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MEDIÉVAL AND RENAISSANCE MANUSCRIPTS

MS 577

France (Besançon?), s. XV^{med}

Book of Hours, in Latin and French

1. ff. 1r-12v Calendar, in French, two pages for each month (r and v), in black and red. The computistical data are: length of the solar and of the lunar month, Golden Number, Day Letter, Roman Calendar without numbers, and Egyptian Days (“D”). Noticeable feasts (note: many feasts are mentioned on unrecorded dates): Susanna (12 Febr.), Maria Aegyptiaca (“Ste Egypciane”, 2 April), Gengulphus (“S. Gengou”, 11 May), Ferreolus and Ferrutius (“S. Ferreul”, “S. Forieul”), whose relics are venerated at Besançon (30 May, 16 June, 5 Sept.), Barnabas (in red, 11 June), Stephanus (13 July, 3 August, in red, 3 Oct.), Magnus (“S. Grant”, 19 August), Lazarus (“Ladre”, 16 Dec.).
2. ff. 13r-70v Hours of the Virgin, Hours of the Cross, Hours of the Holy Spirit combined. The order is obviously the order of the Canonical Hours, but due to the extreme rarity of rubrics only the illustrations or a detailed study of the texts can help in understanding the structure. Leaves are missing between ff. 54 and 55, no doubt containing the None section. Rubrics: “Du Saint Esperit” (f. 39r), “Ad Vesperas” (f. 58r). For the pictures, see below.
3. ff. 71r-75r Obsecro (“Oroison de Nostre Dame”).
4. f. 75r-v Prayer in verse to Saint Michael, in French: “Monseigneur saint Michiel archangle, / A vous rens grace et loange / De bon cuer tres devotement, / En vous suppliant humblement ... This is a variant of Sonet 715 and 1838.
5. ff. 76r-77v Gospel Lesson from John.
6. ff. 78r-98v Penitential Psalms and Litany. Among the Confessors we find Germanus, Remigius, Hilarius, Maclovius, Samson, Paternus, Corentinus and Ivo. Among the Virgins Radegundis.
7. ff. 99r-145v Office of the Dead.
8. ff. 145v-151r Fifteen Joys of the Virgin, in French: “Ce sont les quinze joies Nostre Dame. Doulce dame de misericorde, mere de pitié, fontaine de tous biens ...”. Sonet 458.

9. ff. 151r-152v Gospel Lesson from Luke.

Parchment, ff. 152, 200 x 135 mm. Leaves are missing between ff. 54 and 55.

Pricking in the upper, outer and lower margins and ruling in pink?? ink for one column of 14 lines below top line. Ruling type 13. The Calendar (art. 1) has ruling in pink?? ink for one column of 17 lines below top line, same type, but with three additional vertical lines at left the height of the written area. In the Calendar there are also additional horizontal lines in the lower margin.

Copied by one hand in Northern Gothica Textualis Formata, in two sizes.

Headings (a few) in red. Heightening of majuscules in ... Line-fillers in ... Rich decoration: 1-line versals and 2-line initials, both of the dentelle type; 2-line *KL*-monograms of the same type in the Calendar. Floral outer margin borders normally on the pages with 2-line initials. Four-margins borders and miniatures above 3 lines of text opening with a 3-line foliate initial, on ff. 13r (Annuntiation), 25r (Visitation), 38r (Crucifixion), 39v (Pentecost), 41r (Nativity), 46r (Annuntiation to the Shepherds), 50r (Adoration of the Magi), 58v (Flight into Egypt), 65r (Coronation of the Virgin), 76r (Saint John on Patmos), 99r (Funeral mass). The miniatures are rounded at the top. The borders contain acanthus and a multitude of gold vine and other leaves, flowers, animals, hybrids and monsters. The artist is said to be Péronet Lamy, an illuminator in the service of the Dukes of Savoy in the second quarter of the fifteenth century.

Contemporary binding: brown calf over rounded wooden boards. Both covers entirely blind-tooled with rows of juxtaposed stamps: monkeys and fleurs-de-lys in the central panel; rosettes and phoenix?? in the frame. Clasps missing.

The Calendar (art. 1) perhaps points to Besançon as the place for which this manuscript was made; the presumptive illuminator was working at Thonon; but five saints in the Litany (art. 6) have strong links with Brittany and Normandy (Corentinus, Ivo, Maclovius, Paternus, Samson). And in the modern period the manuscript belonged to at least one family residing in Normandy: on the second front flyleaf and in the upper and lower margins of the first Calendar pages (ff. 1r-3v) there are numerous notes in French by various hands, generally from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, mostly family records of births, baptisms and deaths. The earliest one is the mention of the death, in 1455, of “noble homme Renaud Doussant” (f. 1r). A birth “under the sign of Aquarius” is mentioned in 1519 (ibid.). The seventeenth-century entries obviously deal with members of the le Portier family and date from the years 1609-1695. The numerous s. XVIII entries record births, baptisms and deaths in the Pecqueult de Boisville family, from 1728 to

1783, and the places mentioned are Lisieux, Orbec, Saint-Philbert-des-Champs (all in Calvados). Jean Baptiste Benoît de Pecqueult (1755-1783) was “officier de marine” and died at Brest (f. 1v). Jean Baptiste de Pecqueult, baron de Boisville, born 1765, was “lieutenant-colonel, chevalier de la Légion, de Saint Louis, du Phoenix, de l’Eperon d’or de Rome, commandant du Saint Sépulcre, etc. etc. etc.” (f. 3v). On the first flyleaf r: “J’apartiens à M. Deboville, officier au Régiment de Neustrie, demeurant en sa terre du Bouchirot près Lisieux” (s. XVIII^{ex}). Pictorial bookplate of Charles J. Rosenbloom. Bequest of Charles J. Rosenbloom, Yale 1920, 1 Oct. 1974.

Bibliography:

H.W. Liebert, “The Charles J. Rosenbloom Bequest”, *The Yale University Library Gazette*, 49 (1975), p. 341, no. 171.

F. Avril, N. Reynaud, *Les manuscrits à peintures en France, 1440-1520* (Paris, 1993), p.205.