

TOUCHING PARCHMENT

HOW MEDIEVAL USERS RUBBED, HANDLED, AND KISSED THEIR MANUSCRIPTS

VOLUME 2: SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS WITH THE BOOK

KATHRYN M. RUDY



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and Kissed Their Manuscripts

Vol. 2: Social Encounters with the Book

Kathryn M. Rudy

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Cover image: Girls learning to read. Full-page miniature in a Book of Hours made for a child. London, British Library, Harley Ms 3828, fol. 27v.

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Acknowledgments

Like every other book I have written, this book represents thousands of hours of researching and writing, most of which I have done while avoiding other work. It's been a 25-year project of elaborate procrastitasking. Instead of filing taxes, writing reports, or doing housework, I have played with the dog, walked up mountains, travelled around Europe to study medieval manuscripts, wandered around Asia and Mexico to study textiles, and written these books. I have written *this* book in Berlin, St Andrews, Edinburgh, Cambridge, and in grocery store parking lots around Scotland, often with my laptop propped on the tiny steering wheel of my ridiculous little car. I travel with a supply of mustard and slather it on turkey breast and interesting local cheeses while on frequent road trips. It is amazing how many destinations require a route that happens to pass by the cheese shop in Dunkeld.

Learning to drive fast and confidently was critical to my ability to write more quickly and efficiently. When I first started driving in the UK in 2011, I careened around in a Smart car and didn't dare go over 35 mph. My first book, published in that year, took me seven years and 28 complete rewrites. Later that year, I bought a Saab saloon turbo with 157,000 miles and named it Otto as a tribute to Graham Leggat, the first Scotsman I ever met. He was my editor when I worked at Cornell Cinema in 1991–92, where I was one of the staff writers. He taught me more about language than I ever learned in the English department. The Saab finally died the night I heard from Gillian Malpass at Yale that my second book had been accepted. With the car hemorrhaging fluids and refusing to resurrect, I had to take the bus home, which in my case meant alighting at a village and walking the last few miles to my cottage. The call from Gillian came as I was trudging alongside a soggy field by moonlight. Yelping for joy when I learned that *Postcards on Parchment* was going to press, the dark field next to the road erupted with geese

who honk-cheered its birth. Shortly after that, I bought an Alfa Romeo, but it fell apart after just one book. A fabulous Mark 1 TT replaced it. I had bought it just outside Cambridge to get myself back to Scotland after a research weekend with my then partner, a smart biologist who lived delightfully close to Cambridge University Library. The nervous seller warned me that the battery struggled to hold a charge and he recommended that I drive straight through to Scotland without turning off the ignition. Climbing into the TT for the first time, I could also smell a problem with the fuel pump. Nevertheless, the car not only made it back to Fife, but it held up for more than 60 trips to my office, after my proactive landlord, Colin Campbell-Brown, drove the battery to the village on the back of his little yellow tractor and swapped it out for a fresh one. The TT finally gave up when it was taking me to Kinross to go trail running. The RAC driver who winched the exhausted Audi onto the flatbed took me grocery shopping on our way to Dave's used car showroom/graveyard, because I was going to be without wheels in rural Scotland for a while. We bought strawberries from a roadside stand and ate them in the lorry's cab to the background of rock & roll.

Being immobilized in my riverside cottage (which must have felt like a castle to the numerous mice) helped me make progress on my next book, but shortly after beginning it, a grant from the UK government took me to India, a place rife with fabulous distractions. Nonetheless, I worked on *Piety in Pieces* in the Himalayas while monkeys twerked on my corrugated metal roof, and I penned the conclusion while in south India during long nights under a mosquito net. While riding in a *tuc-tuc* into the nearest village one day (travelling in the evening is unsafe, because the elephants, I am told, treat the *tuc-tucs* like bubble wrap), I realized I'd need a car when I returned to the UK, so, with shaky internet from the torrid jungle, I bought another TT sight unseen. The seller agreed to meet me at the Manchester airport, so I rerouted my plane ticket from Delhi to Manchester to pick it up. It was identical on the outside to the first TT but had lots of zoomy aftermarket parts on the inside, like Eibach 25mm lowering springs, an Airtec front-mounted intercooler, Brembo big brakes, and a baffled oil sump. I named it Tuna Turner. By 2014, with Tuna propelling me around, I was writing a book about every 18 months. It was all going swimmingly until 2019. Turbo lag was beginning to annoy me, and I wanted a naturally aspirated engine

and more direct steering. While driving to a comedy club in Glasgow after a week's research in Oxford, a car that swiftly passed mine caught my attention and made me yearn for something faster. It was a Lotus Elise. Soon after that some prize money came my way, enabling me to enroll for the bronze, silver, and gold driving courses at the racetrack at Hethel, where the Lotus is made. At racecar training, I only ran off the track once (and didn't crash into anything in the process).

During research leave I moved to Cambridge. There I spent the first half of the Covid 19 lockdown and didn't drive much. When it lifted, I bought a blue Aeon and named it Lapis. This was a kit car, hand built by a guy named Mike. It was so adrenaline-inducing that I had to enroll in transcendental meditation classes in York to drive it. (Those discounted and unofficial classes took place in a vacated dental office, and I received my mantra while humming beatifically under a giant sculptural model of dentures.) Lapis had scissor doors and gull windows and looked like an inverted fishbowl on a metallic platform with approximately the same swoopy shape as Farrah Fawcett's feathered hair. Armed with a helmet and a secret word, I proceeded to look for curvy roads across rural Scotland. I once achieved my personal record of breaking down four times in a single trip to the Highlands, including once in a roundabout.

With a mix of relief and mourning, when the opportunity arose, I traded the pernickety kit car for a salvaged Elise S1 with the original Rover engine. My friend Pat Simons named it Argo, the silver racing machine. (The story of acquiring these specialty cars involved: channeling Ayahuasca by Skype, feeding some chickens in a stained-glass chicken coop, encountering a diminutive man who reached the clutch with blocks strapped to his feet, and relying on a mechanic whose tracksuit slipped down to reveal a knife wound on his backside.) I admit that part of my motivation to pursue this unusual pastime—namely, serving as the (pen)ultimate owner of small, legendary cars—is to mix with people who have different world outlooks than the largely homogenous one I encounter in the academy. So far, so good: the buying, the maintaining, and the waiting on the side of the road have achieved this goal admirably. I have broken down in majestic landscapes all over Scotland and have enjoyed every adventure.

If I have any complaints about the Lotus, it is that it is so reliable and therefore offers fewer opportunities to meet the people. As I go to



Fig. 0 The author and her muses

press, I can report that the Lotus has finally had one brief breakdown in a tiny town near the Galloway Forest Park. My instruments were malfunctioning, and I ran out of fuel on a Sunday evening, miles from the nearest open petrol station. Within 90 seconds of walking toward the town's pub, whose activity had spilled out onto the sidewalk, I encountered a man who offered me a gallon of petrol and an enthusiastic, if sparsely-toothed, smile. All he wanted in exchange was a brief look at Argo's 1.8-litre 118bhp K-Series transversely-mounted Rover engine.

I appreciate the craft that goes into this hand-built machine. It was perfected by a thousand smiling engineers who loved landscapes and vibrations and math. Driving in Scotland with the top down—even in a light rain—puts me in a flow state more reliably than any other activity. I long to dance with the gear box. The Lotus is spare on the inside: unupholstered molded seats, no radio, no electric anything, old-fashioned window cranks, and no storage of any kind. I have to strap the mustard down with the harness. All verb, it soars and corners. Driving it, my writing has become faster. With this lighter car (just 725 kg on empty and before lunch), I have written more modular books based on more detailed outlines, so that they can be read (and written) in

attention-deficit chunks. I lost 30 pounds so my ass would fit in the tiny bucket seat without pinching. Life became pretty much perfect.

As you know by now, I dedicate this book to my beloved cars. They are my secret sauce, the engines powering my zeal for writing. Eventually electric self-driving cars will replace stick-shift petrol-powered ones, just as AI-generated texts will replace organically written ones. I have a feeling, however, that bad unpredictable things will happen when we relinquish the need to hone our hand-eye coordination and forget to stay attuned to engine pitch to time the gear shifting. The price we will pay for the convenience of automated transport is distributed and subtle, a slow erosion of skill and passion, and a diminution of exploration for its own sake. We will lose something important about the mechanics of language, just as we lose a sense of how gearing works. We won't change our own oil or carry milk crates full of fluids and paper maps in our tiny boots. We won't edit our own texts or diagram sentences in our minds. Building things with our own hands is tantamount to knowing how they work, to knowing their flaws and appreciating their intricately-designed parts.

With Volume 2, I would like to reiterate my gratitude to the people and institutions I thanked in Volume 1, and I have also accumulated some new debts of gratitude, specific to the items and ideas in this volume. It has involved visits to collections in The Hague (the least happy place I've ever lived), Cambridge (thanks, Jim Marrow and Emily Rose!), Oxford (the highest concentration of intriguing people in the world), Chicago (where I had what I only realized later was a date), Vienna (where I drank carrot juice and attended an Italian film festival with Ulli Jenni shortly before she died), Aberdeen (some good driving roads up there!), Paris (overrated next to Lyon), Venice (Florida, where Larry Schoenberg stored his manuscripts in a bathtub), Canterbury, London, Troyes, Utrecht, Nijmegen, Delft, Amsterdam, Dijon (go for the mustard, stay for the manuscripts), Manchester, Douai, Marseille, Lyon (fully of vivacious people and a great library), Brussels (where to begin?), Berlin, Glasgow, the Beinecke at Yale (New Haven is the only place I've ever been held up at gunpoint and is one of the reasons I moved to Europe), Lambeth Palace (where I paid a fortune for images),

Tilburg (a surprisingly invigorating university town), Copenhagen (where the library lends out wetsuits), and Ferrara (where a random person I met on the street knitted me two sweaters). Nothing can match the wonder I felt the day Peter Aelvoet brought me in a tiny car rattling over cobblestones to the manuscript in Linkebeek. The second time I visited, 10 years later, I was grateful for the hospitality of Tina Oelbrandt and Pierre Cornelis. The hospitality during these research trips has been life-affirming. My gratitude exceeds my capacity to express it.

Most of the manuscripts discussed in this volume I have seen in the flesh, except for those in Tournai, the Church of St Bavo in Ghent, the archive in Leiden, the Ospedale di Santo Spirito, Valenciennes, the St Gorik manuscript (now in the Brussels City Archive), Toulouse, the Escorial, and Castres. The questions I asked of the Croy Hours and the Vienna Genesis (Vienna), the St Louis Psalter (Leiden), the Harley Christine de Pisan (London), are iconographic and did not warrant my asking for the originals, so I relied on proxies in order not to contribute to their exposure. In publishing this paragraph, I would like to encourage other researchers of historic material to list items they have seen in person and items they have studied through (digital) proxy. Let's aspire to this and other forms of transparency.

Individuals who provided images, ideas, and conversation that fed this volume include: Rosa Maria Rodriguez Porto, whom I met in Warsaw; the ever-helpful Remco Sleiderink; François Berquet, Conservateur en chef at the Médiathèque Jacques-Chirac in Troyes; Cressida Williams and Daniel Korachi-Alaoui at the Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library; Anaïs Dondez at the Archives municipales in Dijon; and Benjamin Ravier-Mazzocco at the Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon; Rosalind Brown-Grant; Heather Pulliam; Hanno Wijsman; Irene van Renswoude; Ed van der Vlist; Gia Toussaint; Jennifer Borland; Joyce Coleman; Bart Jaski; David Rundle; Cécile Gérard. I am deeply indebted to Julia Faiers, Lisa Regan, and James Marrow for reading earlier versions of this book and helping to shape it. My particular gratitude goes to Kate Gerry, whose eye for detail has saved me from many moments of embarrassment. As ever, I am grateful to the staff at Open Book Publishers.

This project started to take form when I was the curator of illuminated manuscripts at the National Library of the Netherlands (the KB), where

I gave a talk about purposely damaged manuscripts in 2007. The ideas developed further with the support of organizations across Europe and North America. It was a slow process. I first systematically collected ideas and images for the project when I was a Caroline Villers Associate Fellow at the Courtauld Institute in London in 2009-2010. Following that transitional year from curator to academic, various fellowships gave me the time to write and access some of the great libraries of Europe. I am enormously grateful to these organizations: the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in Amsterdam; the Paul Mellon Foundation; the Bodleian Library in Oxford, where I was a Humfrey Wanley Visiting Fellow; the Getty Research Center in Los Angeles; the Internationales Kolleg für Kulturtechnikforschung und Medienphilosophie (IKKM) at the Bauhaus University in Weimar; the Leverhulme Trust, for a three-year Major Research Grant; and Radboud University in Nijmegen, where I spent three years (part-time) as a visiting Excellence Professor. The University of St Andrews granted me several terms of research leave, provided computing and photography equipment, gave me many forms of administrative support, multiple terabytes of digital storage, and supported the purchase of high-resolution digital images for this book. This book has been partially funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) under Germany's Excellence Strategy in the context of the Cluster of Excellence Temporal Communities: Doing Literature in a Global Perspective (EXC 2020–Project ID 390608380).

During the course of writing these volumes, the practice of reading has changed. People (and here I mean scholars and students) rarely read an academic book from cover to cover but rather dip in to meet their immediate needs. I have tried to accommodate this new reading style by breaking the text into subsections, each with its interlocking point, and to serve the entire thing as digital-born and searchable. I have also tried to illustrate this book as fully as possible, featuring many items that have not previously been photographed or studied. The search for these items has largely involved scouring printed catalogues and pounding shoe leather on the ground: a full-body analogue process has generated a fully digital one.

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- Fig. 195 Folio from a bestiary depicting snakes and salamanders. France, ca. 1450. HvhB, Ms. 10 B 25, fol. 42v p. 319
- Fig. 196 Folio from the *Comedies* of Terence. Northern Italy, ca. 1440–60. HKB, Ms. 128 E 8, fol. 23v p. 320
- Fig. 197 Opening folio of Pseudo-Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. Italy, 1400–1410. HKB, Ms. KA 1, fol. 1r p. 321
- Fig. 198 Initial C with the Christmas Eve Vision, in Caterina da Bologna, *Le sette armi spirituali*. Ferrara, after 1463. Ferrara, Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea, MS Cl. 1.354, fol. Lr p. 322
- Fig. 199 Israel van Meckenem, Horny, thorny dance moves in a curvilinear structure of acanthus, with a woman at the center. Print on paper made from an engraved copper plate, Middle Rhine, before 1503. Bologna, Print Cabinet. PN21342, and detail. Photo: Kathryn Rudy p. 324

Abbreviations

- BNM Bibliotheca Neerlandica Manuscripta (a database of
Netherlandish manuscripts, available at [https://bnm-i.
huygens.knaw.nl/](https://bnm-i.huygens.knaw.nl/))
- BKB Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium
- BM Bibliothèque municipale
- BnF Paris, Bibliothèque national de France
- HvhB The Hague, Huis van het Boek (formerly the Meermannoo
Museum)
- HKB The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek - The National Library
of The Netherlands
- inc. incipit
- LBL London, British Library
- MJRUL Manchester, John Rylands University Library
- OBL Oxford, Bodleian Library
- ÖNB Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek
- rub. rubric
- UL University Library
- UUB Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek

Introduction

There are two kinds of readers: preservationists who handle books gingerly and protect them from all manner of contagions, including fingerprints, and users who treat books as utilitarian objects. Manuscripts owned by the former have been overrepresented in exhibitions and canonical histories. *Touching Parchment* focuses on manuscripts owned by the latter. Since the 2010s, such manuscripts have increasingly entered the scholarly discourse. Before that period, most exhibitions and monographs that showcased manuscripts only featured luxurious, pristine examples with celebrity provenance. I consider it a sign of progress that scholars increasingly pay attention to images and manuscripts that are marred, tattered, anonymous, and filthy.

This multi-volume study analyzes touched books in late medieval Europe, a time and place when touching had a charged meaning. Curative touching was implicated in the pervasive culture of touching relics, objects with an aura of holiness whose efficacy depended on propinquity and belief. Relics populated every altar. In the Christian West, the earliest and most famed cures with relics occurred with the True Cross, with which St Helen revived a corpse. Splinters of the True Cross populated thousands of altars across Europe; touching this object, as well as representations of it, channeled supernatural forces.

Saintly remains also effected cures, and medieval Christians actively sought to touch them. Some saintly tombs were even designed so that the afflicted could climb bodily through apertures in reliquary cases in order to be surrounded, and in maximum physical contact with, the

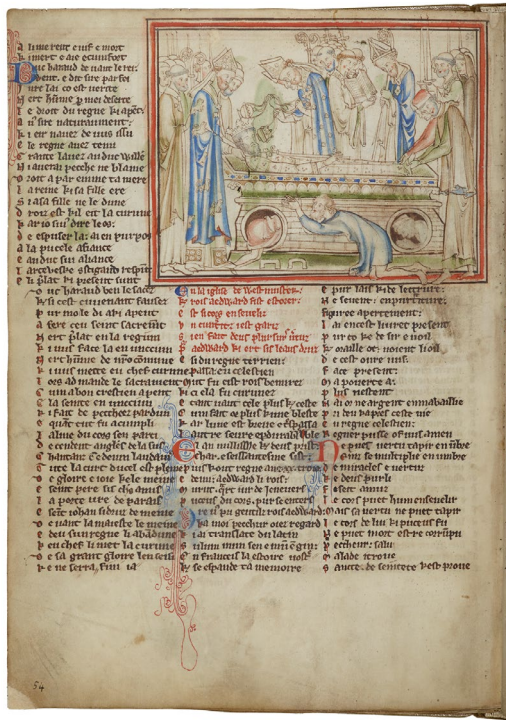


Fig. 1 Folio from the Life of St Edward the Confessor, with a miniature showing pilgrims climbing into the saint's shrine through apertures. Cambridge, UL Ms. ee.3.59, fol. 29v

healing objects (Fig. 1).¹ The twelfth-century German monk Thiofrid asserted that contact relics were formed when “divine power works through things that have been consecrated by [...] contact with [...] [a saint’s] hands.”² *Contact relics* could be endlessly produced at the shrines; they often constituted objects—especially cloths, lengths of string, and other items made from humble materials—which had merely come in contact with the saint.³ For example, at the shrine of St Hubert in the Ardennes, pilgrims suffering from rabies would undergo

- 1 Life of St Edward the Confessor (MS Ee.3.59). For a description and images, see <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-EE-00003-00059/64>
- 2 Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 244.
- 3 Rebecca Browett argues that some institutions created contact relics because they hesitated to allow pilgrims to touch primary relics. See Rebecca Browett, “Touching the Holy: The Rise of Contact Relics in Medieval England,” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 68(3) (2017), pp. 493–509. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022046916001494>



Fig. 2 Pilgrims receiving treatment at the shrine of St Hubert in the Ardennes. Bruges, 1463. HKB, Ms. 76 F 10, fol. 25v.

a ritual involving a piece of fabric that had touched the shrine. A priest would slice the afflicted person's forehead open, insert the shrine-touched fabric into the incision, and bind it together with a bandage. A painting in a manuscript containing the Life of St Hubert shows afflicted pilgrims lining up to have their bandages removed; when they do, they are restored to full health at the foot of the saint's altar (Fig. 2). In this way, touching was a conduit to cure, connecting saints with believers.

The healing powers of touch extended from the realm of saints to that of royalty: the king was able to cure his subjects of their scrofula—an inflammation due to tuberculosis—merely by touching them. As Marc Bloch described in his masterful book of 1924, *Les Rois Thaumaturges*, both French and English kings exercised this practice because performing this limited miracle demonstrated their divine ordination.⁴ Sufferers made a sometimes-arduous journey to receive the royal touch. Each pilgrim reaffirmed his belief in the monarch, just as each person who employed a Gospel manuscript in a ritual reaffirmed the power of sacred writ.⁵

4 See Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France*, trans. J. E Anderson (Routledge, 2020).

5 Three important studies on the use of Gospel manuscripts are: Eyal Poleg, "The Bible as Talisman: Textus and Oath-Books," *Approaching the Bible in Medieval*

Steeped in a culture that elevated the therapeutic touch of holy relics, medieval believers carried these habits and expectations to another class of objects which were likewise divinely touched. Manuscripts, particularly Gospel manuscripts, often contain images depicting the saints themselves touching books. Such manuscripts were conduits to the hands, pens, and very breath of their putative authors. It is therefore not surprising that these objects were heaped with numinous value and, in turn, were touched reverently by medieval believers, who expected great things from rubbing, kissing, and performatively handling them.

When I have talked publicly about how deliberate and charged touching also extended to books, members of the audience have often exclaimed, "I simply cannot believe that medieval people would mishandle their books in ways that would damage the expensive miniatures!" Our notions of art and preservation corset our modern imagination. Since the post-war era every child who has been permitted (or forced) to go to the great national museums has been told to "look but don't touch." We have embodied a collective message about how to engage with art objects, but if one defines "art" as an object of beauty with no practical utility, then this simply cannot be a correct designation for most medieval manuscripts. Liturgical and devotional manuscripts had *utility*. Even many highly illuminated courtly manuscripts, which had an immediate value as display objects, were heavily pawed during public recitations and during rituals. Books played utilitarian roles in social settings in the European late Middle Ages, and signs of wear within those books can help reveal how books were handled. Sometimes that touching was thaumaturgic, but often the activity formed a social glue, marked a rite of passage, or allowed audience members to feel like part of a group. That is the central idea in this book.

England (Manchester Medieval Studies) (Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 59–107; and David Ganz, "Touching Books, Touching Art: Tactile Dimensions of Sacred Books in the Medieval West," *Postscripts*, 8(1–2) (2017), pp. 81–113; David Ganz, "Der Eid auf das Buch. Körperliche, materielle und ikonische Dimensionen eines Buchrituals," *Das Buch als Handlungsangebot: soziale, kulturelle und symbolische Praktiken jenseits des Lesens*, eds. Ursula Rautenberg & Ute Schneider (Anton Hiersemann Verlag, 2023), pp. 446–469

I. Ideas from Volume 1

The previous volume focused on manuscripts in ecclesiastical and legal settings, where they were central to various rituals. Two big ideas about the use of books in Christian ceremonies emerged in the previous volume.

A. Book as divine

The first was that the book-object itself was divine, a manifestation of God's Word made flesh. As the Gospel of John asserts, "In the beginning was the word." Because of this, touching a Gospel manuscript was tantamount to touching God, and for certain applications, such as touching a holy object while swearing an oath or swearing to the truth of a testimony, touching a Gospel manuscript was an appropriate *ersatz* for touching relics. The four Gospels were the operative portal to the divine. Certain manuscripts, especially Gospels and other manuscripts used at an altar, borrowed the status of relics. Swearing rituals, which were discussed in the first volume, operate with this set of assumptions. In the current volume, powerful book-objects, when touched by group members, help to create group identity.

B. Ritual as template

The second big idea from Volume 1 is this: the words spoken by the priest at the Mass during the rite of the Consecration, which were centered around an image of Christ Crucified, motivated the use of the manuscript in other Christian rituals. In other words, some of the gestures around the Mass were reappropriated for other rituals. This is especially true from the twelfth century onwards, when instructions for performing the Mass, which amounted to "stage directions" in the form of rubrics, began to be codified in a book type known as the missal.⁶ (Prior to the twelfth century, a priest would have referred

⁶ For a late fourteenth-century Italian missal with images illustrating the priest's rituals (New York, Morgan Library and Museum, Ms. G.16), see Roger S. Wieck, *Illuminating Faith: The Eucharist in Medieval Life and Art* (Morgan Library & Museum, 2014), cat. 17.

to multiple book types in the course of fulfilling his duties.) A shift toward grander gestures occurred as the Mass was becoming more theatrical. Central to this theater was the moment during which the priest kissed the book, specifically the image of Christ Crucified. The sacrifice centered on the image, re-enacting the consecration of the Eucharist at every Mass. This required an appropriate official to utter prescribed words over a disc of bread. For supernatural functions, images of Christ Crucified ripened the ritual space, as did the Gospels themselves. Images and gestures from the Mass were redeployed in other kinds of rituals that demanded gravitas.

Whereas Volume 1 considered manuscripts handled by persons in authority who touched books as a means to lend divine endorsement to particular rituals, this volume brings a different group of manuscripts into focus: those that exerted a force of social cohesion on their users. The books discussed in this volume were used by multiple people at once. Those people included teachers and students, public readers (or “prelectors”) and their audiences, members of confraternities, and coreligionists in a monastery. Many other social groups existed, but the choices here represent a selection. Books served as a social adhesive, uniting individuals in confraternities; courtly audiences; catechism students; ecclesiastical officials within their hierarchies; monastic communities who prayed for the dead; and religiously defined social groups who rehearsed their collective commitment by retelling Biblical narratives. This could include the knowledge of Christianity or stories of Exodus, in the case of the Passover feast.

Members of faiths other than Christianity had particular touching practices, too. For example, Muslims touched the Great Kabba while circumambulating it, and Jews touched prayer shawls while actively avoiding touching the Torah with their fingers.⁷ However, the current study is not comparative: it is largely restricted to the European late Middle Ages in a Christian context.

7 For a thoughtful perspective on Islamic and other traditions, see Christiane Gruber, “In Defense and Devotion: Affective Practices in Early Modern Turco-Persian Manuscript Paintings,” in *Affect, Emotion, and Subjectivity in Early Modern Muslim Empires: New Studies in Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Art and Culture*, Kishwar Rizvi (ed.) (Brill, 2017), pp. 95–123.

II. Taxonomy for touching



Types of damage to the manuscript can be organized into a taxonomy, which helps to categorize them around intentions and emotions. (See the visualization “Taxonomy of ways of touching manuscripts,” with a QR link). Below I will recount the list but selectively, emphasizing those causes of damage relevant to the present volume. As the diagram makes plain, damage is divided into two large categories: *inadvertent wear* and *targeted wear*. All books are subject to the former. As a rule, I’m not interested in damage caused by faulty storage (such as leaks and insect damage), because passive neglect is not interpretable the way active use is, since it lacks intention and emotion. I am, however, interested in damage that has resulted from use—even normal, expected, and sanctioned use—including regular handling, wax stains, holy water, or other specific stains (i.e., *inadvertent wear*), because these stains reveal the conditions of handling.⁸

This volume considers manuscripts used in social contexts, encompassing learning spaces, courts for public readings, private residences’ communal rooms, church altars, and monasteries. Except for a few brief excursions, I have to set aside study of annotations and deliberate additions, not because they fail to fascinate, but because including them would make the subject swell beyond manageability, and other scholars have treated these subjects with great success. In the social contexts explored here, the act of kissing the book is rarer than in contexts involving figures in authority. Instead, another operation reigns: moistening the finger with a kiss before touching the book. So important and pervasive is this action that I have dedicated a chapter to

8 In making this emphatically materialist argument, I am not arguing that medieval reader/users maintained awareness of the sources of their books’ skins, or even of its animal nature. Although they may have noticed the difference between crisp bovine parchment and much floppier ovine parchment, my approach does not rest on their cognition of a distinction between these materials. My method therefore departs from that of Sarah Kay, which she first discussed in “Original Skin: Flaying, Reading, and Thinking in the Legend of Saint Bartholomew and Other Works,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 36, no. 1 (2006): 35-74, and fully worked up in *Animal Skins and the Reading Self in Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries* (University of Chicago Press, 2017). My thinking is closer to that of Nancy K. Turner, “The Materiality of Medieval Parchment: A Response to ‘The Animal Turn,’” *Revista Hispánica Moderna* 71, no. 1 (2018): 39-67.

it. Book users treated images, initials, and decoration with this action. The gesture creates a moment of intimate physical contact between the reader and the word, as symbolized by an initial. In doing so, it forges a physical link between the breath of the author and that of the reader. That gesture returns in a wide variety of manuscripts, with many examples used for reading aloud in social settings.

A. Themes

This volume has three major themes. First, public speakers used images to animate and illustrate their presentations, to engage the audience, and to improve their performance skills. In thinking about touched and damaged initials, images, and decoration, my goal is to build possible scenarios that explain the patterns of wear.

Second, the prelector assumes a moralizing role. She—or more likely, he—touches images in manuscripts in front of small audiences with the goal not just of transmitting the narrative told in the accompanying text, but also of demonstrating an appropriate moral stance toward the characters represented in the images.

Third, hands are pivotal in fostering community through books. The terminology used in this book—manuscript, handling, holding, touching, manipulate—forms a constellation of topics involving books and hands. Even closed books (i.e., their bindings) were touched. Folios and elements inscribed on folios (words, images) were touched. Paratextual elements (decoration, margins, bookmarkers, curtains, tabs) were touched.⁹ These activities, which all involve the hands, are tangential to reading but essential to demonstrating the status of the book and the person operating it. Christianity was, as these gestures remind their audiences, a religion of the book, and books need to be handled in order to divulge their contents and to fulfill their roles as actors in ceremonies.

These three themes will re-emerge in this volume and throughout the study.

9 Literary theorist Gérard Genette coined the term to refer to all the material and marks that surround the text. See his *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (University of Cambridge, 1997).

B. Ways of touching manuscripts

One basic premise motivates this study: people leave traces in their manuscripts when they handle them. By studying these traces, one can hypothesize how the user touched the book, and consequently build a scenario that helps to recreate the feelings, habits, and emotions of people from the past. Such traces fall into two large categories: *inadvertent* handling and *targeted* touching. Nuanced sub-categories fall beneath these two large umbrellas. Below I provide an overview of each type of wear, as I did in the Introduction of Vol. 1, but this time concentrating on the categories that particularly operate in the current volume—that is, in social contexts.



Fig. 3 Opening in the Lombard Haggadah, fols 28v–29r. Milan, ca. 1400. Private Collection (formerly: Les Enluminures).

1. *Inadvertent wear*

Stains reflect the contexts in which manuscripts were handled. For example, many Haggadot undoubtedly trap traces of food—unleavened breadcrumbs and ritualistic wine—from the Passover meals they helped to choreograph. The Haggadah with its scripts and stories stood at the

center of the social event. For example, the Lombard Haggadah (made around 1400) contains stains from red liquid precisely at the opening describing the drinking of wine and depicting figures doing just that (Fig. 3).¹⁰ More broadly, one should not be surprised to find contextually appropriate stains in utilitarian manuscripts, such as splashes from flasks in alchemists' books, or grease marks in cookbooks.

More generally, inadvertent wear includes fingerprints in the margins left by readers who were simply handling the book in the intended way—opening the book and turning its folios. A user inevitably touches the clasp, binding, and folios to operate the codex, or the flap, membranes, and spindle to operate a roll. While inadvertent wear undeniably forms the basis for understanding the intensity with which a book was read and handled, it is not the main form of wear treated in this study. This brings us to the other form of wear.

10 For a thorough discussion of this manuscript, see Milvia Bollati, Flora Cassen and Marc Michael Epstein, with an introduction by Christopher de Hamel, *The Lombard Haggadah* (Les Enluminures, 2019). Comparable stains appear in the fifteenth-century Hileq and Bileq Haggadah (Paris, BnF, Ms. Hébreu 1333), for which see Adam Cohen's essay: <https://smarthistory.org/the-hileq-and-bileq-haggadah/> Gertsman, Elina, and Reed O'Mara, in "Wrathful Rites: Performing Shefokh ḥamatkha in the Hileq and Bileq Haggadah" *Religions* 15 (2024), no. 4: 451. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15040451>, discuss this manuscript in its performative context.

2. Targeted wear

While inadvertent wear occurs as a result of opening the book and reading it, targeted wear results from deliberately interacting with the marks on the page (words, images, and decoration). There are at least ten distinctive ways of touching books with a finger, and even more ways involving other body parts, such as the whole hand. This is summarized in the diagram (linked with a QR code above). In asking why the image looks the way it does, one should consider that different ways of handling yield different forms of abrasion. One can touch the depicted hem of a beloved saint with a kissed finger, alighting just once, and lift a circle of paint that has been reconstituted by the saliva carried on the finger. Or, with a dry finger, one can trace the trajectory of the Holy Spirit coming down from the firmament. The second act of touching differs significantly from the first, as it is dry and moves across the surface. This comparison reveals that different kinds of volitional touching can leave quite different traces. I contend that these traces can be differentiated. Those that play a role in this volume are as follows.

Wet-touching

I have invented the term “wet-touch,” which is shorthand for “touching something with a finger that has been moistened with saliva.” There are two motivations for this action: to transport a kiss to the image, or to transport the paint to the lips. This will be one of the most important terms in play in this volume.

Touching images with power

Like a Gospel text, an image could likewise be charged with power, and touching it could be tantamount to making contact with the divine. Touching, generally with a dry hand, could signify deep respect, reverence, or even playful mimicry. One can consider a Book of Hours from Southern France, possibly Montpellier (Ms. Rawl. liturg. f. 16; Fig. 4). It contains tables for calculating the date of Easter beginning in 1473, which suggests that the book was made in that year. Facing the Easter tables is a shield, which van Dijk describes as “azure portcullised



Fig. 4 Frontispiece from a Book of Hours, with a hand-clasp gesture. Southern France, 1473? OBL, Ms. Rawl. liturg. f. 16, fol. 3r

argent upon which a fess or.”¹¹ The binding is still intact (Fig. 5). Relevant for the current discussion is the way in which the image of the two hands is damaged: it has been repeatedly touched by someone laying a finger over the hands and dragging the finger across the image, as if joining the represented hands with a slight up-and-down shake. The handclasp was a highly charged gesture in the late Middle Ages: during the ritual of fealty, a lord enveloped a vassal’s hand in a visible and intimate gesture that also signified the lord’s protection (Fig. 6). In a different context, couples clasped hands to outwardly demonstrate their marital vows. Even when the gesture morphed into the modern handshake, it retained the connotations of social bondage. By touching the image, the engaged beholder was joining in on the act that the handshake symbolized: the peaceful joining of two families through a

11 Van Dijk also transcribes the motto, “Perla des voyans” (which may be repeated on the binding as PDVA). See S.J.P. Van Dijk, *Handlist of Latin Liturgical Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, 8 vols. (typescript created 1957–60), Vol. 4: Books of Hours, p. 214.



Fig. 5 Binding from a Book of Hours, tooled and gilt leather. Southern France, 1473? OBL, Ms. Rawl. liturg. f. 16, binding.

marital oath. A coat of arms with a handshake on it turns an ephemeral gesture into a permanent symbol.

Treating the book as symbol

To ritualistically touch the closed book with a dry hand, without reading it, is to acknowledge the symbolic value of the book. The previous volume presented many examples of people touching a page because it contained a Gospel text, which Christians considered a relic of God (the Word made Flesh). Some individuals, in a ritual setting,



Fig. 6 Incipit of the *Constitutiones feudorum cum glossis*. France, 14th century. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. 2262, fol. 174v.

demonstrated their belonging to a group by touching particular books, usually liturgical manuscripts or those containing Gospel excerpts.

Dramatic touching with a finger

Performers, such as raconteurs or prelectors, might point at images while reading aloud from an illuminated manuscript; however, they might also add more dynamism to the pointing gesture to animate the images. Gestures added for dramatic effect while reading aloud showcased a desire to animate and vivify the narratives, emphasizing the liveliness of tales and histories. The specific gesture depended on the narrative context. For example, it could involve tracing the journey

of a horse and rider into battle in an illuminated romance or chronicle. This action would result in dry smears. One gesture conducted during a single event might suffice to effect a change on the picture's surface. Such gestures are often directed at depictions of dramatic action, at figures' faces, hands, or other localized parts of the image in order to enliven the narrative. Here, quick excitement drives the activity: the book's handler not only explains the passage, but also conveys some of its significance through dramatic gestures.

Readers and performers could adopt these gestures for a wide variety of manuscripts. In the Aberdeen Bestiary, for example, someone has physically reenacted the eagle diving into the water to catch a fish



Fig. 7 Folio from the Aberdeen Bestiary with the eagle. England *ca.* 1200. Aberdeen UL, Ms. 24, fol. 61v

(Fig. 7).¹² It appears that the reader wetted a finger first, as if to add liquid verisimilitude to the splash. Accordingly, the bestiary could have been read aloud to an audience: it was the nature documentary of its time. For the current volume—unpacking the role of the book in social interactions—touching the image in the service of dramatizing its contents plays an outsized role.

Aggressive poking

When book users attacked figures, they often targeted the eyes.¹³ Many employed sharp instruments to help them pinpoint this facial detail. Deliberate defacing of certain figures, particularly their eyes, reflects active engagement, possibly a form of moral or personal disagreement. Users attempted to reverse the narrative by attacking the depictions of attackers, thereby helping heroic characters vanquish their enemies. One example can be found in a tenth-century hagiographic manuscript containing an illustrated Passion of St Agatha (Paris, Bibl. Nat., MS lat. 5594), where a user has attacked selected figures.¹⁴ In the scene depicting Agatha resisting corruption at a brothel, the user has rubbed out the faces of the brothel manager Aphrodisia and her nine daughters and then gouged out their eyes with a needle or an awl, leaving them “blinded”: only the Christian Agatha can see.¹⁵ The reader’s micro-destructions are most evident when the page is viewed with transmitted light (Fig. 8). If this needling took place in a communal setting—during a public reading

12 The Aberdeen Bestiary, made in England around 1200, has been fully digitized: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/>. For the manuscript in its European context, see Elizabeth Morrison with Larisa Grollemond, *Book of Beasts: The Bestiary in the Medieval World* (The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2019).

13 David Freedberg, “The Fear of Art: How Censorship Becomes Iconoclasm,” *Social Research*, 83(1) (2016), pp. 67–99, esp. pp. 74–76. Those who attack figurative images in other media, such as sculpture or monumental painting, likewise often attack the eyes. Freedberg touches upon these ideas in *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (University of Chicago Press, 1989).

14 Magdalena Elizabeth Carrasco, *An Early Illustrated Manuscript of the Passion of St. Agatha* (Bibl. Nat, Ms Lat. 5594), *Gesta*, 24(1) (1985), pp. 19–32 discusses this manuscript and notes its intentional damage.

15 This situation is comparable to one described in Michael Camille, “Obscenity Under Erasure: Censorship in Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts,” in *Obscenity: Social Control and Artistic Creation in the European Middle Ages* (1998), pp. 139–54, here p. 143.



Fig. 8 St Agatha resists temptation in a brothel, from the Passion of St Agatha. Paris, BnF, Ms. lat. 5594, fol. 67v, photographed with backlighting, and detail

at a shrine, for example—it could have served to help audiences to rally around the lives of female virgin martyrs, and to prompt the listening community to join in and appreciate the destruction.¹⁶ The prelector's actions could thereby shape the moral attitude of the audience.

Wiping with a damp cloth

This action conveys both reverence and rejection, depending on context. As with scraping, the technique of wiping an image with a damp cloth could be used to loosen paint in order to ingest it. Inversely, such an action could also be used to obliterate sections of text (for example,

16 A *vita* of St Margaret, in which the saint's tormenters have been abraded, may have also been used at a shrine in a similar way (LBL, Egerton 877). See John Lowden's keynote address at the conference Treasures Known and Unknown, held at the British Library Conference Centre, 2–3 July 2007, <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/TourKnownA.asp>, unpaginated.

during the early years of the Reformation) or images (such as a previous owner's coat of arms).

