MS 16. Book of Hours
Latin, Use of Rome, 12 Calendar Illustrations in the Margins,
7 Pages with Historiated Initials and Borders, 8 other
Historiated Initials
[Florence, c.1490]

DESCRIPTION

I. Material
234 leaves of smooth, pale vellum with modern paper fly-leaves AB-CD. A and D are backed with marbled paper, the flaps of which are pasted down to the covers.
15.2 x 9.5 cm., severely trimmed

II. Construction

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III. **Preparation of the Page**

There are no signs of pricking for marginal ruling or lineation. The manuscript is ruled for one column with a double-line grid enclosing 16 lines, with a written area (measured to the outer horizontals and the inner verticals) of $c.8.2 \times 4.2$ cm. (fig. 1). Ruling has been executed on the hair side of the leaves and sometimes on both sides, with a stylus.

![Fig. 1](image)

IV. **Text**

A. **CONTENTS**

1. Calendar, fol. 1r-12v
   
   The calendar is only approximately half full. Entries in red include Anthony Abbot (January 17), Herculanus (March 1), Gregory, martyr (April 23, an error for George?), Apparitio Michaelis (May 8), Bernardinus of Siena (May 20), the Visitatio (July 2 and Octave, July 9), Mary Magdalen (July 22), Festum nivis (August 5, written as 'Festum ninis'), Lawrence (August 10 and Octave, August 17), Louis of Toulouse (August 19), Augustine (August 28), Michael (September 29), Jerome (September 30), Francis (October 4), Dedicatio Salvatoris (November 9), Martin (November 12), Catherine (November 25), Nicholas (December 6), Ambrose (December 7), Lucy (December 13), and Silvester (December 31). The choice of entries is broadly based upon the Roman calendar and does not seem to provide evidence for localisation to a particular area or town within Italy. Special attention should, however, be called to the entry in black of the 'Dedicatio sancti Martini' on October 8, which may represent a local feast. Latin forms are used throughout.

   Instead of beginning at the top of the page like the other months, March begins with KL on the last two lines of fol. 2v after February, which is shorter.

2. Gospel Extract from St John, fol. 13r-14r
   
   fol. 14v blank

3. Hours of the Virgin, use of Rome, fol. 15r-89v
   
   *Incipit officium beate virginis Marie secundum consuetudinem Romane curie.* Followed by 'Salve regina' (Chevalier, 18147), versicle, response and prayer, Omnipotens sempiterne Deus qui gloriose virginis matris Marie corpus et animam . . . (p.v. Wordsworth, 63) fol. 70-71; variable Psalms for the days of the week, fol. 71-80; and variants for different seasons of the liturgical year, fol. 80-89.

4. Votive Mass to the Virgin, Salve sancta parens, fol. 89v-92v
5. Office of the Dead, use of Rome, fol. 93-140
   fol. 140v-142v, blank

6. Seven Penitential Psalms and Litany, fol. 143-165v
   The Litany includes Sts Blaise, Louis and Julian.

7. The Athanasian Creed, fol. 166-168v

8. Hours of the Passion (long Hours of the Cross), fol. 169-194
   fol. 194v blank

9. Short Hours of the Cross, fol. 195-202v

10. Short Hours of the Holy Spirit, fol. 203-209v

11. Prayer by St Anselm, fol. 209v-210v
   Domine Deus meus si feci ut essem reus tuus, numquid facere potuit ut non essem effectus tuus . . . .
   fol. 211-212 blank

12. The Fifteen Gradual Psalms, fol. 213-224v
   fol. 225-226 blank

13. Prayers, fol. 227-234v
   a. The Seven Joys of the Virgin (Chevalier, 7017) followed by a versicle, response and prayer, Deus qui beatissimam et gloriosam virginem Mariam in conceptu et in partu . . . (p.v. Wordsworth, 63-64).
   b. Preface, Jam mater mea multum diliget salutationem tuam. . . . Antiphon, Ave Domine Iesu Christe, verbum patris . . . (p.v. Wilmart, 412-413), versicle, response, and prayer, O dulcissime atque piissime domine Iesu Christe per lachrymas beatissime virginis Marie . . .
   c. The Seven Verses of St Gregory (with only six verses, p.v. Leroquais, II, 346).
   d. Prayer to the Guardian Angel, Angele Dei, qui custos es mi . . . (Chevalier, 22954) and prayers to the Virgin, Te matrem Dei Laudamus . . . (Chevalier, 20156), versicle, response and prayer, Omnipotens sempiterne Deus qui gloriose virginis matris Marie corpus et animam . . . (p.v. Wordsworth, 63).

B. SCRIPT

Written in regular humanistic script with titles, incipits and important rubrics written in capitals (fig. 6). The text is executed in brownish-black ink, but headings and incipits on the miniature pages which introduce major new texts are written in gold on solid blue, red or brown fields. Rubrication has been executed in pale red, except for fol. 201-v where dark red was used. The first lines of the Invitatoria within the Hours of the Virgin (Lauds to Compline), titles of the months in the calendar and the first word of the Mass of the Virgin (fol. 89v) are
executed in alternating brownish-black and pale red capitals; the title to July (fol. 7), however, alternates bright red with brownish-black. The number of days in the solar and lunar months, and the entries of major feasts in the calendar, are written in pale red, and the remaining entries in brownish-black (fig. 7). Catchwords in the same script were written by the scribe vertically in the lower margin, between the ruled inner double verticals, at the end of all except the 2nd, 10th, 15th, 18th, 21st, 23rd, 24th, 26th and 27th (last) gatherings. The brownish-black ink has taken badly to the vellum and the pigment has flaked from both the flesh and hair sides of many of the leaves; the pale red ink used for rubrication appears to have faded considerably.

