 mura
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 lu
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 sancta
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 genitrix

the brush's point. He gives the historiated scenes a vibrancy that cannot be found in the rather more two-dimensional work of his colleagues, who are more rooted in tradition. The use of gold to modulate the drapery again adds to the shimmering colours. The margins have also evolved remarkably even if they retain their multicoloured aspect. The acanthuses are no longer restricted to the margin's axes; they invade its entire surface. Long, tapered and more flexible, they interlace or wind around, giving the scene a rhythm, becoming the central theme it is based upon. In the lower right angle, irresistible stylized strawberry bushes, with their triad of leaves, give a sensuous note to the page. The illuminator also innovates by using medallions in the margin to enrich the narrative content of the principal scene. He uses these surfaces to introduce typological scenes, in other words scenes from the Old Testament which, in the perspective of the History of Salvation, announce certain events in the New Testament. In many typological treatises, such as the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* or the *Biblia Pauperum*, the themes of *Balaam halted by the Angel* (Numbers 22: 22-35) and *The Closed Door of Ezekiel* (Ezekiel 44: 1-4) are related to the *Birth of the Virgin Mary*. This system of narrative extension, which originated in France, appears in our artist's hand in numerous books on which he collaborated: an 'autograph' prayer book for the Use of Grammont, preserved in St Petersburg (Hermitage Museum, Ms. N 60), the Sachsenheim Book of Hours (Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Brev. 162) and the Missal of Pope Pius V (Mondovi, Curia Vescovile, s.n.). A book of hours for the Use of Grammont, kept in Cambridge (Fitzwilliam Museum, Ms. 4483) is clearly inspired by the Maredsous breviaries.

Eva Wolf has shown that this master was a close colleague of Lievin van Laethem and Dreux Jehan, with whom he collaborated on the famous *Légende of Girart de Roussillon* (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2549). Borders with strawberries can be found in this famous book.

The collaboration of a fifth craftsman, who is very recognisable through the hardness of his figures' features and his liking for the harmonies of oranges, ochres and gold, raises the issue of the location of the production of the breviaries. Eva Wolf was of the opinion that a French hand could be seen here, but the same craftsman, with a follower of the Master of Guillebert de Mets, is responsible for painting a book of hours for the Use of Ghent (Universiteitsbibliotheek, Ms. 198), which Léon Delaissé linked to a manuscript of The Hague (Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Ms. 131 G 4) and which is currently attributed to an anonymous Dutchman, the Master of the Boston City of God. James Marrow and Klaas van der Hoek have argued seeing a certain Antonis Utenbroec in it, an artist originally from the northern Netherlands (probably Utrecht), who would have worked in Brabant during that period. Naturally, more thorough research is required, both stylistic and documentary. In the meantime, and in anticipation of learning more, the production of the book vacillates between two poles. Ghent on the one hand, with the entourage of Guillebert de Mets and Liévin van Lathem; Brussels and Brabant on the other, with Dreux Jehan and the presumed Antonis Utenbroec. Situated between these two regions, Grammont may have been an occasional meeting place.

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