One motivation was *damnatio memoriae*—that is, expunging someone from the record so that future generations would not remember him. While most of the examples in this volume relate to social groups reading a manuscript simultaneously, *damnatio memoriae* implies a diachronic aspect: it implies control over individuals in the future. The owner of a copy of the *Mortifiement de vaine plaisance* (The Mortification of Vain Pleasure), a text written in 1455 by René d'Anjou (Séminaire de Tournai, Ms. 42; Fig. 9), may have been the object of *damnatio memoriae*. René d'Anjou was not only a king of Sicily but also an accomplished painter and author, whose writings were consumed by fellow members of the court. He completed another book two years later, *Le livre du cueur d'amours espris* (The Book of the Love-Smitten Heart).¹⁷ The first image in this manuscript depicts, or rather, depicted, King René offering his creation to the archbishop of Tours. Someone has deliberately sponged off the coat of arms in the lower border, and the decorated initial, which may have also contained a coat of arms. King René offers an allegorical story, built around illustrated vignettes, in which the soul encounters various challenges. In one episode, the soul surrenders her heart to fear and contrition (Fig. 10). As on the first folio, the coat of arms has been removed from the margin, this time with a blade. As is clear from these actions, someone wanted to obscure the identity of the manuscript's original owner. It is especially difficult to locate such destructive acts in time.

Tactile curiosity¹⁸

Touching certain areas of the manuscript, especially those with contrasting textures, points toward human curiosity, a desire to

17 Dominique Vanwijnsberghe, "Séminaire de Tournai: Histoire, Bâtiments, Collections," Monique Maillard-Luypaert (ed.), *Institut royal du patrimoine artistique* (Peeters, 2008), pp. 124–126.

18 James Hall, "Desire and Disgust: Touching Artworks from 1500 to 1800," in *Presence: The Inherence of the Prototype within Images and Other Objects*, Robert Maniura and Rupert Shepard (eds) (Ashgate, 2006), pp. 145–60, also acknowledges curiosity as a motivation to touch images.



Fig. 9 King René presenting his work, *Mortifiement de vaine plaisir* (The Mortification of Vain Pleasure), to the archbishop of Tours. France, last quarter of the fifteenth century. Séminaire de Tournai, Ms. 42, fol. 1r

physically explore intriguing elements.¹⁹ Areas of burnished gold and fields of patterned relief invite tactile exploration. Evidence from use wear reveals that people were drawn to touching the gold that often

19 Modern viewers of manuscripts, including those who primarily encounter them through a digital proxy, miss the tactile experience that contributes to the encounter. As a result of this, research groups have tried to recreate the tactility of the manuscript artificially. See Kristen Gallant and Juan Denzer, "Experiencing Medieval Manuscripts Using Touch Technology," *College & Undergraduate Libraries*, 24(2-4) (October 2, 2017), pp. 203-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10691316.2017.1341358>



Fig. 10 Image from *Le livre du cuer d'amours espris* (The Book of the Love-Smitten Heart), depicting the soul encountering fear and contrition. France, last quarter of the fifteenth century. Séminaire de Tournai, Ms. 42, fol. 79r

appeared in initials and in decorations emanating from them. An amalgam of devotion and material pleasure motivated this touch. While some wanted to touch the word of God out of devotion, others may have caressed the gold-encrusted letters out of fascination for their metallic surface texture. An Italian treatise of the fifteenth century, which presents practical math problems, may have been touched out of



Fig. 11 Folio from an illustrated treatise on commercial and practical arithmetic with a problem about the volume of spheres. Italian, fifteenth century. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Library, Schoenberg Ms. 27, fol 99r

curiosity (Fig. 11).²⁰ The problem set out in this opening concerns the masses of three gold balls (*pale d'oro*), where the trick is to cube (not square) the radius of each, since they are volumetric (not planar). A user has rubbed the largest of the balls, abrading the foil surface and feathering the pigment into the void.²¹ Did this person have a magpie's fascination with shiny objects? Was he calling forth riches? Or was he simply curious about the contrasting textures?

Speech acts

Inscriptions, ownership notes, and signatures reveal a manuscript's role as a vessel of identity, authority, and contract. Book owners frequently added a note of ownership, asserting "This book belongs to me." They could also sign documents to add the weight of their authority, sometimes signaling "This was signed by my own hand." In the case of contracts, they could make a mark to signify a promise, such as a pledge to pray for the deceased (as with mortuary rolls), or a profession of

²⁰ Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Library, Schoenberg Ms. 27. I thank Larry and Barbara Schoenberg for letting me study this manuscript in their home in 2007. Their collection is now housed at the University of Pennsylvania. For a transcription of the text, see Pietro Paolo Muscarello and Giorgio Chiarini, *Algorismus. Trattato di aritmetica pratica e mercantile del secolo XV*, 2 vols (Banca Commerciale Italiana, 1972), Vol. II, p. 227.

²¹ The water damage at the top of this folio is separate from the abrasion of the ball.

obedience. All of these forms of language constitute “speech acts,” as philosopher J.L. Austin formulated them.²² These are forms of language that (purport to) change the world by their very utterance. Such acts of inscription are meant to be indelible and form part of a visible contract.

Each of the activities outlined above results in distinct forms of wear. By naming and distinguishing these patterns of destruction, we can better understand the physical role books played in forming social bonds. In short, the method practiced here considers operations performed on books as cultural techniques that left traces.²³ Treating them in this way opens up the possibility of analyzing manuscripts, folios, images, texts, and decoration in the context of socially-coded performances.

22 J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (The William James Lectures) (Clarendon Press, 1962).

23 In using this term, I pay homage to Bernhard Siegert and my time at the IKKM. See Bernhard Siegert, *Cultural Techniques: Grids, Filters, Doors, and Other Articulations of the Real*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young (Fordham University Press, 2015). <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt14jxrmf>.

Chapter 1: Professing Obedience

In the European Middle Ages rituals were developed for building social ties, defining groups, and establishing hierarchies. The rituals often involved saying words aloud, doing something with the hands, and handling a charter or book in a prescribed way. Within the church, ecclesiastical officials—bishops and abbots—professed obedience to their superiors, the archbishops. The rituals, which maintained hierarchies, were adapted from the eighth to the fifteenth century to encompass an ever-larger circle of people, including a variety of religious and civic organizations. Earlier (eighth-century) rituals drew upon the legal language and gestures of charters, but this changed, so that the later medieval rituals drew on the visual language and gestures of the Mass: they benefited from the authority of the Gospels and co-opted the legitimacy of the Mass. What had begun in ecclesiastical contexts as professions of obedience morphed into vows, which were more formulaic. These then developed into something resembling labor contracts. All of these forms of social engineering involved uttering words, making particular hand gestures, and leaving marks on parchment in charter, roll, and codex form.

This chapter ranges from eighth-century England to the sixteenth-century Low Countries to chart the way rituals—involving hand, mouth, and document—helped create social stability. Seen through another lens, they promoted conservatism and enshrined subjugation. The theme of books as tools for social control lingers just beyond my analysis. In this period, we can find an ever-widening circle of rituals, which begin in the Church with the upper levels of clergy and expand to include the lowliest nuns and, eventually, laypeople. To tell this story, I will depart from interpreting only written sources to also consider signs of use and marks of wear in documents in a variety of forms.

I. From professions to vows

This section considers the transition from oral to written professions of obedience in Southern England, focusing on their evolution from the eighth century onwards. I will examine the form and significance of these professions, the rituals associated with them, and their broader impact on ecclesiastical community formation. Before the eighth century, bishops' professions of obedience in Southern England were probably only given orally, but from the eighth century onward, suffragan bishops submitted written professions of obedience to the archbishop of Canterbury. In other words, the ritual changed from an oral one to one that involved oral performance in addition to a written material witness.²⁴

Michael Richter has edited the 301 surviving professions of obedience made by bishops throughout England, who submitted their written statement to the archbishop of Canterbury.²⁵ Of these, 30 date before the Norman invasion, while the bulk of them date from 1070–1420.²⁶ The pre-Norman English examples are the earliest that survive in Europe. In this period abbots also began producing similar professions in the south of England within the diocese of Kent (specifically, the abbeys of Faversham, Bradsole, St Austin's, Langdon, and Cumbwell), and at Chertsey, Glastonbury, and Malmesbury further afield.²⁷

The professions are important for understanding the sense of self-formation and group-belonging that operated in various later ecclesiastical brother- and sisterhoods, as the form of the written profession morphed and adapted. This section will survey some of those changes in order to think about how the parchment sheet and the body were implicated in group formation in a number of different contexts.

24 Michael T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307*, 2nd ed. (Blackwell, 1993), makes this argument, finding evidence in many domains of European culture.

25 Michael Richter, *Canterbury Professions* (Devonshire Press, 1973).

26 The practice of episcopal professions to archbishops ended in 1596 when Pope Clement VIII required bishops to profess obedience exclusively to the pope. See Richter (1973, p. xi).

27 For the professions of abbots, see C. Eveleigh Woodruff, "Some Early Professions of Canonical Obedience to the See of Canterbury by Heads of Religious Houses," *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 37 (1925), pp. 53–72. <https://kentarchaeology.org.uk/node/10461>; however, his transcriptions and facts should be treated cautiously.

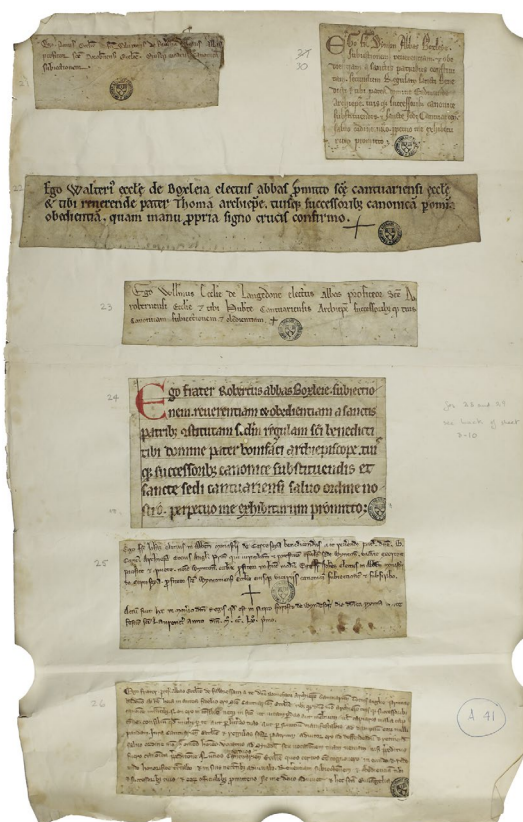


Fig. 12 Briefs of profession of obedience, mounted in the nineteenth century on a card. Canterbury Cathedral Archives, DDc/ChAnt/A41, sheet contains nos 3–10.

Canterbury's role and the influence of Lanfranc

The Canterbury professions take the form of small rectangles of parchment, or charters, inscribed in the first person, which loosely follow one of several formulae (Fig. 12).²⁸ They were produced at Canterbury

28 Richter (1973) edited all of the surviving profession charters in England. Many of them survive in the Canterbury Cathedral Archives, in addition to one manuscript in the British Library, Cotton Ms. Cleopatra E i (transcribed in the twelfth century). The classification marks Richter mentions are no longer valid. Since his study, the CCA has reorganized the professions of obedience, so that the 29 charters of abbots appear in approximate chronological order from 1148–1289 under the classification mark “Chartae Antiquae A/41.” The 170 charters of bishops-elect, dating from 1086–1289, are under the classification mark “Chartae Antiquae C/115.” Enrolled copies of professions of obedience, copied in contemporary hands from 1086–1160

Cathedral, beginning in the eighth century, but they were not made systematically until the archbishopric of Lanfranc (d. 1089). Lanfranc—famed teacher, feisty defender of the doctrine of transubstantiation, and political mastermind—lived in a Benedictine monastery in Normandy before crossing the English Channel. After the Norman Invasion of 1066, William the Conqueror selected him as archbishop of Canterbury, a position he held from 29 August 1070 until his death in 1089. Lanfranc quickly replaced many of the Englishmen in positions of power with Normans. To ensure loyalty, he rejuvenated the practice of extracting professions of obedience from all abbots and bishops. Even other archbishops professed obedience to Lanfranc, including Thomas of Bayeux, archbishop of York (1072), and Patrick, archbishop-elect of Dublin (1074).²⁹ With Canterbury and York serving as the only two archdioceses in England, Lanfranc and subsequent archbishops of Canterbury wanted to solidify their position and maintain power by having bishops profess obedience to them. They attempted to compel all abbots and bishops to travel from their monasteries across England to Canterbury to undergo an impressive ceremony, and thereby impose a single, unified community of ecclesiastical leaders across Britain, under a single head.

Language in the professions reveals aspects of the ceremony. For example, Maurice, elect of London, offered a long and flowery profession, which I translate in part:

...He unjustly demands obedience from his subjects, who disdains to present it to his superior. Therefore, venerable Father Lanfranc, Archbishop of the holy Church of Canterbury and Primate of the whole British Isles, I, Maurice, elect of the Church of London, promise to obey you and your successors according to the canons and institutions of the holy fathers. Of my obedience, I **hand** over and extend my profession to you **in your hand**. [The merciful almighty God] deigns to sanctify me by coming **through your hands** with his Holy Spirit.³⁰ (Emphasis mine)

(plus one dated 1420), are still stitched together, and bear the classification mark "Chartae Antiquae C/117." These documents also include professions of obedience not represented among the loose charters, and they also contain other records. Based on palaeographic evidence, Neil Ker, *English Manuscripts in the Century after the Norman Conquest* (Clarendon Press, 1960), considered the enrolments to have been transcribed shortly after the bishops' consecrations.

29 Richter (1973, pp. 28–29) transcribes these professions of obedience; they are preserved in LBL, Cotton Ms. Cleopatra E I, fol. 49r, and fol. 28r–28v, respectively.

30 Transcribed in Latin in Richter (1973, p. 32).

The text mentions hands thrice: first as a verb to state that the subject is *handing* over the charter of profession; second as a noun, referring to Lanfranc's *hand* that receives the document, a gesture that is apparently essential to the ritual; and third as a metaphor, to state that Lanfranc's *hands* are a conduit for the Holy Spirit. These gestures, together with the uttered words and parchment-as-prop, sealed the contract.

Another aspect of the ceremony can be inferred from an abbot elect who made his profession on 2 March 1154:

I, Thomas, the elected Abbot of the Church of Boxley, promise canonical obedience to the Holy Church of Canterbury and to you, Reverend Father Theobald, Archbishop and Primate of all Britain, and to the legates of the apostolic see, and to your successors. I confirm this obedience with my own hand, signing with the sign of the cross: + (Fig. 13)³¹

As is clear from the language, signing with one's own hand was essential to meaning-making. The verso of Abbot Thomas's charter bears an inscription that sheds more light on the ritual of profession (Fig. 14).

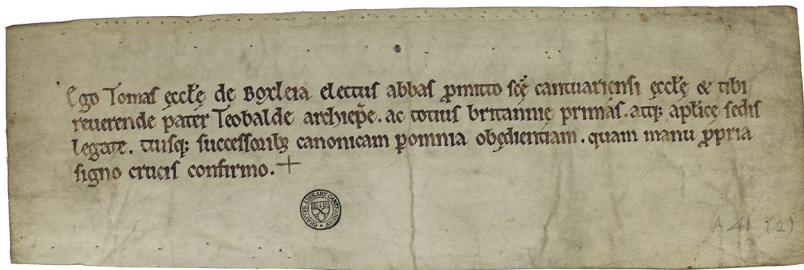


Fig. 13 Brief of profession of obedience of Abbot Thomas. Canterbury, 1154. Canterbury Cathedral Archives, DDc/ChAnt/A41, no. 2

It indicates that, on 2 March 1154 at the high altar of the Cathedral, Archbishop Theobald blessed the new abbot Thomas, who had been a monk of Fontenay in Burgundy.³² This endorsement, describing

31 "Ego Thomas ecclesie de Boxleia electus Abbas promitto sancte Cantuariensi ecclesie et tibi reuerende pater Teobalde Archiepisco ac totius britannie primas, atque apostolice sedis legate tuisque successoribus canonicam obedientiam quam manu propria signo crucis confirm o +"

32 Woodruff (1925, p. 55) mistranscribes the date as 1153.

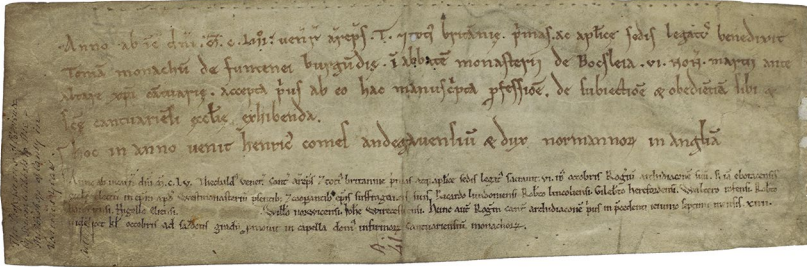


Fig. 14 Reverse of profession of obedience of Abbot Thomas. Canterbury, 1154.
Canterbury Cathedral Archives, DDc/ChAnt/A41, no. 2

how the ritual took place at the high altar at Canterbury Cathedral, is corroborated by a medieval description of a ritual of profession:

One by one, they shall approach the altar and read their profession. After they have finished reading, they shall place the profession on the altar and make the sign of the cross with ink on the document. Let their master ensure that there is ink and a pen there. Once they have made the cross on the document, they shall hand the documents into the hands of the abbot and kiss his hands on bended knees. Then the abbot shall hand the documents to the sacristan.³³

Although the ritual took place at the high altar, there is no mention of subjects placing their hands on a Gospel manuscript while uttering the inscribed words. Instead, the aspirant would complete two acts with his hands: he would inscribe the cross on the charter with his own hand, and he would place the charter in the abbot's hands. The signed charters served as a proxy for the individual, so that the act of placing the charter in the hands of the master can be likened to that of a vassal placing his hands within the clasp of an overlord during a ritual of fealty (see Fig. 6).

33 "Unus post alium eat ad altare et legant professionem. Postquam perlegerint, ponant professionem super altare et faciant crucem cum incausto super cedulam. Uideat magister eorum ut habeat ibi incaustum et pennam. Postquam fecerint crucem in cedula, tradant cedulas in manus abbatis et osculentur manus eius genibus flexis. Tunc tradet abbas cedulas sacriste." From LBL, Cotton Ms. Claudius C. ix, fol. 186r, "Forma professionis noviciorum in monasterio Abendonensi," quoted in Richter (p. xxi), where it is erroneously given as fol. 118r). This text, for the Abbey of Abington, dates from the late thirteenth century.

Profession vs. oath

A profession (*professio*) is similar to but distinct from an oath (*iuramentum*), as the latter involves a binding statement made with supernatural authority while touching a relic or sacred book. Breaking the terms of a profession is called a lie (*mendacium*), while breaking an oath is called perjury (*periurium*). The punishment for the former is excommunication, and for the latter it is the more severe deposition.³⁴ However, pronouncing professions, as we will see below, takes on many of the trappings of swearing oaths, especially after *ca.* 1200, when words and objects (particularly, a Gospel manuscript) were used to invoke the deity.

When aspirants signed with a cross, they made their promise more oath-like, but more importantly, they participated with their own hands, since they (normally) did not inscribe the letters. Consider the profession of Thomas of Boxley, for example. Even though the words, inscribed in a neat *textualis*, are written in the first person, they have not been inscribed by Thomas, but rather by a professional scribe, probably in the scriptorium at Christ Church priory, Canterbury, which employed a bevy of scribes.³⁵ On the other hand, the cross at the end of the statement has been made with a different quill, one apparently wielded by the aspirant Thomas; even though the cross comprises only two strokes, one can see that it is significantly less confident than are the words above it. Thomas has only added the cross at the end, by way of acceding to its promise by making the sign with his own hand.

The subscription “confirmed with my own hand” (*propria manu confirmo*) has parallels with the language of charters, and clearly professions borrow administrative language from this legal convention, which provides a form of authentication. The phrase appears regularly in all of the professions from the eighth and ninth centuries. However, under the archbishops Lanfranc (1070–1089), Anselm (1093–1109), Ralph d’Escures (1114–1122), and William of Corbeil (1123–1136), very few of the bishops-elect used this formula: theirs were truly professions and not oaths.

³⁴ Richter (1973, p. xix).

³⁵ See Richard Gameson, *The Earliest Books of Canterbury Cathedral: Manuscripts and Fragments to c.1200* (British Library Board, in association with the British Library and the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury, 2008).

Under the archbishopric of Theobald of Bec (1139–1161), two things changed: aspirants added the cross *and* they wrote their own names. For example, Walter added a cross to the beginning and end of the charter and filled his name into the blank with the best capital letters he could muster (Fig. 15).³⁶ David was even more enthusiastic, adding three crosses to his

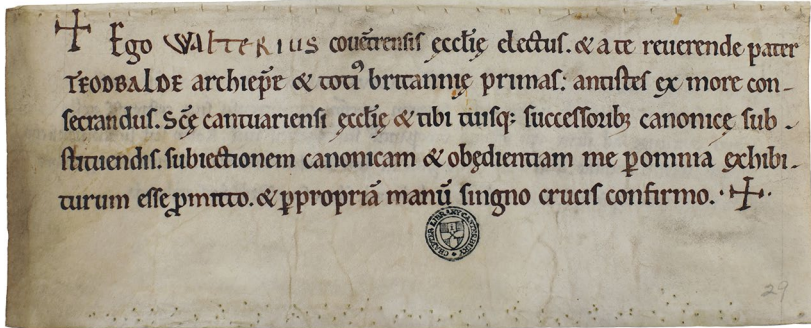


Fig. 15 Profession of Walter Durdent, elect of Coventry (2 October 1149) under Theobald. Canterbury Cathedral Archives, ChAnt-C-115 / 29

charter in brown ink, alongside an abbreviation of his name (Fig. 16). Later in the twelfth century, with archbishops Thomas Becket (1162–1170) and Richard of Dover (1174–1184), most charters ended with the *propria manu confirmo* phrase, plus a cross inscribed by the aspirant. This twelfth-

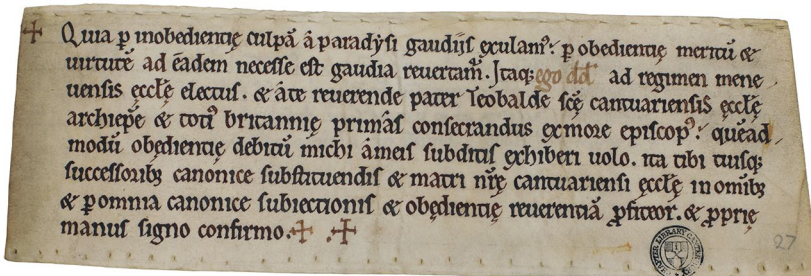


Fig. 16 Profession of David fitzGerald, elect of St David's (19 December 1148), under Theobald. Canterbury Cathedral Archives, ChAnt-C-115 / 27

century interest in employing this theatrical gesture, which also makes a mark on the page, corresponds to the period in which priests and bishops kissed an ever-larger cross at the Canon of the Mass.³⁷ Whereas the

36 Richter (1973, pp. 46–47).

37 See Volume 1, Chapter 4.

addition of the crossing gesture referred to legal language in the eighth- and ninth-century professions, the gesture in the thirteenth century may be more immediately drawing on the theatricality of the Mass.

Archival structure: Sewing the charters

The Canterbury professions have needle holes, top and tail. The documents have now been disassembled to be stored singly or mounted on cards; however, when they were first made, each was sewn with a needle and thread to the end of a roll of similar charters. Some yellow thrums still adhere to two of the charters (Fig. 17). The curved shapes of

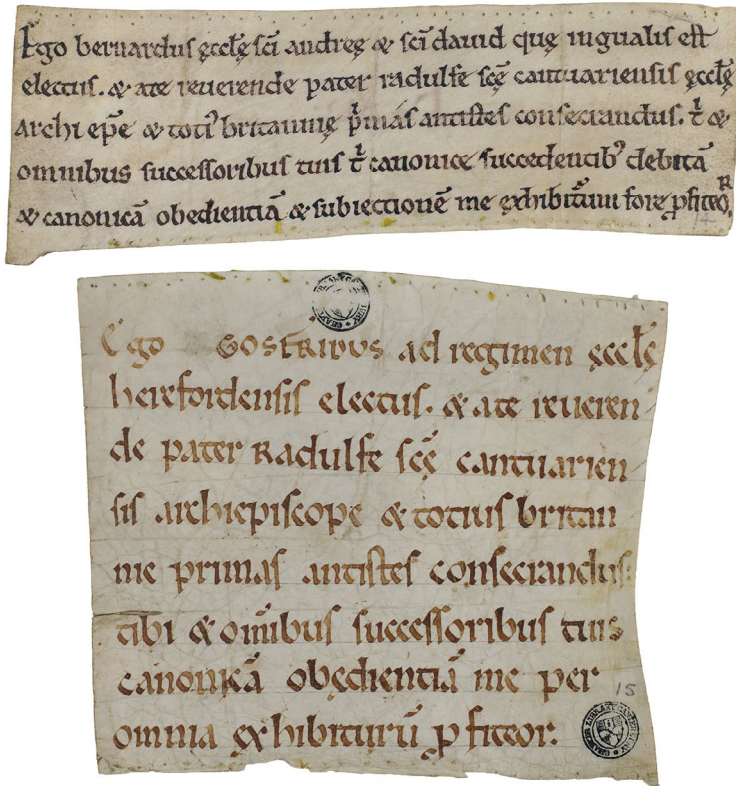


Fig. 17 Profession of Bernard, elect of St David's (19 September 1115) and profession of Geoffrey de Clive, elect of Hereford (26 December 1115), with remnants of yellow thread that once connected them. Canterbury Cathedral Archives, ChAnt-C-115 / 14 and ChAnt-C-115 / 15

Quod ubi obedientia exigitur a subiectis: debet ipse eam sibi cum exhibere placere. Illi cuiuslibet sibi donationem ad regnum Angliam pastorem spirituali subiecti & ecclesiarum essent. Propter ea nonanda pariter lantance scilicet dare. Ego autem
 nam simul ego quodammodo ecclesiarum ecclesiarum ecclesiarum
 sui obediunt. cuiusque successorum precepta in omnibus & yoniam canonice seruatur.
 Hanc professionem mea manu mea cum signo scilicet crucis firmavi. †

Ego nudo ecclesie sancti petri & sancti augustini decem abbas gratia scilicet dorobernensis ecclesie. cuiusque
 canonice seruatur.

Obedientiam quam pastores ecclesiarum de prelatu a quare sibi subiecto ex parte. tandem in omni
 inuoluntate sibi prelatu imponere conuenit. Sicut enim iussus iudicis in iudicium esse ualeat. In
 tra quibus iustitiam esse sibi prelatu uelut & subiecto. Ita ipse ego ob bonum ecclesie ecclesiarum
 unum dei in presentia tui confiteor. punito me & lantance scilicet dorobernensis ecclesie metropolitanam sicut
 archieps. & totius britannie primas. cuiusque successoribus obediunt. & in omnibus &
 omnia canonice seruatur.

Ergo in presentia tui confiteor. punito me & lantance scilicet dorobernensis ecclesie metropolitanam sicut
 archieps. & totius britannie primas. cuiusque successoribus obediunt. & in omnibus &
 omnia canonice seruatur. ut quicquid illi eligitur ac constituitur. quod yoniam
 canonice fuisse. sicut placet se fecit & ipse canonice debet seruare. & in omni
 quod in obedientia ac rebellus ac contumace uelut: que prelationis & totius britannie
 subiecto copulata. In presentia ego omnium ad regimen seruientium ecclesie electus & ac constitutus
 dicitur tui in presentia pariter lantance metropolitanam sicut archieps. & totius britannie primas. &
 cuiusque successoribus debita ac canonice subiectione & obedientia humiliter punito. Inuisi omni
 bus me cartula manu mea signo crucis confirmata. & ut humiliter & obedienter seruatur
 portico. †

Cum canonice institutione dignus ac constitutus ad regimen scilicet ecclesie debet & ipse canonice
 seruatur. sicut metropolitanam debita obedientia ac subiectione ut iustitiam exhibere. In
 presentia canonice ecclesie prbr ad quatuordecim scilicet uellentis ecclesie electus & ac
 ordinatus est. debita subiectione ac canonice obedientia & cuiusque successoribus uenerun
 de par lantance britannie primas. & scilicet dorobernensis ecclesie archieps punito. &
 huius professionis propria manu signo crucis confirmata cartula portico. †

Ego hinc a tui scilicet theosfordensis ecclesie nunc ordinatus est. subiectione ac constitutus
 ac obedientia ac in presentia constituta. scilicet in presentia canonice scilicet canonicis ecclesie electus
 in presentia domini archieps thome punito exhibetur punito & sup scilicet
 propria manu firma. †

Ego radulfus scilicet ecclesie nunc ordinatus est. subiectione ac constitutus
 ac obedientia ac in presentia constituta. scilicet in presentia canonice scilicet canonicis ecclesie electus
 in presentia domini archieps thome punito exhibetur punito & sup scilicet
 propria manu firma. † Ex parte alia ad hac signum epistole hinc ponenda.

Ego sawison Wigorniensis ecclesie electus. & ac reuerende patris theosfordensis ecclesie
 archieps & totius britannie primas amicus confiteor tui & omni
 successoribus tuis. canonice obedientia me p omnia seruaturum esse punito.

Ego oia de uos herfordensis ecclesie electus. & ac reuerende patris theosfordensis ecclesie
 canuarientis ecclesie archieps & totius britannie primas amicus confiteor tui &
 omni successoribus tuis canonice obedientia me p omnia seruaturum esse punito.

Ego walterus ecclesie Wasterdie electus. & ac reuerende patris theosfordensis ecclesie
 canuarientis ecclesie archieps & totius britannie primas amicus confiteor tui &
 omni successoribus tuis canonice obedientia me p omnia seruaturum esse punito.

Fig. 18 Briefs of profession of obedience, recopied in the Middle Ages. Canterbury Cathedral Archives, ChAnt-C-117, membrane 1 and part of membrane 2

the two pieces of parchment match, suggesting that these two charters were once stitched end-to-end with yellow thread.³⁸ This served not only as a storage method, but even more importantly, presented a visible and continuous legacy of ecclesiastical authority.

With each profession representing one man, the charters joined up to create a diachronic community, stitched together through time. Even some of the cartulary versions of profession charters—that is, early transcriptions—were produced in roll format, with the membranes laced together with thin parchment strips, which foreshadowed the possibility of endless accretions in a Christian continuity that would last until Christ’s second coming (Fig. 18). Their connected form was integral to their function as documents that stretched forward and back into time.

II. Professions in later centuries and broader social contexts

A. From charters to codices

Written professions became more prevalent in the fourteenth century and encompassed a widening circle of religious. For example, in an illuminated English Pontifical made around 1400, with additions made about a decade later (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, Ms. 79), one finds a series of illuminations depicting the ordination and confirmation of deacons, priests, bishops, abbots and abbesses, and the coronation of kings and queens, among other rituals.³⁹ One of these illuminations depicts a nun handing her profession of obedience to a bishop at an altar as he blesses her. The profession is depicted oversized, as a scroll, to distinguish it from a codex (Fig. 19).

These examples show that the charters of profession imposed a community with a particular hierarchical structure upon religious

38 For the Profession of Bernard, elect of St David’s (19 September 1115) and the profession of Geoffrey de Clive, elect of Hereford (26 December 1115), see Richter (1973), pp. 37–38.

39 For a bibliographical survey of English Pontificals, including a history of their development from the eleventh century onward, see J. Brückmann, “Latin Manuscript Pontificals and Benedictionals in England and Wales,” *Traditio*, 29 (1973), pp. 391–458.



Fig. 19 Folio in a Pontifical showing a nun submitting her profession of obedience. England, ca. 1400. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, Ms. 79, fol. 92r

leaders in England, involved a ritual that took place at the altar, choreographed symbolic use of the hands, and sometimes made use of the sign of the cross that was borrowed from administrative parlance. The idea of inscribing professions of obedience seems to have originated in Canterbury but would have easily spread across England, since all bishops had to travel to Canterbury to partake in the practice. When their scope broadened, their medium changed, too. When professions were no longer made on individual sheets that could be signed, handled, handed over, and stitched together, all of these ritual actions shifted or disappeared.

The Samson Pontifical is so called because it contains formulae for professing obedience to Samson, bishop of Worcester (1096–1112).⁴⁰ The core of the manuscript, now in the Parker Library (Cambridge), was

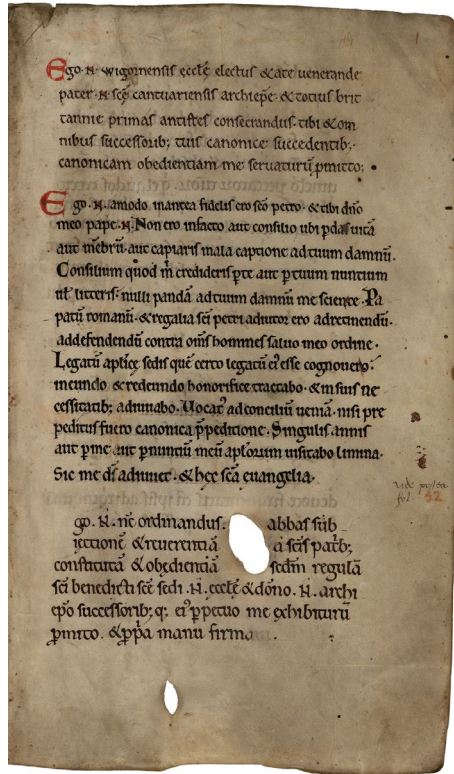


Fig. 20 Profession formulae added to the Samson Pontifical in the early twelfth century. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 146, p. 1

made in the early eleventh century, and it then received many additions, including the formulae for professions, which were added to the front of the manuscript when it was nearly a hundred years old (Fig. 20).⁴¹ The first text—an episcopal profession to Canterbury from the early twelfth century—looks similar to those produced in Canterbury, with several

40 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 146. Images and updated bibliography can be found here: <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/wy783rb3141>. The manuscript is paginated, not foliated.

41 Richter (1973, p. 109) transcribes them.

important differences. In the Samson Pontifical, the text is a generalized formula, so that the name is given as “N,” to be replaced with a candidate’s actual name. One can imagine the candidate either reading the text aloud, or having it read aloud, and repeating it back. In either case, it would not be appropriate for him to make a cross at the bottom of the formula. If everyone did so, the margin would soon be cluttered with crosses.

The second text in the Samson Pontifical is an oath of fidelity to the pope, also from the early twelfth century, but written in a different script. It too presents a generalized formula: “Ego N. amodo in antea fidelis ero sancto Petro et tibi, domino meo pape N...” (I [state name] will be faithful to Saint Peter and to you, my master, Pope N...). The ending, however, presents something new. It reads: “sic me deus adiuvet et hec sancta evangelia” (so may God help me and by these holy Gospels). The statement assumes the presence of a new prop: a Gospel manuscript. This prop takes the place of an inscribed cross. With the shift from individual profession charters to a general one written in a manuscript, the manner of acceding to the terms of the profession shifts from signing with a cross to acknowledging the presence of the Gospel.

The next generation of forms of professions appears in another book type: the Register of Henry of Eastry, prior of Christ Church, Canterbury (1285–1331). Henry kept meticulous notes about running the Cathedral. His resulting manuscript, written *ca.* 1310–1331, is now preserved in the British Library (Cotton Ms. Galba E. iv).⁴² It contains, *inter alia*, the forms for a bishop to profess his obedience to the archbishop of Canterbury. The wording has developed from that of the previous generation. It begins: “In Dei nomine, amen” (In the name of God, amen), and it ends with the subscription: “Sic me Deus adiuvet et sancta Dei evangelia. Et predicta omnia subscribendo propria manu confirmo. + ” (So may God help me and by these holy Gospels of God. And I confirm everything written above by signing with my own hand). By the early fourteenth century, signing “with my own hand” and mentioning the Gospels had become *de rigueur*. Including a Gospel manuscript in the ritual made it even more theatrical, and also made it more like an oath than a profession and gave it more of the trappings of a Mass than of a legal deposition.

42 For images and bibliography, see https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=cotton_ms_galba_e_iv_f001r

B. Continental translations

In the course of the fourteenth century, the ritual continued to become more elaborate, as illustrated by the Arenberg Gospels (New York, Morgan Library and Museum, Ms. M. 869).⁴³ Like the Samson Pontifical, the Arenberg Gospels were used for decades, or in this case, centuries, before the formulae were added, demonstrating that the core manuscript was still in use but also took on additional functions. The manuscript's antiquity, foreignness, and colorful decoration may have contributed to its function as a prop in ritual spectacles.

Produced in Canterbury around 1000–1020, the Arenberg Gospels were in Cologne by the 1070s as attested by a note on one of the blank folios indicating that Pope Gregory VII had canonized Archbishop Heribert of Cologne (ca. 970–1021). Heribert's elevation to sainthood took place between 1073 and 1075. The manuscript adopted a new role beginning in the fourteenth century, when officials at the Church of St Severin in Cologne began writing professions of obedience in the Canterbury manuscript. The professions are similar to those written in Canterbury, but with several important differences:

1. Each abbot or monk in England had his own profession inscribed separately; each was personalized, and the individual charters were kept by the cathedral in Canterbury, where they formed a continuous record. By contrast, the professions in the Arenberg Gospels were inscribed directly into the existing manuscript, on the blank leaves found from fols 1–9. Instead of being individualized (as the Canterbury professions are), those in the Arenberg Gospels are generalized—that is, written for the office rather than for the person. Therefore, instead of saying, “I, Richard, bishop-elect...”, they read, “I, N,” where the N stands for *nomen*, or “insert your name here.” Because the professions in the Arenberg Gospels are generalized, the resulting document does not keep a running list of the various abbots, bishops, and clergy. This is also a function of the format, whereby a roll can be infinitely expanded by sewing

43 I discuss this manuscript more fully in Vol. 1, Chapter 3.

more membranes to it, but a codex can only be expanded with the considerable labor and expense of rebinding.

2. Because on the Continent the resulting document was a codex (and not a roll), it played a different role in the ritual. The candidate using the formulae in the Arenberg Gospels would neither write his name nor inscribe a cross. Nor would he hand the manuscript to the officiant as part of the ritual. Instead, the use-wear evidence showed that a different ritual took place: the Arenberg Gospels were fitted with a full-page Crucifixion, which many (hundreds?) of hands have touched. Those reciting the words inscribed in the manuscript would apparently touch the image while making their pronouncements. In other words, scribes were not using the Arenberg Gospels as an exemplar to make individual charters, but rather, the aspirants were making their professions with their hands directly on the manuscript. Instead of inscribing a small cross "with my own hand," each aspirant laid his own hand on one enormous cross in the manuscript.
3. Whereas the bishops and abbots only handled the Canterbury charters, the various people making professions in Cologne using the Arenberg Gospels touched the image in the manuscript (the Crucifixion). The candidates were also, *de facto*, touching a Gospel manuscript which, as we have seen earlier, stood as a proxy for Christ and raised the ritual to the level of one witnessed by the divine. What they were doing was no longer a profession, but an oath.
4. In the century after the Norman Invasion, the professions in Canterbury covered bishops and abbots. What is most surprising is the degree to which usership widened even further in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In this period, the number of roles utilizing such professions expanded considerably, to include vicars, canons, and the petty-aristocratic castle-lords.

C. An expanded role for the Pontifical

When the practice of making professions crossed the Channel, for the most part it changed into a different material form—from charter/roll to codex. The new Continental form therefore implies a new set of book-handling gestures. The other shift that professions underwent is that they became more oath-like, relying not only on the cross but also on the Gospel to give them credibility. The substrate could be a Gospel manuscript—as with the repurposed Arenberg Gospels—but it could be any liturgical manuscript that normally belonged at the altar. The earliest surviving Continental manuscript containing a profession is Paris, BnF, Ms. Lat. 12052, a sacramentary written in the second half of the tenth century by the order of Ratoldus, Abbot of Corbie, with the profession (generalized, whereby the candidate fills in his own name at the blanks with his voice, not with a pen) appearing at fols 14v–15v.⁴⁴

Or the substrate could be a Pontifical, such as the Pontifical of St Loup, written and illuminated in the twelfth century (Fig. 21).⁴⁵ The Abbey of St Loup, an Augustinian foundation in Troyes, was destroyed during the French Revolution, but many of its books have survived. Like all Pontificals, this one contains the instructions and words to be uttered for a bishop to perform various rites. Noteworthy about this one is that various important information has been added to the beginning and end of the book, with papal bulls and a poem about a devastating flood in the front matter, and professions in the back. The Pontifical itself fills 174 folios. The final verso was blank, and onto this blank space professions of obedience were inscribed, so that they would be in the bishop's manuscript and written straight into the institutional history (Fig. 22). When this folio was filled, a bifolium (fols 175–176) was added to the end so that professions of obedience could continue

44 See <https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc734105>. It is nearly identical to the profession of Herewine, written in Canterbury in 814 or 816 (Richter, 1973, no. 9), demonstrating a strong exchange between English and Continental practice, with the example from Canterbury providing the model for the one at Corbie a century later.