V. Decoration

A. Initials

One-line initials are painted within the text columns as well as along the left edge of the written space. They are executed in burnished gold on rectangular fields painted in pale milky shades of red, blue, or olive green, or in combinations of any two of these colours, one inside the initial and the other outside (fig. 2). Initials at the left edge of the text column are placed with approximately one-third to one-half of their width projecting into the margin. The letters are edged with pale yellow-gold, and the fields are highlighted with geometric patterns, chiefly of simple lines and dots in the same gold. Some of the fields are also highlighted with silver dots. There are exceptions to this pattern on fol. 201, where the initials are executed in brushed, not burnished gold, and the fields are painted in darker shades of red, blue and olive green.

![Fig. 2](image1)
![Fig. 3](image2)

Two-line initials in the text and the two- and three-line initials in the calendar are executed in a similar technique, but are found only at the left edge of the text column (fig. 3). The initials themselves project slightly to the left of the written space and are roughly centred between the two vertical rulings at this side of the text column. The fields of these initials are painted in at least two contrasting colours, and some use all three. The gold highlighting of the fields is more elaborate than in the one-line initials, and includes schematic representations of flowers. Most of the fields are also highlighted with silver dots, frequently suggesting the petals of flowers. On fol. 1 and 7 of the calendar, and on fol. 201v, the initials are executed in brushed gold and the fields, divided into red and blue on fol. 1 and 7, and in monochrome blue or red on fol. 201v, are in darker shades than elsewhere. These initials are highlighted only with brushed gold and not with silver dots.

The five- and six-line historiated initials,* introducing the Mass of the Virgin and the individual hours within the Hours of the Virgin (Lauds to Compline), are executed in burnished gold on rectangular fields of blue or red (fig. 13). The initial introducing the Mass of the Virgin (fol. 89v) is in solid gold, but those introducing the different hours within the Hours of the Virgin include panels painted either in green or in varying shades of pink (fol. 26v, 48v, Lauds and Sext). The areas enclosed by the letters and forming the backgrounds to the painted figures are solid pale blue and in the case of the initials within the Hours of the Virgin are edged with bands in either bright red or green (fol. 26v, 48v) which follow the contour of the letter. The fields

* Initials of five lines or more in height are all historiated; their subjects will be found in Section vi on the Illustration.
outside the initials are framed with burnished gold bands, and highlighted with geometric and foliate designs in pale brushed gold, sometimes including silver dots. Except for fol. 39 and 52v, all the gold initials and the gold bands enclosing the fields are edged with brownish-black and pale yellow ink, and the fields themselves are enclosed within brownish-black ink perimeters. The initial ‘C’, introducing Compline of the Hours of the Virgin (fol. 65), is distinguished by its decoration of brushed gold foliage at the right of the field, across the open ends of the letter.

The historiated initials which introduce major texts in the manuscript are all seven or eight lines in height. The initials on fol. 143, 169, 195, 203 and 213 are executed in gold (brushed gold on fol. 143, burnished gold for the others) with panels of dark green (fig. 15-18) or dark brownish-olive (fol. 213, fig. 19). The initial on fol. 143 is edged in black ink, the others in black and pale yellow gold. The areas within the initials on fol. 143, 195 and 203 are edged with bands in bright red, whereas within fol. 169 the band is in brushed gold. The rectangular fields outside these initials are blue or red, highlighted as described above. Two of the initials also include painted decoration in the fields: fol. 143, two cherub-heads at the right of the initial; fol. 213, two cornucopias with foliage and flowers, beneath hanging garlands (fig. 15, 19). The initial introducing the Office of the Dead (fol. 93) is executed in violet-pink, panelled with, and enclosing a band in, brushed gold; the field is blue, highlighted and framed as described above (fig. 14). The initial introducing the Hours of the Virgin (fol. 15) consists of two pairs of cornucopias, sheathed in blue acanthus foliage with green undersides, and joined at the mouths with pearls; the field is a solid brushed-gold rectangle edged in black ink and enclosed with the usual framing gold band (fig. 12).

B. BORDER DECORATION

Decorated borders occur on all pages with historiated initials, and on the verso of the leaf introducing the Short Hours of the Cross. On the verso in question (fol. 195v, fig. 4) the decoration is executed in the left margin as vertical extensions from the two-line initial to the Matins hymn. The decoration consists of naturalistic, arabesque-like flowering foliage arranged symmetrically around a vertical axis; the area covered by the painted foliage and flowers is filled with sprays of small gold circles, edged in black and surrounded with radial hair-line pen-flourishes in brownish-black ink.

Borders of pages with historiated initials introducing minor or sub-texts (i.e. the Mass of the Virgin, Lauds to Compline of the Hours of the Virgin) are also decorated in the left margin, but the decoration is independent of the historiated initials and is frequently extended across the upper or lower margins or across both. Decoration on these pages also consists of flowering foliage arranged symmetrically or in scrolls with sprays of gilt circles as described above, but includes putti, Renaissance vases and candelabra, acanthus, jewels, birds and insects (fig. 5).

