Hours of the Virgin. Rome. XV cent.

M. 250 Hours of the Virgin, for Rome use, preceded by a Kalendar for Nevers.

Manuscript on vellum, written and illuminated in Central France (Rouen?) in the XVth century.

Decoration: The outstanding feature of the manuscript are two beautifully illuminated leaves on ff.13v and 14. The first has the arms of France and Naples (i.e., quarterly Anjou-Jerusalem) surmounted by a crowned helm. Below the shields are the collars of the orders of St. Michael and of the Crescent with its motto: "Los en croissant". On f.14 the miniature depicts Christ the Gardener, to whom Mary Magdalen is presenting the kneeling king Charles VIII of France. This painting is a beautiful example of the later-Rouen style. The order of the Crescent was suppressed by a Bull of Pope Pius II in 1460, being ten years before the birth of Charles VIII (1470-1498); it is introduced here to indicate Charles' assumption of the title of king of Sicily and Jerusalem, which he did in 1493.

There are 25 other miniatures of inferior execution in the Italianate Rouen style, two of which have portraits of the original owner of the MS. (ff. 13lv and 148v). Of iconographic interest are The Annunciation, f.22v, with the descending Child bearing a Tabor-crown and f.148v, the ascension of Mary Magdalen enveloped in her hair. There are naturalistic flower, bird and insect borders in the Flemish style.

Text: Beginning with f. 13lv the text is misbound.

154 leaves (1 blank), (7 x 5 inches) 18 lines, 12v.

Binding: 16th century red velvet in blue morocco case lettered "Heures de la Vierge - MS. écrit pour Charles VIII".

History: Obtained from Quaritch, 1907.

+ by the artist J. Morgan M.4915

Add cards:
MSS.-Illum.-French-XV cent.
MSS.-Illum.-Rouen -XV cent.
Use - Rome, Tours
Calendar, Ecclesiastical - Nevers (red on le.)
Mary the Virgin - Annunciation
Mary Magdalen - Assumption
Portraits - Sovereigns - French. (red on le.)
MSS.-Illum.-Portraits.
Provenance - Charles VIII, king of France.
" Armorial.
Order of St. Michael.
Order of the Crescent.
Jesus Christ - As gardener.
Charles VIII, king of France - Portrait. (red on le.)
Jesus Christ - Inception.

Biography cards:
Arms: Charles VIII, king of France and Sicily. 1470-98, f.14

Evangelist: John, on column, writing f. 15 v p. 2
Luke, painting portrait of Virgin f. 17 v
Matthew, seated, writing f. 22 v
Mary the Virgin: Annunciation - Child descending from Virgin
Mary the Virgin: Visitation
Shepherds: Annunciation
Magi: Adoration
Jesus Christ: Presentation
"Fugit into Egypt"
Mary the Virgin: Coronation, with Chirpy
Pintorico
Job, and friends three
Mary the Virgin enthroned: Child sleeping away from
Mill: Illum. Portraits: women f. 129 v 146 v
John Baptist: beheading
Evangelist: John - death
Apollines, Peter and Paul f. 137 v
Christopher: Simeon, carrying infant child f. 138 v
Rebaptism: tomb: martyrdom
Martin: finest: chaining: clerk
Antony the Great: Temptation f. 141 v
Mary Magdalen: Ascension f. 142 v
Catherine: of Alexandria: martyrdom: execution f. 143 v
Apollonia: martyrdom
Sabina: Third: mediate: martyrdom f. 145 v
Mary the Virgin and Child with angels: musicand f. 147
For printed text or notices of this MS. see:


Robert W. Scheller, "Imperial Themes in Art and Literature of the Early French Renaissance: The Period of Charles VIII," Simiolus, 12, 1981-82, 22-23, fig. 5 [fol. 13v].

Alison Stones and John Steyaert, Medieval Illumination, Glass, and Sculpture in Minnesota Collections, Minneapolis, 1978, 102.