45 Pontifical of St Loup, twelfth century with later additions. Troyes, Trésor de la Cathédral, Ms. 4. See Françoise Bibolet, "Serments d'obéissance des abbés et abbeses a l'Évêque de Troyes (1191–1531)," *Bulletin philologique et historique* (1959), pp. 333–343. V. Leroquais also notes the professions in *Les Pontificaux manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France*, Vol. II (1937), pp. 396–402.



Fig. 21 Incipit for the first Sunday in Advent, Pontifical of St Loup, ca. 1150-1200. Troyes, Cathedral treasury, Ms. 4, fols Bv-1r

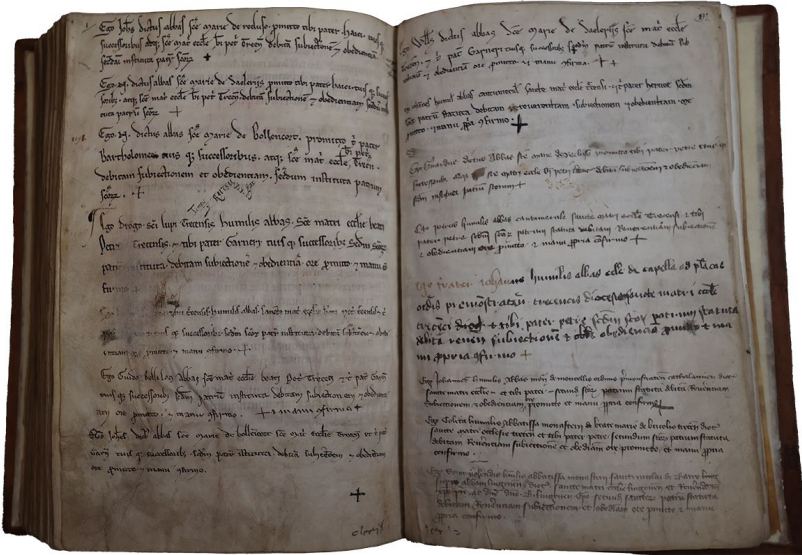


Fig. 22 Professions of obedience added after 1191 to the Pontifical of St Loup. Troyes, Cathedral treasury, Ms. 4, 174v-175r

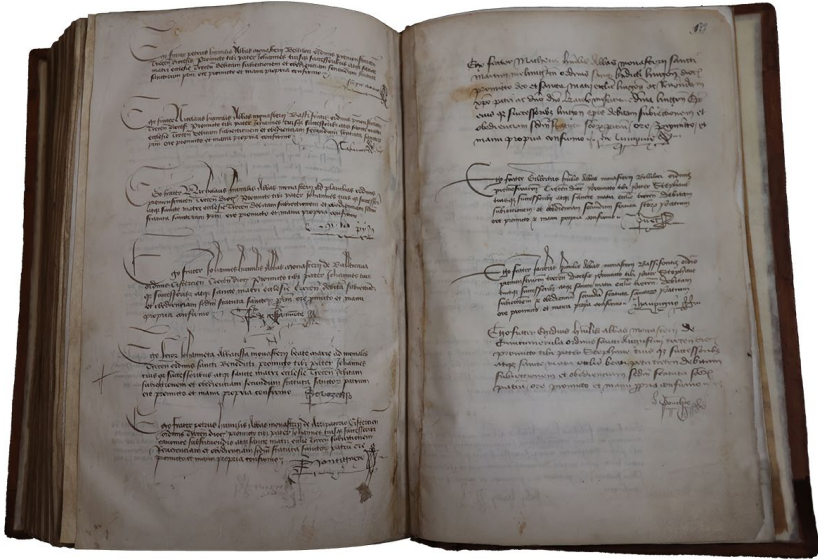


Fig. 23 Professions, written in the fifteenth century, added to the Pontifical of St Loup. Troyes, Cathedral treasury, Ms. 4, fols 178v–179r

to be inscribed into the book itself. These were individuated (similar to the Canterbury professions), not generalized (such as those in the Arenberg Gospels). When these folios were filled, a quire of six leaves (fols 177–182) was added, and then a singleton (fol. 183), and finally another bifolium (fols 184–185). These bits of added parchment were not high-quality, but rather tawny scraps added to meet an urgent need, so that 113 professions of obedience could be successively inscribed between 1191 and *ca.* 1531.

These professions in the Pontifical of St Loup vary little and follow this formula:

I, N, humble abbot of {monastery of X}, {of the order X, of the diocese of Troyes}, to the holy mother Church of Saint Peter of Troyes and to you, Father N, and to your successors, according to the institutions of the holy Fathers, promise the due subjection and obedience, which by my word and with my own hand, I confirm.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Ego N, humilis abbas [monasterii de X], [ordinis X, Trecensis diocesis], sancta matri ecclesie Beati Petri Trecensis et tibi, pater N tuisque successoribus, secundum sanctorum Patrum instituta, debitam, subjectionem et obedientiam ore promitto et manu propria confirmo.



Fig. 24 Opening at the Book of Luke, Gospels of St Loup, ca. 1164–1197. Troyes, Médiathèque Jacques-Chirac, Ms. 2275, fols 4v–5r

As with the professions from Canterbury, the texts were inscribed by professional scribes, and the aspirant merely added the cross. Making his mark in the physical book, which presumably lay on the altar as it received his ink, was an essential part of the ritual. With two small strokes, he left his indelible sign in the historical record.

Hundreds of years of precedent created an undeniable weight of historical gravitas to later signatories. Nevertheless, several things changed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. First, abbesses of Troyes began signing the record in 1384, using the same strokes of the cross as their male counterparts. Then, around 1400, the male monastics began signing their own names (Fig. 23). This undoubtedly reflects an increased literacy among the brothers, namely an ability to wield the pen and not just to read the resulting words: reading and writing were distinct skills. Their undisciplined handwriting is nearly indecipherable but does the important job of letting each man make his distinctive mark on the page. The women followed about 50 years later.

The Pontifical of St Loup is exceptional because the abbots and abbesses had their professions individually written into the manuscript.

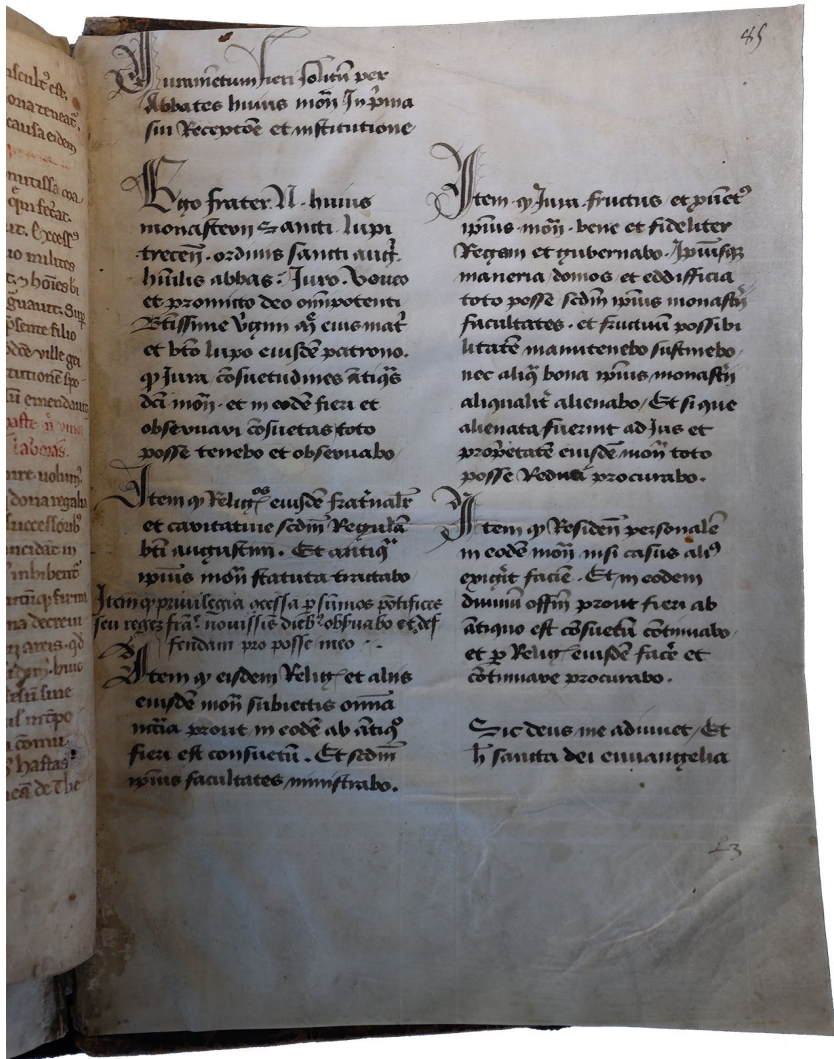


Fig. 25 Folio added to the Gospels of St Loup, with an oath written *ca.* 1500 (and partially rewritten later). Troyes, Médiathèque Jacques-Chirac, Ms. 2275, fol. 85r

This situation is unusual, because most codices (such as the Arenberg Gospels) containing professions only include *blank* formulae for communal use. Normally, the official could read it aloud so that the candidate could repeat it back phrase by phrase and fill in the personal

details on the fly. Contrariwise, the Pontifical of St Loup forms a living, written record of the people comprising its social network.

In fact, the Abbey of St Loup did move to blank formulae, but not until the fifteenth century. To see this change, one must turn to a different manuscript: the Gospels of St Loup. The manuscript was given to the Abbey of St Loup during the abbacy of Guitherus (1153–1197) by Henri the Liberal in honor of his son Henri (born after 1164). The main part of this manuscript, which is preserved in a fragmented state, therefore dates from second half of the twelfth century, and it, like the Pontifical of St Loup, has boldly painted initials (Fig. 24). The final folio (85) is an added singleton of thick parchment inscribed with professions in a *bâtarde* of *ca.* 1500 (Troyes, BM, Ms. 2275, fol. 85r; Fig. 25; see Appendix 1 for a transcription and translation of the text).

This added sheet within the Gospels of St Loup sharply departs from the professions of faith in the abbey's Pontifical. The text in the Gospels is an oath, not a profession. It is anonymous: that is, each aspirant must supply his own name. It is to be read aloud, and not signed. To indicate his assent, instead of writing his name in the abbey's Pontifical, he probably laid his hand on the Gospel, as suggested by the final sentence on the folio, "So help me God and by these holy Gospels of God." This, however, cannot be definitely ascertained, as the swearing page has not survived within the manuscript, which now only contains the Books of Luke and John, with many folios cut out. Also telling is that part of the oath has been squeezed in by another hand (in italics in my transcription). This part specifies that the abbot also owes his allegiance to the pope and the kings of France. It may have been inscribed shortly after the Concordat of Bologna (1516)—an agreement between King Francis I of France and Pope Leo X, which allowed the king to appoint bishops to the French dioceses. This arrangement gave the French monarch a significant influence over the French clergy. More broadly, the squeezed-in passage demonstrates how the oath culture could be continuously adapted as the political climate changed.

Like the added texts in the Samson Pontifical and the Arenberg Gospels, the text added to the Gospels of St Loup suggests that the respective liturgical manuscript ripened the space for the oath to take place. The gestures have moved from physical mark-making to ephemeral gesturing, where the repeated touching of the Gospel manuscript may have registered cumulative abrasion that connoted tradition.

III. Expanding oath-taking: Confraternities in churches

As the reach of religious influence extended beyond the confines of the monastery, in the thirteenth century derivative forms of oath-swearing took root in confraternities associated with particular churches. These oaths served as solemn commitments, binding members to their religious communities, doctrines, and responsibilities. When a man entered the priesthood or became a canon in the Chapter of St Servaas (Latin: *Servatius*) at the *domkerk* in Maastricht, he had to swear an oath to the Chapter of St Servaas, one of the most powerful organizations in the region of Limburg. The chapter may have formed as early as the ninth century to serve the needs of secular canons; it lasted until the end of the *ancien régime* in 1797.⁴⁷ Canons, or secular priests, were distinct from monks in that they could own property, although like a monastery, the chapter provided apartments and communal meals for its members. Priests within a chapter formed a confraternity, or brotherhood, to whom they owed allegiance. Four manuscripts from the Chapter of St Servaas survive; these would have belonged to the group and not to individuals.⁴⁸ The contents of, and marks of use in, its book of statutes reveal aspects of the priests' rules and rituals, suggesting that the group was highly regulated but formed close bonds (HKB, Ms. 132 G 35).⁴⁹ This book was made around 1430–50. Instead of writing the oaths in the blank interstices of a Gospel manuscript, as the canons of Cologne had done with the

47 In the nineteenth century, religious brotherhoods were founded in various cities of the Catholic parts of the Netherlands, including Maastricht and Hasselt, and they produced books of statutes modeled on medieval precedents, which were printed as *Broederschap der gedurige aanbidding van het allerheiligste sacrament der autars, opgericht in 1768, in de parochiale kerk van S. Jacob en thans berustende in de hoofdparochiale kerk van den H. Servatius, te Maastricht* (Leiter-Nypels, 1845); *Broederschap der gedurige aanbidding van het allerheiligste sacrament: opgericht door Zijne Hoogheid Carolus, Prins Bisschop van Luik..., en opgericht te Hasselt (Overijssel) op Pinxterdag 1833* (J. W. Robijns, 1835).

48 P.J.H. Vermeeren, "Handschriften van het kapittel van Sint Servaas," *Miscellanea Trajectensia* (1962, pp. 181–192), identified four extant manuscripts belonging to this chapter: a fourteenth-century Bible in a chemise binding (HKB, Ms. 78 A 29); a missal with a calendar for Limburg (HKB, Ms. 78 D 44); *Statuta et ordinationes fraternitatis sacerdotum ecclesie S. Servatii Traiectensis Leodiensis diocesis* (HKB, Ms. 132 G 35); and a book of oaths in Middle Dutch and Latin (HKB, Ms. 75 F 16, discussed below).

49 HKB, Ms. 132 G 35. For a description and bibliography, see <https://bnm-i.huygens.knaw.nl/tekstdragers/TDRA00000003597>

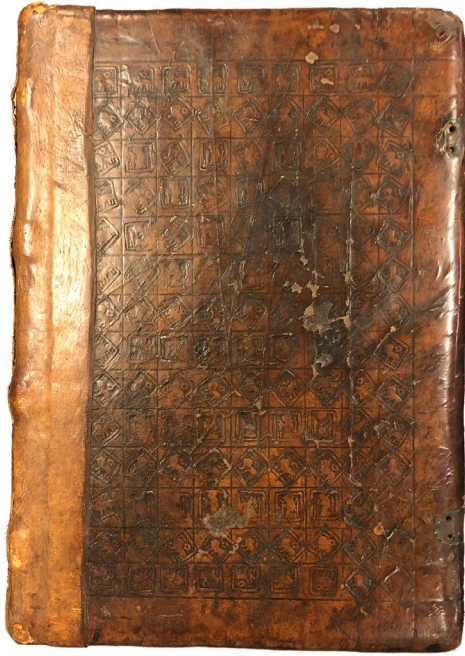


Fig. 26 Front cover of the Statutes and Regulations of the Chapter of St Servaas in Maastricht. Tooled leather, fifteenth century. HKB, Ms. 132 G 35.

Arenberg Gospels (Morgan M.869), the canons in Maastricht created a new manuscript for this part of their public-facing administration. They bound their book in a red leather cover (like the books of privileges discussed in Vol. 1), possibly to distinguish it as an official oath-swearing manuscript. The blind-tooled leather is original, although the red dye has faded, the spine has been re-backed, and the clasps have fallen off (Fig. 26). The choice of red leather suggests that the makers of this book drew upon conventions of civic legal manuscripts to lend additional authority to their compilation of statutes.

Books of statutes invariably contain legitimizing structures, such as an image of Christ Crucified with an osculatory target, or excerpts from Gospel manuscripts. The Maastricht book of statutes has an oath inscribed near the front of the manuscript, in the center of folio 3r (Fig. 27). Here, the text was arranged so that it could be headed by an image of the Crucifixion and tailed by an osculatory target painted at the bottom. The loose image of the Crucifixion, which has been pasted in, can be localized and dated



Fig. 27 Opening of the Statutes and Regulations of the Chapter of St Servaas in Maastricht (Maastricht, fifteenth century), with an oath and a parchment painting (ca. 1430, Utrecht) depicting the Crucifixion pasted to the top. HKB, Ms. 132 G 35, fols 2v–3r.

on stylistic grounds to Utrecht ca. 1430, shortly before the main body of the manuscript was inscribed in Maastricht. The image was therefore not commissioned for this book, but its availability solved a problem for the scribe, who wanted to introduce an appropriately gilded and crafted image into the opening, so that Christ's presence would form an umbrella of divine authority over the oath.⁵⁰ The shape of the cross painted at the bottom of the page resembles consecration crosses inscribed or painted on the interiors and exteriors of churches, which were used in ceremonies including processions. The shape constitutes a call to corporeal action. The text reads:

Oath of the brother:

I, N, promise by my publicly offered faith, and I swear on these holy Gospels of God, physically touched with my right hand, that from this

50 For a discussion of this Crucifixion as a loose image, see Rudy, *Postcards on Parchment* (p. 288).

hour onward I will be faithful to the fraternity of priests of the Church of Saint Servaas of Maastricht. I will inviolably observe the Charter of Statutes of this brotherhood and all its statutes, whether ordered or yet to be ordered, which have not been changed, revoked, or removed, to the best of my ability. And in the affairs or business of the said brotherhood, I will not side against the brotherhood, and I will not reveal the secrets of the same brotherhood. So help me God and by these holy Gospels of God.⁵¹

The oath is intricately scripted as a speech act. It directs a ceremonial performance for the person to physically engage with *this* book, specifically touching it with his right hand. Bountiful fingerprints, concentrated in the lower lateral margin, suggest that many people touched the page while swearing the oath inscribed on it, apparently with their respective right hands.

Even though “these holy Gospels” are in fact a book of statutes, it apparently counts as “holy Gospels,” and the users have touched it as though it carried that weight. To some degree, it did: the scribe, to invoke the evangelists, has written the incipits of the Books of Matthew (fol. 4r), Mark (fol. 5r), Luke (fol. 5v), and John (fol. 6v) into the book immediately after the oath. These have also been furnished with author portraits of the evangelists. Users deliberately laid their hands on the lower corners of these openings, as the patterns of wear indicate. The lower corner of Matthew is especially smudged with fingerprints, and I suspect that this is so because Matthew is the first of the Gospel fragments after the oath (Fig. 28).⁵² Smudgy, darkened corners are consistent with a scenario in which the initiate, who was fully literate and therefore able to read his own oath on fol. 3r, would place his finger on the corner of the next folio (fol. 4r), and thereby make contact with “these holy Gospels” while

51 Iuramentum fratris. Ego N. promitto fide mea media prestita atque iuro ad hec sancta Dei ewangelia manu mea dextera corporaliter tacta quod ab hac hora in antea ero fidelis fraternitati sacerdotum ecclesie sancti servacii trajectensis cartamque statutorum eiusdem fraternitatis necnon statuta omnia ordinata et ordinanda que mutata revocata seu sublata non fuerint inviolabiliter observabo pro posse. Et me in factis seu negocijs dicte fraternitatis contra ipsam fraternitatem partem non faciam et secreta fraternitatis eiusdem non revelabo. Sic me juuet deus et hec sancta dei ewangelia (HKB, Ms. 132 G 35, fol. 3r).

52 I make a similar argument about prayerbooks that contain parts of Gospel texts: these could also be used for oath-swearing. See Kathryn M. Rudy, “Targeted Wear in Manuscript Prayerbooks in the Context of Oath-Swearing,” *Models of Change in Medieval Textual Culture*, Jonatan Pettersson and Anna Blennow (eds) (forthcoming, 2024).



Fig. 28 Opening in the Statutes and Regulations of the Chapter of St Servaas in Maastricht, with the incipit of the Book of Matthew, with an author portrait, ca. 1450, Maastricht. HKB, Ms. 132 G 35, fol. 3v–4r

still being able to read the relevant text. This situation contrasts with manuscripts stained at the top margin, which imply the presence of an initiate or oath-swearer to whom the book is proffered, and who is having the formula read *to* him rather than reading it himself. If my hypothesis is correct, this would also explain why there is also some darkening on fol. 3v, which would have rested on top of the initiate's hand and brushed the tops of his fingers while he deliberately touched fol. 4r with the finger pads of his right hand. In the photographs, my hand not only holds the book open, but provides a sense of scale for the activities described here.

A late fifteenth-century hand has copied a second oath onto the otherwise blank space at the bottom of fol. 2v, opposite the repurposed Crucifixion image. This time, however, the oath is for a “Master of the Fraternity of Priests” (*magistrum Fraternitatis sacerdotum*), and to take this oath, the swearer would once again physically touch the statutes with his right hand, or one of the Gospel texts on the following pages. Once again, the initiate can read one page while touching another. Someone has inscribed a *manicula*, or “little hand,” which not only draws

attention to the added oath, but also introduces another right hand to the proceedings.⁵³

The folios of HKB, Ms. 132 G 35 measure 260 × 190 mm with a text block of 170 × 130 mm. By choosing such a large format, the scribe has unburdened the initiate by providing him with large clear letters surrounded by plenty of space. He has also disambiguated the text by writing it with few abbreviations, which could be easily seen and pronounced aloud. The patterns of wear reveal further details about the audience and the context of the ceremony. Clearly the users could read the oath aloud themselves while standing at the bottom of the manuscript: it was not read to them. As they were joining the brotherhood of priests of the church or becoming the leader (*magister*) of the group, the audience for this manuscript was presumably literate.

The Chapter also owned a manuscript containing dozens of other oaths (without statutes), for all those besides priests who owed loyalty to the Church of St Servaas (HKB, Ms. 75 F 16; Fig. 29).⁵⁴ This manuscript has functional similarities with the example from the Chapter of St John in Utrecht, to be discussed in the next section. The function of HKB, Ms. 75 F 16 is conveyed by its size and appearance: this large manuscript contains only 13 folios but is bound in thick wooden boards with bosses and a decorated clasp (Fig. 30). In its unnecessarily heavy and ornate binding, it was used purely for ceremonial purposes: for publicly pronouncing oaths. Considering its function, it is surprisingly modestly decorated. The manuscript begins with oaths for emperors (in Latin) and dukes (in the vernacular, Middle Dutch), and also contains oaths for, *inter alia*, deacons, cantors, teachers (*scholastici*), treasurers (*thesaurarij*), canons, cellarers, chaplains, guardians of the relics, and *roydregeren* (*rooidragers* in modern Dutch), who played a ceremonial role in processions and feasts, and preceptors of feasts and anniversaries. Some of the oaths are in Latin and some in Middle Dutch, depending on the audience, and all require the subject to “lay his right hand on these holy Gospels,” except one: the *roydregeren* have to put their hands on a

53 For a lively discussion of manicules, see Erik Kwakkel, “Helping Hands on the Medieval Page,” *medievalbooks* blog (13 March 2015). <https://medievalbooks.nl/tag/manicula/>

54 For a description and bibliography, see <https://bnm-i.huylgens.knaw.nl/tekstdragers/TDRA000000003598>



Fig. 29 First folio in the oath book of the Chapter of St Servaas, Maastricht. HKB, Ms. 75 F 16, fol. 1r

Fig. 30 Fore-edge and upper clasp of the oath book of the Chapter of St Servaas, Maastricht. HKB, Ms. 75 F 16

cross to say their oaths (*rub: Tunc ponat manus ad crucem et dicat*, fol. 7r). Apparently, those fulfilling this important ceremonial role brandished an additional layer of spectacle that distinguished their inaugurations: for them, a crucifix served as the prop sealing the speech act. The master of ceremonies enjoyed the greatest ceremony of all. The final folio of the original, fifteenth-century text, like other manuscripts designed for official purposes, has abbreviated copies of the Gospels (Fig. 31). Once again, their presence infuses the inert matter with the divine, thereby turning the manuscript into one charged for oath-swearing.

Comparing the two oath-taking manuscripts from the Chapter of St Servaas reveals much about the brotherhood. Whereas HKB, Ms. 75 F 16 accentuates adherence to a structured hierarchy, HKB, Ms. 132 G 35 incorporates both hierarchical submission and allegiance to the fraternity. The brother pledged both vertical *and* horizontal bonds.

HKB, Ms. 75 F 16 can also be compared with the Arenberg Gospels used by the church in Cologne, discussed in Volume 1, Chapter 3, and above in this chapter. The Maastricht manuscript contains the same kinds of oaths as the Arenberg Gospels, but in fact the two churches have approached the project from opposite tenets. In Cologne, the leadership began with an eye-catching, centuries-old, colorful imported Gospel manuscript, and then filled in the empty spaces with oaths to

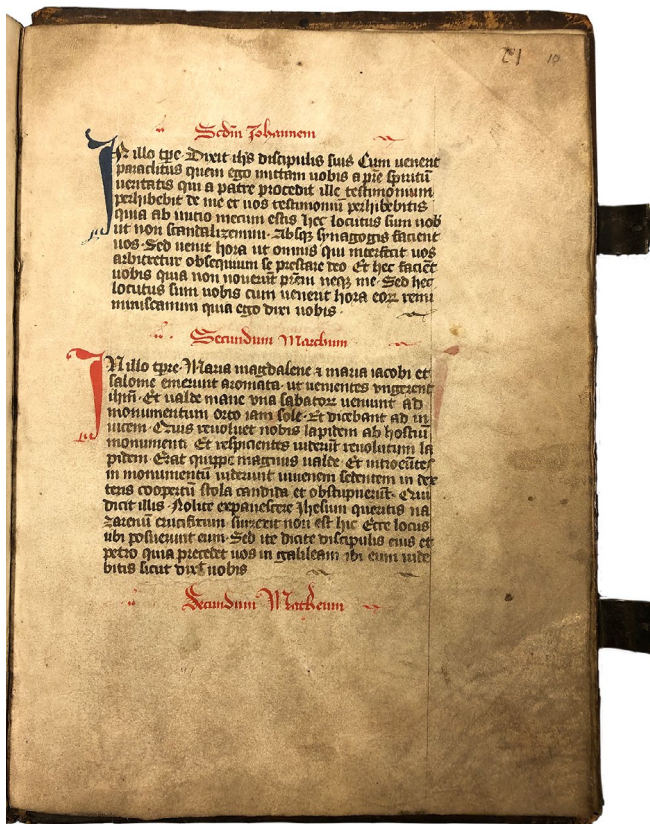


Fig. 31 Final original folio of the oath book of the Chapter of St Servaas, Maastricht, with abbreviated texts from the Gospels. HKB, Ms. 75 F 16, fol. 10r

be read while touching the Crucifixion miniature, the prop that sealed the speech acts. In the Maastricht manuscript, the scribe started from scratch, creating a new manuscript rather than repurposing an existing one. Simply including the Gospel texts made this manuscript a worthy prop.

There are as many solutions to the problem of how to publicly forge meaningful cohesion between group members and adherence to regulations as there are manuscripts produced for this purpose. Such manuscripts have not previously been studied as a group, and a Europe-wide systemic survey of oath manuscripts would certainly reveal patterns over time and across space, which is beyond the scope of this project. However, I will consider a final example in this category, a manuscript made in the sixteenth century that contains statutes as well as formulas for oaths for members of the Abbey of St Bavo in Ghent. Here the brothers have chosen a strategy we have seen before for instilling the book with a sufficient supernatural numen: they have inserted a Crucifixion page of the sort made for missals (Fig. 32). Signs of wear on the represented wood of the cross, and on the torso of Christ, indicate that it was touched, although not heavily. Oath-swearers could lay a hand on the full-page Crucifixion miniature, or they may have also laid their hands on the coats of arms that flank the osculatory target at the lower margin. Considering that they have not dampened or dislodged the paint, they apparently did not kiss or wet-touch it.

What is telling in this manuscript, however, is that members had their names listed in the book following their oath-taking ceremonies. Not only did the rituals and the ritual objects transform the people who participated in them, but those people also indelibly changed the ritual objects. They left their hand- and fingerprints in the manuscript and changed the text by adding their names. They became co-creators of the manuscript surface.

IV. Out of the church and into the castle

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, laypeople—and not just aspirants of confraternities—increasingly took oaths of the sort formerly designed for clergy, where the oaths would create a class of members with special privileges and obligations. A material witness survives in the form of an enhanced Gospel manuscript used by the Deaconate

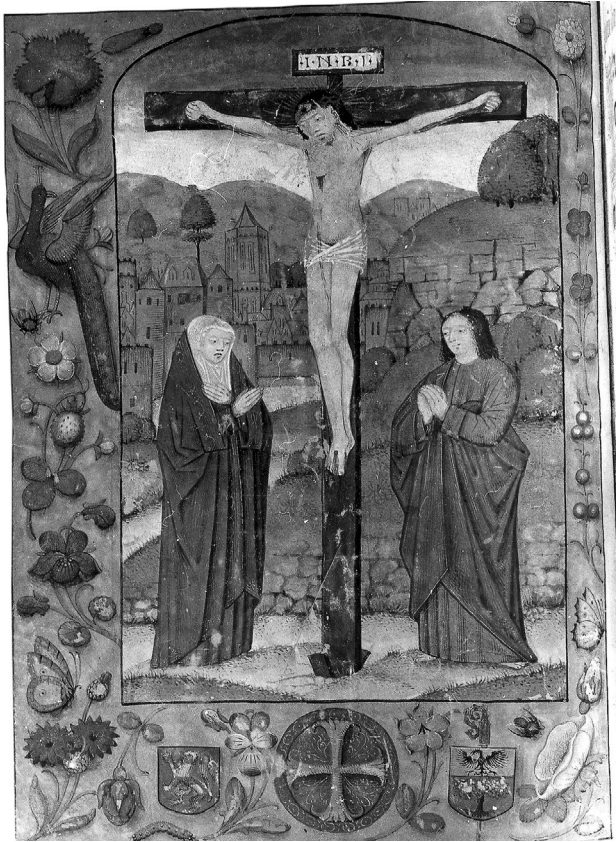


Fig. 32 Crucifixion miniature, mounted in a book of oath formulas, statutes, and lists of names from the Church of St Bavo, Ghent, sixteenth century. Ghent, Church of St Bavo. KIK nr 88571

(Chapter) of St John in Utrecht (UUB, Ms. 1590; Fig. 33 and Fig. 34).⁵⁵ This manuscript contains a carefully tailored selection of oaths for religious and laypeople and reveals some of the inner workings and power dynamics operating among clergy, nobles, and courtly attachés.

Conrad, the bishop of Utrecht from 1076–1099, had granted to the Chapter of St John several parishes located between Utrecht and

⁵⁵ I thank Irene van Renswoude for bringing this manuscript to my attention. Old signature: 6 K 16, sometimes written 6.K.16. The nineteenth-century cataloguer refers to the manuscript as *Liber iuramentorum ecclesiae S. Johannis*. That is a descriptive label not given in the manuscript itself. Images and bibliography can be found here: <https://objects.library.uu.nl/reader/index.php?obj=1874-339303&lan=en#page//44/90/50/44905082442839785202757785567081520258.jpg/mode/1up>

Amsterdam. These parishes paid rents and were beholden to the Chapter. As a result, the Chapter controlled various castles, including the Kasteel de Haar outside Mijdrecht. (This castle, which now hosts glamorous celebrities, burned in the fifteenth century and was largely rebuilt in the sixteenth and again in the nineteenth.) Some of the added texts in UUB 1590 relate to the governance of castles, for which specific oaths were drawn up. The oaths require physical interaction with this manuscript, alongside certain hand gestures and utterances.

UUB 1590, like the Arenberg Gospels, was made in multiple campaigns of work, demonstrating that it was in use for several centuries. The core (fols 32–101r) dates from the thirteenth century and contains an incomplete Evangelistary (Fig. 35).⁵⁶ In the fifteenth century, the function of the manuscript changed. What had been an Evangelistary, to be used by a priest while performing Mass, became an oath-swearing manuscript for use by members of the Chapter and laypeople in its orbit. It is possible that a 200-year-old Gospel manuscript was chosen for this purpose because it—like the Arenberg Gospels when they changed function—burgeoned with several hundred years of history and was illuminated. In other words, it fit the bill.

To give it a new function as an oath-taking prop, several quires were added to the front of the manuscript, now comprising fols 3–31. These new folios received the oaths, listed in a clear hierarchical order, beginning with one for the provost of the church. (The oaths are transcribed and translated in Appendix 2.) The fifteenth-century scribe made an effort to duplicate the page design from the thirteenth-century core. Namely, he ruled the folios for 15.6×11 cm, and then filled them with 14 equally spaced horizontal lines. However, because the thirteenth-century scribe wrote on the top line, while the later scribe followed the newer habit of avoiding the top line, the old section has 14 lines per folio and the later section only has 13. The later scribe therefore maintained the large size of the letters from the original core but could not escape the scribal habits of his age. Furthermore, the later scribe also tried to duplicate the older script as best he could, with a *textualis* that floats about 1 mm above the ruling. It is as if the later scribe were trying to create a tradition as old as

56 In the fourteenth century, someone added two quires to the end in order to supplement the Gospel readings (fols 101r–109).

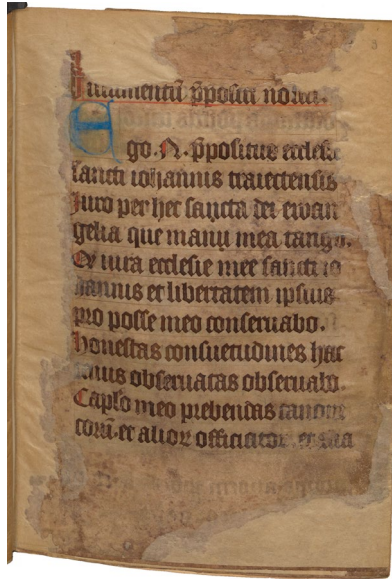


Fig. 33 Folio with an oath in Latin for the provost of the Chapter of St John, added in the fifteenth century to an (incomplete) Evangelistary from the thirteenth century. Utrecht, UB, Ms. 1590, fol. 3r

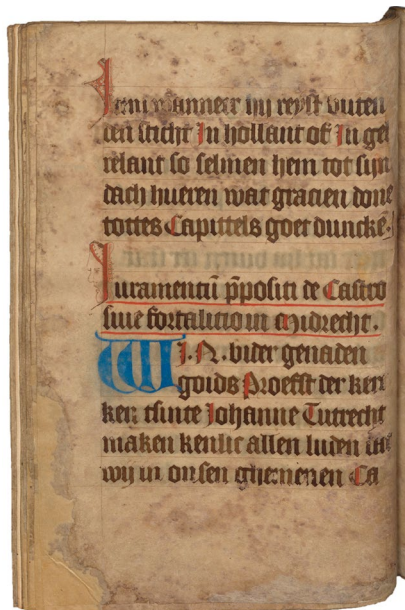


Fig. 34 Folio with an oath in Middle Dutch for the governor of the castle to pledge to the Chapter of St John, added in the fifteenth century to an (incomplete) Evangelistary from the thirteenth century. Utrecht, UB, Ms. 1590, fol. 21v

the core of the book, as if both the Evangelistary and the oaths reached deep into history and formed a long, legitimating tradition.

Appended to the oath for the provost is a long statute further detailing the responsibilities of the office. Three features of the text are important to the current discussion: first, that the candidate mentions in a meta-textual moment “these holy Gospels that I touch with my hand.”

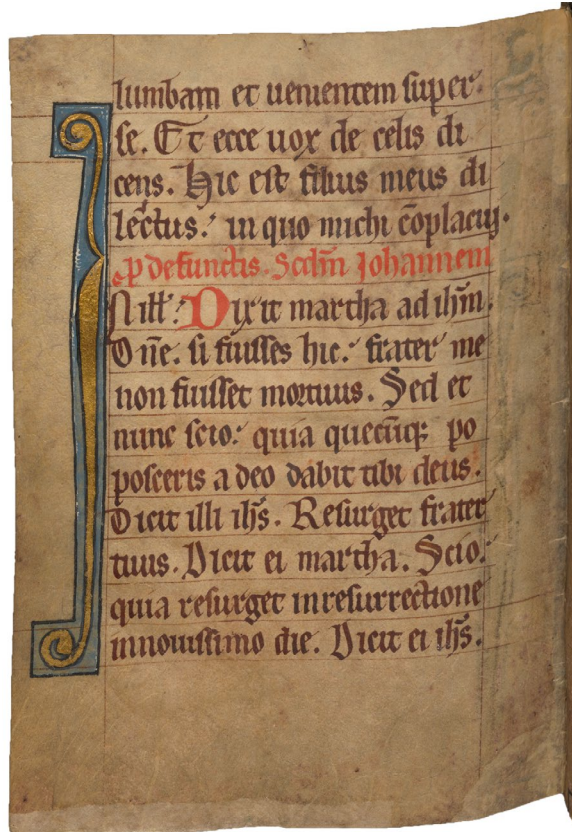


Fig. 35 Folio from the base manuscript, a thirteenth-century Evangelistary. Utrecht, UB, Ms. 1590, fol. 98v

In so doing, he is referring to a gesture he makes while reading his oath: that of touching this very manuscript. In this way, the function of UUB 1590 is like that of the Arenberg Gospels. Unfortunately, Utrecht 1590 is severely damaged, and has been restored in a heavy-handed way, so that all of the frayed margins have been filled in with modern paper. One can

speculate that oath-swearers touched and darkened the lower margins, but one cannot be certain.

Second, this and the other oath texts are appended to the *front* of the Gospel manuscript, meaning that during swearing, the Gospel manuscript would also be physically underneath the candidate's hand, so that he would not only be touching the oath, but also the Word of God. Third, this manuscript is in terrible condition. It has undergone some water damage, but that only explains part of the degradation: it has also been handled so vigorously that it is now in tatters. The manuscript has been rebound and now contains several blanks. It is possible that it, like the Arenberg Gospels, once contained a Crucifixion page.