The borders of pages with historiated initials introducing major new texts are decorated on all four sides. On all but one of these pages (fol. 15, 93, 143, 169, 203 and 213) the text columns are surrounded by joined vertical and horizontal panels forming a solid frame c. 13.8 x 8.7 cm. On fol. 15, 93, 143 and 169 the vertical panels contain painted decoration on solid fields, while panels in the upper margins contain landscape scenes with animals, and the lower margins contain historiated panels in their own simulated picture frames (fig. 12, 14-16). The panels are decorated with a rich variety of painted flowers, foliage, vines, garlands, animals, birds (including large peacocks), jewels, putti, Renaissance candelabra, trophies, dolphins, masks, etc., all intermixed with roundels, medallions, cameos and ordinary and barbed quatrefoils containing depictions of animals (particularly deer and bears), emperors (?), prophets, evangelists and other holy personages. The border to fol. 195 (fig. 17) is the sole exception to this general
pattern; its decoration, consisting of the same motifs, and with sprays of gilt circles surrounded by radial hair-line pen-flourishes, is executed on the bare surface of the vellum. Special attention should also be called to the depiction of a coat of arms which occurs in a roundel at the top of fol. 169, Gules, a bend chequy azure and argent, on a chief argent, a cross or.  

* Professor John Shearman has identified the arms as those of the Cibò family and the peacock on fol. 195 and 203 (fig. 17, 18) as the Cibò emblem which appears twice with the text Leavte Passe Toot in the Belvedere of Innocent VIII (cf. Giorgio Bernadini, 'Le pitture nell'appartamento di Innocenzo VIII in Belvedere in Vaticano', Rassegna d'Arte, XVIII, 1918, pp. 185 ff, fig. 3 and 6). Emblems of the Medici also appear in MS 16.

Francesco Cibò, son of Innocent VIII, married Lorenzo de' Medici's daughter Maddalena in 1488, and the Magdalen kneeling at the foot of an empty cross on fol. 169, the same page as that on which the Cibò arms occur, may be an allusion to Maddalena. This would suggest that the book was made for her, possibly at the time of the marriage. Professor Shearman has also suggested that the goat (?) with long ears in the border of fol. 169 and fol. 15 may refer to the gift of exotic animals from the Sultan of Egypt to Lorenzo de' Medici in 1487.
VI. Illustration

The illustration consists of 12 calendar illustrations in the margins, 7 large historiated initials on pages with fully decorated borders, 4 of which include historiated panels in the lower margins, and 8 smaller historiated initials.

A. Subjects

1. Calendar illustrations painted in the margins, fol. 1-12 [Style A, fol. 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, fig. 7, 9; Style A?, fol. 6, 7, 10, fig. 8, 10; Style B, fol. 2v, 9, 11, 12, fig. 11]

2. The Virgin and Child with St. John the Baptist, and the Adoration of the Magi (Hours of the Virgin), fol. 15, fig. 12 [Style A]

   Large historiated initial and historiated panel

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3-9. Virgin Saints (Lauds to Compline), fol. 26v, 39, 44, 48v (fig. 13), 52v, 56v, 65 [Style A]

Small historiated initials
There are no inscriptions or attributes to identify the seven saints.

10. The Virgin and Child (Mass of the Virgin), fol. 89v [Style A]
Small historiated initial

11. Death, the Reaper, and the Three Living and the Three Dead (Office of the Dead), fol. 93, fig. 14 [Style A?]
Large historiated initial and historiated panel
Fig. 8. June, fol. 6 (detail).

Fig. 9. August, fol. 8 (detail).

Fig. 10. October, fol. 10 (detail).

Fig. 11. December, fol. 12 (detail).

12. King David playing the Harp, and David and Goliath (Seven Penitential Psalms), fol. 143, fig. 15 [Style A]
   Large historiated initial and historiated panel

13. Mary Magdalen embracing the Cross, and the Carrying of the Cross (Hours of the Passion), fol. 169, fig. 16 [Style A]
   Large historiated initial and historiated panel

14. The Pietà (Short Hours of the Cross), fol. 195, fig. 17 [Style A]
   Large historiated initial

15. Pentecost (Short Hours of the Holy Spirit), fol. 203, fig. 18 [Style A]
   Large historiated initial

16. The Presentation of the Virgin (the Gradual Psalms), fol. 213, fig. 19 [Style A]
   Large historiated initial

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B. TECHNIQUE

Having lost its main miniature pages (see p. 342), this manuscript retains only the secondary illustration, which is so thoroughly mixed with the decoration that it is not always certain if a detail, a roundel for instance, is part of the decoration or of the illustration. The essential feature of the iconographical programme of the page appears in the rather small historiated initials, and is limited to the representation of a few essential and easily identifiable figures, and conventional landscape or architectural backgrounds.

Although small by comparison with miniatures in many other books, the little panels in the lower border of the most important pages gave the miniaturist the possibility of expanding his compositions somewhat, since they are not restricted to the shape of an initial. Because of the small surface at his disposal, the miniaturist had to work on an almost microscopic scale, but in spite of this he distributes large groups of figures with great skill and articulates each of them in a very expressive manner. Even the landscapes are given some detail. The small panels in the calendar are treated in the same way, and convey a real sense of direct observation in the depiction of the Labours of the Months (fig. 7-11). Not only is the theme itself generously interpreted, but material details are often carefully rendered. The labourer seen through the corn he is about to cut (fol. 6, fig. 8) was not necessary to describe the harvest and shows an unusual sensibility. The backgrounds, however, particularly the landscapes, are often simplified, and, with the preference for elegant and even classical human types, ensure that a certain idealisation prevails over the realism of the details. The exuberance of the decorations surrounding all these illustrations naturally reinforces this impression.

The palette is extremely rich, even luxuriant, particularly with its deep blue and brilliant red sparkling with minute touches of gold. These two colours dominate the others, except for a very light green, generally used in small areas, and shades of pale pink used for faces and the innumerable putti in the borders.

