BOOK OF HOURS, in Dutch. Utrecht diocese calendar and litany, Hours of Virgin in compilation of Geert Grote. North Netherlands, signed: Spierinck (Spir), dated: 1488.

Description

Vellum, 105 leaves (190 x 140 mm). 1 col., 20 lines (99 x 68 mm). Script: textura. 4 miniatures, 4 historiated initials, illuminated initials and borders. Collation: see below. Binding: contemporary blind-tooled brown leather, with brass clasps and corner reinforcements.

1-12v Calendar (unillus.).
13-13v Blank.
14 Virgin and Child Enthroned (H). On lower border: inscription 'Spir 1488'.
14-45 Hours of Virgin.
45v-46 Blank.
46v Crucifixion (fp).
47 Christ as Man of Sorrows (H).
47-54 Short Hours of Cross.
54v-55 Blank.
55v David's Vision of Three Scourges (God Father in tiara with three arrows and globe; fp). In illuminated border on opposing page (f. 56): Crowned female figure holding book and crown (i.e., crown removed by penitent David).
56-71 Penitential Psalms and Litany.
71v-72 Blank.
72v Raising of Lazarus (fp).
73-90v Short Office of Dead.
91 Blank.
91v Christ Washing Feet of Peter (foreground) and Last Supper (in adjoining room in background; fp). Border: Bust of man. Angel with armorial shield: red, a sword between four stars, in chief a cross, all silver.
92 Angel holding shield with arms of Christ (O). Border: Horseman.
92-95 Prayers for Communion: 'O Overste priester ende ghewaer bispoc here ihesu criste die de selven offerdste...'; 'Here ihesu criste ick en bins niet waerdich...'; and 'O here ihesu criste hoe sel ick arme sundige mensche...'. 
95-96v Five prayers (greetings) to Virgin: 'God gruet u goeder-tieren maria een blenckende dageraet een morgensterre...'.
96v-98 Prayer to God Father: 'O Almachtige ewige hemelsche vader die mit dinen eengeboreh sone ihesu cristo...'.
98v-99v Suffrages to St. Anne: 'Ter? eren ende waerdicheit der edelre stamme van ysse...'.
99v-100 Suffrage of Holy Cross: 'O gloriose çruus o cruus dat te aenbeden is...'.
100-100v Suffrage to Virgin: 'Die onbevlechte maget heest gode behaget ende gode gebaert...'.
100v-101 Suffrage to one's guardian angel: 'O heilige engel mijns gods dien ick bevolen bin te bewaren...'.
101-105v Suffrages to Sts. Peter, Sebastian, Augustine, Anthony, Elizabeth, Catherine, Agnes, Barbara, Apollonia.

Collation
8  5  8
I (1-8), II (9 10 11 x 12 leaf missing 13 leaf missing), III-V (14-37),
9  8  9  8  9
VI-VII (42-55), VIII (56-63), IX (64-72), X-XI (73-88), XII (89-97),
8
XIII (98-105).
Comments


The Horae have been associated with Nicolas Spierinc or his son Jan, who were scribes and illuminators in Ghent. However, the books were surely produced in the North Netherlands, not the South, at least three of them were made after the death of Jan, and none agree in script or illumination with the documented work of Nicolas, according to the research of Antoine De Schryver. The first name of our artist and where he worked are therefore not yet known, although Amsterdam is a likely place.

A side-by-side comparison of the Heineman and Stillman Hours, which are separated in time by eight years, reveals striking consistency in basic layout and in pen-flourish and painted decorative motifs. But the decorative scheme is richer in the later Stillman Horae, especially in the margins (two-page marginal Jesse Tree for beginning of Hours of Virgin, etc.). There is, moreover, a perceptible change in figure style, and while some iconographic themes are depicted in essentially identical manner in the two manuscripts (e.g., David's Vision of Three Scourges), others show substantial compositional modification (e.g., Crucifixion, Raising of Lazarus).

Selective Bibliography of Related Works


J. Destrée, "Claeis Spierinc", in Biographie Nationale, vol. XXIII, 1921-1924, col. 338 (for a MS. which in 1888 belonged to a curator at the episcopal museum of Utrecht; see De Schryver, 434, note 4).

A.W. Byvanck and G.J. Hoogewerff, La Miniature hollandaise, The Hague, 1923 and 1926, 63-65, nos. 151-156, fig. 100, pls. 157, 158 (for Harley 2943, Boekenogen 11, and other possibly related manuscripts).


Provenance

Fifteenth- or sixteenth-century inscription on front flyleaf: 'dit boeck hoert toe celle cegers doechter'.

Bibliography


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