After the oath for the provost (*prepositus*), next in the hierarchy is an oath for the canons of the Church of St John (11v–13r); then the oath for the vicars, or episcopal deputies (13r–15v); for the notaries (15v–16r); for the rector of the school (*iuramentum rectoris scolarium*) (16v–18r); for the messenger (*iuramentum nuncii suie sculteti nostril*) (18r–21v); for the provost of the castle or fortress in Mijdrecht (*iuramentum prepositi de castro sive fortalitio in Midrecht*) (21v–23r); and for the *castellani* in Mijdrecht (23v–25v). These are the petty-aristocratic castle-lords, who take the oath collectively.⁵⁷

The oaths for the messenger, the governors, and castle-lords are written in the vernacular—Middle Dutch—rather than in the Latin of the other oaths, underscoring their departure from the norm. The oath for the provosts of the castle at Mijdrecht is given in the plural, “we,” rather than the singular “I.” This grammatical choice suggests they were to take their oaths in unison, and the text specifies that they put their hands on their chests (instead of touching the book) as they swear to safeguard the castle and ensure no harm comes to it. The final oath in this group, apparently read aloud to “the castellani,” is addressed to “Everyone who shall see this brief, or hear it read” (fol. 23v). These people swear to protect the castle, and state “I have laid my hand on this

57 One could compare this situation with that in Languedoc, as discussed in Hélène Débax, “Oaths as an Instrument of Power in Southern France, 11th–12th Centuries,” *Medieval Worlds*, 19 (December 2023), pp. 163–194, https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds_no19_2023s163. The author provides evidence of the prevalence of oaths in the absence of a strong central authority. The article also explores the standardization of oaths and the implications they carried in terms of hierarchy and service and emphasizes the rise of castles and their impact on the region's power structure.

brief, and I swear by my life with my hand, with mouth, and with upheld fingers." Here there is no mention of touching the Gospel manuscript; instead, their own breast takes the place of the book. For the more secular roles within the castle, the various officials swear their allegiance to the Chapter of St John but do so with the written and wax-sealed charter, rather than with the Gospel manuscript.⁵⁸ Reflecting a meticulous order, these oaths are organized hierarchically, beginning with the individuals who were to read their oaths in Latin while touching the book, to singular individuals reading in the vernacular, to groups of people having the oath read to them, who do not necessarily have access to the manuscript.

Yet another addition was made to the front of the manuscript (fols 1–2) to accommodate an oath for the provost and archdeacon, added in the sixteenth century. This new role must have superseded the role of provost, or perhaps the role of provost was expanded to encompass the tasks of the archdeacon, as well. Around that time, the oath for "our deacon" was added to fol. 25v, where there had been some blank space. These additions demonstrate that the manuscript was in constant use, and that it needed to be updated to reflect mutations within the Chapter of St John. Where was this manuscript used during its long tenure? It probably stayed in the Chapter of St John most of the time, and perhaps was brought to Mijdrecht so that the oaths from the various officials working in the castle could be taken. Transporting the manuscript safely from the city to the castle would have been one errand the deacon assigned to the messenger, whose duties are so clearly laid out in the document.

With the copying of oaths directly into existing liturgical books, several things shifted. Each candidate no longer made (or commissioned) a singular professional charter; the charters could therefore no longer be collected, sewn together, and brandished as a history of an institution's leadership. The formulae to be recited became standardized, since

58 I have drawn the line with wax-sealed charters for the current study, even though they certainly exhibit fascinating signs of use, not the least of which are the handprints made by the clerks on the backs of the wax blobs as they impressed the seal matrix on the front. For this, see Philippa M. Hoskin and Elizabeth A. New, "'By the Impression of My Seal.' *Medieval Identity and Bureaucracy: A Case Study*," *The Antiquaries Journal*, 100 (2020), pp. 190–212. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003581519000015>. On the authority of seals, see Paul Harvey, "This is a Seal," in *Seals and Their Context in the Middle Ages*, Phillip R. Schofield (ed.) (Oxbow Books, 2015), pp. 1–5.

the anonymized form was not mutable. The context changed, from a ceremony in which the candidate signed his cross at the bottom of a charter, to one in which he interacted physically with a liturgical book, sometimes a Pontifical but usually a Gospel manuscript, which was by default present. The ritual morphed from a profession to an oath, from an individualized into a collective experience, and from active to passive mark-making.

V. Testaments in Mariënpoel

The habit of writing individual, named professions of obedience had begun in eighth-century England, had an upsurge after the Norman Conquest, and was largely replaced in England and on continental Europe by communal oaths sworn from books containing formulae. In the fifteenth century, the practice of producing individual named professions of obedience returned, this time in a different context. Sisters in a convent in Mariënpoel outside Leiden (Klooster Mariënpoel te Oegstgeest) wrote professions of obedience in such a way, I believe, that their very writing formed part of their meaning. These documents, written individually on small sheets of parchment, testified to their profession when they entered the convent. A significant number of them—54 in total—survives from this convent, from the mid-fifteenth through the mid-sixteenth century.⁵⁹ Although most of them are undated, Ed van der Vlist has sequenced them chronologically based on other records from this convent, and I rely on his findings.⁶⁰ Most were penned by girls who were 11 to 14 years old. The earliest surviving testament is from Jutte Hectorsdochter [uten Leen] (1416–1501) (Fig. 36), whose testament reads:

I, sister Jutte Hectorsdochter, pledge *stabilitas loci* and to convert my limbs, to keep my body pure in perpetuity, to forsake possessions, and I pledge obedience to you, sweet mother prioress and your white underlings from this convent, which was founded in honor of the most holy virgin Mary

59 The 54 surviving testaments are preserved in the Leiden Archive (RAL Kloosters 885) and have been digitized: <https://www.erfgoedleiden.nl/collecties/archieven/archievenoverzicht/file/5f6598d8f2ce3cc49fa3edba74076cfe>. I provide examples of some additional oath-swearing sheets, designed as independent parchment paintings, in Rudy, *Postcards on Parchment* (pp. 290–296).

60 André Bouwman and Ed van der Vlist, *Stad van boeken: handschrift en druk in Leiden 1260–2000* (Primavera Pers & Uitgeverij Ginkgo, 2008), p. 38.

and all the saints, in the presence of lord Jan, prior of the regular canons in Emmaus outside Gouda. +⁶¹

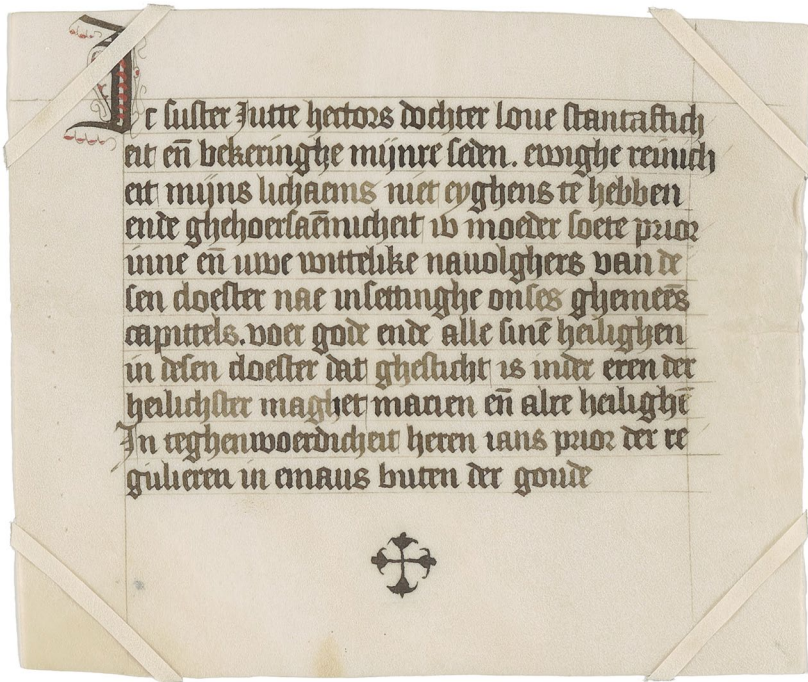


Fig. 36 Profession of obedience of Jutte Hectorsdochter. Leiden, ca. 1428. Leiden Archive (RAL Kloosters 885), blad 9b

The term “white underlings” probably refers to the white woolen gowns the sisters wore. One can see the resemblance between this profession and those made by the bishops and abbots pledging allegiance to Canterbury from the ninth through twelfth centuries and beyond. However, there are some important differences. Jutte Hectorsdochter made this profession ca. 1430 when she was about 14 years old, not when she was in her full adulthood entering the upper tiers of ecclesiastical management. It is

61 Ic suster Jutte Hectors dochter love stantasticheit ende bekeringhe mijnre leden, ewighe reinicheit mijns lichaems niet eyghens te hebben ende ghehoersaemichheit w moeder soete priorinne ende uwe wittelike navolghers van desen cloester nae insettinghe onses ghemeens capitels, voer gode ende all sinen heilighen in desen cloester dat ghesticht is inder eren der heilichster maghet Marien ende alre heilighen. In teghenwoerdicheit heren Jans prior der regulieren in Emaus buten der Goude. +

likely that she copied the profession herself, in slow and careful *textualis* script. Her inconsistent ink saturation documents her struggle. She decorated the initial in the same dark brown ink, with a small amount of red. She may have entered the convent some months before she made this vow and learned to write during the interim. The testament would therefore not only be a solemn vow, but also a demonstration of her ability to read and write, and to work in the scriptorium.

The wording in the 54 surviving testaments is similar to that of the oath taken by members of the Chapter of St Servaas (discussed above). And in both cases, a cross with decorated finials, similar to an osculatory target on the Canon page in a missal, punctuates the bottom of the sheet containing the oath. There are several very important differences in the Mariënpol and Maastricht oaths, however: the former comprises loose sheets, each produced individually by a single sister, who swore her profession on the sheet she made herself, with her own name listed at the top; the latter comprises a communal volume, in which each brother in Maastricht replaced the word “nomen” with his own name during an oral performance. Clearly the sisters’ act of penning the sheets was an essential part of their declaration. In this way, the sisters at Mariënpol exceeded the efforts of the male abbots- and bishops-elect



Fig. 37 Opening of a missal at the Canon, missal of the Nijmegen Bakers’ Guild, 1482–83. Nijmegen, Museum Het Valkhof, Ms. CIA 2, fols 125v–126r.

from Canterbury, who had had their professions written by professional scribes, and then merely filled in their names and crosses. For the Netherlandish women, the charters documented their ability to write, to make complex layouts, and to execute elaborate flourishes.

One can imagine that the ceremony of profession for the sisters at Mariënpol would have involved writing the testament, dressing in a new white habit, pronouncing the testament in the presence of the convent's prioress and the supervising male prior, and then sealing the vow by touching the cross. These were far too complex to inscribe during the ceremony, as the Canterbury bishops had done. The position of the cross on the page was borrowed from the layout of the earlier professions of obedience, but the cross also takes on the qualities of an osculatory target on a Canon page, where the marginal cross is often highly ornate, especially in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries (Fig. 37). Concomitant with the borrowing of the formal qualities of the osculatory target, the ritual may have also borrowed a kissing gesture

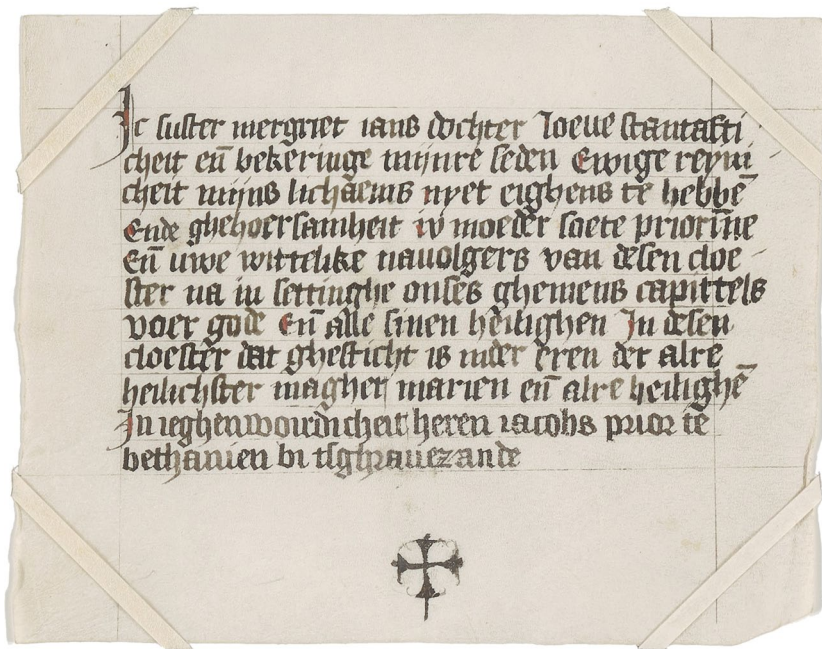


Fig. 38 Profession of obedience of Mergriet Jansdochter, Leiden, ca. 1428. Leiden Archive (RAL Kloosters 885), blad 10a

from the liturgy. These symbols and gestures would have given the girls' performance gravitas and legitimacy steeped in Christian liturgical ritual.

Across the ten decades of these briefs, the girls' testaments follow a similar formula, although they are not copied precisely from a standard exemplar. The next oldest testament, from Mergriet Jansdochter (d.1504), was written *ca.* 1430 (Fig. 38). This time, the girl struggled with her penmanship, especially with pen angle and letter spacing, and she reduced the decoration to just a few strokes of red. What she produced was a testament to her writing abilities as well as to her faith. What remained constant was the decorated osculation target at the bottom of the age, the symbol for ratifying the vow.

Later in the fifteenth century the charters became more decorous. Barbara, meyster Philips Wielantsdochter (d.1506), penned one in the 1490s where she has heaped layer upon layer of festooning red

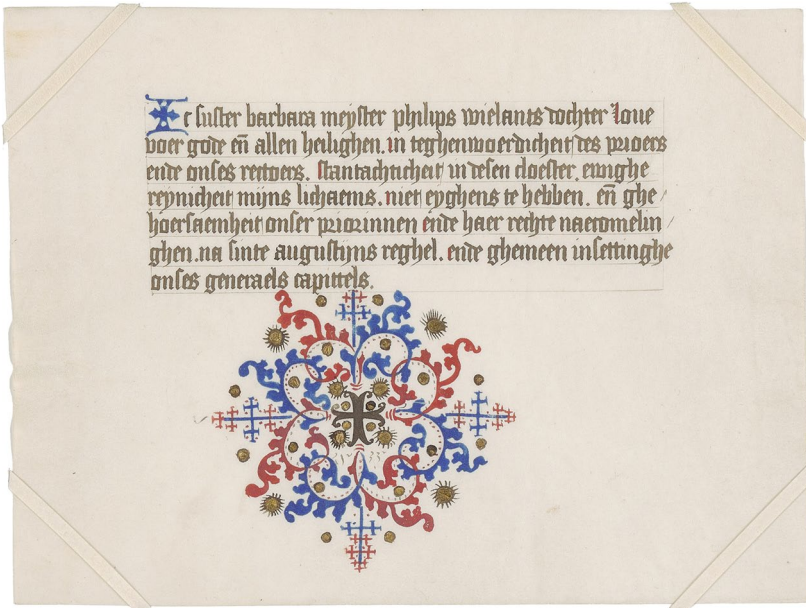


Fig. 39 Profession of obedience of Barbara meyster Philips Wielantsdochter. Leiden, 1490s. Leiden Archive (RAL Kloosters 885), blad 19a

and blue scrollwork onto the osculatory target so that it has become a dizzying abstract design (Fig. 39). It is impossible to know whether this florid attention to the object to be touched also accompanied a more

flamboyant, theatrical performance of touching it. What is clear is that the crosses on all 54 sheets look fresh and pristine. This is presumably because each has only been touched a maximum of one time by one girl during one ritual of profession. These sheets fulfill a role similar to the osculatory target represented in the manuscript for the Chapter of St Servaas, but here each girl has her own sheet rather than swearing on the group's collective manuscript. Distributing the crosses fulfills a number of desiderata: it means that each girl must demonstrate her proficiency in writing before she can profess, and it generates a personalized memento for each newly minted sister.

Exceptions to this pattern occur in a few of the testaments, including that of Sophia, Humansdochter (1543 - after 1589), who re-used a charter made in the 1510s (Fig. 40). The words "Sophia Humans" constitute a palimpsest. She erased the previous name with a knife and scraped the



Fig. 40 Profession of obedience re-used by Sophia Humansdochter. Leiden, 1510s, with additions. Leiden Archive (RAL Kloosters 885), blad 25a

ruling along with the letters. She left the word "dochter" (daughter) on the page so that she would not have to rewrite it. By erasing one of the other sister's names, was she committing *damnatio memoriae*? Perhaps

she was merely demonstrating some continuity with the past while saving herself some labor.

While the Augustinian sisters at Mariënpol showed evidence of having made their testaments themselves, an Augustinian canoness in the nearby convent of St Anna in Delft eschewed the homespun and apparently commissioned an elaborate note of profession, which she then stored in a breviary (Fig. 41). Her full name is given in the accompanying oath: “I, sister Willem Lord Jan van Egmont’s daughter”



Fig. 41 Profession of obedience of Sister Willem, “Lord Jan van Egmont’s daughter.” Parchment painting (after 1468) in its current manuscript context, bound into a breviary made at the convent of St Agnes in Delft, ca.1440–60. Amsterdam University Library, Ms XXX E 117, fols 1v–2r

(Ic suster willem heer Jan van egmonts dochter). She was the daughter of Jan III van Egmont (1438–1516).⁶² With its strewn-flower borders distributed across panels, its gold ground, and its intense colors, the sheet may have been painted by the Masters of the Dark Eyes, a group of

62 For a discussion of this oath as an autonomous object, see Rudy, *Postcards on Parchment* (2015), pp. 290–291; Klaas van der Hoek, “Stantachticheit in desen cloester: Het Brevier van Wilhelmina van Egmond,” *Allard Pierson mededelingen*, 122 (2020), pp. 18–20. <https://hdl.handle.net/11245.1/bf179dc3-67de-4967-97af-5f3af9f60ae6>

artists who supplied the painting for Books of Hours and prayer books throughout the region now called South Holland.⁶³

Each of these testaments appears fresh (except for those whose owner's name has been written over an erasure). The osculatory targets all appear fresh. They have probably only been used once each, at the moment of publicly declaring the profession. Each girl or woman has her own target, emblazoned on her own personal charter, ratifying her own personalized vow. In this case, these are objects each touched one time by one person (as opposed to objects touched once each by many people, as in the case of Gospel pages on which multiple people swore, or objects touched multiple times by the same person, as in the case of certain images touched daily out of habit and/or devotion).

The sisters were not only copying an exemplar when they penned their own sheets: they were also forming themselves. They did this not only by shaping their bodies and hands to wield a pen in order to write, but also by molding their emotions and sensibilities to become one of a group. Their formation was partly defined by penning their profession charters. They then shaped their bodies in another way as they underwent a ritual involving the charter, which would have required making physical contact with the area of the charter centered in the lower margin and decorated with the best, most symmetrical, neatest penwork they could muster. The testaments of the Mariënpol sisters derived their significance contextually—solely for the girls crafting them, within the specific convent they were about to join. That the girls made the sheets themselves would have demonstrated their complicity in this arrangement and their willingness to be bound to the convent for life.

63 For related manuscripts, see the "Southern Group" in Klara H. Broekhuijsen, *The Masters of the Dark Eyes: Late Medieval Manuscript Painting in Holland* (Ars Nova: Studies in Late Medieval and Renaissance Northern Painting and Illumination) (Brepols, 2009).

VI. Hinged thinking: A civic context

Manuscripts that needed to project authority, group membership, or obligation could draw on the structures of two kinds of manuscript at the center of ecclesiastical authority—the Gospel and the Missal—to lend gravitas to texts and rituals. Moreover, such books could contain oaths, privileges, and other obligations ratified under the dominant cultural symbol for justice. These borrowed the language and written structures of secular contracts. Such practices formed the social glue building group membership, keeping promises, and minimizing uncertainty.

Rituals were crucial in establishing social relationships, especially those centered around trust and protection. I have sketched a progression over time, from oral statements to professions, then from vows to formulas. This chapter has spotlighted manuscripts that helped to impose obedience within bishoprics, chapters, and convents through specific handling practices. The types of manuscript-objects have been unusual, because particular social settings compel their utility.

Each of the examples in this chapter tells of a local solution to the problem of ensuring a less uncertain future by adding gravitas and a perceived supernatural presence to speech acts. This gravitas could be achieved by repurposing an older Gospel manuscript that effused the



Fig. 42 *Evangélique* of Dijon, 1488; closed state. Painted wooden boards, hinged. Archives municipales de Dijon, lay. 5,72 (B 18)

gravitas of antiquity for swearers to touch. Some achieved this by inventing elaborate rituals involving signing parchment letters at an altar. The city of Dijon achieved this in a novel way by commissioning a swearing object: a diptych that looks like a book in its closed state (Fig. 42). Like the swearing manuscript that belonged to the Church of St Servaas in Maastricht discussed above (HKB, Ms. 75 F 16), the Dijon diptych is more binding than book. Made in 1488, the diptych is painted marbled green to turn the wooden boards into marble, thereby lending the object the valor and antiquity associated with carved stone. An escutcheon at the center of the faux marble slab presents the arms of the city. Hands opening and closing the diptych for centuries have worn the paint away. It was used in an annual ceremony when the mayor of Dijon pronounced his oath in front of the Church of St Philibert, a twelfth-century building that was also home to the informal guild of grape-stompers (or “purple asses”). This



Fig. 43 Site where the Mayor of Dijon swore his oath until the French Revolution

spot is in the former cemetery of the Cathedral of St Bénigne and is now a parking lot (Fig. 43). This oath-swearing practice continued until the French Revolution.

Opening the diptych reveals parchment sheets, each with an image: Christ Crucified on the left, and the Pietà on the right, with the first fourteen lines of the Book of John inscribed around them (Fig. 44). The object, when closed, measures 314 mm high, 220 mm wide, and 38 mm thick in its closed state. At 444 mm wide in its open state, it would have been easily visible from a distance of four or five meters in the public space in front of the Church of St Philibert. The modern archival box in which the object is now kept—in the Archives municipales, not far from the Church of St Philibert—does not have the item's number but is inscribed with the word "Evangélique." In other words, it is known as a Gospel, even though it does not contain the full Gospel texts but only the beginning of John. It is similar to the oath book of the Church of St Servaas (HKB, Ms. 75 F 16) discussed above, in that a giant binding frames only a brief document; moreover, in both cases, a highly abbreviated Gospel text suffices as "these holy Gospels" on which to swear. Just a snippet of the Gospels is sufficient to call something a "Gospel" for ceremonial use.

The Dijon *Evangélique* functioned the way a Gospel manuscript functioned: for lending gravitas to oaths in the secular context of local government. Accordingly, the arms of the city of Dijon appear four times, twice on the exterior of the object, and twice inside. Anyone using, holding, or opening the object can hardly avoid touching the coat of arms of the city. The civic ritual borrows from the ecclesiastic one by heaping the civic symbols on a simplified Gospel form.

Not only the exterior of the diptych, but also its interior has signs of having been touched. Specifically, the images on the interior are shiny, having been burnished with dry fingers. There is no evidence that they were wet-touched. I have photographed them from an oblique angle to capture their hand-polished sheen (Fig. 45). Like other items in this chapter, this object crosses the boundary between charter and book, opening in a hinged way like a codex but presenting two small pieces of parchment.

As these examples have shown, the oaths, often documented in intricately crafted manuscripts, were not just words. They were physical,



Fig. 44 Evangélière of Dijon, 1488; open state. Inscribed and painted parchment sheets mounted to wooden boards, hinged Archives municipales de Dijon, lay. 5,72 (B 18). Photo: author



Fig. 45 Evangélière of Dijon, open state, photographed in raking light. Archives municipales de Dijon, lay. 5,72 (B 18)

tangible affirmations of faith and allegiance. They had a (semi-)public role. The very act of placing one's hand on a page, the palpable feel of the parchment, and the intentional touch on images or words all played a

role in making the oath a sensory experience. This chapter has shown that witnessed promissory statements permeated medieval culture but were reinvented continuously to reflect specific needs. These statements used an oath and gesture formula, whereby the swearing objects shifted across multiple permeable conceptual membranes: from public to private, from charter to codex, single use to multiple use, religious to civic. Many medieval rituals of bondage not only borrowed features from earlier practices but also sought legitimacy from the tangible presence of the Gospel and the enduring nature of parchment. These qualities, including the perceived durability of the physical substrate of parchment, continue to play a role in oaths as they grow to encompass other social groups and brotherhoods.

Chapter 2: Confraternities of Laypeople

Civic institutions borrowed from the word-gesture-prop formula that operated in ecclesiastical rituals. Manuscripts made for confraternities can disclose aspects of their membership ceremonies, since signs of wear in the relevant books reveal how the ceremonies were locally inflected and adjusted.⁶⁴ Swearing allegiance to a religious order required making a public statement and placing one's hand on a document, such as the order's Rule. The *Liber Regulae* of the Order of the Holy Spirit, the first non-military hospital order, exists in a highly illuminated copy made in the mid-fourteenth century for the Hospital of Santo Spirito in Sassia, situated in Rome just east of Vatican City (Rome, Fondo dell'Ospedale di Santo Spirito, Ms. 3193, fol. 202v; Fig. 46).⁶⁵ A historiated initial marks the beginning of chapter LXXV, "De forma iuramenti, quam magister

64 Paul Trio, "Confraternities as Such, and as a Template for Guilds in the Low Countries during the Medieval and the Early Modern Period," in Konrad Eisenbichler (ed.), *A Companion to Medieval and Early Modern Confraternities* (Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, 83) (Brill, 2019), pp. 23–44, argues for the distinction of the terms confraternity (*broederschap*, brotherhood), guild (*gilde*), and company (*gezelschap*). In the manuscript under discussion here, the terms *broederschap* and *gildeboek* are both used. In the same volume, see also Konrad Eisenbichler's overview of confraternities in his introduction. See Gervase Rosser's essay for the meaning of the term "confraternal," referring to the ideal of Christian brotherhood that was intended to establish a relationship among the members.

65 Gisela Drossbach and Gerhard Wolf (eds), *Caritas im Schatten von Sankt Peter: der Liber Regulae des Hospitals Santo Spirito in Sassia: Eine Prachthandschrift des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 2015); and Gisela Drossbach, "The Roman Hospital of Santo Spirito in Sassia and the Cult of the Vera Icon," in *The European Fortune of the Roman Veronica in the Middle Ages* Amanda Murphy et al. (eds) (Convivium Supplementum) (Brepols, 2017), pp. 158–67, with further references. The folios of the Sassia manuscript have been cut apart and mounted onto paper blanks. It is possible that this was done because the manuscript was so worn at the bottom from being proffered that it required urgent and heavy-handed conservation.



Fig. 46 Folio in the *Liber Regulae* of the Order of the Holy Spirit (disbound and mounted in an album), with a historiated initial depicting members of the Brotherhood taking an oath on a book. Rome, Fondo dell'Ospedale di Santo Spirito, Ms 3193, fol. 202v

prestatibit" (Concerning the form of the oath, which the master will proffer). The image represents a brother professing his obedience to the rule by placing his hand on the open book proffered to him by the pope in the presence of two cardinals. The pope himself places his left hand on the open book, while the brother places his right hand on the

facing page, and the two men lock gazes. The book therefore acts as a conduit between papal authority and brotherly submission, and the gesture takes place in front of four witnesses. Both the public nature of the event and the ritual involving authorized words and gestures are required to seal the oath, as Austin's speech-act theory would have it.⁶⁶ Several of the manuscripts featured in this study have patterns of wear consistent with the manner of handling shown in this image. With this gesture, instead of placing his hands within those of the overlord, as is pictured in the vassalage ceremony discussed above (see Fig. 6), here the subject places his hands inside a book, as if the enveloping structure of the book, with its symbolism of authority, takes the place of the hands of the overlord.

Knightly orders, such as the Orders of the Golden Fleece, Saint Michael, and the Garter, likewise adopted ceremonies for swearing on manuscripts to assert hierarchical bonds. For example, in 1352 Louis of Taranto, King of Naples, founded the Order of the Holy Spirit with Noble Desire, which was also called the Order of the Knot (*L'Ordre du Saint-Esprit au Droit Désir*, or the *Ordre du Noeud*). He commissioned a manuscript, filling nine elaborately-painted folios, that presented the order's statutes (Paris, BnF, Ms. fr. 4274).⁶⁷ The statutes detailed the obligations of the members of the order, including the specific garments—robes, mantles, and colored sashes—that they were compelled to wear during ceremonies. Knightly members also had to perform warlike feats to gain the ultimate distinction of wearing the untied knot, which distinguished the bravest knights from their more cowardly comrades, who brandished pretzel-shaped knots. The knights also had to perform charitable acts and to commemorate their dead. A miniature in the manuscript shows a group of knights, each with the insignia of the golden knot on his shoulder, kneeling before the king to swear an oath of loyalty (Fig. 47). The knights place their hands on the open book proffered by the king. Whereas members of the Order of the

66 J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (The William James Lectures) (Clarendon Press, 1962).

67 For images and bibliography of the manuscript, see <https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc50635h>. Additionally, Agnès Bos, "Le livre des évangiles de l'ordre du Saint-Esprit. Redécouverte d'un manuscrit," *Bulletin de la Société nationale des Antiquaires de France* (2022), pp. 34-58, has shown how such rituals and manuscripts continued to operate into the sixteenth century and beyond.



Fig. 47 Folio in the *Statuts de l'ordre du Saint-Esprit au droit désir*, with an image depicting knights swearing an oath to King Louis of Taranto. Naples, 1352-1353.

Paris, BnF, Ms. fr. 4274, fol. 3v, and detail

Holy Spirit (in the previous example) pledged their oaths to the pope, the members of the Order of the Holy Spirit with Noble Desire pledged theirs to King Louis. In these two examples, one can see how what had been an ecclesiastical ritual, set in a church with cardinals and the pope, morphed into a secular one staged around a royal throne. Re-staging the ceremony in this way helped to assert the divine right of the king and to enforce the solemnity of the ritual, which borrowed its prestige from ecclesiastical precedents.

As urbanization intensified in Europe and England, the culture of oath-taking continued to expand beyond the church and the court into the new civic organizations that people — primarily men — formed to create bonds of trust. In a Europe still deeply steeped in Christian culture, these bonds continued to be endorsed under the auspices of the Word. In the fourteenth century, various trade organizations, or guilds, were founded in cities across Europe. These guilds established rules around labor and product quality, enforced protectionist trade regulations, prayed for the souls of deceased members, and paid for Masses. Although primarily trade organizations, they leveraged Christian values around labor and ethics.

Manuscripts commissioned by the guilds preserving their statutes and their matriculation registers. Guilds in the city of Bologna were particularly active in this area. Surviving manuscripts, largely preserved in the Archivio di Stato of Bologna, include the statutes of the sword makers (1285 and 1378), of the notaries (1336 and 1382), of the blacksmiths (1366), of the silk workers (1372, 1381, 1398, 1410, 1424), of the salt sellers (1376), of the barbers (1376), of the saddlers (1378, 1422), of the drapers (1346), of the carpenters (1377), of the goldsmiths (1383), of the tailors (1379-1466). The rise of these new urban trade organizations coincided with a new government in 1376, free from papal control. Even the new government commissioned a manuscript, the Statutes of the Municipality (1376). Additionally, matriculation registers survive, including the register of the apothecaries' guild (1318), of the haberdashers' guild (1328), of the shoemakers' guild (ca. 1386), and of the creditors of the Monte di Pietà (in five volumes, from the 1390s, discussed below). This partial list shows that illuminated corporate



Fig. 48 Nicolò di Giacomo, Crucifixion, ca. 1390, cutting probably from the Statutes of the Apothecaries of Bologna. Cleveland Museum of Art, inv. 24.1013

manuscripts were *de rigueur* for these new guilds and professional societies.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Until these manuscripts are restored and digitized, they are difficult to consult or study. For now, see Massimo Medica, *Haec Sunt Statuta. Le corporazioni medievali nelle miniature bolognesi* (Rocca di Vignola, with Franco Cosimo Panini, 1999).

Since the genre of illuminated secular statutes and registers was new, illuminators experimented with programs of imagery, which largely took the form of elaborate frontispieces. Due to treasure-seekers mutilating many of the volumes in the nineteenth century, many frontispieces now reside in collections across Europe and North America. As Alessandra Gardin points out, the imagery in these manuscripts is largely religious, despite the commercial and secular nature of the manuscripts.⁶⁹ This is because the texts themselves begin with an invocation to Christ, Mary, and patron saints. Gardin also notes that guild rules required members to observe religious holidays, celebrate the feast of the patron saint, and they penalized members who worked on Sundays and holidays. Members were also required to attend Masses celebrated for the guild or deceased members.

Although the imagery was not standardized, patterns emerge across the group. Some of the statute volumes feature an image of Christ Crucified between Mary and John, as one would expect to find in a missal. According to Patrick de Winter, a cutting depicting Christ Crucified, now in Cleveland, had been thought to come from a Missal belonging to the Duke of Anjou, but in fact, came from the Statutes of the Apothecaries (Fig. 48).⁷⁰ The leaf bears the signature of Nicolò di Giacomo, also known in the literature as Niccolò da Bologna. As the official illuminator for the city of Bologna at the end of the fourteenth century, he illuminated many books of statutes and guild registers. The mutilator trimmed off most of the coat of arms below the frame, so that it could be interpreted as a prestigious Anjou commission. However, as de Winter points out, there were three shields below the Crucifixion,

69 Alessandra Gardin, "Presenza di Immagini Religiose in Codici Laici," *Il codice miniato: rapporti tra codice, testo e figurazione*, Melania Ceccanti and Maria Cristina Castelli (eds), *Storia della miniatura: studi e documenti 7* (Leo S. Olschki, 1992), pp. 375-385.

70 Patrick M. de Winter, "Bolognese Miniatures at the Cleveland Museum," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, 70, 8 (1983), pp. 314-51. De Winter notes that the same arrangement of three coats of arms appears below a miniature depicting Our Lady of Mercy in a frontispiece from the Register of the Corporation of the Apothecaries, also painted in the late fourteenth century, but cut out and redeployed in a register of 1481, also in the Bologna Archives. Both miniatures were created around the same time and for the same guild. Analogous motifs (Christ crucified, above three shields, including two referring to the guild) appear in the Statutes of the Silk Workers for 1424-1589 (Bologna, Archivio di Stato, Ms. 59), and the Statutes of the Salt Sellers for 1376-1403 (Bologna, Archivio di Stato, Ms. 15).



Fig. 49 Nicolò di Giacomo, Six Standing Saints, 1394-95, frontispiece cut from a volume of the register of the creditors of the Monte di Pietà of Bologna. New York, Morgan Library and Museum, Ms M.1056r

with one larger shield in the upper field depicting *France ancien* and a six-pendant label of *gules*. De Winter clarifies that these heraldic elements correspond to the city of Bologna, not the Anjou family, as previously asserted. The two lateral escutcheons probably represented the Corporation of the Apothecaries, identifiable by the ends of two pestles in gold mortars on a field of *azur*, the motif on this guild's shield.⁷¹ In other words, Nicolò di Giacomo used Crucifixion imagery in the apothecaries' manuscript to give their statutes the gravitas of a Missal.

Nicolò di Giacomo produced a different iconographic program for the five volumes he painted for the creditors of the Monte di Pietà, an

⁷¹ The same heraldic elements appear in the Register of the Apothecaries of Bologna of 1481-1759 (Bologna, Archivio di Stato, Ms. 44).



Fig. 50 Nicolò di Giacomo, St Peter and man beating gold, 1394-95, headpiece cut from a volume of the register of the creditors of the Monte di Pietà of Bologna. New York, Morgan Library and Museum, Ms M.1056v

innovative public loan fund established in the late 14th century. This system was designed to stabilize the city's finances by recording loans made by citizens to the city, which promised repayment with interest. The frontispiece from one of the volumes is now in the Morgan Library (Ms. M.1056).⁷² The recto shows two rows of standing saints, identified at their feet as St Petronius, St Paul, St Ambrose, St Dominic, St Francis, and St Florian (Fig. 49). The presence of these saints, who oversaw the loans, helped instill confidence in the lending process, as long as both parties believed that saints could wield power.

⁷² Diane Wolfthal connects this leaf with the new financial culture of Bologna after 1376, and contextualizes it with oaths of office for coiners and minters. See Wolfthal et al., *Medieval Money, Merchants, and Morality* (Morgan Library, 2023), pp. 165-168.

The verso of MS M.1056 has a bipartite miniature (Fig. 50). The left side depicts St Peter, the patron saint of the district of Porta San Pietro in Bologna. The volume from which this image was cut may have come from that district. He holds his attribute, the key, and an open book, as if he were overseeing this very register. When Bologna established its new government in 1376, the city began minting its own coinage, the gold *bolognino d'oro*, which had the same imagery — St Peter with a key and book — stamped onto its obverse. Thus, St Peter was closely associated with the new coins, which also appear on the right half of the image, where a goldbeater is at work, surrounded by sacks and piles of coins.

Two details, which appear outside the frame and have often been trimmed off when this image has been reproduced, provide some clues about how this folio might have been handled. Although the rest of the leaf is in excellent condition, the historiated initial *A* shows Christ raising his hand in benediction. This initiates the invocation to Christ, Mary, and the saints on the recto. Although the other figures on the leaf are undamaged, the Christ initial has been deliberately touched, to the point where much of the paint on the figure's torso is missing, and the gold leaf has flaked off, revealing the pink ground. The beginning of the invocation is also damaged, as if those uttering the invocation purposely touched Christ when doing so. Two other areas of the leaf are also damaged: at least one person who touched the pile of coins then wiped his finger into the nearest margin. Although this touching of the coins might be written off as a stray accident, the fact that the pile of coins depicted in another volume of the Monte di Pietà registers has also been touched in a similar way raises the possibility that the gesture belonged to a ritual designed to secure the fiduciary arrangement.⁷³

It is the nature of registers that their content changes with use, since text is continually added to them, similar to necrologies, another book genre from which the scribes and illuminators borrowed design ideas. (This theme will be taken up again in Chapter 5, below.) In particular, registers were designed to contain blank parchment that will eventually be filled in with members' names. For example, a folio from the register of the Bologna shoemakers' guild, made around 1386, is now a cutting

73 Bologna, Archivio di Stato, Ms. 27. C, fol. 1v, reproduced in Gardin, p. 382



Fig. 51 Nicolò di Giacomo, folio from the register of the Bologna shoemakers' guild, ca. 1386. Los Angeles, Getty Museum, Ms. 82 (2003.113)

in the Getty Museum (Fig. 51).⁷⁴ Nicolò di Giacomo illuminated the leaf with an imposing image of St Dominic, whose church was in the shoemakers' quarter. The leaf lists the names of the members of the shoemakers' guild, inscribed over time by a series of hands. A simple cross or the designation "mor" (mortem) is written next to the names of

⁷⁴ For a description and bibliography, see <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/109559>

deceased members. Living members were obliged to pray for them. Just as the shield for the apothecaries' guild featured a mortar and pestle, the shield for the shoemakers' guild features a knife, shoe, and sandal. Indeed, throughout this body of manuscripts, the shields are the main secular imagery, as they stand for the goods or services provided by the guild members. In the shoemakers' guild register, it appears that the shield of shoes has been touched, and the paint is smeared and chipped. In other manuscripts from the group, the shields have similarly been touched, revealing that a shield-touching gesture may have also formed part of the book-centered rituals among the guilds.

Guilds in other cities, too, commissioned manuscripts to formalize social networks among professionals and to maintain standards of quality. For example, the Oxford company of tailors had an oath book, which was begun in the fifteenth century but was used by masters of the company until the eighteenth century.⁷⁵ Such manuscripts helped to form strong bonds among cohorts of simultaneous members as well as cohorts over time. Gospel pericopes were copied near the beginning of the manuscript so that when members swore their oaths, they were doing so in the presence of the Gospels. The hand of God thereby exerted control over civic and professional groups.

The manuscripts discussed above have distinctive patterns of wear indicating that their respective ceremonies differed. Horizontally organized groups—such as those with non-hereditary members who were equals—fell into several institutional contexts. In satisfying the demand for the human need to feel a sense of belonging, various kinds of confraternities formed in the late Middle Ages that gave members opportunities for horizontal connections both on earth, and—equally importantly—in the afterlife.⁷⁶

Members of ecclesiastical chapters swore oaths to attain their offices, and to join brotherhoods, as the previous section showed. When laypeople likewise formed groups, often under the *aegis* of a religious establishment, the entrance procedures resembled those of their religious

75 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Morrell 25, *Liber jurament(i) magistri wardorum et fraternitatis sutorum vestiariorum*. See *Summary catalogue of manuscripts in the Bodleian Library relating to the city, county and University of Oxford; accessions from 1916 to 1962*, ed. P. S. Spokes (1964), p. 144.