Two main styles can be detected in the decoration and illustration of this manuscript, and there is probably more than one hand working in each. The contrast is more apparent in the small panels of the calendar, probably because, as they were so small, each was painted by a single craftsman, whereas the painting of pages with borders and different scenes could have been shared by several artists. The contrast between these styles is apparent in the palette as well as in the technique. Style A is rather linear and flat, as is shown in the faces, and with a preference for the strong red and blue already mentioned (see fig. 7, 9, and perhaps 8 and 10). The other is characterised by a striving after softer colours, and a sketchy, more lively, technique (see fig. 11). However, not all the miniatures fall easily into these two groups, and their further division into the work of different hands is discussed in the commentary, p. 344.

VII. Binding

Old red velvet over pasteboard, gilt and gauffed edges, marbled endpapers. The manuscript has been resewn, as there are traces of an earlier sewing beneath the thread in the centre of each quire. The marbled endpapers are of the early-nineteenth century: the paper end leaves are of wove paper and therefore later than the middle of the eighteenth century. The red velvet of the cover is of sixteenth-century make,* but there is no evidence to show that it was on the book before it was rebound early in the nineteenth century.

* Mr Donald King of the Victoria and Albert Museum has kindly examined the velvet. In his opinion a plain velvet of this kind cannot be precisely dated, but its structure is characteristic of sixteenth-century velvets and it cannot be later than the early seventeenth century.
VIII. *Additions to the Manuscript*

A. In the top left corner inside the upper cover, a rectangular label, with a frame and two lines printed in blue, between the lines, in black ink: 146'B.

B. At the top left corner of fol. Av, Baron Edmond de Rothschild’s inventory number written in pencil: Ms 27.

IX. *Provenance*

According to Baron Edmond de Rothschild’s notes, this manuscript came from the collection of Prince Doria. See also p. 329.

**COMMENTARY**

The differences that were observed among manuscripts made north of the Alps were striking enough to make us conscious of the variety of types of books, particularly Books of Hours, that can be found for instance in a small part of France, north of Paris. Such differences, however, appear negligible if we compare these manuscripts with an Italian one, such as a Book of Hours made in a centre like Florence, which was little influenced, if at all, by other centres of book production. Here everything is different, not only the composition of the gatherings, the order of the devotional exercises, the conception of the decoration, the style of the miniatures, the palette, the script, but above all the layout of the page and its general appearance.

Except for the first few leaves, which seem to have been soiled and affected by damp, the parchment of this Book of Hours has the refined texture and pale ivory colour that are so characteristic of good Italian manuscripts, even before the fifteenth century. The quires used for the Hours are quinions (five bifolios) in accordance with Italian or at least Tuscan tradition. Quires with less than ten folios are found at the ends of the parts of the manuscript, or when the text was too short to need a full quinion.

All the leaves of this Book of Hours, even those of the calendar, were ruled in the same sophisticated manner, with a double line on each of the four sides of the written space, extending into the margins on each side (fig. 1); but whereas the double lines at the top and bottom each contain a line of text, the spaces between the two vertical lines on each side are left blank with only the very ends of words spreading into the right-hand column. The left-hand one is more strictly respected, and its lines were only useful in positioning the initials which project from the written space.

The choice of a double frame of ruling drawn with a stylus, and therefore hardly visible, is somewhat paradoxical. This ruling is so light that it lacks the decorative effect found in many books from north of the Alps. Besides, what was the purpose of the double framing lines on all four sides, when they were hardly necessary for the scribe? This may of course date from a time when books made in the publishing house were still ruled in ink and with a decorative effect in mind. Not surprisingly, during the Renaissance such superfluous elements tended to be reduced to their basic function of helping the scribe, and were kept as unobtrusive as possible. In this case, the habit of ruling double lines may have been carried on because they were still of some use for the initials and, as we shall see, for the catchwords.

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The format of the written space within the page is most unusual. The column of text is narrow, much narrower than in contemporary Books of Hours from north of the Alps; and the rather broad margin on the inner side of the leaf, nearer to the sewing, gives a more balanced appearance than the heavier proportions found in non-Italian manuscripts. All the margins in fact appear even broader because of the elongated written space, and contribute to the elegance of the layout of the page.

The ruling chosen for the main text could also be used for the calendar without any additional lines. The numbers of the lunar cycle were written in the left-hand margin; the letters for the seven days of the week were inserted between the two vertical lines on the left of the page, and the names of the saints were added in the written space. On the other hand, the sixteen-line grid created some problems. Of the thirty-two lines that could be used for each month on the recto and verso of the first twelve leaves, two lines (even three for January) were
needed for the name of the month, the numbers of days, the lunar days, and the hours of the night; and therefore the thirty remaining lines were insufficient for months with thirty-one days. Consequently the thirty-first had to be added at the end, below the written space on the verso. In the case of January, which begins with a heading of three lines, the problem was solved either accidentally or intentionally by omitting the 24th and 26th of the month. March has its heading, not at the top of the page like the other months, but on the two blank lines of the verso at the end of February. It is strange that the basic principle of beginning each month on the recto was violated in this case, but whoever planned this manuscript was confronted with a problem that was entirely due to the number of lines adopted by the publishing house for its Books of Hours.

This manuscript is written in a humanistic book-hand, and it suffices to glance even superficially at the scripts found in French manuscripts of this collection to appreciate the contrast in the size of the letters, the thickness of the pen strokes, and particularly in the form of the letters themselves (fig. 6). It is important on the other hand to note that this script is not totally different from Gothic scripts. Most of the downstrokes are still broken at their upper and lower extremities, the ‘s’ is still tall, ligatures continue to be used, for instance between ‘e’ and ‘t’, and the nib itself is applied to the parchment at an angle, and not parallel to the ruling. Therefore, although the general appearance of the book is different, and a sign of another culture, the script itself cannot be considered as a classic example of humanistic script.

