Psalter in Latin, followed by the Centicles, Paternoster, Credo and Litany. (The calendar is missing.)

Manuscript on vellum, written and illuminated in North France, in the vicinity of Beauvais, in the XIIth century.

Decoration: The illumination consists of 8 historiated initials of very good execution, all excepting that on fo 95v having dark backgrounds. From the initials proceed ivy sprays and bands which frame the text. Animals, birds, grotesques and dragons decorate the bands and fill in line-endings, and there is no duplication of design.

The first leaf contains a large historiated initial B. of rich colour and delicate design, with 3 side borders, one of which is filled with fleur-de-lis.

164 leaves (9 x 6 1/2 inches). 21 lines to a page. 80°.

Bindings: Dark brown tooled mor. over boards, with two clasps, lettered "Psalterium Davidis, Cantica Bibliae, &c. &c. MS. in Membranis."

History: W. Bragg Coll. (Leeds exhib. 1868) Bragg sale, London, 1876, no. 368; S. Addington sale (London, 1886, no. 462) sold 10 June 1888 by Ellis to G. Fairfax Murray; Charles Butler, W. Morris (his autograph description pasted in front, ex-libris and autog. sig. on blank fly-leaf) and R. Bennett coll.

(Full description see Morgan Cat. Mss. 1906, No. 23.)

Add. Cards:

Mss. Illum. French - XIIth cent.
    "    " Grotesques
    "    " Beauvais - XIIth cent.
    "    " Borders

Provenance - Bragg, W. (sale London 1876, no. 368)
    "    " Addington S. ("  " 1886, " 462)
    "    " Murray, Charles Fairfax (bought 10 June 1888)
    "    " Morris, William (1834 - 1891)
    "    " Butler, Charles

BIBLIOTHEQUE DE MONTPELLIER:

Bibl. Haseloff: Psalter Illustration, p. 50

MFR#1932
23. PSALTERIUM. Vellum, 9 x 6\(\frac{3}{4}\); ff. 164; 21 lines to a page; cent. xiii (late); in a bold black hand, rather closely written. Modern stamped leather with clasps. Bookplates of Mr. William Morris and Mr. Bennett. Formerly in the possession of a Leeds collector, probably Mr. Bragge; exhibited at Leeds (National Exhibition of Works of Art) in 1868. It was later (?) in the possession of Messrs. Ellis and Scrutton, of 29, New Bond Street, and probably also of Mr. C. Fairfax Murray.

Collation: f. 1-8, 8, 9, 10-20, 21. Foliation in pencil incorrect after f. 145.

CONTENTS

(Kalendar wanting.)
Psalter.
Cantica, Paternoster, Credo. 1
Litany. 146

The work is pretty evidently North French. The absence of the Kalendar deprives us of much help in fixing the locality, and the Litany is not very distinctive. In it we find: Martyrs; Nicasius (Nigasiaus), Lucian, Eustace, Quintin, Gervasius, Protasius, Thomas, Marcellinus, and Peter. Confessors: Martial (second), Romanus, Taurinus. Lucian points to Beauvais; Romanus, Martial, and Taurinus rather indicate Normandy. Nigasiaus must be taken to be the bishop of Rouen (Oct. 11) not the bishop of Rheims (Dec. 14).

The following note by Mr. William Morris is interesting:

"This book has a complete and satisfactory scheme of ornament, which is nowhere departed from, and the colour of which is thoroughly harmonious. Many of the dragon-scrolls end in daintily painted little heads, drawn with much expression and sense of fun; and the hair of them beautifully designed, and drawn very firmly. The figure-work in the eight historiated letters is everywhere quite up to the average of its date, but on the first page in the Beatus and the symbols of the Evangelists goes a good deal beyond that. Altogether an admirable specimen of the work of the later thirteenth century."

The "dragon-scrolls" alluded to are a characteristic feature of the book. The lower margin of each page has a horizontal band of colour, usually blue or pink with white pattern on it. At the ends this breaks out into scroll, leaf, or cusped work, and generally ends in a grotesque monster or head. Animals and birds are also often painted on the top of the band.

1. f. 1a. Beatus vir. Border on three sides. That on r. has lozenges of blue with white fleurs-de-lis and two medallions on gold ground containing the eagle of St. John and ox of St. Luke, each with a scroll bearing the Evangelist's name. The angel and lion for SS. Matthew and Mark are in similar medallions in the r. angles of the initial B.

Along the lower border are figures. A seated lion, an ape facing him, a man blowing a horn, two hounds, a running stag, and a bird.

The initial has gold ground within, and blue, with delicate white pattern, outside. The letter itself is in pink with interlacings.

It has two subjects. Above, under three red trefoil arches, the central one finished with a pretty finial, David (in c.) playing harp; two crowned musicians, with fiddle and dulcimer (?)

Below, David slaying Goliath, who sinks to the ground; he is in mail, bearded and bareheaded, with pink surcoat. Trees and two dogs on l.

2. f. 22. Dominus illuminat. Samuel in red cap anoints the young David, who is seated, with crowned and curved staff. Gold ground.

3. f. 36. Dixit custodiad. David crowned, kneels and points to his mouth. In the upper r. corner the head of Christ. Gold ground, hatched.

4. f. 50b. Dixit insipiens. The fool, bald, in brownish-red mantle only, with stick, eating a cake. In upper r. corner the head of Christ. Gold ground with pattern.

5. f. 63b. Salvum me fac. Above, Christ, half length, in cloud with orb.

Below, David, nude, crowned in river, praying. Ground as above (No. 4.)

6. f. 80b. Exultate. David crowned, seated, plays on three bells on r. with two hammers. His harp is hung on the horizontal bar of the letter (E). Ground as before.

7. f. 95b. Cantate. Three clerks in copes (two pink, one gold) sing from book on lectern on r. Blue ground with white stars.

For printed text or notices of this MS. see:

New York, Research Center for Musical Iconography. Inventory of Musical Iconography 3: The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts, comps. Terence Ford and Andrew Green, New York, 1988,
no. 219, 1 ill. [fol. 1].
no. 220, [fol. 53v].
no. 221, [fol. 80v].
no. 222, [fol. 95v].

J.H. Oliver, Gothic Manuscript Illumination in the Diocese of Liège (c. 1250-c. 1330) (Corpus of Illuminated Manuscripts from The Low Countries, 2-3), Louvain, 1988, 198 n.66.

Howard Helsinger, 'Images on the Beatus Page of Some Medieval Psalters,' Art Bulletin 53 (1971) 161-176, p. 164, Fig. 5.