76 Guilds also formed, but membership for these was based on a shared trade and had a different form of entrance procedure; guilds fall outside the current discussion.

counterparts. They used books as props and uttered ceremonial words. Swearing into a confraternity also resembled vassalage ceremonies. Initiates adapted gestures to express their loyalty to certain saints, especially those associated with the military class who dressed as soldiers (including Sts Sebastian, Adrian, and George). Just as overlords promised protection to vassals in exchange for fealty, money, and service, so could military saints step into the role of overlord and thereby extract devotion, service, and money from believers. For the remainder of the chapter, I analyze manuscripts made for three confraternities, two of them dedicated to St Sebastian. The cult of this military saint played a role in reforming the behavior of crusading knights: Alan de Lille, in the late twelfth century, urged soldiers to behave less brutally by following the Christian example set by St Sebastian.⁷⁷ In the period after the Black Death, the saint was strongly associated with bodily protection, since the arrow wounds he incurred during his execution resembled the buboes of plague victims. For the brotherhood who gathered under his name, he was venerated as a knight, as a prophylactic against disease, and as a patron of shooting.

The evolution of confraternities reflects the shifting patterns of religious practices and affiliations. Confraternities of prayer had begun in a Benedictine monastic environment, with the purpose of maintaining *memoria* of members and donors. Membership in these early monastic confraternities was usually open to laymen who made a substantial one-time donation. After ca. 1200, such confraternities moved away from monastic administration, and toward a system of annual membership fees, and they welcomed both male and female members. Although confraternities first formed in the early twelfth century in France, the number of such organizations multiplied after the Black Plague when desperate Christians turned to collective prayer to protect themselves from disease. Unlike Psalters or missals, manuscripts for brotherhoods had no fixed form, and it is therefore difficult to make generalizations about them, other than this: signs of wear in their pages often reveal aspects of membership rituals and of collective prayer for their deceased members.

⁷⁷ James B. MacGregor, "Negotiating Knightly Piety: The Cult of the Warrior-Saints in the West, ca. 1070-ca. 1200," *Church History*, 73(2) (2004), pp. 317–45.

I. The colorful confraternity of St Nicholas

In 1423 in the town of Valenciennes, a group of men formed a confraternity to honor the relics of St Nicholas, to pray for each other upon death, and most importantly, to form a robust all-male social club. This confraternity mandated such activities as dressing smartly, feasting, drinking, and processing with a reliquary holding the bones of its patron saint. While the original statutes from 1423 do not survive, a copy from the end of the fifteenth century does.⁷⁸ The manuscript (now Valenciennes, BM, Ms 536) was undoubtedly made for the confraternity, possibly to replace the 60-year-old exemplar in tatters. The scribe produced the confraternity manuscript in a legible *bâtarde* script, the norm for vernacular administrative documents of the fifteenth century.⁷⁹ (A transcription and a translation of the entire manuscript appear in Appendix 3.) This copy exhibits many signs of use, with marks from both inadvertent and targeted wear. The textual contents, numerous images, and evident wear in the Valenciennes manuscript provide a sense of what the confraternity meant to its members.

It is clear that their participation in the confraternity was thoroughly embodied. Membership was highly selective and limited to 50, chosen among current and former clergy. (This confraternity therefore bridges ecclesiastical confraternities, discussed in the previous chapter, and emphatically lay ones.) Being elected to this body was no mere sinecure or civic prize. Confrères committed to taking care of the reliquary of St Nicholas, which they regularly processed through the streets of Valenciennes. They are depicted doing so in several of the miniatures.

78 On Valenciennes, BM, Ms 536, fol. 28r (the final folio of the written text), there is an added note, possibly from the sixteenth century, indicating that the current manuscript is a copy of one from 1423. The earlier manuscript does not survive or has not been identified.

79 Auguste Molinier, *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France. Départements—Tome XXV. Valenciennes* (Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1894), cat. 536. Dominique Vanwijnsberghe briefly mentions the manuscript in “La miniature à Valenciennes, Etat des sources et aperçu chronologique de la production (fin XIVe—1480),” *Valenciennes aux XIVe et XVe siècles*. Art et histoire, Valenciennes, Presses universitaires de Valenciennes, 1996, pp. 181–200, here: p. 193, fn. 57. See also Lucie Laumonier, “Medieval Confraternities: Prayers, Feasts, and Fees,” *Medievalists.net*. <https://www.medievalists.net/2021/11/medieval-confraternities-prayers-feasts-and-fees/>. The manuscript is fully digitized at https://patrimoine-numerique.ville-valenciennes.fr/ark:/29755/B_596066101_MS_0536.locale=fr

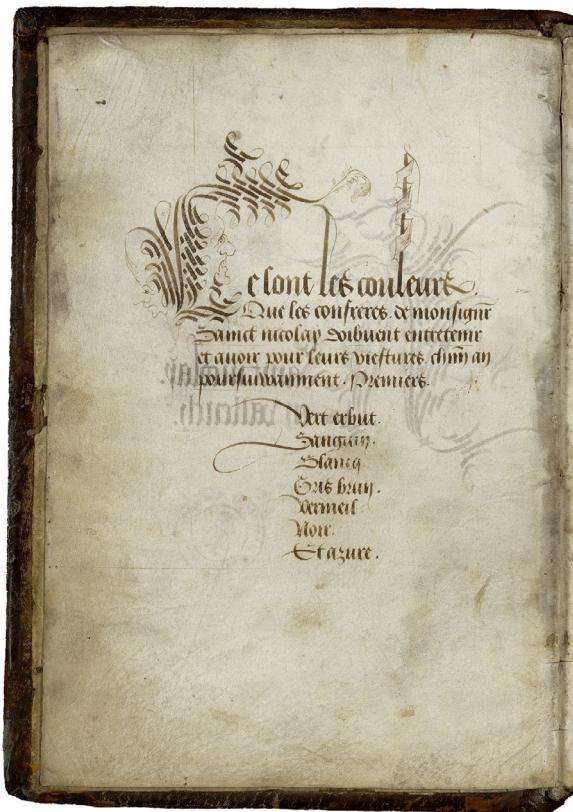


Fig. 52 Folio in the Confraternity Book of St Nicholas of Valenciennes, outlining the colors that confrères must wear. Northern France (Valenciennes?), ca. 1490. Valenciennes, BM, Ms. 536, fol. 1v

Furthermore, the brothers convened to sing and pray, and also to ante up their dues. Finally, members had to attend Masses, including requiem Masses for the deceased brothers. They marked their election to the brotherhood by taking a solemn oath, signifying their commitment to these activities. The brotherhood demanded members' full participation, once they were initiated with an oath and ceremony. Those who failed to participate in the frequent specified activities were penalized with fines: fines for missing the annual dinner; fines for failing to carry the reliquary correctly; fines for paying the annual dues late; fines for talking during the procession. Most of these would be paid in cash to the confraternity's coffers or to the fund for the building maintenance, but some of the fines

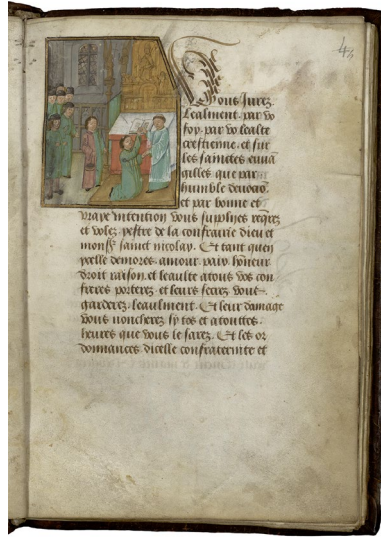


Fig. 53 Folio in the Confraternity Book of St Nicholas of Valenciennes, with an image depicting the oath of a new brother. Northern France (Valenciennes?), ca. 1490. Valenciennes, BM, Ms. 536, fol. 4r, and detail

were to be paid to the reliquary itself, in the currency of wax. The wax would be turned into candles to illuminate and honor the object of their attentions. Maintaining, handling, carrying, processing, and guarding the reliquary were central to confrères' activities.

Within the brief written space of 28 folios, the book's 11 images depict the journey of a member from his initiation to his demise. The imagery, however, only shows the brothers as members of the group, never as individuals. The manuscript begins by specifying the seven colors of clothing that the brothers may wear, and in fact, must wear (Fig. 52). So important is this information that it is given an entire folio, decorated with elaborate pen flourishes. To ensure that the brothers have uniform-colored garments, each is given a fabric swatch to hand to his respective

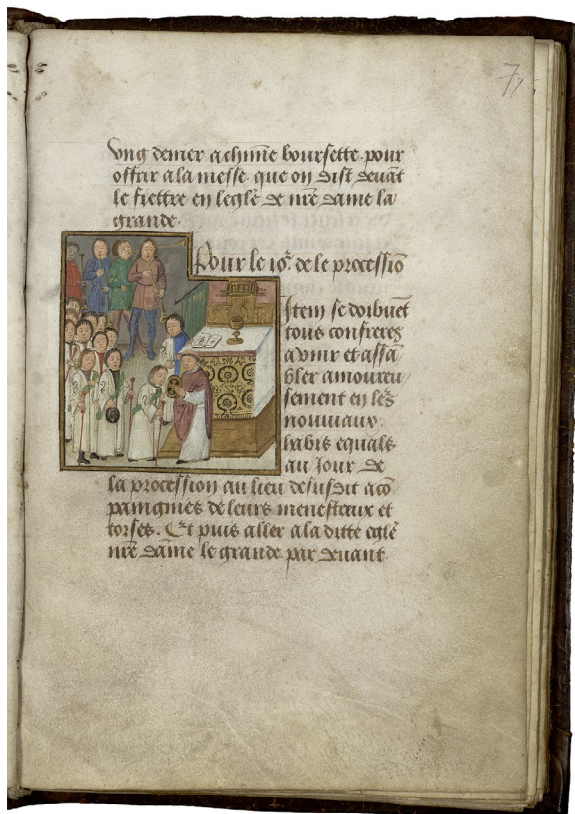


Fig. 54 Folio in the Confraternity Book of St Nicholas of Valenciennes, with an image depicting the Mass of the brotherhood. Northern France (Valenciennes?), ca. 1490. Valenciennes, BM, Ms. 536, fol. 7r

tailor. A section of the manuscript is dedicated to the construction of these coats, in all their intricacies, including their embroidery (fols 19r–20r, transcribed in Appendix 3). In this respect, the manuscript, with its textual and visual attention to ceremonial garments, can be compared with the Statutes of the Order of the Holy Spirit with Noble Desire, discussed earlier. Members demonstrated their group cohesion through distinctive dress.

Across the Valenciennes manuscript, the illuminator depicts confrères wearing the full spectrum of outfits. For the oath of a new brother, the brothers wear green (fol. 4r; Fig. 53). At the procession for the feast of the Birth of Mary on 8 September, they wear their blood-red coats (fol. 5r). For the Mass of the brotherhood on the day of the procession, they

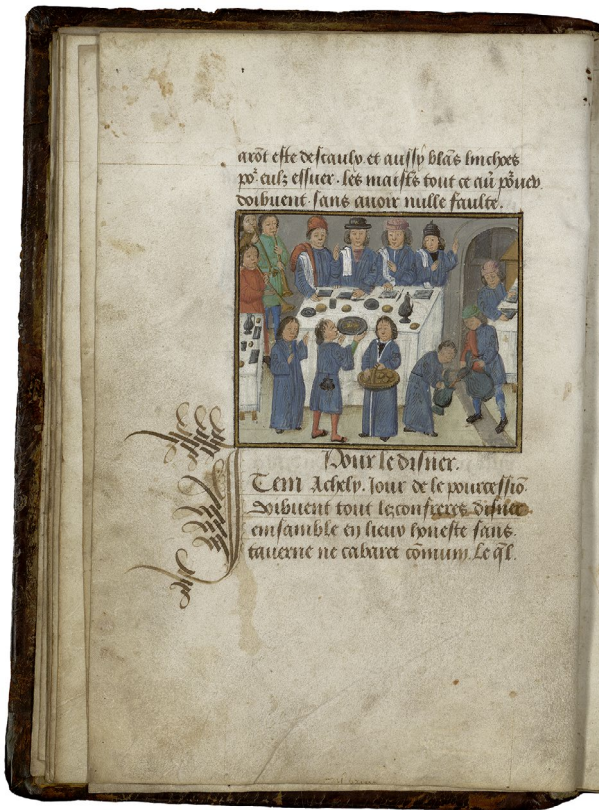


Fig. 55 Folio in the Confraternity Book of St Nicholas of Valenciennes, with an image depicting the brothers at their annual banquet. Northern France (Valenciennes?), ca. 1490. Valenciennes, BM, Ms. 536, fol. 9v

wear white floor-length robes (fol. 7r; Fig. 54). They are coordinated in grey at their annual banquet (fol. 9v; Fig. 55), wear vermillion when they elect new masters (fol. 12r), and appear in their black gowns the day they pay their annual dues (fol. 14v). They wear blue when they process the relics of St Nicholas on his feast day in December (fol. 16r; Fig. 56), and keep the same blue attire when they gather for the translation of St Nicholas in May (fol. 17r; Fig. 57). They wear blue again for the procession of the relics of St Nicholas on consecration day (fol. 18r; Fig. 58). They wear blood-red to bury a brother (fol. 21v) and also to attend vespers and requiem Masses (fol. 23r). From these activities, we can perceive what the brothers valued about the group: it provided a

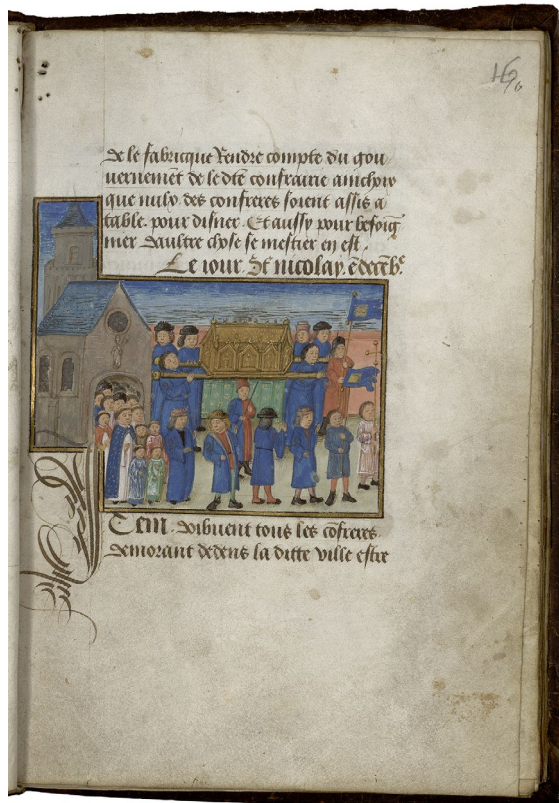


Fig. 56 Folio in the Confraternity Book of St Nicholas of Valenciennes, with an image depicting the procession of the relics of Saint Nicholas on his feast day in December. Northern France (Valenciennes?), ca. 1490. Valenciennes, BM, Ms. 536, fol. 16r

regulated social environment, meals and sociability, a visible monument paid for collectively. It organized pious activity, and it ensured that surviving members would pray for deceased ones, giving them a sense of color-coordinated belonging.

Both the text and images in Valenciennes 536 show that several of the rituals involved codified words and gestures. At the Mass celebration on the day of the procession (fol. 7r), they walk with staffs, wear sashes, and kiss an enormous pax proffered by the priest near the altar. When the new recruit takes his oath (fol. 4r), he and the tonsured priest clasp left hands while they both place their right hands on a book. While it is clear from the description of the oath-taking that the ceremonial book used at the altar (pictured on fol. 4r) was a Gospel manuscript, not the brotherhood's statutes, the brothers also interacted with Valenciennes 536 in ritualized ways.

The large amount of grime on the opening folios of the manuscript, especially on the opening at the front of the book, means that the possibility of the brothers touching this book ceremonially during their oath-taking ceremonies cannot be ruled out. The opening describing

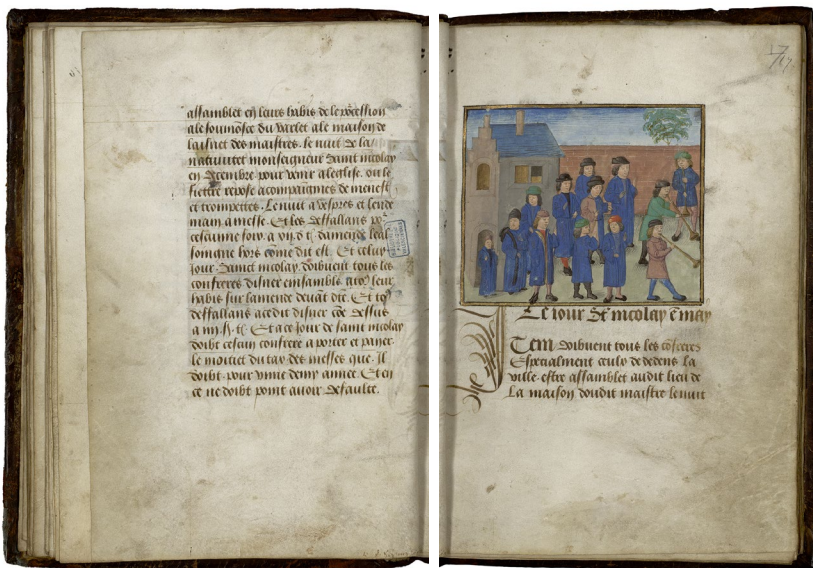


Fig. 57 Opening in the Confraternity Book of St Nicholas of Valenciennes, with an image depicting the gathering of the brotherhood on the feast of St Nicholas in May. Northern France (Valenciennes?), ca. 1490. Valenciennes, BM, Ms. 536, fol.

the ceremony of oath-taking (fols 3v–4r) has handprints all around the margin, including the upper margin, which one does not usually touch in order to turn the leaf. This dirt may indicate that the manuscript was used for touching, just as the book in the illumination (fol. 4r) is depicted being touched.

Other marks of wear indicate that confraternity members interacted with images of themselves socializing, perhaps re-living intense experiences in January through May when the confraternity's physical activities were in a lull. At the banquet scene (fol. 9v), someone has touched the face of the brother who is receiving wine in his ewer. Was he recalling drinking at the meal? In the first procession image, someone seems to have wet-touched the blue hem of one of the brothers (fol. 16r). In isolation, that could be written off as a stray touch, but similar abrasion appears on the figures in the May festival. The damage is extreme in the second procession image (fol. 18r; Fig. 59), where the hems and faces of several members have been thoroughly abraded. The image may have been splashed with drink at one of the annual dinners; if so, that indicates that the manuscript was present at the gala feast.

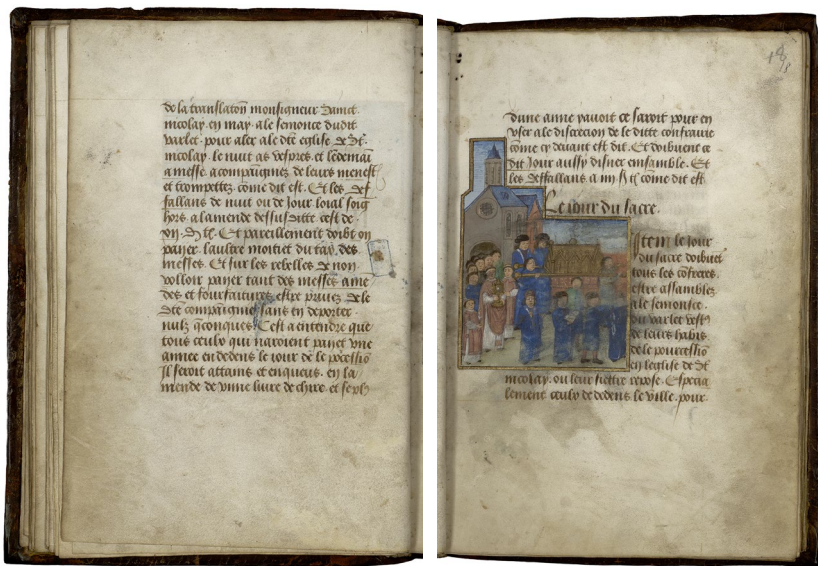


Fig. 58 Opening in the Confraternity Book of St Nicholas of Valenciennes, with an image depicting the procession of the relics of Saint Nicholas. Northern France (Valenciennes?), ca. 1490. Valenciennes, BM, Ms. 536, fols 17v–18r



Fig. 59 Miniature in the Confraternity Book of St Nicholas of Valenciennes depicting the procession of the relics of St Nicholas. Northern France (Valenciennes?), ca. 1490. Valenciennes, BM, Ms. 536, fol. 18r (detail)

Furthermore, at the folio where the brothers are shown participating in a requiem Mass (fol. 22r), a user has wet-touched the top of the image and the headline. Whether this manuscript was used in actual ceremonies or formed a keepsake for one of the enthusiastic members, it prescribed various bodily rituals and also preserved their rehearsal. That several of the images within the manuscript have been deliberately touched suggests that this manuscript had active utility.

Since the interactions take place according to highly structured and codified rules, it makes sense that the brothers would have referred to the manuscript frequently for instruction. The text even specifies the food to be served during their feasts, down to the types of roast, the accompanying

saucers, and the kinds of suitable restaurants where the feasts can take place (not in a cabaret!). These feasts had strict gender rules, with the text explicitly stipulating that no women should serve at these events.

Besides dinners, many of the other structured events took place around the reliquary, which was retrieved from the Church of Our Lady, processed, and returned to the chapel dedicated to St Nicholas within the Marian church. The group was more dedicated to the reliquary than to St Nicholas himself, whose *vita* is never mentioned in the manuscript. Nor were the confrères interested in patterning themselves after the charity for which their patron saint was famed. Instead of supporting orphans or providing dowries for destitute girls, they spent their disposable income on lavish, brightly colored clothing for themselves in which they made frequent, loud, public appearances. The sounds of their gatherings can be inferred from the minstrels and trumpeters specifically mentioned in the text. These hired extras would have heralded the colorful brotherhood, making their public appearances even more performative and noisy. Group members were on display, engaged, and highly visible. Even if their confraternity had only been founded in 1423, the text- and image-based, rule-bound interactions would have projected a sense of tradition. However, theirs was an invented tradition.

The confraternity of St Nicholas testifies to medieval communal practices, and the survival of its book of statutes offers a rare and vivid insight into the values and ceremonial intricacies of such groups. Bearing signs of wear and deliberate touch, the manuscript serves as an artifact of lived experiences. Its folios bear witness to the importance of shared rituals, to the ways in which these medieval men related to their world and each other. The intertwining of the tangible (the manuscript) and the intangible (the deep human connectivity) corroborates the layering of ritual with emotion. It contrasts sharply with a confraternity manuscript made slightly earlier just outside Brussels, the subject of the next section.

II. Ducal patronage at Linkebeek

In 1110 Godfrey the Bearded, Count of Louvain (ca. 1074–1139), founded an oratory dedicated to St Sebastian in the town of Linkebeek, a village west of Brussels, setting into motion a series of events that would generate a pilgrimage church, a confraternity, and an ornate and intensely used manuscript.⁸⁰ Godfrey likely selected St Sebastian, the protector of archers, due to his own knighthood. Sebastian, once a Roman soldier who survived a barrage of arrows, earned the reputation of answering the calls of soldiers, military campaigners, plague victims, and those dreading the plague. After the Black Death, Linkebeek welcomed an influx of pilgrims who sought cures for mortal diseases and who wanted to shield themselves from the bubonic plague, which had swept through Europe first in 1347–1349, and then revisited towns in subsequent decades.⁸¹ Arrows connoted the plague sent by an angry God, because arrow wounds, such as those incurred by St Sebastian, resembled the buboes caused by the disease. Linkebeek and St Sebastian thereby became closely intertwined, with the saint's veneration playing a pivotal role in the village's development.

The legend

After Charles the Bold (1433–1477, Duke of Burgundy 1467–1477) attributed a miraculous cure he experienced to the workings of St Sebastian, he made multiple gestures of gratitude. He took a pilgrimage to St Sebastian's shrine in Linkebeek. He also founded a confraternity dedicated to St Sebastian, to be based in Linkebeek. As an accoutrement

80 The oratory burned in 1546, but its Romanesque baptismal font survived, for which see Jean-Claude Ghislain, "La cuve baptismale romane de style Ardennais de Linkebeek (Brabant)," *Annales du cercle historique et folklorique de Braine-le-Château, Tubize et des régions voisines*, Vol. VIII (1988–1993), pp. 153–175, who shows that it is one of about a hundred surviving baptismal fonts made in the Ardennes for export. The object was conserved in 1947–1948, when it received its current stone pedestal and copper lid.

81 Not all the pilgrims came of their own volition. According to a record of the archers' guild in Mechelen, in 1433 it was decreed that any member who had gambled would be required to make a pilgrimage to Linkebeek and to give a pound of wax and eight stuivers to the shrine. See Hugo van der Velden, *The Donor's Image: Gerard Loyet and the Votive Portraits of Charles the Bold*, trans. Beverley Jackson (Brepols, 2000), p. 183, n. 104.

of the confraternity, he commissioned a manuscript, which calls itself



Fig. 60 Folio in the Linkebeek Guldenboek with an image depicting Charles the Bold before an altar dedicated to St Sebastian, Brussels, 1467. Linkebeek, Parish Church, unnumbered manuscript, fols 2v

the *Guldenboek* (or “Golden book;” Fig. 60).⁸² Made beginning in 1467, the manuscript, which is still in Linkebeek, is very brief and contains only two short texts and two miniatures (fols 1r and 2v) in a single quire: a legendary story about Charles the Bold’s miraculous healing at the hands of St Sebastian (fol. A verso), and a descriptive foundational text (fol. B recto-verso). After the two texts, which I will discuss shortly, the majority of the quires consisted of blank, ruled parchment, now populated with hundreds of confraternity members’ names, in nearly as many hands.⁸³ Charles had, in effect, given the people of Linkebeek a visitors’ book. By the evidence of the number of names inscribed in the decades before 1500, the confraternity was exceedingly popular throughout the duke’s lifetime and within his living memory.

In 1477, a text was added to the *Guldenboek* (fol. A verso) that recounts an event from ten years earlier and elucidates the reasons for the confraternity’s establishment (Fig. 61; for a transcription and translation, see Appendix 4A). As is clear from the red smear at the top of the folio—an offset from the rubric on the facing page that the scribe has avoided—this text was inscribed later, on what had been a blank sheet. It narrates an episode that allegedly took place in July 1467: during his stay at the palace of Louis of Bourbon in Liège, Charles the Bold fell ill at the dinner table, suffering from a “pestilence in his armpits.” (Swollen glands at the groin and armpit symptomized the bubonic plague and usually spelled death.) The duke excused himself to the oratory to pray to Jesus, Mary, and St Sebastian, “our patron saint at Linkebeek,” for a cure. His prayers were answered, and he lived another ten years. Later

82 Linkebeek, parish church, unnumbered manuscript. The manuscript was confusingly foliated in multiple campaigns. See Appendix 4 for a codicological overview. For an art historical analysis of the manuscript, see Dominique Vanwijnsberghe, “Charles le Téméraire et le Livre d’or de la confrérie Saint-Sébastien de Linkebeek”, in *Quand flamboyait la Toison d’Or: le Bon, le Téméraire et le chancelier*, exh. cat. (Beaune, 2021), pp. 243–245. See also Denis Coekelberghs, ed. *Catalogue de l’Exposition Trésors d’Art des Églises de Bruxelles*, vol. 56, 1979 (Brussels: Société Royale d’Archéologie), no. 31.

83 The manuscript attests to the great popularity of the confraternity, from the late fifteenth century until 1732, which is the last date entered in the book. According to undated internal documents at the parish church at Linkebeek, written by Marguerite Berghmans and Alex Geysels, Humbertus Precipiano, the archbishop of Mechelen, gave 40 days’ indulgence in 1702 to those who venerated St Sebastian in Linkebeek. Pope Gregory XVI also gave an indulgence to the shrine’s pilgrims, according to written records in 1833 and 1834, possibly in response to the cholera epidemic that began in 1831. E.H. Nijs, the pastor at Linkebeek from 1953–1973, encouraged the confraternity.

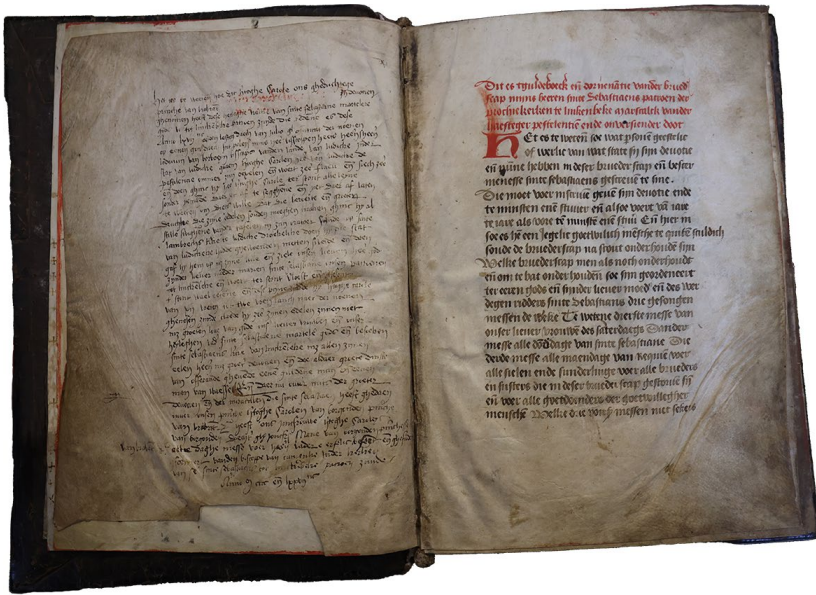


Fig. 61 Opening of the Linkebeek Guldenboek. Linkebeek, written in 1477 and 1467. Linkebeek, Parish Church, unnumbered manuscript, fols Av–Br.

he visited Linkebeek with his entourage. Although these dates cannot be accurate (Charles's itinerary does not place him in Liège in July 1467, and he actually visited Linkebeek in November 1468 after his conquest of Liège on his way back to Brussels), this is how the miraculous cure is remembered. The purpose of the text added in 1477 was to recount the miracle and thereby demonstrate the efficacy of the shrine, and to explain Charles's reason for founding the confraternity.⁸⁴

Furthermore, the text added in 1477 provides some additional information about the ducal patronage of the shrine. First, the added text mentions a magnificent object in the church in Linkebeek: a golden statuette.⁸⁵ According to the text, Charles gave the shrine a “guldene man” and a “man van waesse”: that is, a figure made of gold and a figure

84 It is possible that the story of Charles's miraculous cure was apocryphal, and that in fact, he patronized the oratory because St Sebastian was patron of archers. Charles fancied himself a proficient bowman.

85 For an extensive discussion of this statuette in the context of Gerard Loyet's work, see van der Velden (2000), pp. 61, 155, 178, 182–184, and 323–24 (doc. 75).

made of wax. These votive figures, given as thanks for his miraculous cure, do not survive, although accounts of their purchase do. Gérard Loyet, goldsmith at the court of Charles the Bold, made a stock of images depicting the duke's likeness, which the duke then distributed to shrines around the territory he commanded (Fig. 62). Such spectacular and lavish gifts created a permanent presence for the itinerant duke. Loyet produced silver busts of Charles in a kneeling position for the shrines at Our Lady of Scheut near Brussels and Our Lady of Aardenburg, and he made busts representing the duke for the Church of St Sebastian in Linkebeek and for the Church of St Adrian in Geraardsbergen. To accompany these gifts, according to a payment record of 1470, Charles paid for Masses to be said at De Lier on Thursdays, at Geraardsbergen on Fridays, at Our Lady of Scheut on Saturdays, and at Linkebeek on Tuesdays.⁸⁶ For these four images, Loyet received payment in 1477, the same year that the text mentioning the golden gift was added to the Linkebeek manuscript. This image was delivered only after the duke had died in the Battle of Nancy on 5 January 1477. The text added in 1477 also mentions that the duke's daughter Mary of Burgundy commissioned daily Masses for her father's soul. These Masses were "performed by the bishop of Cambrai in the Church of Saint Sebastian at Linkebeek," according to the added text.

Gerard Loyet, who helped to create the duke's public image and reputation, was in fact one of the many confraternity members listed in the *Guldenboek*, indicating that he was a member of the court in addition to serving as the duke's goldsmith. Charles did live to see the delivery of one of Loyet's other creations: a kneeling image of the duke for the Cathedral of Our Lady and of St Lambert in Liège, which is the only one that survives.⁸⁷ In his exquisite sculpture made in 1467, the duke appears with St George, another military saint. Containing about 500 grams of gold, the Liège votive provides a sense of the scale and level of craftsmanship of this group of exquisite sculptures, which also functioned as votives. The text in the Linkebeek manuscript serves as a testament to the miraculous impact of the shrine and Charles's subsequent gratitude.

⁸⁶ van der Velden (2000, p. 182).

⁸⁷ See van der Velden (2000, *passim*).



Fig. 62 Gerard Loyet, Reliquary of Charles the Bold, 1467-1471. Liège, Cathedral of St Paul

Charles also commissioned numerous images of himself in wax, with Linkebeek numbering among those who received one. These figures would have been turned into candles so that the burning figure could illuminate the altar. (Recall the economy of wax that also operated within the Confraternity of St Nicholas in Valenciennes.) We can imagine the altar in the Church of St Sebastian as one populated by nobles and well-stocked with candles.

Directly facing the text describing Charles's miracle, a text from the original campaign of work—from 1467—proclaims in vibrant red letters: "This is the *Guldenboek* of the confraternity of my lord St Sebastian, patron of the parish church in Linkebeek, protector from sudden pestilence and from unforeseen death" (Fol. Br; for a transcription and translation, see Appendix 4B). The text enumerates membership regulations. Contrasting with the confraternity of St Nicholas (discussed in the preceding section), the confraternity of St Sebastian welcomed members of any religious background (lay or clerical), marital status, or sex: anyone could pay, join, and invoke the saint's protection. Like the

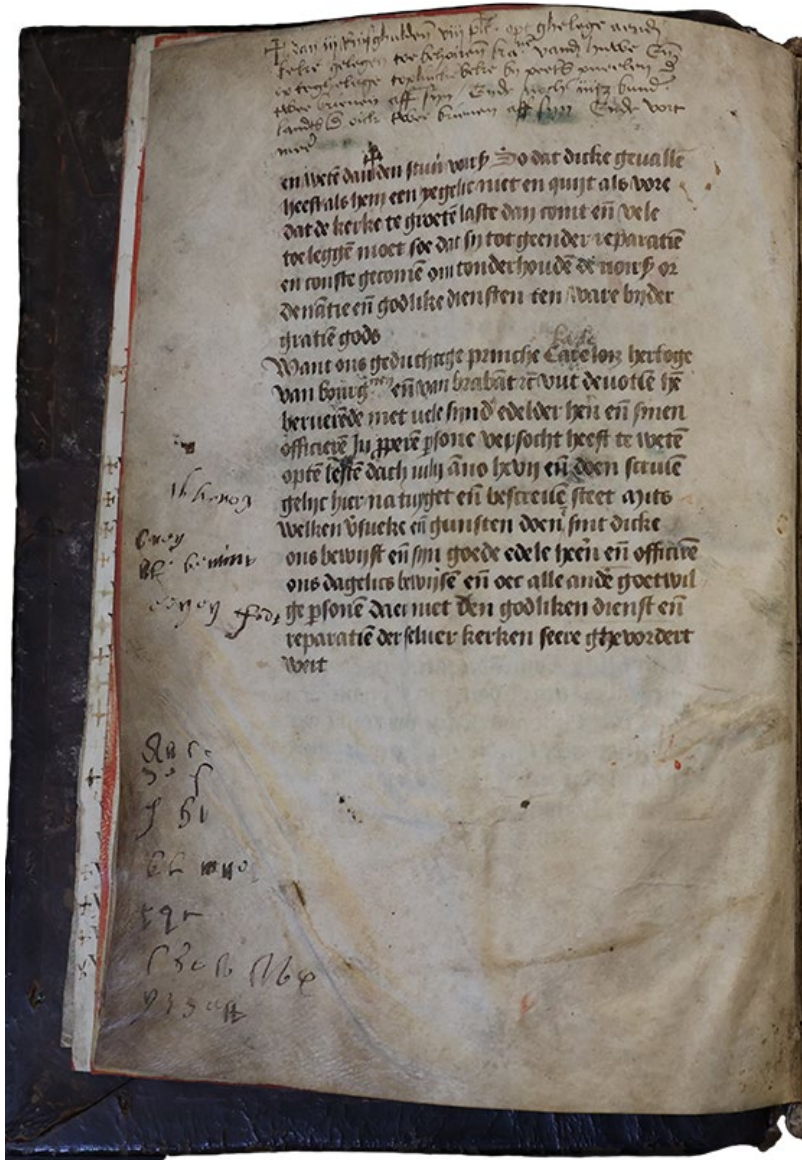
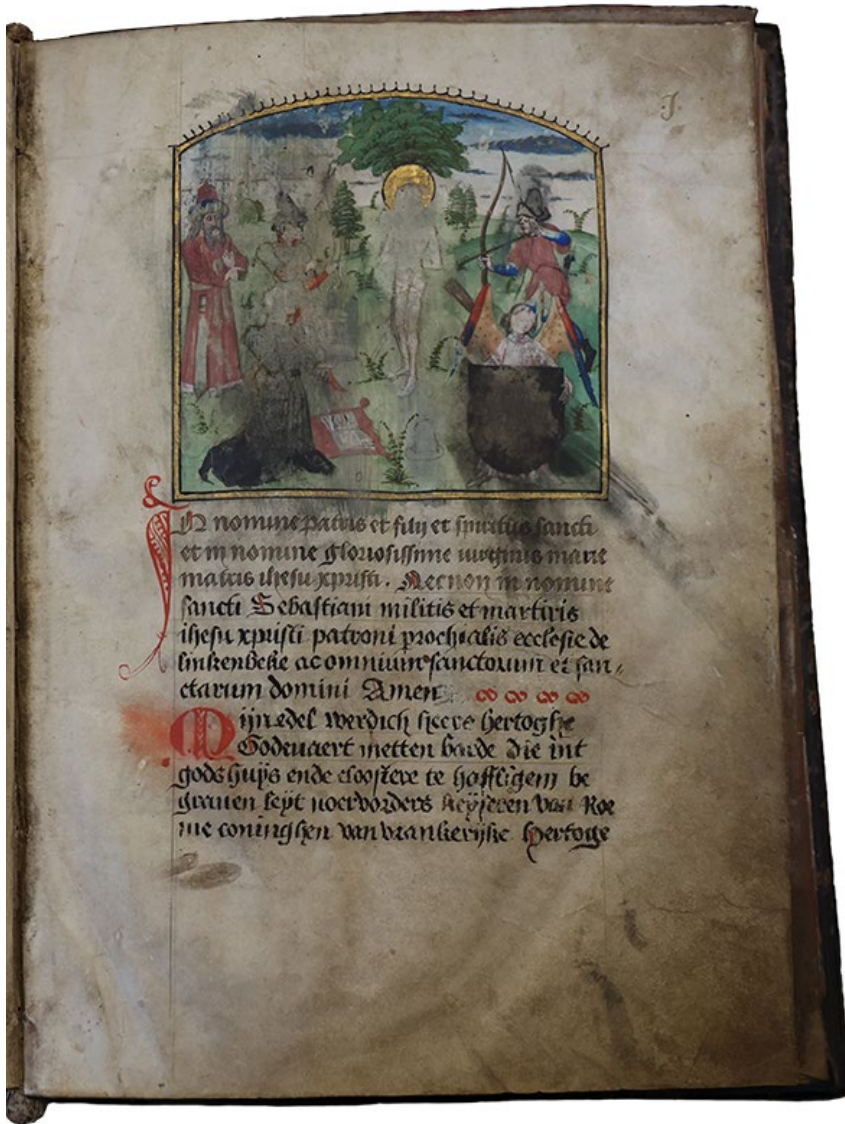


Fig. 63 Opening of the Linkebeek Guldenboek with an image depicting Godfrey the Bearded witnessing the Martyrdom of St Sebastian. Linkebeek, Parish Church, unnumbered manuscript, fols Bv (above) - 1r (opposite)



Valencienne confraternity, members paid a fee upon entrance (in this case, one stuiver), and then paid annually, in the form of dues.⁸⁸ These

⁸⁸ A range of coins circulated in the late medieval Europe, because of the various regional and national authorities that minted currencies. The relationship between these units varied across time and over the region. The stuiver, mentioned in this text, circulated in the Low Countries. It was worth 16 penning or pennies. The florin, or the gold florin, was first minted in Florence in 1252. It was adopted broadly

funds were allocated for building maintenance and to pay for three sung Masses per week: one to honor the Virgin Mary on Saturdays, one for St Sebastian on Thursdays, and on Mondays a requiem Mass for all souls, especially those of members of the confraternity who had died. Failing to pay the dues would jeopardize the sung Masses and threaten the very fabric of the building, which required regular maintenance. While the confraternity guaranteed spiritual safeguarding, it also demanded collective accountability.