The same type of script is used throughout the book, except for fol. 201-v, apparently by one hand, which may even have done the rubrics. This scribe wrote his catchwords perpendicularly to the text in the lower part of the last verso of the quire, between the right-hand pair of vertical lines of the ruling. There is no catchword, however, for the last quire of each part of the Book of Hours. It must be remembered, and it can easily be observed in the plan of the construction of this book, that nearly all these gatherings at the end of the different parts of the book, are irregular. The two that are complete quinions, the fifteenth (fol. 133-142) and twenty-fourth (fol. 203-212), at the end of the Office of the Dead and of the short Hours of the Holy Spirit, both finish with two blank leaves, so that the following devotions start on a new quire. The division of the work in this publishing house, or at least in this manuscript, is therefore easy to establish, as it is confirmed by the absence of catchwords as well as by the irregular composition of the quires or by the presence of blank folios. The number of divisions in this manuscript is unusually large, consisting of nine parts in all, with the Office of the Dead before the Penitential Psalms and immediately after the Hours of the Virgin. Moreover, the order of these parts is unconventional, at least by northern European standards, although this may have been affected by the rebinding of the book. One should also mention the inclusion of the Hours of the Passion with the Short Hours of the Cross, of the Gradual Psalms which are not often found in Books of Hours, and of the Gospel Extract which is only that from John, the other three Evangelists being omitted.

As far as one can see, nothing in the contents of these Hours gives any indication of the origin
of the book; the calendar is generally Roman, and both the Hours of the Virgin and the Office of the Dead are of the use of Rome.

At the beginning of the main parts of this book the rubric and the first words of the text are written in gold or, occasionally, for lesser rubrics, silver letters, mostly in Roman capitals but sometimes in the ordinary humanistic script, against a plain blue or red background. This technique, which was already in use in the Carolingian era, was naturally adopted to make the script a decorative element of the more ornate pages. On the first leaf of the Hours of the Virgin (fol. 15, fig. 12) the entire text was written in gold on a blue background; a difference of treatment underlining the particular importance of this page, which was generally the most important in a Book of Hours.

The decorators of manuscripts in Italy, and particularly in Florence, seem to have loved extremely elaborate ornaments and to have enjoyed inventing very complicated patterns. On
the other hand, the tolerance of some technical weaknesses, such as the use of thick, burnished, gold for the big and sometimes badly drawn initials, is difficult to understand in the product of a centre so much concerned with refinement.

The scale of initials shows a slightly greater variety than in other books, as well as a strict observance of it by the illuminators. The usual one- and two-line initials are reserved for each verse, and for the beginning of psalms, or for similarly related divisions of a devotion, as well as for the months of the calendar (fig. 2, 3, 6, 7). However, January, being the first month, has a three-line initial. A five- or six-line initial precedes the secondary parts of the book, for instance each of the last seven Hours of the Virgin (fig. 13), or the special Mass of the Virgin which follows these and which may have been added. For each complete devotional exercise, which in this book covers an independent group of quires, or leaves, the initial is even bigger,
seven or eight lines high (fig. 12-19). This confirms the division of work indicated by the composition of gatherings and the absence of catchwords. There are, however, two exceptions to this rule. The first is that the personal prayers at the end, which are written on a separate quaternion, have no particular decoration on fol. 227. The second is on fol. 15 (fig. 12), the first leaf of the Hours of the Virgin, nearly always regarded as the frontispiece of a medieval Book of Hours. In all the other big initials, which are historiated, the letter itself is made of burnished or brushed gold, but on fol. 15 it consists of a very classical motif: two pairs of cornucopias whose mouths are separated by a large pearl. The progression in size and complexity of the ornaments in relation to the importance of the text is thus very evident.

The one- and two-line initials differ considerably in technique and even in pigment from the others, although the letters themselves are in burnished gold throughout the book. In spite of
their small size they are decorated with extremely delicate filigree in brushed gold, and, in addition, the two-line initials have tiny dots in silver, which although hardly visible are very rarely omitted. In most cases there are one or two circles of small silver dots, distributed as petals of a flower (fig. 3). Minute details and variations like this are more revealing than anything else of the technical ability of medieval craftsmen, and also of their particular conception of the variety of decoration planned for this type of Book of Hours. The initials in these two smaller sizes were very probably the work of the same decorator.

A slight and fortunate distraction during the decoration shows how these craftsmen proceeded in their task. No small initials have been painted on fol. 15 and 24, which are conjoint leaves forming the first bifolio of the quinion. As fol. 15 is the first page of Matins and is highly decorated, this bifolio must have been extracted from the quire and handed to the illuminator and miniaturist for completion whilst the lesser decoration was forgotten. We can therefore assume that all folios with miniatures were taken out of their quires and passed on to the more skilful craftsmen in the workshop.

Although no large illustrations survive in this manuscript, the border decoration is extremely rich, and is graded in a sophisticated way in relation to the importance of the text. We can distinguish four main types of marginal decorations. The minor one consists of minute and intricate motifs, painted on the parchment in the outer margin of the page and sometimes stretching into the upper and lower margins. This type is used with the less important—and also smaller—historiated initials, illustrating once again a difference of treatment which is evident in many other ways (fig. 5). The same type of decoration appears on fol. 195v (fig. 4), which has only a two-line initial and is on the verso of the decorated page at the beginning of the short Hours of the Cross. This border was probably painted in error, but it may indicate that in other, more luxurious, Books of Hours issued by the same publishing house, decorations of this nature were added on similarly less important pages of the manuscript.