Ducal legitimacy

The second text in the *Guldenboek* states that Godfrey the Bearded founded the oratory at Linkebeek and ensured its financial viability by bestowing upon it “houses, farms and fields, forests, land, duties and rents,” so that the churchwardens could use the income generated from these properties to maintain the oratory (*Guldenboek*, fols 1r–2v; for a transcription and translation, see Appendix 4C). Additionally, he gave the oratory a relic, namely a piece of the True Cross, which would have assured the supernatural efficacy of the shrine.

These texts also show that Linkebeek played a role in a network of institutions in the neighborhood west of Brussels, some of which also received ducal patronage. For example, Godfrey found his final resting place at Affligem Abbey, a Benedictine monastery not far from Linkebeek. While he did not establish the abbey, he was one of its early protectors. When Charles the Bold established the confraternity of St Sebastian in Linkebeek in 1467, he placed it under the administration of the abbey at Forest (Forêt, Vorst), a Benedictine priory for women, which had been established in 1239. This abbey had considerable power, reputation, and reach.

The text confirms the legitimacy of the current duke, tracing his lineage back to Godfrey the Bearded, and reminds readers (or listeners, if this text was read aloud) how instrumental the ruling lineage had been

because of its consistent gold content and weight. Sols, which circulated in France and other regions, originally referred to the solidus coin of the late Roman Empire. In the late Middle Ages in France, a sol was worth 12 deniers. The relationship between the florin, stuiver, and sol would have depended on the exchange rate. For an exhaustive study on this topic, see the 20+ volumes of *Medieval European Coinage* published by Cambridge University Press.

in constructing and maintaining the shrine. By emphasizing the lineage and contributions of the dukes, the text in the Linkebeek manuscript stresses the noble foundation and the importance of preserving the shrine's legacy. Finally, the text specifies that new members' full names (family name and forename) must be inscribed in the book, and in fact the rest of the manuscript contains just that: hundreds of names of members. When they were inscribed into the register, as per the instructions, they would have seen the two bold images at the beginning of the manuscript: the one depicting Godfrey, and one depicting Charles the Bold before the altar at Linkebeek. The Master of Johannes Gielemans, who was active in Brussels in the 1450s and 1460s, executed the two miniatures.⁸⁹

A large image depicting the martyrdom of St Sebastian in a landscape prefaces the text about Godfrey (Fig. 63). Although severely rubbed and therefore difficult to make out, the image seems to refer to the text it prefaces. The figure on the left, kneeling and with his prayerbook on a pillow in front of him, is probably meant to represent Godfrey the Bearded. His face is so abraded that it is impossible to determine whether he in fact has a beard. (Perhaps users adamantly touched his face as if stroking his eponymous facial hair.) An angel holds up a shield, which may have displayed Godfrey's coat of arms but is now rubbed beyond recognition. (Although the crest is not identifiable, it is clearly not quartered and therefore cannot be the same crest as the one depicted on the next folio, to be discussed shortly.) The painter has given the figure black attire, which was the color reserved for the Burgundian dukes, as if indicating that the kneeling man belonged to that lineage. If the figure does in fact represent Godfrey, then the landscape may not only serve as a setting for Sebastian's shooting, but it may also represent the lands whose rents and benefits were granted to the parish church.⁹⁰

89 Dominique Vanwijnsberghe made this attribution. For the Master of Johannes Gielemans, see James Marrow's discussion of the moral and didactic treatises illuminated by this artist, now in the New York Public Library, Spencer 17, in Alexander et al. (2005), cat. 96, pp. 407–412.

90 According to his *vita*, Sebastian survived the shooting by arrows (ordered by Diocletian) and was martyred some time later after he stood up to Diocletian, who then had Sebastian clubbed to death. Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints / Jacobus de Voragine.*, Eamon Duffy (ed.), trans. William Granger Ryan (Princeton University Press, 2012), Chapter 23.

This second image again depicts St Sebastian being shot, but this time in a different setting. Here he appears above an altar in a church (fol. 2v, Fig. 60 as above). At the foot of the altar is a man wearing black, kneeling at a *prie-dieu*, with many men kneeling behind him, imitating his pose but smaller in size. On the altar are two tapers in elaborate holders, and a pile of silver coins, which may refer to members' entrance fees. Although here, too, sections of the image are so abraded that the faces and details are indistinct, one can see that the coat of arms is quartered, and its overall layout is consistent with that of Charles the Bold, which has blue fields in one and four and vertical subdivisions in two and three.⁹¹ The arms, together with the contextual clues in the text, and the fact that the figure is wearing black, balance the evidence in favor of his identity as Charles the Bold. Given the context, the image shows Charles the Bold visiting the chapel in Linkebeek with his entourage, apparently to convene the confraternity's inaugural assembly.

Members' names

Charles the Bold must have radiated charisma, because members of his court rushed to join the confraternity when he founded it in 1467. By appealing to St Sebastian, members tapped into both the saint's military and medicinal roles, and also paid homage to its ducal founder. St Sebastian promised protection for all the people under his jurisdiction from the most likely sources of death—war and disease. The manuscript lists the names of the hundreds of men and women who joined the confraternity upon its foundation and in the following decades and centuries.

The very first names (on fol. 2v) are those of the duke and his immediate family:

Charles le duc de Bourgne et Brabant, conte de flanders etc.

91 The arms of Charles the Bold (which appear in his portrait on a round panel, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, SK-A-3836) are as follows: quartered, 1 and 4, three gold fleurs-de-lis on a blue field; 2, divided vertically, i, three diagonal gold bands on a blue field, ii, a gold lion rampant on a black field; 3, divided vertically, i, three diagonal gold bands on a blue field, ii, a red lion rampant with gold claws on a silver field; an inescutcheon with a black lion rampant with red tongue and claws on a gold field. See <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/SK-A-3836/catalogue-entry>

Madame Isabaul sa mere etc

Madamoselle de bourgne sa fille etc

These names identify Charles the Bold (1433–1477) in gold script; Isabella of Bourbon (1436–1465) in blue; and their daughter Mary of Burgundy (1457–1482) in red. The gold script of the duke's name may be why the manuscript is known as the *Guldenboek*.⁹² These names set a terminus post quem and a terminus ante quem: the manuscript must have been begun between 15 June 1467, when Charles became duke, and 3 July 1468, when Charles married Margaret of York. In fact, however, Charles must have founded the confraternity in 1467, because in that year, many members of his entourage joined it, as is clear from the marginal notes, discussed below. The entries for Charles, Isabelle, and Mary appear to be written in the same Burgundian *bâtarde* as the rest of the original campaign of writing.

Their names head up the extensive list of members' names. Although the page has layer upon layer of scribal additions, with some analysis one can see that the first names written were on fol. 3r and began with these:

Monsieur de Chambray

Monsieur de Liège

Monsieur de Humbercourt

Monsieur de Fiennes

Monsieur Christian de Diguome

Monsieur Rehan de Luxembourg

Monsieur Marquis de Farare

Monsieur Anthoen de Luxembourg, Comte de Rossi

Monsieur Ian de La Viesville

Monsieur de Careny

Pierre de Beffremont, Comte de Charny

Monsieur de La Hameyde

92 Alternatively, the book may have originally been in a golden binding or one covered in gold-shot cloth, just as the "red books" discussed in Vol. 1 were originally in red bindings.

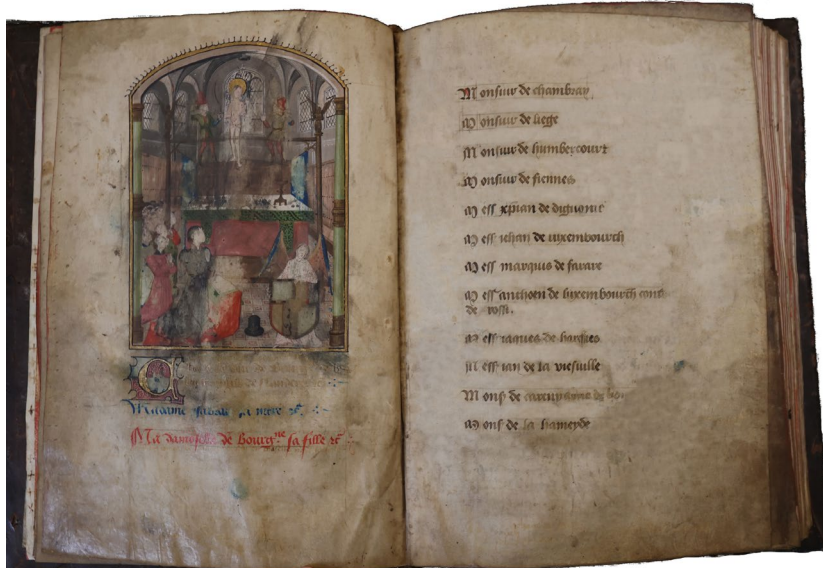


Fig. 64 Opening of the Linkebeek Guldenboek with an image depicting Charles the Bold before an altar dedicated to St Sebastian, Brussels, 1467 and later. Linkebeek, Parish Church, unnumbered manuscript, fols 2v–3r. Above: unprocessed photo; below: digitally masked photo to show only the original inscriptions from 1467

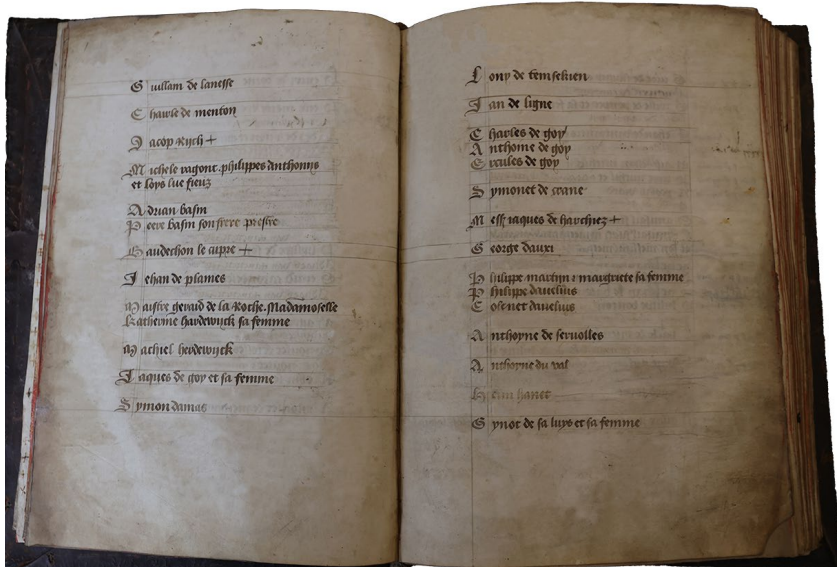
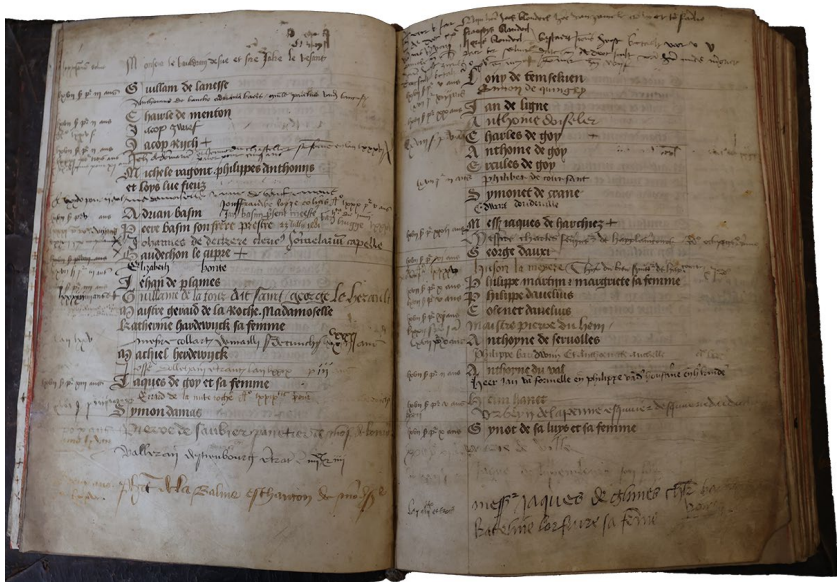


Fig. 65 Opening of the Linkebeek Guldenboek with members' names, Brussels, 1467 and later. Linkebeek, Parish Church, unnumbered manuscript, fols 4v–5r. Above: unprocessed photo; below: digitally masked photo to show only the original inscriptions from 1467

These are members of the ducal entourage, several with the rank of count. The scribe reflected their social standing by inscribing their names in a particular way, which is now obfuscated by later inscriptions made by many hands. A digital reconstruction of the opening when it was first inscribed in 1467 reveals that a single scribe has written their names in a precise *bâtarde*, leaving one blank line between each name, as if to underscore the real estate they controlled, on land and on parchment (Fig. 64). (In this reconstruction, no effort has been made to restore the image to its fresh state.) This sparse page layout exuded dignity and exclusivity.

This way of inscribing names, skipping a line between individuals or family groups, went on for several more folios (until fol. 6r), as a further digital reconstruction shows. (Fig. 65 shows an opening with members' names, and a digitally masked version of the same opening.) This way of inscribing members' names preserved the sparse dignity of the page, emphasizing large margins, luxurious in their wastefulness.⁹³ It suggested that members formed part of an exclusive club, whose foremost member was Charles the Bold.

After a few folios, the scribe abandoned this way of listing names and slid into a more compact method, without skipping a line between each. Reviewing the first opening with names again (fols 2v–3r), we can see that after the inaugural wave of inscriptions in 1467, more members of the ducal entourage joined the confraternity. Instead of having their names inscribed on the blank sheets at the end, they had their names squeezed into the front, in the spaces that had deliberately been left blank. These added names begin with *Monsieur Anthoine bâtard de Bourg, frère notre seigneur*, that is, Anthony, Grand Bastard of Burgundy (1421 - 5 May 1504), illegitimate son of Philip III and his mistress Jeanne de Presle. Because he was the half-brother of Charles the Bold, he is designated as "frère." The two boys grew up together then remained close. Anthony, a member of the duke's inner circle, sat for a portrait painted by Rogier van der Weyden wearing his insignia of the Order of the Golden Fleece. As friend, ally, and brother of the duke, Anthony's name was inscribed in the very first open space. He and the other confrères vied to be as

93 Catherine Reynolds, "The Undecorated Margin: The Fashion for Luxury Books without Borders," in *Flemish Manuscript Painting in Context*, Thomas Kren and Elizabeth Morrison (eds) J. Paul Getty Museum, 2006), pp. 9–26.

close to St Sebastian, Charles, Isabelle, and Mary as possible—similar to the way that the most important people would be buried in churches, as close to the saint’s relics as possible—as if proximity would work some sympathetic magic. Where one’s name touched the page reflected the person’s status.

This analysis shows that the initial scribe attempted to position the names of the duke’s entourage in a distinguished way, with plenty of space around them, but that the next wave of members sought to “jump the queue,” as it were, and gain a privileged position as close to the front as possible. It is unlikely that the original scribe himself took the initiative to fill in the blank lines, since he had deliberately left them blank as part of the page design. Instead, it is more likely that the new confrères would have cajoled a later scribe into placing their names close to Charles the Bold’s. This also implies that the new confrères would have seen the manuscript and witnessed their own names being added to it. Some also took this desire to be close to the duke to an extreme, by having their names added to the folio with the image of the kneeling duke, even turning the book sideways if necessary.

Annotations in the margin next to the names provide further clues about the nobles’ participation in this club. For example, next to the second original name at the top of fol. 3r, Monsieur de Liège, a note reads “lxvij stuivers pour xij ans,” which indicates that in 1467, he paid 12 years’ worth of dues. In the same year—that is, the year Charles the Bold founded the confraternity—Monsieur de Humbercourt and Monsieur de Fiennes each paid ten years’ worth of dues, Monsieur Christian de Diguome paid 11 years’ worth, Monsieur Rehan de Luxembourg paid some amount (but the annotation is too abraded to read), and Monsieur Marquis de Farare paid an impressive 21 years’ worth. In light of these inscriptions, the significance of the note opposite the first original name at the top of fol. 3r, Monsieur de Chambray, becomes clear: it reads “obijt,” indicating that he died before he could pay his dues.

Touching images

The patterns of wear on the two images, which provide some clues about how they were handled, suggest two scenarios. First, an officiant might have read the text aloud to gathered confrères on Sebastian’s

feast day and pointed out pictorial elements of the images to those gathered, thereby drawing the audience's attention in to the image. And second, we saw above that confrères expressed opinions about where their names should appear, which presumes that they had access to the book. It is possible that hundreds of confrères touched the manuscript. In fact, close observation reveals that it was touched in specific and targeted ways. I will treat the two images in turn.

In the first image (fol. 1r), user(s) touched specific areas of the image: Godfrey's face (signifying his identity), his coat of arms (signifying his nobility), and his book on the red pillow (signifying either his devotion or self-referring to this very manuscript); the naked torso of St Sebastian (who protected believers from the bubonic plague); the longbowman at the left (who holds the tool of the knight and soldier). In other words, users targeted symbols associated with divinity, authority, and knighthood. This shows users' interaction with both the depicted book and the actual book.

Some of this touching involved a wet finger. The effects are visible on the letter *M* that initiates the phrase "My noble lord duke Godfrey..." Moreover, the image of the book and the coat of arms have been touched with a wet finger. Someone with a finger-full of black paint has wiped at the lower border, suggesting one or more performances, in which someone made dramatic, mark-making gestures. Except for the wet-touched letter (which, I believe, resulted from a gesture associated with reading), it is difficult to say whether these marks were primarily caused by an official or by confrères. One can imagine that an official would read the text, with its official-sounding prose in Latin and Dutch, to a group of confrères during an annual celebration. One can also imagine that that same official would turn the book to the gathered audience to point out elements of the image, which left finger tracks behind, and that individual confrères would have asserted their status and sense of entitlement by making a mark in the book, in addition to their inscribed names. The conditions for this mark-making on the page therefore remain nebulous.

The second image (fol. 2v) likewise depicts the martyrdom of St Sebastian, but this time set in a church interior. A backlit photo of the second image reveals that this one, too, was heavily touched (Fig. 66).

These are the precise marks of targeted fingers, not the wider strokes of blur caused by entire hands. The handlers avoided some areas, which remain clean, namely the architectural frame and the duke's hat placed on the floor. It can be deduced that the book was not proffered head-first to new members for oath-taking, for there is no cumulative smearing at the top margins. Rather, individuals have used careful fingers to touch details in the image.

For this interior image, users have targeted the face of Charles the Bold, his entire body, his book, his coat of arms, the faces of the retinue, the body of St Sebastian, the altar below the saint, and the two blue altar cloths, which may have brandished coats of arms. But who touched these areas of the image? One heavily touched detail is telling: users have carefully, and nearly surgically, touched the faces of the duke's retinue. Although it is conceivable that an officiant would have done this, it is more likely that confrères themselves touched these faces, seeing themselves in the representations. If this hypothesis is correct, then the damage resulted from multiple acts of tactile self-identification. In this scenario, just as some members sought to have their names close to the duke's, others expressed this wish by touching the duke's representation, leading to its significant



Fig. 66 Folio of the Linkebeek Guldenboek with an image depicting Charles the Bold before an altar dedicated to St Sebastian, Brussels, 1467. Linkebeek, Parish Church, unnumbered manuscript, fol. 2v, photographed with transmitted light

damage. In the same vein, users have also touched the painted and gilt initial at Charles the Bold's name, to the point where 90% of the blue paint in the initial, and much of the gold on the burnished letters, has been rubbed off. It is as if the letters comprising the duke's name were apotropaic.

Whereas the first image depicted events from centuries earlier (Sebastian was executed around the start of the fourth century, and Godfrey was born in the eleventh), the second one represents the very recent past, with Charles the Bold venerating St Sebastian and founding the confraternity. Rather than taking place in a landscape, this time the martyrdom appears in a different ontological level: clumsily represented perching on an altarpiece above an altar. Of course, the miniature does not document the event with any mimetic exactitude, but it is tempting to wonder whether the duke, together with the founding members of the confraternity represented behind him, did perform a ceremony at the altar in the oratory at Linkebeek, which by that time had grown into a parish church, to establish the confraternity.

Although the exact nature of the membership ritual is not described in the text—only that members should have their fore- and family names inscribed in the book and pay a stuiver—one can imagine an event, possibly on St Sebastian's feast day, in which an official would read the confraternity's history, and then a scribe would add the names of new members into the book. If the image of the altar is any indication, then the ceremony occurred at the St Sebastian altar, and if the patterns of inscriptions and the marks of wear are any indication, then members would have had access to the manuscript and treated it with ceremonial physicality.

In the image, members of the brotherhood appear next to the altar as Charles the Bold founds the organization. The book's users have deliberately touched his represented entourage, perhaps because they stood for the new members. They also touched the coat of arms and the represented book and wanted to have their names squeezed as close as possible to the represented altar. They have filled in the blank lines that the first scribe left empty and have also added entries in the margins around the text page. They have even gone so far as to turn the book sideways to inscribe their names in the margin next to the

miniature. This situation is akin to nobles who wanted to be buried with the greatest possible proximity to the high altar and its relics. By making indelible marks in the book, members reinforced their bonds with the confraternity, its origin, and its revered symbols. This manuscript was anything but static, playing a central role in a club of elites who considered themselves worthy of handling a precious object roughly, and quite literally making their mark in history alongside some of the most famous names in the Burgundian realm. The ritual was a demonstration of entitlement.

III. St Sebastian at St Gorik's

Surveying the landscape of confraternity manuscripts, one observes a lack of uniformity in their contents. Remco Sleiderink brought attention to a distinctive manuscript in 2012, which he later placed in the City Archives of Brussels (now identified as "Private Archive 852").⁹⁴ The manuscript presents a wealth of historical data and provides insights into the social, artistic, and religious milieu of Brussels. It encapsulates the confraternity's rules, lists esteemed members such as painter Bernard van Orley, sculptor Jan Borreman, and the printer Thomas van der Noot. It also records an inventory of possessions spanning from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries.

The confraternity began as a society honoring St Sebastian, with a focus on archery contests, and which was affiliated with St Gorik's Church in Brussels (known as *Gaugericus* in Latin and *Gory* in French). After its foundation, part of the confraternity morphed into a rhetoricians' guild (*rederijerskamer*) called De Corenbloem (Cornflower, or Bluet).⁹⁵ As noted by Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, De Corenbloem was the only rhetoricians' guild that originated from a

94 Remco Sleiderink, "Sebastiaan en Swa. De zoektocht naar het cultureel erfgoed van de Brusselse handboogschutters," *Madoc: Tijdschrift over de Middeleeuwen*, 27 (2013), pp. 142–53.

95 Remco Sleiderink, "De schandaleuze spelen van 1559 en de leden van De Corenbloem. Het socioprofessionele, literaire en religieuze profiel van de Brusselse rederijerskamer," *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire / Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis*, 92 (2014), pp. 847–875.

shooting club.⁹⁶ Their manuscript lists regular members, organized alphabetically. Around 1515, someone appended a list of members of De Corenbloem to the end of the manuscript. (All of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century texts in the manuscript are transcribed and translated below in Appendix 5).

The St Gorik manuscript begins with a page-wide miniature, painted by the Master of Gerard Brilis, which introduces the text chronicling the confraternity's foundation and regulations (Fig. 67).⁹⁷ The confraternity at St Gorik's was founded in 1468, just a year after Linkebeek's foundation. This manuscript aligns closely with those from Linkebeek and Valenciennes, both thematically and chronologically, as all three portray early group portraits and are dedicated to particular saints. Like the Linkebeek manuscript, it depicts St Sebastian in an interior, flanked by two rows of priests, men, and women, symbolizing the confraternity members. Despite the absence of an oath for members within the manuscript, it is clear that the confraternity's identity was expressed through other significant means, with the artists and craftsmen listed among its members playing a pivotal role in its cultural and social fabric.

All three confraternities, including St Gorik's, financed regular Masses, with St Gorik's conducting services every Tuesday at the altar dedicated to St Sebastian. They also had structured systems for collecting membership fees. The row of priests recalls the description from Valenciennes, emphasizing clergy, purses, and money. In the St Gorik image, a prominent purse hangs from the belt of the figure wearing red. The collective figures represent members of the confraternity and form a

96 Anne-Laure van Bruaene, *Om beters wille: Rederijkerskamers en de stedelijke cultuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (1400–1650)* (Amsterdam University Press, 2008), p. 47. Jean-Dominique Delle Luche, in *Des amitiés ciblées: Concours de tir et diplomatie urbaine dans le Saint-Empire, XVe–XVIe siècle*. Studies in European Urban History (Brepols, 2021), analyzes urban shooting contests in the fifteenth and sixteenth-centuries. Competitive shooting began in the 1430s and continues today. Delle Luchedescribes them as friendship clubs and “laboratories of masculinity.” He does not discuss the manuscript from St Gorik's.

97 Hanno Wijsman and Dominique van Wijnsberghe have made this attribution. For this artist, see James H. Marrow, “The Master of Gerard Brilis,” in *Quand la Peinture Était dans les Livres: Mélanges en l'Honneur de François Avril*, Mara Hofmann and Caroline Zöhl (eds) (Brepols, 2007), pp. 168–191.



Fig. 67 Folio in the members' book from the Confraternity of St Gorik's Church in Brussels, with an image painted by the Master of Gerard Brilis, depicting the members of the confraternity. Brussels, 1468. City Archives of Brussels, Privéarchief 852, fol. 13r. Photo: Remco Sleiderink

corporate portrait. Their identity is coded in their garments.⁹⁸ The act of touching the image of St Sebastian might have been a ritualistic gesture, symbolizing veneration and commitment to the confraternity. This act reinforced the collective identity of the group and the individual's connection to the patron saint.

The manuscript contains detailed rules and statutes governing the brotherhood's functions, such as their annual dinner before St Sebastian's feast day and the structured payment of membership dues. It specifies the nature of Masses to be conducted for members and outlines the financial support available to members' families upon their death, essentially acting as an early form of insurance. The document also instructs members on how to gain an indulgence at the altar of St Sebastian.

At the manuscript's conclusion, like the Linkebeek manuscript, there is a list of members' names, categorized into individual men, couples, and separate lists for widows and single women. This list includes prominent individuals like the painter Bernard van Orley and tapestry weaver Lyoen de Smet. These names not only represent the confraternity's membership but also highlight the social standing and the high esteem of crafts and trades within the broader context of Brussels society in the decades flanking 1500.

To gain a sense of the confraternity as a social club for shooting, one could consider the representation on a calendar page of the Croy Hours, made in the Southern Netherlands, which shows a shooting club having a match (Fig. 68).⁹⁹ Participants take aim at a stuffed bird on a pole as a form of competitive theater. They also signal their group belonging by dressing alike (such as the confraternity members of Valenciennes). Male members of St Gorik's confraternity did more than feed the poor,

98 The illumination can therefore be seen in relation to certain Netherlandish panel paintings with similar themes, for which see Ingrid Falque, "Visualising Cohesion, Identity and Piety: Altarpieces of Guilds and Brotherhoods in Early Netherlandish Painting (1400–1550)," in *Material Culture: Präsenz und Sichtbarkeit von Künstlern, Zünften und Bruderschaften in der Vormoderne. Presence and Visibility of Artists, Guilds and Brotherhoods in the Pre-Modern Era*, Andreas Tacke, Birgit Ulrike Münch, and Wolfgang Augustyn (eds) (*Artifex. Quellen und Studien zur Künstlersozialgeschichte / Sources and Studies in the Social History of the Artist*) (Michael Imhof Verlag, 2018), pp. 190–209.

99 Otto Mazal and Dagmar Thoss, *Das Buch der Drollerien: (Croy Gebetbuch); Fabelhafte Welt in Miniaturen* (Faksimile Verlag, 1993).

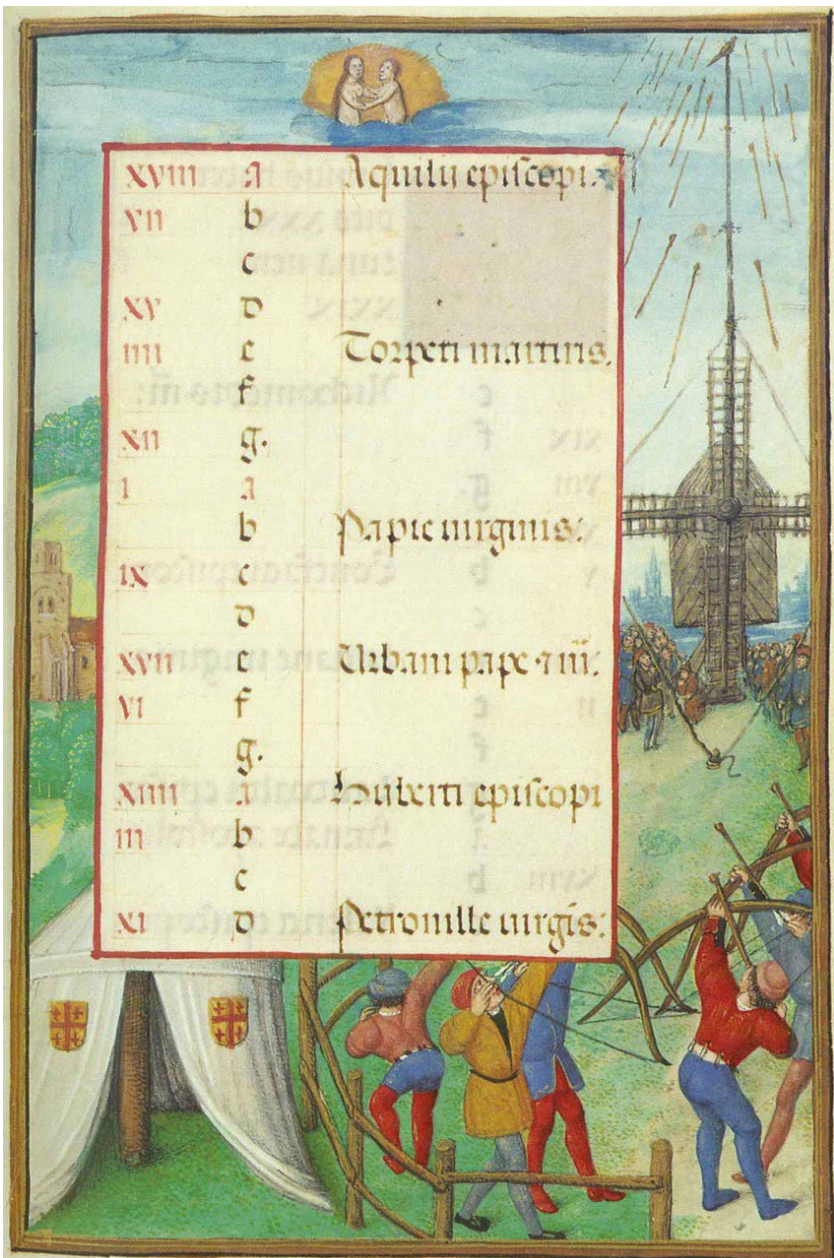


Fig. 68 Calendar page in the Croy Hours, with a shooting contest in the margin, ca. 1500–1520, Southern Netherlands. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 1858

pay for Masses, and hold banquets: they also engaged in ceremonious social activities around military play and demonstrations of masculinity.

Coda

Signs of wear in manuscripts for confraternities reveal different and specific micro-cultures for individual groups, yet they share common functions. Some confraternity manuscripts have a strong memorial function, since their *raison d'être* was to ensure prayers for deceased members' souls, and the inscribed names within them—which then become part of the text—share characteristics with necrologies. The ritualistic significance of having one's name recorded in such books was particularly pronounced in the Linkebeek and St Gorik's confraternities.

Linkebeek had a clear connection with the court, St Gorik's with patrician families, and Valenciennes with men wealthy enough to afford seven ceremonial outfits. Linkebeek and Valenciennes were written in *bâtarde* script, associated with the French and Burgundian courts. Linkebeek and St Gorik's, which featured registers of members' names within their respective manuscripts, included both men and women, in contrast to Valenciennes, which welcomed only men. St Gorik's emphasized support for widows, the elderly, and charitable acts. Valenciennes, which focused on the procession of relics, was also characterized by its numerous rules regarding attire and the maintenance of standard colors.

The following chart presents a summary of the three manuscripts' contrasting features:

Feature	St Gorik's, Brussels	Linkebeek, Brussels	Valenciennes
Establishment Details	1468 by Jan de Costere and Joes Verleys	1467 by Charles the Bold in	Confraternity founded in 1423
Main Aim	Praise St Sebastian, charity	Praise St Sebastian, protector against ailments	Care for the reliquary of St Nicholas in Valenciennes

Feature	St Gorik's, Brussels	Linkebeek, Brussels	Valenciennes
Major Rituals & Practices	Tuesday Mass for St Sebastian	Three sung Masses per week: for Our Lady, St Sebastian, and a requiem for all souls	Regular Masses, including special services for deceased members
How do confrères pray for deceased members?	Grand funeral on the Monday after the annual meal	Requiem every Monday for deceased members of the brotherhood and its benefactors	Prayers during eight major liturgical feasts, including Christmas and Easter, and on the day of a brother's death
Membership Fees & Financial Aspects	Entry fees, annual dues, exit fees, etc.	One stuiver to be enrolled into the brotherhood	Entry fee of 12 deniers
Leadership & Roles	Initial Provosts: Heinrick Heenkenshoet, Jan van der Nat, Ghijsbrecht van Schoeneycke	Special Masses led by the bishop of Cambrai	Provosts, supported by four deacons, and a treasurer
Special Events & Days	Saint Sebastian's Day (20th January) and its second feast day	Regular devotion in honor of Saint Sebastian and notable events related to Duke Charles and his family	The dedication day of St Nicholas' Church
Members & Professions	Examples: Anthonijs Mathijs (tile layer), Jan Borreman (sculptor), Kerstiaen de Visscher (leatherworker)	Members from the Duke's bloodline and those devoted to St Sebastian	Clergy and wealthy men

Feature	St Gorik's, Brussels	Linkebeek, Brussels	Valenciennes
Properties & Rental Obligations	Various properties in Brussels with specific rental details	Church and ecclesiastical properties in Linkebeek, including houses, farms, fields, forests, land, duties, and rents	Not specified

Of course, these three confraternities, which all had books at their respective centers, represent but a fraction of the confraternities that existed throughout Europe. Contrasting them reveals some of the diversity among their purposes, reflected in diverse patterns of use across their respective manuscripts.

Images in both the Linkebeek and St Gorik manuscripts depict groups of people flanking a saint—in both cases, Sebastian. In each of these manuscripts, images had a role in creating group identity: members physically interacted with the images in ways that reinforced their social cohesion. New members adopted certain visible gestures with the book that would seal their identities as confrères. The role of the book expanded: it was both prescriptive and descriptive, and it formed an object around which group identity could be established with authority. These rituals were performed for members and their new peers and helped to forge horizontal bonds.

Several trends have emerged from these investigations. First, the pattern of wear in a communally used manuscript is diffuse when multiple people each touch the book (or an image within the book) one time. Second, that groups of people imitate their forerunners by touching in approximately the same place and manner. This is related to conscious conformity that smooths social bonding. Third, that rituals of joining groups involve making large, visible gestures that firmly assert one's fealty to a saint and a group which that saint represents. A fourth trend relates to constructing invented traditions. To do this, a group might emphasize its backstory (as in the case of Linkebeek), or build a ritual around an old manuscript (as in

the case of the Chapter of St John writing oaths into a 200-year-old manuscript, as discussed in the previous chapter). One of the most striking examples of this tactic occurred in twentieth-century Chicago, when gangsters purportedly took oaths on a ninth- or tenth-century lectionary written in Greek. The “Gangster’s Lectionary” is now in the University of Chicago Library.¹⁰⁰ The use of a ceremonial, millennium-old book written in a language from “old Europe” underscored the gravity of the mobsters’ “blood oath,” their deference to religion, family, and tradition, and the life-or-death strength of their bond to the mob boss.

100 I thank Irene van Renswoude for bringing this manuscript to my attention. James Snapp writes about the “Gangster’s Lectionary” on his blog (<https://www.thetextofthegospels.com/2022/03/the-gangsters-bible-lectionary-1599.html>). The manuscript is digitized here <https://goodspeed.lib.uchicago.edu/view/index.php?doc=0128&obj=008#?c=&m=&s=&cv=&xywh=-2131%2C0%2C10409%2C8149>. In a recorded interview, former mob boss Michael Franzese describes the gravity of the oath: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjwnDF2dRgI>



Fig. 69 Opening in a Book of Hours illuminated by the Masters of the Gold Scrolls, depicting Jesus teaching the Apostles to pray. Ghent or Bruges, ca. 1460. LBL, Add. Ms 39638, fols 34v–35

Chapter 3: Educators and Learners

An image made for a private prayer book constructed for a family in the Southern Netherlands around 1460 shows Christ teaching the apostles how to pray (Fig. 69). The apostles gather around Jesus, whom they see as a teacher and leader. He presents a book that serves as both his source of authority and his prop. He turns the book to his audience and draws them into it. Positioned at the center of the painting, the open book mediates between teacher and students. The book's size ensures that the students cluster around it, forming a tight social circle of learning.

Over the past century, manuscript scholars have investigated the intricacies of copying, by which they usually mean tracing an artist's pictorial models or investigating how an artist translates visual models from one context to another. Some of these studies have brilliantly explicated aspects of the working processes of medieval illuminators.¹⁰¹ They have all concentrated on the production of manuscript copying, whereas I aim to steer the conversation to its reception. How did medieval people learn to handle their books and emulate others' behaviors? This shift in focus underlines the importance of understanding the lived experiences of medieval readers.

101 J. J. G. (Jonathan James Graham) Alexander, "Facsimiles, Copies, and Variations: The Relationship to the Model in Medieval and Renaissance European Illuminated Manuscripts," *Studies in the History of Art*, 20 (1989), pp. 61–72; *idem*, *Medieval Illuminators and Their Methods of Work* (Yale University Press, 1992); Ilya Dines, "The Copying and Imitation of Images in Medieval Bestiaries," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 167(1) (September 1, 2014), pp. 70–82. <https://doi.org/10.1179/0068128814Z.00000000026>; Vibeke Olson, "The Significance of Sameness: An Overview of Standardization and Imitation in Medieval Art," *Visual Resources*, 20(2–3) (March 1, 2004), pp. 161–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0197376042000207543>



Fig. 70 Beatus page and opening of the Psalter text in the Psalter of St Louis. Paris, ca. 1220. Leiden, UL, BPL 76A, fol. 30v–31r

In learning contexts, whether for young students or adults, a master would often engage with learners through a performative demonstration using a book. In this study I do not analyze scholars' manuscripts, in which learned readers left notes for themselves and for future readers in the margins as glosses or commentary, in what is in effect asynchronous learning. Others have thoroughly covered that topic.¹⁰² Instead I will consider learning situations structured as live performances around a book: young children learning to read, older children learning tenets of the faith, and a duke learning his catechism. These situations transferred book-touching behaviors from educator to student.

Before ca. 1400, the Psalter served as the predominant educational tool for children. For example, the childhood Psalter of Louis IX

¹⁰² Irene O'Daly, Irene van Renswoude, and Mariken Teeuwen conducted a project at the Huygens Institute in Amsterdam from 2016–2020, which resulted in a thoughtful website, “The Art of Reasoning in Medieval Manuscripts,” a valuable resource on medieval didactic manuscripts, with examples and many further references: <https://art-of-reasoning.huygens.knaw.nl/about.html>. See also the essays in Mariken Teeuwen and Irene van Renswoude (eds), *The Annotated Book in the Early Middle Ages: Practices of Reading and Writing*, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy, 38 (Brepols, 2018).



Fig. 71 Manuscript opening with the murder of Abel by Cain, and Noah's ark in the Psalter of St Louis. Paris, ca. 1220. Leiden, UL, Ms. BPL 76A, fols 10v–11r



Fig. 72 Manuscript opening with the Last Supper, Baptism, and Temptation of Christ in the Psalter of St Louis. Paris, ca. 1220. Leiden, UL, Ms. BPL 76A, fols 20v–21r

(1214–1270), preserved in Leiden, has an inscription at the foot of the *Beatus* page indicating its use in teaching Louis to read (Fig. 70).¹⁰³ The Psalter opens with a calendar and a series of full-page miniatures, each bisected into two registers, showing the major stories from the Old and New Testaments. These include an opening with stories featuring Cain and Abel on the left, and stories of Noah on the right (a raven returning to the ark, and Noah's death at the age of 950 years, surrounded by his three sons) (Fig. 71). The extensive and colorful picture cycle would have appealed to the young boy and would have contributed to his education as king and eventually saint. The pictures are still in quite good condition, except for the image depicting devils tempting Jesus in the desert (Fig. 72), on which a user has rubbed out the devils, particularly targeting their heads. It is possible that Louis's teacher gestured angrily at these devils to offer a moral component to the recounting of the story. The tangible interactions with this psalter offer a glimpse into the emotional and instructional practices of medieval learning.

While Louis's Psalter is precious, gilded, exclusive, and based on an adult book type, in the later Middle Ages the possibilities of manuscript types for children expanded as people realized that colorful images and easier texts served as effective entrées into the world of letters. Better pedagogy created a virtuous circle with increased literacy, where the two spiraled upward in tandem. They were but two of many forces that helped to create a new wave of readers who, in the 1450s, would demand the printing press to feed their bookish needs.

Manuscripts crafted or adapted for children often incorporated alphabets, accessible texts, and captivating imagery—either portraying children in learning situations or featuring elements appealing to a young audience (with bright colors, shapes, animals).¹⁰⁴ Learning to read involved shaping a child's body in the presence of a book and adopting certain didactic gestures—such as crossing oneself before reciting the alphabet. One children's manuscript has a full-page miniature showing girls holding out their books to read aloud to a teacher (London, BL,

103 Leiden, University Library, BPL 76A <https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl/view/item/1611724>

104 Kathryn M. Rudy, "An Illustrated Mid-Fifteenth-Century Primer for a Flemish Girl: British Library, Harley Ms 3828," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 69 (2006), pp. 51–94.

Harley 3828; Fig. 73). This image is all about reading aloud with an



Fig. 73 Opening in a prayer book with a full-page miniature painted by the Masters of the Gold Scrolls depicting girls learning to read, with an alphabet on the facing folio. Ghent or Bruges, *ca.* 1445. LBL, Harley Ms 3828, fols 27v–28r

audience, but the roles are reversed: usually, the seated authority would wield the book and read aloud, but here the kneeling underlings do the reading, while the “audience” is seated, older, and authoritative. Although this image shows a fiction, both the image and the manuscript containing it (which has an alphabet and easy-to-read, highly illustrated texts) suggest that elite children possessed manuscripts made specifically for their needs, and that learning involved a set of codified gestures.

Examining the wear patterns of Harley 3828 reveals certain interactions between its young users and the content. The opening is in general well-worn and grubby (with inadvertent wear). It also brandishes damage from targeted wear. Specifically, several areas of the image have been touched with a wet finger, most notably, the green dress of the first kneeling girl. The kneeling figure in blue has also been touched; did the book’s user consider this to represent the teacher again, this time in the guise of a patient, encouraging helper? One can imagine that the young female owner would have read the book together with her teacher (or



Fig. 74 Jesus instructing the doctors of the temple. Painting on panel, *ca.* 1480.
 Siebenbürger Church, Biertan, Transylvania.

mother), and that the instructor would have shown her young charge how to “look at” the pictures by touching them, while identifying the various figures, especially the “student” and the “teacher.” Another area of the opening that may have been touched with a wet finger is the cross that initiates the alphabet, as well as the capital letters. The blue paint, which does not adhere well, has been reconstituted and has stuck to the opposite side of the opening, thereby dappling the background of the miniature with blue. Perhaps the teacher also taught the student to wet-touch the cross, and then to follow the alphabet with her fingers.

Other gestures associated with learning include holding books open and pointing to specific passages within them. This is what is happening in a panel painting showing the twelve-year-old Jesus instructing the

doctors of the temple, which was made in 1482 for a church in Biertan, Transylvania (Fig. 74).¹⁰⁵ Jesus, elevated in the position of enthroned teacher makes points by gesturing with his fingers. At the upper left, the doctors of temple point to a passage in the open book, as if to acknowledge their conversion. At the upper right, the crowned doctor holds his open, brandished book over his head. This gesture recalls one described by William Durand, in which a Gospel manuscript is raised above the head of a newly installed bishop to demonstrate that the bishop is under the jurisdiction of the holy writ. In the painting, too, the temple doctor marks his conversion to Christianity by demonstrating his subordinate position to the book. Only the figure at the bottom of the frame, occupying a position as if at the bottom of Fortuna's wheel, has yet to be convinced, and he therefore tears violently at the pages of his book. The thesis of the painting seems to be that how the figures handle their books communicates their moral and intellectual level. Touching open books, pointing at specific items within them, gesturing with them in an animated way—all of these gestures belong to a social culture mediated by books.

While early learners might primarily be children, some people continued learning with the aid of a book and a teacher throughout their lives. The lessons became more difficult, the sentences more complex, and the relationship between teacher and student shifted. This chapter explores the reading environment of several manuscripts, each brandishing signs of wear that may have been inflicted during didactic exchanges with a teacher interacting with a student in the presence of a book.

I. Teaching children how to read with manuscripts

What kinds of books stood at the center of micro-learning environments of the late Middle Ages? We have seen that Louis IX received a manuscript prefaced by a series of large miniatures devoid of text in order to introduce him to visualized accounts of basic Bible stories.

¹⁰⁵ The date is inscribed within the book that the crowned figure holds above his head. For this painting in its Transylvanian context, see Harald Krasser, "Zur siebenbürgischen Nachfolge des Schottenmeisters. Die Birthälmer Altartafeln," *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege*, Vol. 27 (1973), pp. 109–121.

Other kinds of books contain so-called picture Bibles as prefatory cycles and may have been shown to children as a step toward teaching them to read and write. One manuscript that contains signs that it has been used this way is MJRUL, Ms. French 5, a thin volume made in France or in Francophone England in the first half of the thirteenth century, whose 48 extant folios contain nothing but full-page pictures drawn from the Old Testament. The series opens with God creating the world (Fig. 75).¹⁰⁶ Some of the folios have gone missing, which attests to its hard use: the images were of such interest that someone dismembered the book to isolate and own some of them, which is a strong testament to their enthusiastic reception. In this section, I consider this manuscript's content and potential use.

A shiny, colorful world

Scholars have had difficulty categorizing these and related autonomous booklets of images, with the two most frequent categories for these items being either "historiated Bible" or "preface to a now-missing Psalter."¹⁰⁷ These categories reflect the cataloguer's urge to file manuscripts into existing categories, and to emphasize the primacy of text (rather than images) as a manuscript's defining feature. In fact, that primacy is already coded in the word "manuscript" itself, which after all means

106 I first presented the ideas in this section at a lecture I gave at the John Rylands Library in Manchester on 20 October 2016. This was followed by a manuscript handling session I led with MJRUL, Ms. French 5, in which I hypothesized its function as a didactic aid for teaching children in light of its traces of use. As I go to press, a new article about this manuscript has appeared; it proffers ideas close to those I presented in 2016, although the author was apparently unaware of my lecture: Molly Lewis, "Sinful, Sexual, Sacred: Locating a Thirteenth-Century Visuality through the Selective Erasures in Rylands MS French 5," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 99.2 (2023): 1–24. <<https://doi.org/10.7227/BJRL.99.2.1>> (published on the Web 14 Jan. 2024). Previously, two studies concentrated on this manuscript: Caroline S. Hull, "Rylands Ms French 5: The Form and Function of a Medieval Bible Picture Book," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 77(2) (1995), pp. 3–24; Robert Fawtier, *La Bible Historiée toute Figurée de la John Rylands Library* (Pour les Trustees et gouverneurs de la John Rylands library, 1924).

107 As was typical with twentieth-century scholarship, Fawtier 1924 is concerned with questions of style and production, but not of use or reception; however, following M. Delisle, he does ask whether the booklet of images once formed part of a Psalter or a Bible (pp. 33ff).



Fig. 75 Full-page miniature depicting God creating the world. France or England, ca. 1200–1250. MJRUL, Ms. French 5, fol. 1v

“hand-written.” But rethinking such picture cycles as stand-alone booklets opens up new possibilities for their use.¹⁰⁸ Namely, they form part of an oral rather than a written culture, one that is marked by an interlocutor who explains the images.

108 Martin Kauffmann, “Seeing and Reading the Matthew Paris Saints’ Lives,” in *Illuminating the Middle Ages: Tributes to Prof. John Lowden from His Students, Friends and Colleagues*, Laura Cleaver, Alixe Bovey and Lucy Donkin (eds) (Brill, 2019), analyzes a related case, with inscriptions on image cycles that resemble “school exercises.”



Fig. 76 Full-page miniature depicting Noah's Ark. France or England, ca. 1200–1250. MJRUL, Ms. French 5, fol. 14r

One can imagine that in French 5 the images have been selected for maximum appeal to children—with large figures, colorful elements, gilt backgrounds. Noah's Ark, a perennial children's favorite, has been laid out according to simple principles and divisions: the fish at the bottom denote water and thereby set the stage (Fig. 76). The ark is divided into four chambers, which would lend themselves to a discussion with the child about the behavior of herbivores and carnivores. The figures on deck are shown pious and praying, and finally the dove is neatly silhouetted against the canopy as it returns to the ark with an



Fig. 77 Full-page miniature depicting Cain and Abel making their offerings.
France or England, ca. 1200–1250. MJRUL, Ms. French 5, fol. 8r

olive branch. The images in MJRUL French 5 are not dissimilar from the prefatory cycle in the Psalter of St Louis, which also contains an image of Noah's Ark. The Psalter of St Louis provides evidence that dense, Biblical picture cycles were given to children to introduce them to books and stories. It is reasonable to assume that the picture cycles were made in a separate atelier than the textual parts of the manuscript, and that the image cycle could have functionality outside of a text-oriented environment. It was perhaps a child who added small drawings to the



Fig. 78 Full-page miniature depicting Cain killing his brother. France or England, ca. 1200–1250. MJRUL, Ms. French 5, fol. 9v

lateral margins, which seem to depict the dove returning with the olive branch, in an unrefined and highly stylized way.¹⁰⁹

The individual images have small, simple labels written on them, which describe the scenes.¹¹⁰ These are not instructions to the illuminator,

109 On identifying children's drawings in medieval manuscripts, see Deborah Ellen Thorpe, "Young Hands, Old Books: Drawings by Children in a Fourteenth-Century Manuscript, LJS MS. 361," Peter Stanley Fosl (ed.), *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 3(1) (December 31, 2016), 1196864. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2016.1196864>

110 Fawtier, *La Bible Historiée*, pp. 3–6, transcribes the *tituli* in the context of his thorough description of the manuscript.



Fig. 79 Full-page miniature depicting Moses killing the Egyptians and sparing the Israelites. France or England, ca. 1200–1250. MJRUL, Ms. French 5, fol. 47v

but didactic labels designed to remind the teacher to explain the stories, to teach children to read simple sentences that match the colorful pictures they are looking at. These *tituli* would be unnecessary in a book for an adult already steeped in Biblical knowledge. They are consistent with the use of the book as a mediator between teacher and student, whereby the teacher uses the book together with the student, in order to identify its narrative.

Signs of wear in the book indicate its use as a didactic and moralizing aid. Specifically, ways in which the figures have been rubbed might have

stemmed from demonstrating a moral stance toward them. For example, charged lessons have left their marks in the stories of Cain (a farmer) and Abel (a shepherd) offering their produce (Fig. 77), and then Cain killing his brother (Fig. 78). Plausibly, the teacher enacted the stories by animating the images, conveying the narrative action through physical action. In the first image, God favors Abel's sacrifice, a lamb. The user has rubbed the face of Abel, the face of the angel, and the space between the two (where the gold leaf is abraded down to the red-colored glue), as if drawing and redrawing the connection between Abel and God's heavenly messenger. In the murder scene, the teacher has rubbed out



Fig. 80 Full-page miniature depicting Lot and his family fleeing Sodom. France or England, ca. 1200–1250. MJRUL, Ms. French 5, fol. 20r

the face of Cain and has even pitted Cain's eyes out until they are dark blanks bored into the parchment surface.

In the scene where Moses kills the Egyptians and spares the Israelites, the teacher has heavily touched various elements in the picture (Fig. 79). The Egyptian is pulling the Israelite's hair, and the teacher/reader has noted this gesture by touching the hair-pulling hand and smearing the black ink. With even more gusto, the reader/teacher has participated in plunging the lance through the Egyptian's gut by fingering the bleeding wound at the center of the image. As if to negate this figure after the murder, the reader/teacher has rubbed out the Egyptian's face, indicating his death. Finally, one can imagine that the teacher—explaining that Moses was also disobedient for committing murder—rubbed the face of Moses too, as if to punish him.



Fig. 81 Lot and his family fleeing Sodom, from the Vienna Genesis. Syria, sixth century. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Theol. gr. 31, fol. 5r

The miniature on folio 20r depicts Lot and his family fleeing Sodom, and his wife turning into a pillar of salt (Fig. 80). When she was turned into a pillar, apparently her clothes fell off her, as her discarded dress lies in a heap at her feet, as if in a swoon. Her pale body against the burnished background became the pictorial element that commanded viewers' attention: her figure has been rubbed along the entire torso, but the act does not seem to have been motivated by iconoclasm or, more specifically, in order to punish Lot's wife, as her face has not been attacked. Rather, someone has wet-touched up and down her torso, as if trying to taste the salt. Again, this way of interacting with this subject



Fig. 82 Full-page miniature depicting the Drunkenness of Noah. France or England, ca. 1200–1250. MJRUL, Ms. French 5, fol. 15v

may have been longstanding and widespread. In the Vienna Genesis, written and painted in the sixth century, the image of the same subject has been rubbed in an analogous way—with a wet finger, as if trying to taste the veracity of the story (Fig. 81).

A different motivation, but just as telling, appears at the story of the Drunkenness of Noah in MJRUL French 5: someone (the teacher?) has rubbed out the drunken father's genitals, as if to ensure that the young reader would not gaze at them as the depicted figures are furtively doing (Fig. 82). All these features—the large images, the short descriptive *tituli*, the targeted handling—point to a scenario in which this manuscript formed the focus for a series of early childhood reading lessons. Other picture books of the same ilk bear similar marks of use, which suggests a widespread use of books as mediators between teachers and learners.

A similar scene was rubbed in a twelfth-century Bible from the Northern French Abbey of Saint-Sauveur d'Anchin (Douai, BM, Ms. 2), suggesting that images in different types of manuscripts were also used to mediate between a learner and a teacher. The page-high letter I (*In principio*) in the Bible contains vignettes from the Old Testament,



Fig. 83 Incipit of Genesis (*In principio*), with scenes from the Old Testament, in a Bible. Northern France, twelfth century. Douai, Bibliothèque Marceline Desbordes-Valmore, formerly the Bibliothèque municipale, Ms. 2, fol. 7r, and detail

with Cain and Abel making their offerings, and then Cain killing Abel (Fig. 83).¹¹¹ With repeated targeted attacks, a user has rubbed out Cain's face, making it smeary and indistinct. Although the exact conditions under which this damage took place are unknowable, the possibility exists that this illumination served as the locus of a moral lesson between a teacher and a student.

111 For images, see <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?reproductionId=10679>.
For an updated bibliography, see <https://portail.bibliissima.fr/en/ark:/43093/mdata24fa2b3214b6ef030e91bcef23cb1eb05eea3244>

Learning to read with the fingers

In the fifteenth century, scribes and illuminators increasingly produced books for children. Following precedent in manuscripts such as the Psalter of Louix IX and MJRUL Ms. French 5, child-centered books offered young readers dazzling cycles of full-page illuminations, where the only text was that added by the teacher. One example, the Bolton/Blackburn Hours (York Minster Add. Ms. 2), made in York in the second decade



Fig. 84 Opening in the Bolton/Blackburn Hours, with the Arrest of Christ, and St Anne teaching Mary to read. York, ca. 1415. York Minster Library, Add. Ms. 2, fols 34v-35r

of the fifteenth century, contains an extensive picture cycle (Fig. 84). Although the manuscript has now been rebound and re-organized, the picture cycle formerly prefaced a graded children's reader and comprised a separate volume.¹¹² Other image-rich manuscripts, which

112 Kathryn M. Rudy, "The Bolton/Blackburn Hours (York Minster Add. Ms. 2): A New Solution to its Text-Image Disjunctions using a Structural Model," *Tributes to Paul Binski. Medieval Gothic: Art, Architecture & Ideas*, ed. Julian Luxford (Brepols, 2021), pp 272-285. On fol. 35r, reproduced here, the teacher was wrong: the image does not represent "the meeting and mourning of the Maries," but rather shows St Anne teaching Mary and two other nimbed girls to read.



Fig. 85 Opening in a prayer book, with a nurse rocking the infant Mary. Paris, ca. 1400–1410. HKB, Ms. 76 F 21, fols 12v–13r

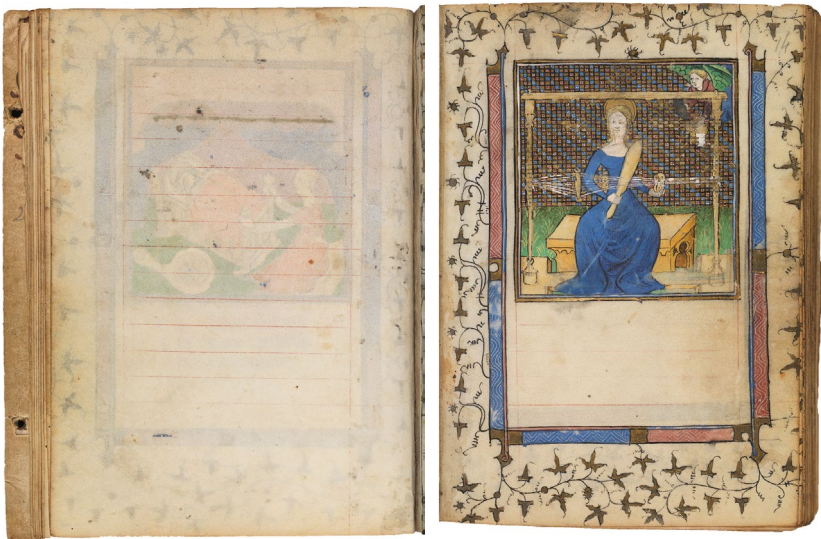


Fig. 86 Opening in a prayer book, with the Virgin weaving. Paris, ca. 1400–1410. HKB, Ms. 76 F 21, fols 13v–14r



Fig. 87 Opening in a prayer book, with a nurse bathing Mary as a child. Paris, *ca.* 1400–1410. HKB, Ms. 76 F 21, fols 14v-15r



Fig. 88 Opening in a prayer book, with St Anne teaching Mary to read. Paris, *ca.* 1400–1410. HKB, Ms. 76 F 21, fols 15v-16r



Fig. 89 Opening in a prayer book, with an angel teaching Mary to read. Paris, *ca.* 1400–1410. HKB, Ms. 76 F 21, fols 16v-17r

have been hiding in plain sight, indicate that they, too were in fact made for children.

One example, examined here in depth, is a Book of Hours made for the Use of Paris, made in the first decade of the fifteenth century (HKB, Ms. 76 F 21).¹¹³ This manuscript has some unusual features, which suggest that it was made for teaching a child. Roger Wieck and Kathryn Smith have discussed the programs of texts and images, incorporated into Books of Hours, that were developed for teaching children to read.¹¹⁴ These include the alphabet, *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria*, *Credo*, and the “grace before meals.” HKB, Ms. 76 F 21 lacks most of these features and stands apart from other manuscripts made for children, yet other features, including the ways in which it has been handled, convince me that it

113 Anne S. Korteweg et al., *Splendour, Gravity & Emotion: French Medieval Manuscripts in Dutch Collections* (Waanders, 2004), p. 175.

114 For children’s manuscripts, see Roger S. Wieck, “Special Children’s Books of Hours in the Walters Art Museum,” in *Als Ich Can: Liber Amicorum in Memory of Professor Dr. Maurits Smeyers*, Bert Cardon et al. (eds) (*Corpus of Illuminated Manuscripts = Corpus van Verluchte Handschriften*) (Peeters, 2002), pp. 1629–39; and Kathryn A. Smith, “The Neville of Hornby Hours and the Design of Literate Devotion,” *The Art Bulletin*, 81(1) (1999), pp. 72–92. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3051287>

too was used to instruct and engage children. In fact, manuscripts made for children were few and far between, and it is difficult to say that they conform to a particular mold.

HKB, Ms. 76 F 21 has a lively program of illumination with several images that emphasize children and learning. It opens with a cycle of illuminations depicting the infancy of the Virgin. In one of them, a nurse rocks the nimbed child in a cozy cradle next to a brazier (Fig. 85). The illuminator has conveyed its warmth by showing flames licking upward. In the next one, with a thin waist and careful upright posture, the young Mary learns to weave on a band loom under the instruction of an angel (Fig. 86). In the third, the nurse gives the young Mary a bath (Fig. 87). Although this presents a rare scene of the Virgin's nudity, it is fully innocent. Next come two scenes of learning. First Mary receives instruction from her mother, St Anne (Fig. 88), and then she receives instruction from an angel, who stands by patiently while Mary points to words and sounds them out (Fig. 89).¹¹⁵

Several aspects of these images are unusual, beginning with their existence at all. They are highly unusual subjects, especially the bath scene and the angel teaching Mary to read. They emphasize tender quotidian moments. Secondly, they lack text. Although their respective pages are ruled for text, they were never filled in, and the user apparently deemed them operational *sans* text. In this way, they conform to the cycles of pictures given to children, discussed above. Thirdly, they have been handled extensively. To a lesser degree, the rest of the miniatures in the book, which follow a more standard program of images and texts, have also been handled. In what follows, I will analyze the conditions of handling and hypothesize what kinds of rituals and actions would have led to the specific forms of degradation in this book.

In the rocking scene (Fig. 85), someone has rubbed the inner frame near the brazier. Was this person tucking in the Virgin? In the bath scene, someone has rubbed the inner frame near the bench with the towel, possibly with a wet finger, and smudged the paint around. Was this

115 On St Anne and children's literacy in the late Middle Ages, see Michael Clanchy, "Did Mothers Teach their Children to Read?," in *Motherhood, Religion, and Society in Medieval Europe, 400–1400: Essays Presented to Henrietta Leyser*, Conrad Leyser and Lesley Smith (eds) (Ashgate, 2011), pp. 129–53; Wendy Scase, "St. Anne and the Education of the Virgin," in *England in the Fourteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1991 Harlaxton Symposium*, Nicholas Rogers (ed.) (Paul Watkins, 1993), pp. 81–98.



Fig. 90 Miniature depicting St Anne teaching Mary to read. Paris, ca. 1400–1410. HKB, Ms. 76 F 21, fol. 16r, detail of Fig. 88, photographed with transmitted light

person helping to dry Mary off? Someone has also touched the area near the fire, perhaps to imagine feeling its heat. A different kind of touching occurred at the scene with Mary learning to weave. Here the user has wet-touched the hem of her blue gown several times, perhaps dragging it along the lower part of the image toward the loom. That is consistent with the undisciplined movements of a child. Someone has also touched the gifts (skeins of yarn?) the airborne angel delivers to its enthusiastic recipient. The area of the background below the angel and between the angel and Mary has been so pawed that chunks of the thick paint have flaked off, and the surface decoration of the painted diaper background has worn off. In the image with Mary receiving a reading lesson from the angel, the user wet-touched the blue gown, and touched the diaper pattern in the background.

The most vigorous and sustained touching takes place in the image with St Anne. Photographing the image with transmitted light more fully illuminates the extent and position of the wear (Fig. 90).¹¹⁶ There

¹¹⁶ Photographing manuscripts with backlighting (transmitted light) has been in the toolbox of book conservators but not of book historians. See, for example, Nancy K. Turner, "Beyond Repair: Reflections on Late Medieval Parchment Scarf-Joined

the user has touched the Virgin's gown in several places, leaving the blue fabric pocked and the lower margin smudged. The user has also touched the Virgin's finger as it touches the book. By moving her finger along the page to concentrate the attention on one group of letters at a time, the figure in the image enacts how to interact with the book. I argue that this depicted behavior is also prescriptive, shaping the young user's performance. One can imagine that the book's young user would have had a guide—a mother or teacher—helping the child navigate through the book, first using the picture cycle at the beginning to introduce the child to the concept of books holding images, words, and information, containing interpretable memes. In this case, the guide has helped the child see herself in the person of Mary, who is also a young girl struggling to learn to use a book. This guide is also helping the young charge learn two more lessons. One is about curiosity: feel the bath! Feel the heat from the brazier! Feel the pattern of gold and painted squares in the background of the image! The other kind of lesson is about how to interact with books: demonstrate your love for the Virgin by kissing her hem! Help the angel give Mary the skeins of yarn!

The most likely *destinarius* for this manuscript, with this particular imagery, is a young girl. Of course, it is possible that some other interested party—a pedophile or someone with a Peter Pan complex—would have felt a particular affinity to this imagery, but I am going to assume that the simplest and most innocent solution is probably the correct one. The rest of the manuscript contains standard images and texts, although the scribe seems to be catering to his young audience by avoiding abbreviations that could cause the new reader to stumble. For example, on fol. 79r the text is laid out in large, neat letters, and words such as “filiorum” and “dominum” are written out entirely, without abbreviations, as if aiding a freshly minted reader.

In the image representing God enthroned, which prefaces the Seven Penitential Psalms, the entire background behind God's head, chest, and gesturing finger has been rubbed and smeared, with the ink that outlines the gold bar frame having been pulled into the upper margin (Fig. 91). Furthermore, the initial has also been stroked. At the image of the Annunciation, the diaper background has been thoroughly touched,



Fig. 91 Opening in a prayer book at the incipit of the Seven Penitential Psalms, with a miniature depicting God enthroned. Paris, ca. 1400–1410. HKB, Ms. 76 F 21, fols 94v–95r

apparently with a wet finger, since the moisture left a stain on the facing folio (Fig. 92). But in the image of the enthroned God, God's face and



Fig. 92 Opening in a prayer book at the incipit of the Hours of the Virgin, with a miniature depicting the Annunciation (Mary's eyes repainted). Paris, ca. 1400–1410. HKB, Ms. 76 F 21, fols 34v–35r



Fig. 93 Opening in a prayer book at the incipit of the Hours of the Cross, with a miniature depicting the Crucifixion. Paris, ca. 1400–1410. HKB, Ms. 76 F 21, fols 116v–117r

head are relatively fresh, and in the Annunciation, Mary's face is intact. How can this be? Because both faces have been repainted, which also explains why the eyes are too low. Other miniatures in the manuscript have similarly been repainted, most notably the one depicting St Anne teaching Mary to read, probably because deliberate touching had corroded the faces, which prompted a later user to take corrective action.

Users touched images elsewhere in the book. At the image of the Crucifixion, the user has wet-touched several places: the Virgin's blue garment has at least 20 distinct wet-touched places on it (Fig. 93). The user further touched the bottom of the cross, Christ's shins, John's clasped hands, and multiple places in the diaper background, as well as the frame and the initial, some of which have deposited offsets on the facing text page. Notably, the user has touched the line ending at bottom of the verso page: is it possible that the teacher encouraged the child to touch the book, but to aim for non-figurative imagery to prevent further damage?

While some images seem to have been touched out of veneration, others have been touched out of a desire to participate in the narrative. For example, at the image of Pentecost, prefacing the Hours of the Holy



Fig. 94 Opening in a prayer book at the incipit of the Hours of the Holy Spirit, with a miniature depicting Pentecost. Paris, ca. 1400–1410. HKB, Ms. 76 F 21, fols 121v–122r



Fig. 95 Opening in a prayer book at the incipit of the Fifteen Joys of the Virgin, with a miniature depicting the Virgin and Child enthroned. Paris, ca. 1400–1410. HKB, Ms. 76 F 21, fols 125v–126r

Spirit, the user has touched the rays of light emanating from the body of the holy dove, as if to trace their trajectory from the dove to the apostles below (Fig. 94). The user has also touched the red and blue swirl of Heaven near the top of the picture. Likewise, the user has stroked Mary's hair (and along with it, the background behind her head) in the image of the Virgin and Child enthroned (Fig. 95). These traces suggest a reader/user who became tangibly involved with the events from sacred history.

A different, and moister, kind of attention has degraded the opening at the incipit of the Vigil for the Dead (Fig. 96). This image has been



Fig. 96 Opening in a prayer book at the incipit of the Vigil for the Dead, with a miniature depicting the Mass for the Dead. Paris, ca. 1400–1410. HKB, Ms. 76 F 21, fols 136v-137r

thoroughly pawed. In particular, someone has repeatedly touched the black-draped coffin, and a large swath of the background has lost its painted detail. (This way of touching recalls how images of the dead were touched in the Grand Obituary of Notre Dame, discussed in Volume 1, Chapter 6.) The face of the hooded monk has been repainted with an inexpressive economy of means. But most notably, there is a significant amount of wet damage that corresponds to the left-side



Fig. 97 Opening in a prayer book within the Hours of the Virgin. Paris, ca. 1400–1410. HKB, Ms. 76 F 21, fols 60v–61r

border of the image, and the facing folio. This wet damage is not typical of seepage (for if water had seeped into the book during storage, one would expect that it would have affected multiple folios and would have a brownish leading edge). One possible explanation for this damage is that the teacher taught the young learner to pray for a dead family member, such as a grandparent, and that the moisture resulted from the girl rubbing her saliva, or even her tears, into the book. While this solution makes contextual sense, it must remain a hypothesis.

One further way of touching the manuscript becomes clear on certain text pages. At the recitation of Psalm 1 within Prime of the Hours of the Virgin, the user has wet-touched the initial *B* for *Beatus vir* (Blessed is the man) (Fig. 97). These are of course the opening words of the Psalter, as with the Saint Louis Psalter, mentioned above. As the initial of the Ur-devotional text in Christendom, this letter *B* was charged with meaning, and frequently targeted in this way. A large number of Psalters and manuscripts containing snippets of Psalms have had their initials handled. For example, a fourteenth-century Franciscan breviary incorporating Psalms has had its *Beatus vir* page so heavily damaged through handling that a subsequent user has had to re-inscribe some



Fig. 98 Incipit of the Psalms in a Franciscan breviary. France, fourteenth century. Marseille, BM, Ms. 118, fol. 11r

of the obliterated letters (Fig. 98).¹¹⁷ By analyzing the *B* smeared in the child's manuscript, one can hypothesize that touching this letter was part of one's devotional lessons from a young age. Children would have then applied this behavior to other initials in different book contexts, including but not limited to *Beatus* initials. The young user of HKB, Ms. 76 F 21 has also touched the initial for *Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis* within the litany (Fig. 99). Of all the saints listed, only Mary's initial is touched. Given the physical attention paid to images of Mary throughout the volume—with her blue gown wet-touched innumerable times—this plea to Mary for her prayers can be considered an extension of the mariolatry with which the young learned was inculcated.

The following scenario explains why elements of the manuscript were abraded. It was commissioned for a child in France, somewhere

¹¹⁷ For a rudimentary description of this manuscript, see <http://initiale.irht.cnrs.fr/codex/2772>



Fig. 99 Opening at the beginning of the Litany. Paris, ca. 1400–1410. HKB, Ms. 76 F 21, fols 109v–110r

in the vicinity of Paris (given that St Geneviève is rubricated in the calendar), around 1400. A teacher, represented as a mother, grandmother, or nurse figure who appears in several of the images, used the book to teach the child the rudiments of Christianity, first by showing her the images at the front of the book, which are oriented toward the domestic world of a wealthy child living in a cold climate. The images forged a connection between the young learner and Mary. In the graduated series of images, the child was first indoctrinated with cozy images of bath time and angelic visitations, which lulled her into blissful domestic comfort, before she confronted the image of God and eventually the potentially terrifying bleeding savior. The teacher also drilled the child in reading by practicing with the Psalms and other texts in the manuscript, which were inscribed with deliberately large letters and minimum abbreviations. Finally, that person encouraged the child to absorb the lessons by making the book and its messages tangible, teaching the child to touch the pages in specific ways: to kiss her finger and transport the kiss to the images; to trace the rays of the Holy Spirit as they shone on the characters from sacred history below; and even to touch the most ineffable character of them all—God.

I dwell on this because such examples provide an explanation for how people learned to handle their books. The learner joined a social-devotional culture that was also an embodied world in which certain cultural techniques, including touching images with a wet finger, were modeled. These lessons encouraged exploration with the fingers, while using the fingers and mouth to interact with the images. It is possible that some of the advanced lessons motivated the child to touch the decoration, or to touch *near* the venerable figure, which is why the hems and backgrounds are so often wet-fingered. Once we, as modern viewers, develop lenses to see this medieval form of veneration, we will find hundreds of examples of votaries leaving wet fingerprints near objects of affection. For example, in a Book of Hours made in 1411,



Fig. 100 Female donor kneeling before the Virgin and Child, in a Book of Hours made in 1411 possibly for Jeanne de La Tour-Landry. Lyon, BM, Ms. 574, fol. 55v

possibly for Jeanne de La Tour-Landry, the female patron wearing a dress of her coat of arms kneels before the Virgin and Child (Fig. 100).¹¹⁸ Someone, perhaps the patron, perhaps one of her children, has planted a wet finger on the diaper background, just next to the head of Jesus. The figure of Jesus, in turn, points at the spot, as if his finger and the user's finger had briefly made contact. Ostensibly, the book was at the center of this world, but actually, it was people, not books, that the child wanted to please and whom she imitated. These were lessons she carried into adulthood.

¹¹⁸ For a description and a link to the images, see <http://initiale.irht.cnrs.fr/en/codex/2431>

II. Teaching morals

Ci nous dist

A didactic text first compiled in France around 1320, *Ci nous dist* contains all the religious knowledge that a child would need to know. As its first rubric announces, it calls itself a book of “moral examples” taken from the Bible, the *Golden Legend*, the Church Fathers, the Dialogues of St Gregory, as well as Virgil, Plato, Seneca, and Socrates. Copies were written in the vernacular and were often illustrated, although the illustration program was never standardized; one now in Chantilly, made around 1340, contains the most miniatures (812 of them) distributed across its 781 chapters.¹¹⁹ Christian Heck argues that illustrated text served as a “moralized encyclopedia for the laity.”¹²⁰ In fact, the audience for the book may have been a subset of the laity: each short lesson begins with the words *Ci nous dist*, “It is said to us,” or “We are told that,” which is the rhetoric of teaching children. The book was popular at court, and it may have been used for instructing courtly children.

The text is organized into six major sections: 1. An overview of salvation history; 2. Moral lessons, written as stories and fables; 3. A guide to humility and confession; 4. Instructions on how to attend Mass; 5. Examples from saints’ lives; 6. How to understand the Final Judgment. The content and aim of the *Ci nous dist* is therefore similar to that of the *Tafel vanden kersten ghelove* (Table of Christian Belief) discussed below, as both are didactic texts that imply guidance by a teacher through a graduated catechism. The copy in Chantilly includes visual subjects that seem calculated to appeal to children—stories with characters that are wild, domestic, or mythical animals, and miracles performed by Jesus as a child.¹²¹

119 Christian Heck, *Le Ci nous dit: L'image médiévale et la culture des laïcs au XIVe siècle: les enluminures du manuscrit de Chantilly* (Brepols, 2011), treats a richly illuminated copy (Chantilly, Musée Condé, Ms. 26-27 [1078-1079]). Like the copy examined here, now in Brussels, the Chantilly copy has also been heavily touched, as if a teacher were enacting moral lessons with the images.

120 Heck, *Le Ci nous dit*, p. 15.

121 This is comparable to subjects in the Neville of Hornby Hours, which Kathryn Smith convincingly argues was made for instructing a child. See Kathryn A. Smith, “The



Fig. 101 Full-page miniature with four scenes from the creation of the world. Frontispiece in a *Ci nous dist*. Ghent or Bruges, 1390s. BKB, Ms. II 7831, fol. 17r

A copy of the *Ci nous dist*, written and illuminated shortly before 1400 in Ghent or Bruges (BKB, Ms. II 7831) has a column-wide illumination at each section, after a page-wide frontispiece (Fig. 101).¹²² Many of the images in the manuscript, including those in the frontispiece, have been touched, as if a teacher had pointed out their features to a student and moralized them along the way. Analyzing which parts of the images are

Neville of Hornby Hours and the Design of Literate Devotion," *The Art Bulletin*, 81(1) (1999), pp. 72–92.

122 Maurits Smeyers, *Vlaamse Miniaturen voor van Eyck, ca. 1380-ca. 1420*. Catalogus: Cultureel Centrum Romaanse Poort, Leuven, 7 September–7 November 1993, *Corpus of Illuminated Manuscripts = Corpus van Verluchte Handschriften* (Peeters, 1993), cat. 52.

rubbed and how they have been rubbed provides some clues about the setting for learning.