The same technique, but applied to the four borders of the page and enriched with historiated panels, is used only once; at the beginning of the Short Hours of the Cross (fol. 195, fig. 17). There is no doubt that this devotional exercise is less important than the others, because the manuscript already contains the long Hours of the Cross, often called the Hours of the Passion, although the same rubric ‘Officium Sancte Crucis’ is used twice.

All the other illuminated pages have fully framed borders, painted on monochrome backgrounds and strictly rectangular in form. Here again, however, two clearly different types are used according to the text they introduce. The marginal decorations at the beginning of the Short Hours of the Holy Spirit (fol. 203, fig. 18), and the Gradual Psalms (fol. 213, fig. 19), do not include rectangular panels with religious scenes in the lower margin, and the garland below the frame on fol. 203 is unique in this position in the book. These panels are only found on the first folios of the longer sections of the manuscript: the Hours of the Virgin (fol. 15, fig. 12), the Office of the Dead (fol. 93, fig. 14), the Seven Penitential Psalms (fol. 143, fig. 15) and the Hours of the Passion (fol. 169, fig. 16). That a conscious choice was definitely made between two different types of border for one group of two illuminated folios and for another group of four will be shown again when we examine the illustration of this Book of Hours, or more exactly the absence of it.

Although one can see some recurrent patterns in the marginal decoration, the borders in fact vary considerably, not only in the ornaments used but even more in their composition. Individually, the putti are as varied in their attitudes and actions as are the floral and sculptural ornaments or jewels in shape and colour, but the grouping of these motifs tends to be stereotyped and symmetrical. Only Italian illuminators used such a large vocabulary of motifs, but the display is so overwhelming that it could become monotonous if one did not make the effort
to analyse it in detail. To reproduce all this wealth of ornament is impossible, but its analysis is a task that the future historian of the publishing house that produced this manuscript may have to undertake.

In the description of these borders small tondi, medallions and cameos were mentioned. These often contain representations of human beings and animals, but it is not always clear whether these are part of the decoration or of the illustration. In manuscripts like this – and the same can be said about many Italian manuscripts – one can hardly distinguish one from the other. For instance on fol. 195 and 203 (fig. 17, 18) the Cibò emblem of a peacock is painted in the middle of the lower margin (see p. 329, note *), but on fol. 213 (fig. 19) we see in the same place two deer (which appear elsewhere in the book, for instance on fol. 143r, fig. 15), whilst the peacock is painted in each corner of the same page. One feels equally inclined to give a personal meaning to the two hares painted in the top border of fol. 169 (fig. 16), because they
appear on each side of the coat of arms. However, as the two hares are found in other books from the same publishing house, they are probably part of the repertory of animals used at random by these craftsmen. On the other hand, their accepted, or at least symbolical, meanings: immortality and pride for the peacock, lust for the hare, timidity and pride for the deer, strength (?) for the bear, are not out of place in the context of an Italian prayer book.⁸

Small panels with human heads or busts can also be either decorative or part of the illustration. Cameos are of course simply ornaments, but St Jerome with a skull on his book (fol. 93, fig. 14), or the Dove (fol. 203, fig. 18), are without doubt related to the text of the Office of the Dead and the Hours of the Holy Spirit respectively. There are also Evangelists (fol. 15, fig. 12), and prophets, some even with their names (fol. 143, fig. 15 and fol. 105, fig. 17), but who is the figure in prayer and perhaps with a crown of laurels (fol. 195, fig. 17), or the seemingly contemporary face in profile and also crowned with laurels (fol. 15, fig. 12) ? It is known that owners of books such as Matthias Corvinus,⁹ had their portrait and those of members of their family painted within medallions in this way, but even these became in turn part of the workshop repertory. Anyone who eventually tries to distinguish between decoration and illustration in this manuscript will have to bear this in mind.⁷

The importance of the decoration in Italian manuscripts such as this one, which is excessive in many ways, contrasts strangely with the classical style both of the humanistic script and of the layout of the page. The late Roman manuscripts that have survived have no decoration, not even a painted initial. The absence or loss of sobriety in the decoration that we observe here can therefore be only a consequence of a medieval tradition which emphasised this rather superficial aspect of the book. However, as we shall see in MS 18, not all Italian manuscripts have the same emphasis.

When speaking of the illustration of MS 16 we are reduced to mentioning only the twelve little panels for the calendar and the first leaf of each part of the text, because the main miniatures painted on full pages have disappeared from the book. This cannot be deduced from the composition of the quires, because these miniatures were painted on leaves that were inserted in their proper place amongst the quires, but from the stains of glue where the stubs of these added folios were stuck (fol. 24v, 152v, 178v and 200v), from the presence of a stub still glued to fol. 102v, which indicates that the corresponding leaf with a miniature was cut out, and even from traces of the marginal decoration of some of these illuminated pages that have marked the lower margins of the facing leaf (e.g. fol. 93, fig. 14; fol. 169, fig. 16). As the miniatures were always added in front of the existing gatherings, the corresponding stub was naturally glued after the last folio of the quire. These Hours therefore probably contained five full-page miniatures; before fol. 15 for the Hours of the Virgin, fol. 93 for the Office of the Dead, fol. 143 for the Penitential Psalms, before fol. 169 for the Hours of the Passion, and before fol. 195 for

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⁸ See E. Droulers, Dictionnaire des attributs, allegories, emblèmes et symboles, Tournhout, n.d. Dr Shearman has also suggested that the harts on fol. 15 and fol. 143 may be emblems. The hart with a fawn on its back also occurs in the decoration of Leo X's Praeparatio ad missam pontificalem, 1520, referred to in note ⁷ below.

⁹ See A. de Hevesy, Le Bibliotheque du roi Matthias Corvin, Paris, 1923, pl. XXVII, from MS 9008 in the Bibliothèque Royale at Brussels.

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⁷ For instance the ring which occurs on fol. 5, the emblem of Matthias, was also used in the decoration of MS 9008 in Brussels (Bibliothèque Royale). The ring and diamond with feathers and a banderole which occurs frequently on fol. 195 (fig. 17) was also an emblem of the Medici family. Moreover, as Professor Shearman has pointed out, other motifs in the decoration are emblems of, or occur in books belonging to, the Medici family. The branches which occur on fol. 203 (fig. 18) and 213 (fig. 19) are bronconi, (pruned branches which produce new shoots in the Spring) used as emblems of rebirth, especially by Lorenzo and Leo de Medici; in MS 16 they encircle the Ghibelline peacock. The bear stealing honey in the left-hand border on fol. 143 (fig. 15) is a motif which occurs in the decoration of Leo X's Praeparatio ad missam pontificalem, 1520 (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Heineman Loan).
the Short Hours of the Cross. Apparently the Short Hours of the Holy Spirit and the Gradual Psalms were not preceded by full page miniatures.

The themes illustrating the Labours of the Months in the calendar are traditional, except in a few interesting cases. For the month of August (fol. 8, fig. 9) we see a doctor taking the pulse of a sick man in bed while the doctor’s assistant, holding a jar, speaks to a nun. This subject is not normally characteristic of August and may have been introduced to fill a gap in the sequence. Harvest is illustrated in June (fol. 6, fig. 8), winnowing and threshing in July. As these two Labours seem to be at least a month in advance, particularly the winnowing, this error could have induced the illustrator to create a new theme for August. December (fol. 12, fig. 11) is illustrated by the gathering of fruit from a tree. As the usual theme of collecting acorns (with pigs hopefully waiting at the foot of the tree) illustrates November, it is presumably another fruit that is being gathered in December, probably olives.
The twelve scenes are interpreted in very different ways. Some are nearly realistic tableaux, as in January and February (fol. 2, fig. 7), with, for example, an accurate rendering of the central axle of the mill, a large beam that pivots between the middle of the large stone basin lying on the floor and a mounting in the ceiling. In June (fol. 6, fig. 8) not only do we see the head of a labourer through the corn he is about to cut, but the legs of another man show through the light garment he is wearing because of the heat. Others, such as the panel for December on fol. 12 (fig. 11), are more conventional, but the human body is always represented naturally and generally with elegance.

The illustration of the Hours of the Virgin follows neither the French nor the Netherlandish tradition. Only Matins was properly illustrated, with a full miniature, almost certainly of the Annunciation, now missing; an initial with the Virgin and Child with Jesus offering or receiving an indistinguishable object to or from St John the Baptist; and, in the panel within the lower margin, the Adoration of the Magi, which in non-Italian manuscripts prefaces Sext (fol. 15, fig. 12). The other Hours begin simply with an initial historiated with a female saint, who could be Mary herself because these never have any attribute to individualize them. The attitudes of the figures, however, vary greatly, as well as their features, age, and clothing, and they all illustrate deeply religious emotions (fig. 13).

Instead of either a funeral service in church or at the cemetery for the Office of the Dead (fol. 93, fig. 14), we have two impressive miniatures depicting, in the initial, the theme of Death as a skeleton pitilessly scything all human beings whatever their status, and, in the panel below, inviting the living to join him in the tomb. In the illustrations for the Hours of the Passion, the theme of St Mary Magdalen in penitence at the foot of a Cross without the body of Christ (fol. 169, fig. 6) is not generally found north of the Alps, whereas the Pietà in the initial for the Short Hours of the Cross was used everywhere.

The Gradual Psalms, another devotional exercise not normally found in Books of Hours from northern Europe, have an historiated initial representing the Presentation of the Virgin. The connection is not self-evident, but medieval theologians drew an analogy between these fifteen psalms and the fifteen steps of the Temple. The same iconographical theme, within the triangular shape of the big initial ‘A’, is found in other Books of Hours of the same origin (fig. 19). All these small panels, historiated initials and borders, were undoubtedly painted by a group of miniaturists, but in spite of slight differences in their ways of using the brush, and above all of palette, they all paint in the same manner. They all adopt, for instance, very full compositions with a large number of figures on a small scale. We see in these miniatures the same spirit as in the borders, and the same aesthetic preferences for innumerable details, which are not always painted with great care, but which are always varied. The most impressive scene is probably that of Death calling the living to join him in the tomb (fol. 93, fig. 14). In spite of its small size it has considerable grandeur, particularly of composition. The three living and the three dead are interpreted as an event of universal significance. The most striking part is the skeleton sitting in his tomb between his two recumbent companions; his elbow rests on his raised knees and his long fingers call the three onlookers to join him. The palette reveals the personality of the miniaturist. He uses a great variety of hues on a single figure and its clothing, and each hue is graded with a remarkable sense both of volume and of light and shade.

Two main styles were noted in the description, with the suggestion that a number of miniaturists shared the task. The attribution to particular hands, suggested below, may not necessarily apply to a whole page, but only to the essential parts, the initial or the panel in the lower

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margin, that appear to be homogeneous enough to have been painted by one man.

The whole frontispiece (fol. 15, fig. 12) may be attributed to a single artist, apparently the most accomplished of all, but not necessarily the most appealing. His technique, and particularly his control of the brush, is perfect, and his palette remarkably well balanced.

A second artist painted the scene of Death (fol. 93, fig. 14) described above, and shows a very different sensibility. Although more simple, the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple (fol. 213, fig. 19) may have been done by this artist, as all the figures are painted with the same liveliness. To a third artist I would give the two scenes representing David (fol. 143, fig. 15). His style is more linear, and he uses his colours in a conventional manner according to the surface that he has to paint, instead of following his love for colours, as does his colleague. On the other hand, the modelling of his faces is powerful, even hard, as the volumes are underlined with darker tones.

A fourth group of miniatures reflects the manner of the first artist, but they are all inferior in quality and are probably by another hand. These include the frontispiece of the Hours of
the Passion (fol. 169, fig. 16) and of the Cross (fol. 195, fig. 17), and the seven small historiated initials (see fig. 13).

Another miniaturist, who painted the frontispiece to the short Hours of the Holy Spirit (fol. 203, fig. 18), is easy to differentiate: his putti and many of his faces are practically white and contrast strangely with those in the other miniatures. His palette is rather subdued and his brush strokes are flat.

Not all the small panels of the calendar can be divided between these five hands. January, April, May and August (fol. 8, fig. 9) resemble the work of the fourth miniaturist. February (fol. 2, fig. 7), June (fol. 6, fig. 8) and October (fol. 10, fig. 10), on the other hand, are painted with darker colours not found elsewhere, applied in a mass of parallel strokes. The rest, March (fol. 2v), July (fol. 7), September (fol. 9), November (fol. 11) and December (fol. 12, fig. 11), are again unlike anything else in the manuscript: the technique is sketchy and nervous, the human types are elongated and graceful, and the palette is light, with much use of pale grey and touches of gold.

It appears, therefore, that what remains of the original illustration of these Hours was shared between several craftsmen. In the pages that were entirely painted it does not seem that the miniaturist was often responsible for both decoration and illustration.

In spite of the missing full-page miniatures, MS 16 remains a remarkable example of a very particular type of book. All its techniques – the smooth parchment, the nearly invisible but regular and complex ruling, the elongated format, the humanistic script, the elaborate decoration, linked with great skill to the illustration and presented in a great variety of frames – show the extremely high standard of craftsmanship attained in the publishing house where this manuscript was made. In comparison with other books from the same centre, we shall see that MS 16 was not one of the very best products, but it is nonetheless as carefully executed, and the only difference is one of refinement in the handling of the brush. This high quality and the homogeneity of styles shown by the different hands who illuminated this book are a definite sign that it could only have been made in a very well organised publishing house with long and rigorous traditions, where the best was expected of all the craftsmen from the preparer of the parchment to the miniaturists.

Books of Hours similar to MS 16 are numerous and quite a few follow the same pattern very strictly, without necessarily adopting the same number of lines, but respect the elongated format. The main difference is found in the quality of the decoration and the miniatures. These manuscripts appear to be equally well written, either in round Gothic or in humanistic scripts. MS Add. 35254 R at the British Museum has already been mentioned as a fragment very similar to Waddesdon MS 16, and to this can be added: Oxford, Keble College, MS 60-62 in three parts; Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, James MS 154; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Buchanan e. 7 and g. 17 and a Book of Hours sold by Sotheby's in 1960 which was part of the Dyson Perrins Collection. The Dyson Perrins Hours, which still contains its full page

* To be described by Mr M. B. Parkes in the forthcoming catalogue of Keble College Manuscripts.
* M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Fitzwilliam Museum*, Cambridge, 1895, p. 349, pl. XVII.
* Sotheby's, London, *The Dyson Perrins Collection*, Part III, 29 November 1960, pp. 105-107, lot 142, pl. 51-2. See also Sir George Warner, *Descriptive Catalogue of illuminated manuscripts in the library of C. W. Dyson Perrins*, Oxford, 1920, pp. 204-207, no. 91, pl. LXXXI. Another MS, called the Giraldi-Guicciardini Hours (MS 92 of the Chester Beatty Collection) is also part of this group; it is described in the sale catalogue, Sotheby's, *The Chester Beatty Western Manuscripts*, Part I, 3 December 1968, pp. 98-100, pl. 45.
miniatures, is in many respects similar in appearance to Waddesdon MS 16 and is dated 1495. According to the sale catalogue, the script in the Dyson Perrins Hours is very similar to that of Sigismondo de' Sigismondi of Carpi. However, in contrast to the decoration and illustration of the Dyson Perrins Hours which are homogeneous and are attributed to Gherardo del Fora in the sale catalogue, we have distinguished at least four hands in Waddesdon MS 16. It is difficult, therefore, to make firm attributions of these hands, but we may compare their work with that of well-known miniaturists painting in Florence at the end of the fifteenth century. It seems unlikely that Gherardo del Fora, or someone from his workshop, worked on the bulk of the manuscript; the decoration on fol. 195 (fig. 17) is much more reminiscent of the style of Filippo di Matteo Torelli\(^a\) for example. The rather distant influence of another prolific miniaturist in Florence c. 1485, Attavante degli Attavanti,\(^b\) also appears, for instance on fol. 143 (fig. 15) and fol. 169 (fig. 16) of MS 16. The interest, therefore, of Waddesdon MS 16 lies in the confluence of local styles which it seems to exhibit and which may perhaps best be interpreted as the collaboration of miniaturists trained by different Masters. MS 16 should therefore be an interesting case to study in connection with the question of the relationships between different illuminators' workshops in Florence at the end of the fifteenth century.


\(^b\) This miniaturist is known from many documents and above all his signature in the Missal made in Florence between 1485 and 1487 for the King of Hungary, Matthias Corvinus (Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 9008). Cf. A. de Hevesy, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 60, Cat. No. 5, pl. xxvii–xxx.