In the opening section of the book, images of the naked bodies of Adam and Eve were particular targets of attention. Most have



Fig. 102 Folio with a column-wide miniature depicting God creating Adam. *Ci nous dist.* from Bruges, 1390s. BKB, Ms. II 7831, fol. 18r, and detail

been rubbed until the anatomical details became illegible. This occurred in the frontispiece, as well as at a lesson about God creating Adam, accompanying a miniature (Fig. 102). The entire midriff of the comatose Adam has been rubbed down to the parchment, either because the teacher was pointing at the creation vigorously, or because he was obscuring the naked man's genitals and taking a wide aim. That teacher continued the lesson in corporeal squeamishness at the Creation of Eve (Fig. 103). Here, the teacher has obscured the skin-on-skin contact but carefully left Eve, wearing a large smudge, facing her creator. The moral lessons that can be deduced from this gesture mirror that of the story itself: like Eve, a child/learner only becomes aware of his or her shame through loss of innocence. It is as if the process of learning to read and becoming inculcated in Christianity were akin to learning shame. Adam and Eve demonstrate that lesson,

while the teacher provides extra moral didacticism by making sure that the child/learner understands that displaying one's genitals is a



Fig. 103 Folio with a column-wide miniature depicting God creating Eve. Ci nous dist. Ghent or Bruges, 1390s. BKB, Ms. II 7831, fol. 18v, and detail



Fig. 104 Folio with a column-wide miniature depicting Adam and Eve being driven from Paradise. Ci nous dist. Ghent or Bruges, 1390s. BKB, Ms. II 7831, fol. 19r, and detail

cause for shame. The teacher instructed the child to feel this shame by obscuring the genitals in the manuscript.

At the banishment of the couple from Paradise, one detects the presence of an abrading wet finger as the instrument that sanitized the image (Fig. 104). If Adam and Eve were suddenly aware of their nakedness, that awareness was double for the learner, since partially destroying the image drew more attention to it. God may have created Adam and Eve in the previous frames, but teachers destroyed their sex in this one. Living in the post-lapsarian world, the teacher made the student feel that world by touching it and shifting its paint around. These lessons were continuous with moralizing and constituted an interpretative act. Enacting these morals, externalizing them, not only made them more palpable, but it also left traces on the page for future students. In this way, the cultural techniques bridged teacher and student, and also bridged generations, imposing a conservatism in religious thought.

These lessons take another turn later in the manuscript in the story of a certain St Guillaume (Fig. 105). Here the readers (a teacher and student?) have rubbed the body of the devil, especially his hairy torso.



Fig. 105 Folio with a column-wide miniature depicting the devil kneeling before a priest carrying the host. *Ci nous dist*. Ghent or Bruges, 1390s. BKB, Ms. II 7831, fol. 49r, and detail

The abrasion has also affected the blue background, but mostly the body itself, where someone might have even used a sharp instrument or a fingernail to chip off the paint. In the image the devil kneels before a priest carrying the host, while a man rings a hand bell to signal the presence of the body of Christ. Other images in the book have survived either in pristine condition, without any loss of the flaky blue paint that is eager to throw itself off the page, or with other patterns of handling, such as touching the frame or the nearby initial. This suggests that the book was used episodically, and that the teacher/student dipped into it for particular lessons, rather than reading it from cover to cover. It shows that different stories and their images demanded different responses because they had different moral messages that the teacher wanted to draw out.

The teacher modeled different ways of touching the images. For example, at the image of the Three Magi, the teacher has concentrated on the frame around the image, as well as the initial C[*i nous dist*]



Fig. 106 Folio with a column-wide miniature depicting the Three Magi. *Ci nous dist*. Ghent or Bruges, 1390s. BKB, Ms. II 7831, fol. 23r, and detail

(Fig. 106). It appears that he or she has wet-touched these areas, and one can imagine a scenario in which the teacher used the image in order to

reproduce the drama of the Three Magi offering their gifts to the Christ Child, one in which wet-touching the frame was tantamount to offering a gift. The gift on offer is a kiss. A similar wet response has taken place at the image of the Baptism (Fig. 107). A user has again touched the blue



Fig. 107 Folio with column-wide miniatures depicting Christ in the temple as a twelve-year-old, and the Baptism of Christ. *Ci nous dist*. Ghent or Bruges, 1390s. BKB, Ms. II 7831, fol. 25r

frame and smeared it beyond its original boundaries. The bottom of the frame has been particularly targeted. Did the blue frame “stand for” the river, so that by touching it, the user dipped into the Jordan?

It is worth noting that this folio (25r) also presents an image-*cum*-story about Mary and Joseph finding their twelve-year-old son in the temple after looking for him for three days. The accompanying image depicts Jesus as a boy instructing the scholars of the temple, as they are all gathered around, and pointing at, an open book. In other words, this image models the kind of arrangement that operated around this very volume, with a teacher (played by Jesus) pointing at items in a book to an audience of learners (played by the scholars of the temple). Of course, this image is interesting because the child becomes the teacher, and the scholars become the learners, in a fundamental reversal. The image itself has been heavily touched, with particular damage to the scholar holding the book, and to the background behind Jesus. The frequent handling and evident wear on this image suggest its profound significance to and resonance with past readers, underscoring the dynamic power of visual storytelling and tactile reading in moralizing texts.

Table of Christian belief

These childhood lessons became codified in moralizing adult entertainment. Children did not outgrow the hierarchical structures of learning when they came of age; rather, the teachers changed.



Fig. 108 Frontispiece in *Liber de informatione principum*, with a miniature depicting St Thomas Aquinas teaching an emperor, a king, a chancellor, and three noblemen. Paris, 1453. HKB, Ms. 76 E 20, fol. 6r

Confessors instructed adults, even powerful ones. A scene depicting adults as students appears in a copy of Jean Golein's French translation of the *Liber de informatione principum*, made, according to the colophon,

in Paris in 1453 for Giovanni Arnolfini (d. 1470) (HKB, Ms. 76 E 20).¹²³ Arnolfini, a socially-climbing merchant from Lucca who traded in Bruges, emulated court style so closely that he even commissioned Jan van Eyck to paint the famous marital portrait (but that is a different story). The miniature in his manuscript about statecraft shows St Thomas Aquinas teaching an emperor, a king, a chancellor, and three noblemen (HKB, Ms. 76 E 20, Fig. 108). Public figures, such as members of the nobility, would willingly submit to religious instruction to conform to social expectations and to provide an example to their subjects, as well as a testament to their moral rectitude to be broadcast to their associates.

In addition to imitating the behavior of social superiors, nobles sought instruction from private confessors, who may have directed how their charges prayed. Dirc van Delf (ca. 1365–1404), the court chaplain and confessor to Duke Albert (Albrecht) of Bavaria from 1389 until the duke's death in 1404, not only instructed the duke and coordinated his spiritual reading, but even wrote a textbook for him. Duke Albert and his second wife, Margaret of Cleves (d. 1411), resided in The Hague, where they held court in the decade flanking the year 1400.¹²⁴ Under Albert and Margaret, the arts flourished, especially rhyming Dutch literature produced in exquisite illuminated volumes. Although the court was in The Hague, the artists working in the court style were based in Utrecht. Even though the court sat in The Hague, the seat of the bishop, most of the convents, and a good deal of the cultural life was based in Utrecht. As will be discussed below in Chapter 4, the courtly audience had a taste for vernacular literature, especially rhyming literature, and members of the court in The Hague would have gathered to hear recitals of the newest texts being produced in Utrecht.¹²⁵

123 See Anne S. Korteweg et al., *Splendour, Gravity & Emotion: French Medieval Manuscripts in Dutch Collections* (Waanders, 2004), no. 51, color figs. 94, 95.

124 Although they ordered many books, including the *Sachsenspiegel* discussed above in Vol. 1, Chapter 5, and must have patronized numerous writers and painters in their midst, the names of these artists have not come down to us, and we refer to them by the name of the patron of the most distinctive examples of their work. One of the miniaturists who made leaps in style is known as the Master of Margaret of Cleves for having made the duchess an exquisite Book of Hours: Lisbon, Museum Calouste Gulbenkian, Ms. LA 148, for which see James H. Marrow, *As Horas de Margarida de Cleves = The Hours of Margaret of Cleves* (Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, 1995).

125 F. P. van Oostrom, *Stemmen op Schrift: Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Literatuur vanaf het Begin tot 1300* (Bakker, 2013), pp. 531–547.

Around 1400 Utrecht bookmakers produced an illuminated copy of a *Rijmbijbel* by Jacob van Maerlant, a poet born in the 1230s in Bruges. Jacob van Maerlant had spent the early part of his career translating romances into Middle Dutch, and his *Rijmbijbel*, a rhyming Bible in Middle Dutch, is a selective translation of the *Historia scholastica* by

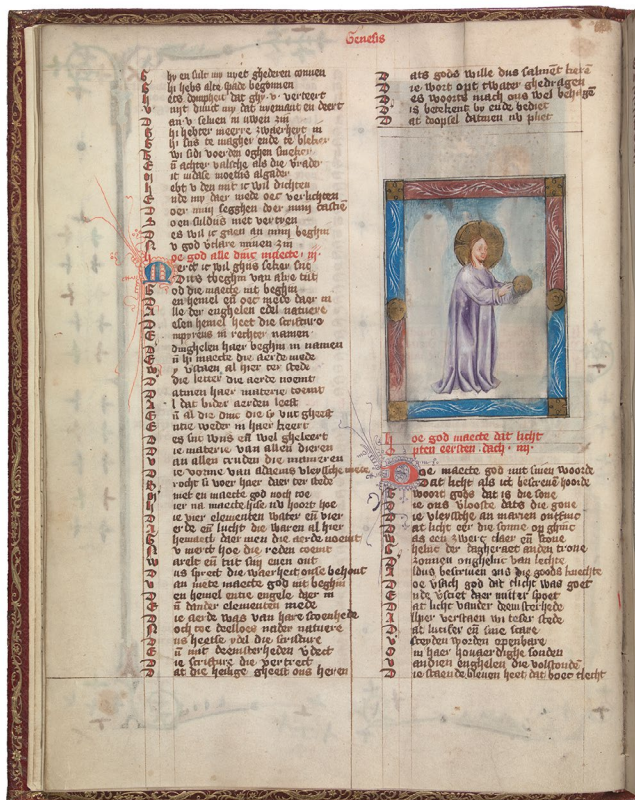


Fig. 109 Folio in Jacob van Maerlant's *Rijmbijbel*, with a column-wide miniature depicting God creating light from darkness. Utrecht, ca. 1400. HKB, Ms. KA 18, fol. 12v.

Petrus Comestor. To this, the poet added another rhyming text called *Die Destructie van Jerusalem* (The Destruction of Jerusalem), which is his verse translation of a text by Josephus. The two texts, which fill a large and ornate volume, begin with the creation of the universe in



Fig. 110 *Tafel van den kersten gheloue*, incipit of the prologue. Utrecht or Delft, ca. 1400–04. HKB, Ms. 133 F 18, fol. 1r

seven days, accompanied by a column-wide miniature depicting God creating a glowing orb of light (HKB, Ms. KA 18, fol. 12v; Fig. 109). With folios measuring 315 × 240 mm, and a text block of 250 × 184 mm, the manuscript was sized for public performance, and it would have been large enough for six to eight people to view simultaneously.

Courts provided nodes between which new ideas easily passed, and they often developed new devotions, systems, and tastes, which others in the periphery then followed. Albert's court produced several copies of the *Sachsenspiegel* which, like the duke himself, had come from Germany. He multiplied this text because he was eager to roll out the new legal code in his Dutch-speaking territories, and the contents of



Fig. 111 *Tafel van den kersten ghelove*, incipit of the main text (summer part). Utrecht or Delft, ca. 1400–04. HKB, Ms. 133 F 18, fol. 6r

that code could best be disseminated by book (see Vol. 1, Chapter 5).¹²⁶ The court in The Hague also produced didactic literature, namely a religious compendium called the *Tafel vanden kersten ghelove* (Table of Christian Belief).¹²⁷ Its author, Dirc van Delf, was a Dominican based at the priory in Utrecht, and his book was a scholastic theology for laymen. Attachés such as Dirc van Delf mediated between the court and the

¹²⁶ In addition to the Middle Dutch copy of the *Sachsenspiegel* (HKB, Ms. 75 G 47) discussed in Vol. 1, Chapter 5, another is now in Cologny-Geneva (Switzerland), cod. Bodmer 61 (<https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/description/fmb/cb-0061/>).

¹²⁷ C. G. N. de Vooy, "Iets over Dirc van Delf en zijn 'Tafel Vanden Kersten Ghelove,'" *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsche taal- en letterkunde*, 22 (1903), pp. 1–67, provides an overview of the text.



Fig. 112 Miniature in Jacob van Maerlant's *Rijmbijbel*, depicting God creating light from darkness. God doesn't play dice, but he does bowl. Utrecht, ca. 1400. HKB, Ms. KA 18, fol. 12v (detail of Fig. 105).

non-court urban milieu. As Frits van Oostrom has argued, the primary audience for this text was the duke himself. From its courtly origins, the text flowed to other audiences.¹²⁸

A surviving two-volume copy of the *Tafel* was produced for the duke in 1400–04. Volume I, which contains the Prologue, bears the duke's coat of arms on the first recto (HKB, Ms. 133 F 18, fol. 1r; Fig. 110).¹²⁹ That is followed by 39 chapters on topics such as the roles of students, teachers, bishops, clergy, and leaders; expositions of difficult concepts such as the Trinity, the sacraments, the Ten Commandments, the Works of Mercy, the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Seven Deadly Sins, and the meaning of confession. This manual packages its author's encyclopedic knowledge of the Christian faith into a palatable form for the laity. It is divided into neat, short sections that may have formed the lessons that the confessor conducted privately with his charge.

It is conceivable that Dirc van Delf would have used this very copy during the lessons that the confessor prepared for the duke. Dirc would have taught his charge how to read the book and understand its teachings. Thus, it may have been Dirc who instructed the duke to touch the image of the Trinity at the beginning of the manuscript to initiate his lessons (Fig. 111). The historiated initial is severely abraded from repeated contact. There are no other figurative images in the manuscript, which is part of the reason that the rest of the manuscript has not been touched in this way, but rather bears the marks of regular wear. Albert's confessor may have encouraged the duke to make physical contact with the image of the Trinity on the page, as a ritualized preamble to learning his catechism. Ultimately, it relates to the priest touching or kissing the body of Christ before performing the Canon of the Mass.

In fact, another image from this courtly milieu also appears to have been touched: that showing God creating light in the *Rijmbijbel* (see Fig. 112). Someone has repeatedly touched the orb that God holds and did so in imitation of God's gesture. In this miniature, fingers have probed the black ink outline around the gold orb, thereby spreading smudges

128 Frits Pieter van Oostrom, "Dirc van Delft en zijn lezers," in *Het woord aan de lezer: zeven literatuurhistorische verkenningen*, W. van den Berg, Hanna Stouten, and P. J. Buijnsters (eds) (Wolters-Noordhoff, 1987), pp. 49–71.

129 Volume II (the winter part) is now in Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, Ms. W.171. For a description and images, see <https://www.thedigitalwalters.org/>

into the clean white area. One can imagine the performer touching the golden disc by way of dramatizing his reading, as if switching on a light in the darkness. Such gestures would have been directed toward the audience attending the recitation.

Book of the Antichrist

One could also teach morals through fear, which is the central idea behind the Book of the Antichrist. This story, in circulation since the fifth century, formed part of an eschatological and apocalyptic tradition that resurged around the year 1000, and then again in the later Middle Ages. Although the illustrated text is better known in its blockbook form called the *Puch von dem Entkrist*, the blockbook was based on an earlier manuscript tradition in Germany.¹³⁰ This section considers a particular manuscript copy of the text, now preserved in Berlin (Berlin, SB, Ms. germ. fol. 733).¹³¹ This image-centered book—or *Bilderbuch*—could have had multiple audiences, including a small teaching group. Signs of wear suggest that this volume was used in a didactic context, where the images amplified the terse messages, and a teacher or interlocutor extended the message in theatrical retellings.

130 Literature on blockbooks is vast, part of which deals with the *Puch von dem Entkrist*. Several facsimile editions have been produced: *Das Puch von dem Entkrist: Faksimile des Originals der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek*, ed. Kurt Pfister (Insel, 1925); and *Der Antichrist und die Fünfzehn Zeichen: Faksimile Ausgabe des einzig erhaltenen chiroxylographischen Blockbuches*, Vol. 1, Heinrich Theodor Musper (ed.) (Prestel, 1970); *Der Antichrist und die Fünfzehn Zeichen vor dem jüngsten Gericht: Faksimile der ersten typographischen Ausgabe. Inkunabe der Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main*. Inc. Fol. 116, Vol. 1, Karin Boveland, Christoph Peter Burger, and Ruth Steffen (eds) (Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1979). For an overview the literature about the Book of the Antichrist (which centers around the blockbook tradition, although this is also relevant for the earlier manuscript tradition), see: Tina Boyer, "The Miracles of the Antichrist," in E. Hintz & S. Pincikowski (eds), *The End-Times in Medieval German Literature: Sin, Evil, and the Apocalypse* (Boydell & Brewer, 2019), pp. 238–254. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781787445024.012>; and Anneliese Schmitt, "Der Bild-Text des 'Antichrist' im 15. Jahrhundert. Zum Abhängigkeitsverhältnis der Handschriften, Blockbücher und Drucke und zu einer möglichen antiburgundischen Tendenz," *E codicibus impressisque. Opstellen over het boek in de Lage Landen voor Elly Cockx-Indestege*. 3 vols., Frans Hendrickx and Josef M. M. Herrmans (eds) (Peeters, 2004); *Miscellanea Neerlandica 18–20*, Bd. 1: Bibliografie, handschriften, incunabelen, kalligrafie, pp. 405–430.

131 The manuscript has been digitized: https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkaansicht?PPN=PPN726683248&PHYSID=PHYS_0009&DMDID=DMDLOG_0001

The manuscript is large enough to be seen by approximately eight people simultaneously. The signs of wear in the manuscript are numerous and have multiple origins. They tell a story of the book being handled extensively and also held up for demonstration purposes. Unlike the Parisian Book of Hours (HKB, Ms. 76 F 21), discussed earlier, this book lacks the features one would associate with an easy reader for children: rather than presenting large, unabbreviated script, and easy-to-read texts, it has tiny, loopy script rife with ligatures and abbreviations. However, like MJRUL French 5 and the Parisian Book of Hours, it does have enormous colorful images that augment the message. The book is not for teaching someone to read, but rather instructing them about what to think. In that way, it is less like MJRUL French 5 and the Parisian Book of Hours, and more like the *Ci nous dist* and the *Table of Christian Belief*.

Berlin, SB, Ms. germ. fol. 733 was copied around 1440. It comprises three distinct but related texts: The Book of the Antichrist (*Vom Antichrist*, fols 1r–10v); The Fifteen Signs before the Last Judgement (*Die Fünfzehn Zeichen vor dem jüngsten Gericht*, fols 11r–12v); and The Last Judgement (*Vom jüngsten Gericht*, fols 13r–13v). The respective beginning folios of the



Fig. 113 Screen shot showing a tile view of all the folios in *Vom Antichrist* (https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN726683248&PHYSID=PHYS_0009&DMDID=DMDLOG_0001). Germany, ca. 1440. Berlin, SB, Ms. germ. fol. 733

Book of the Antichrist and The Fifteen Signs are missing, and the first and last surviving folios are abraded, which suggests that this manuscript was out of its binding for some time before receiving its current boards in the nineteenth century. Only 13 folios survive from what may have originally comprised 16 folios. An overview of the complete book shows how worn it is, especially at the beginning and end (Fig. 113).

The story of Antichrist is styled as a saint's *vita*, where Antichrist appears as a nimbed figure. The difference between his representation and that of a saint is the presence of a wiry black devil that hovers above his hands or head in nearly every scene. Besides that, his story follows the lines of a saintly *vita*, beginning with his diabolical birth and continuing through his adulthood.¹³² When he appears during the Apocalypse, Antichrist's goal is to deceive and confuse people. To do this, he masquerades as Jesus, pronouncing the words from Matthew 24:5, "Ego sum Christus," the ultimate blasphemy.

The legends of the Antichrist, told as vignettes, dwell on his miracles. Antichrist performs miracles that are either pointless or that invert Christ's. Instead of turning water into wine, he makes water run uphill (1r). The point of his miracles is showmanship and entertainment, not humanitarian relief. Antichrist hatches a giant from an egg, he suspends a castle by a thread from the sky, and he calls forth a stag from a rock. These three miracles, which lack any narrative precedents, appear in one vignette (Fig. 114). Tina Boyer explains them as reversals of nature.¹³³ A castle, for example, usually stands for safety and impenetrability, but when it dangles above the earth from a weak fiber, it provides no more security than a tree house in a willow bush.

Although the book has been damaged inadvertently due to poor storage, especially on its first and last folios, it has also received targeted wear on several of the miniatures, offering some clues about how the reader might have presented the stories to the audience. Each folio in

132 For a detailed analysis of all of the images in the Berlin manuscript, cross-referenced with the image cycles in other copies of the story, see Hella Frühmorgen-Voss and Norbert H. Ott, *Katalog der deutschsprachigen illustrierten Handschriften des Mittelalters Band 7*, 59. *Historienbibeln-70. Kräuterbücher* (Beck, 2017), pp. 264–274; for an overview of the Berlin manuscript, see pp. 274–276.

133 Tina Boyer, "The Miracles of the Antichrist," in E. Hintz and S. Pincikowski (eds), *The End-Times in Medieval German Literature: Sin, Evil, and the Apocalypse* (Boydell & Brewer, 2019), pp. 238–254.



Fig. 114 Folio depicting multiple events in *Vom Antichrist*. Germany, ca. 1440.
Berlin, SB, Ms. germ. fol. 733, fol. 1v

The Book of the Antichrist is divided horizontally into two registers containing a framed narrative image and a short descriptive text in German. The text blocks have not been ruled, and consequently the text meanders. Clearly the book has been conceptualized foremost as a picture book, and the texts inscribed as an afterthought. One can imagine a charismatic person in the mid-fifteenth century, someone keenly guarding the morals of young people, who tells stories of a clever devil and recounts the signs of the end of the world, pointing at the images in the book and enthraling his audience. The somewhat simple drawings, with their bright washes, do not so much represent these events as present a springboard from which the raconteur can launch his performance to ignite the audience members' imagination.

Audience is crucial to the stories. As Boyer points out about the motivations of Antichrist: "His goal is to blind and seduce [audience members] so that they believe his lies and deceit."¹³⁴ The images in Berlin 733 show Antichrist performing these miracles before audiences, and it is possible that these depicted audiences reflect the intended audience for the book itself: not a solitary reader, but a group of listeners who reinforce each other's reception of the text, where each gasp and tut ripples through the group.

The Book of the Antichrist accompanies the Fifteen Signs before the Last Judgement, both in its manuscript and its blockbook traditions. The signs are as follows, in abbreviated form: 1) the sea rises above the mountains; 2) the sea recedes, and the earth withers; 3) the fish in the sea lament to heaven; 4) the sea and all the waters burn up; 5) trees sweat blood; birds assemble on the fields and refuse food; 6) buildings collapse and trees fall down; 7) stones fly up and smash each other; people hide in caves; 8) earthquakes; 9) all mountains are leveled; 10) people return from the mountains and go about as if they are senseless and unwilling to speak to each other; 11) the dead rise; 12) the stars fall from heaven and emit fire; 13) the living die so that they can rise with the dead; 14) heaven and earth are consumed by fire, 15) but will be renewed, and all humankind shall rise together.¹³⁵ Some of the startling series of preternatural events form an antithesis to the Biblical stories. Instead of God separating the land from the waters, here the waters engulf the land. Instead of creatures multiplying, here they starve and wither. The final events concern humanity, which will die to be reborn and undergo a collective apotheosis.

One can see how the Fifteen Signs could have riveted an audience. This text comprises a list, sometimes illustrated, which is often incorporated into other texts, which frame and contextualize it. For example, in the Berlin manuscript, it depends on the apocalyptic context of the Book of the Antichrist. Christoph Gerhardt and Nigel F. Palmer identified the text

¹³⁴ Boyer, "The Miracles of the Antichrist," p. 238.

¹³⁵ The list comes from Boyer, p. 248, n. 2. See also Manfred von Arnim, "The Chiroxylographic Antichrist and the Fifteen Signs: English Summary," in Musper, *Der Antichrist und die Fünfzehn Zeichen*, 2; Petra Simon, *Die Fünfzehn Zeichen in der Handschrift Nr. 215 der Gräflich von Schönborn'schen Bibliothek zu Pommersfelden* (Ph.D. Diss., 1978), pp. 173–176.



Fig. 115 Folio depicting three of the Fifteen Signs before the Last Judgement, in *Vom Antichrist*. Germany, ca. 1440. Berlin, SB, Ms. germ. fol. 733, fol. 11r

in 68 German and Middle Dutch manuscripts.¹³⁶ Many of them can be categorized as didactic manuscripts, such as *Buch von geistlicher Lehre* and Dirc van Delf's *Tafel van den kersten ghelove*, discussed above.

Each folio presents three signs. Because the first folio of the text is missing, the series begins with the fourth sign (Fig. 115). Immediately apparent is the degree to which this section of the book has been handled. The edge is darkened with fingerprints from hands turning the folios. Because the book is large (measuring 290 × 210 mm) and the parchment heavy, the leaves lie open now and may have also done so when the book was new around

¹³⁶ Christoph Gerhardt and Nigel F. Palmer, "Die 'Fünfzehn Zeichen vor dem jüngsten Gericht' in deutscher und niederländischer Überlieferung," *Katalog* (18. Juni 2000). <https://handschriftencensus.de/forschungsliteratur/pdf/4224>

1440. It was not held in the hand, like an octavo-sized book, but rather it lay flat on a table. Besides the fingerprinting at the edges, suggesting just how often the pages were turned, the surface also has some stains from dripped liquid, possibly candle wax. One can imagine a group of about six people gathered around a small table where the manuscript lay open, its graphic images illuminated by candlelight: wax has dripped onto folio 6v.

Various authors have considered the audience for blockbooks in general, and the Book of the Antichrist in particular. Even if that audience can be identified, the blockbook audience may have differed from the manuscript audience. As the text was written entirely in German, it could have had a wider reach than comparable picture books with text, such as the *Biblia Pauperum*, which were written in Latin. As Boyer argues, the *Antichrist* and the Fifteen Signs were used in an educational environment, in a monastic or urban setting.¹³⁷ One can easily imagine this manuscript at the center of a gripping lesson with a charismatic teacher guiding pairs of wide eyes through the apocalyptic parchment-scape.

Coda

Manuscripts treated in this chapter have images and texts that suggest they were used in teaching settings, where a teacher plus one or more students would gather around the book, and the teacher would draw the students' attention to the items on the page through gesture. All of the books discussed above have been touched in vigorous and specific ways that have left traces, allowing us to reverse-engineer these actions.

I have dwelt upon the social actions around teaching and learning because they would have been highly influential in creating norms of book-handling. The children who used the books discussed above would have been members of courts or of wealthy, book-owning families. Such families and courts were trendsetters and tastemakers, both in terms of manuscript content and style.¹³⁸ The direct way in which teachers normalized book-

137 Boyer, "The Miracles of the Antichrist," p. 239.

138 On this point, see Joyce Coleman, "Reading the Evidence in Text and Image: How History Was Read in Late Medieval France," in *Imagining the Past in France: History in Manuscript Painting, 1250–1500*, Elizabeth Morrison and Anne D. Hedeman (eds) (J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 2010), pp. 53–67, with further bibliography.



Fig. 116 Margaret of York in prayer before an image, with her ladies-in-waiting behind her. Ghent, 1475. OBL, Ms Douce 365, fol. 115r

touching behavior among their charges was an influential vertical method of transmission, which would have shaped how those children handled other manuscripts when they came of age and acquired more books.

Likewise, European courts were places where horizontal and vertical lines of transmission encouraged the spread of objects, tastes, and ideas. Those who witnessed Duke Albert touching his books may have copied his behavior. It is clear that nobles at various courts around Europe made dramatic displays of their piety and that doing so may have been a pre-condition for social acceptance in courts headed by leaders who vehemently displayed their piety. One need only turn to a depiction of Margaret of York in prayer, with her ladies-in-waiting behind her, to see how devotional performance would have been transmitted to the immediate audience of one's underlings (Oxford BL, Ms. Douce 365, fol. 115r; Fig. 116). Social performances with manuscripts at court will be taken up in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Performing at Court

Members of royal and ducal courts entertained themselves by holding jousts, hunting, feasting, watching pageants, and reading literature. To satisfy the demand for reading, courtiers commissioned new literature, including historical, religious, and didactic works, splendid, legitimizing histories, and chronicles of recent events. They also sought romances, such as the stories of the Knights of the Round Table, which presented idealized images of the courtier that mirrored their audience in a rose-tinted glass. Courtiers owned the largest libraries in late-medieval Europe and had a penchant for rhyming texts in vernacular languages.¹³⁹

139 This chapter draws on the work of two scholars in particular: Joyce Coleman, who brings attention to oral performance of late medieval literature in *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Mark Cruse, who emphasizes the multiple senses engaged in reading and listening to courtly literature, in "Matter and Meaning in Medieval Books," *The Senses and Society*, 5(1) (2010), pp. 45–56. See also Rosalind Brown-Grant, who cites many instances of public reading aloud at the Burgundian court: Rosalind Brown-Grant, *Visualizing Justice in Burgundian Prose Romance: Text and Image in Manuscripts of the Wavrin Master (1450s-1460s)*, *Burgundica*, 29 (Brepols, 2020), pp. 56-59. doi: 10.1484/M.BURG-EB.5.118439. For a group of compelling essays about how courtiers read literature—specifically the bawdy, comic tales in the "Hundred New Novellas"—in the second half of the fifteenth century, see Graeme Small (ed.), *The Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles (Burgundy-Luxembourg-France, 1458 - C.1550): Text and Paratext, Codex and Context*, *Texte, Codex & Contexte*, Vol. 23 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023). The stories in the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* are structured as if they were being told by the members of Philip the Good's court. In his essay ("Opening and closing the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*: Paratext, context, and reception, 1469-c. 1550," pp. 135-164), Graeme Small explores the reception of the stories, especially in light of the relatively playful court of Philip the Good, versus the restrained mood and officious tone set by Charles the Bold. The named conteurs (storytellers) in the text point to the vibrant culture of storytelling and literary performances at Philip the Good's court. Although concerned with how the text transitioned from manuscript into printed form, and how these changes influenced its reception, relevant to the present context is the author's application of Gabrielle Spiegel's approach of examining texts as situated uses of language within their specific historical contexts. This involves asking how the manuscripts might have been read by applying the "social logic of

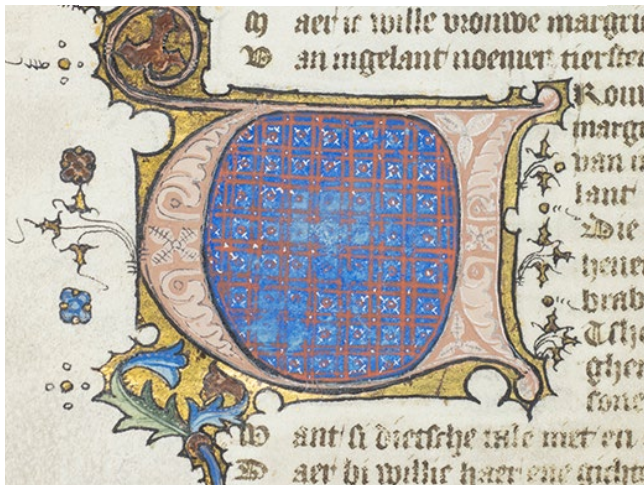


Fig. 117 Folio in Jan van Heelu, *De slag bij Woeringen*. Brussels, ca. 1440. HKB, Ms. 76 E 23, fol. 9v, and detail of the initial

Writers and translators scurried to meet this demand. For example, knight and writer Jan van Heelu penned the *Battle of Woeringen* (*De slag bij Woeringen*) in 1288 after he took part in it. As a witness to this battle between Reinoud I of Guelders and Jan I, Duke of Brabant, he memorialized the event in rhyming verse. Around 1440, a copy was made for the city of Brussels, where it was kept in the town hall for 200 years (HKB, Ms. 76 E 23, fol. 9v; Fig. 117). In other words, it was the kind of book contextualized alongside a city's privileges, such as the *Rood Privilegieboek* discussed in Volume 1, where, as we have seen, courtly life spilled into civic life with the joyous entries of Brabantine dukes, and the deeds of the ruling class were memorialized in town halls. Damage to the opening initial—multiple finger-tip-sized areas of paint loss aimed at the center of the letter—point to physical, performative gestures of reading. These cultural techniques around public reading took hold in European courts, and their effects left traces in manuscripts of a variety of genres.

Didactic works patronized by courtiers and socially aspiring merchants included many titles in the “Mirror for Princes” genre, which were how-to volumes about statecraft. One of these, the anonymously authored *Liber de informatione principum*, was translated into French by Jean Golein. A copy, illuminated in Paris in 1453, was made for Giovanni Arnolfini (d. 1470), the lucchese merchant who lived in Bruges and Rouen (HKB, Ms. 76 E 20).¹⁴⁰ The prefatory miniature shows a courtier on bent knee presenting the manuscript to a knight of the Golden Fleece (Fig. 118). The knight acknowledges the gift by looking at it while laying his hand on it. The image attests to the centrality of literature and book-gifting culture among the most powerful men of late-medieval Europe.

The fourteenth century witnessed a push to translate large amounts of literature from Latin into the various European vernaculars, and also to write new literature in those languages. The manuscripts featured in this chapter testify to this trend, which also points to more widespread literacy, and to increased use of manuscripts beyond ecclesiastical or administrative purposes. A related trend was to versify prose texts,

the text” and considering how it was received and interpreted at different times and places. This is analogous with my own approach, to consider how prelectors used gesture to enlarge the miniatures while simultaneously drawing the audience into the narrative and its illustrations during oral performances.

140 See Anne S. Korteweg et al., *Splendour, Gravity & Emotion: French Medieval Manuscripts in Dutch Collections* (Waanders, 2004), no. 51, color figs. 94, 95.



Fig. 118 Opening folio of Jean Golein's translation of *Liber de informatione principum*, illuminated in Paris by the Master of Étienne Sanderat de Bourgogne in 1453. HKB, Ms. 76 E 20, fol. 1r

including prayers. Doing so both conformed to courtly tastes and made texts more entertaining to read aloud. Versified texts included romances, chronicles, prayers, and retellings of the Bible. Chaucer, Jean de Meun, Dante, and Jacob van Maerlant supplied new versified texts in English, French, Italian, and Dutch, respectively. Versifying and translating texts implies turning them from scholarly, monastic, or study texts into texts performed aloud for an audience.



Fig. 119 Opening folio of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*. Paris, ca. 1400–1425. BM de Toulouse. Ms. 822, fol. 1r, and detail

There was even a versified translation of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* (BM de Toulouse, Ms. 822, fol. 1r; Fig. 119).¹⁴¹ Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius (ca. 480–584) wrote the text in prison before his execution. It opens with Boethius bewailing his miserable state, and Dame Philosophy instructing Boethius on the nature of Fortune. The message proved influential throughout the Middle Ages, when melancholic noblemen and imprisoned knights waiting to be ransomed took comfort from its teachings. More than 400 medieval copies of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* survive. The copy now in Toulouse, which was written and illuminated with courtly magnificence in Paris

141 For a description and bibliography, see <http://initiale.irht.cnrs.fr/codex/4152?contenuMaterielId=12393>. For an embodied reading of a related manuscript, see Kayla Lunt, "Flesh Side: Reading Bodies and Boethius in the Yale Girdle Book," *Exemplaria*, 35(1) (January 2, 2023), pp. 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10412573.2023.2185378>, who argues that the Beinecke Boethius, because it was in a girdle binding that was meant to be worn, implicates the original reader in intimate and physical ways.



Fig. 120 Opening folio of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*. Genoa(?), 1385. Glasgow UL, Hunter Ms. 374, fol. 4r

in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, has column-wide miniatures and initials that have been touched and rubbed repeatedly.

This leads to an important question: how did people read at court? Two camps of literary historians answer that question differently. One, led by Paul Saenger, believes that medieval people read silently and alone.¹⁴² His evidence is that after the eleventh or twelfth century, books came to be made with clearer spaces between words, which allowed faster reading. He argues that silent reading was necessary for the development of personal identity, as well as such literary forms as irony. Scholars in the other camp, led by Joyce Coleman, argue that much of the written word was experienced

¹⁴² Paul Henry Saenger, *Space Between Words: The Origin of Silent Reading* (Stanford University Press, 1997, 2006).

aurally, and that books continued to be read aloud well into the late Middle Ages. Of course, multiple kinds of reading on a continuum from private to public and from silent to voiced can coexist. Coleman has shown that public reading aloud persisted well into the early modern period as a form of literary entertainment.¹⁴³ With that in mind, I would like to suggest that in the Boethius example, a prelector—a professional reader, who recited texts aloud—touched the figures in the miniature depicting Boethius speaking with Philosophy. The prelector particularly targeted their faces, as if he were enacting their conversation. As I argue in this chapter, reading aloud embodied gestures that would help the prelector to interpret the text and magnify the images in order to draw listeners in.

I would like to take Joyce Coleman's well-argued ideas a step further to ask how images might have functioned in the context of aurality (that is, in listening to texts being read and performed). And what was the role of the prelector in shaping the audience's reception of the images? To begin addressing these questions, let me turn to another image from an illuminated Boethius, this one in an exquisite Italian manuscript (Fig. 120).¹⁴⁴ The copyist signed his name "Brother Amadeus," and the illuminator "Gregory of Genoa," and they dated the work 1385. In the image Boethius languishes behind the bars of a Romanesque prison. A user has rubbed the building's façade. Was he striking out against the fortress that imprisoned the great thinker? Pointing to it in order to

143 Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge University Press, 1996). Several studies have subsequently acknowledged the role of manuscripts in performance, including Robert L. A. Clark and Pamela Sheingorn, "Performative Reading: The Illustrated Mss. of Arnoul Gréban's *Mystère de la Passion*," *European Medieval Drama*, 6 (2002), pp. 129–54; and Robert L. A. Clark and Pamela Sheingorn, "Performative Reading: Experiencing through the Poet's Body in Guillaume de Digulleville's *Pèlerinage de Jhesucrist*," in *Cultural Performances in Medieval France, Essays in Honor of Nancy Freeman Regalado* (Boydell and Brewer, 2007), pp. 135–52. Mark Cruse, "Matter and Meaning in Medieval Books," *The Senses and Society*, 5(1) (2010), pp. 45–56, citing Fournival's *Bestiaire d'amours* (c.1250) at p. 50, demonstrates that images were integral to medieval audiences' reception of romances.

144 Glasgow University Library, Ms Hunter 374. N. Thorp, *The Glory of the Page* (London/Toronto, 1987), cat. 71, p. 131; Robert Gibbs, "Early Humanist Art in North Italy Two Manuscripts Illuminated by Gregorio Da Genova," *The Burlington Magazine*, 134(1075) (1992), pp. 639–45, identifies the scribe as "Brother Amadeus," who signs his name (fol. 1r). The illuminator and the date are worked into the border of the same folio: "Istud opus est Gregorii de Janua. MCCCCLXXXV" (This is the work of Gregory of Genoa). Gibbs convincingly shows that this is the name of the illuminator, not the patron.

draw his audience's attention to the figure of Boethius? The exact ethical motivation behind the gesture is difficult to recover in this case. What is clearer is the scene in the historiated initial, C[arina] at the top of the folio. There is Boethius, dressed as he is in prison, but this time depicted as a teacher, showing his students a book. Two things are noteworthy about this image. The first is that the illuminator, apparently Gregory of Genoa, has carefully depicted Boethius's book so that its pages are visible to his immediate audience gathered around him, and to us, outside the picture plane. The second is that the five figures gathered around Boethius sit close enough to be able to see the book. It is this arrangement of masters and students, or prelectors and audience members, that I would like to imagine throughout this study: audiences that can see the images in illuminated manuscripts, which are being read—and performed—by a prelector who moralizes the contents and shapes his audience's reception of the text by showing the images, pointing to them, touching them, and animating them. The arrangement of prelector to his audience is closer than, say, the arrangement of a preacher delivering a sermon from a pulpit to his audience. The reading situation I am imagining is still hierarchical and moralizing, but much more intimate. The audience members would have been able to touch each other, smell each other, hear each other breathe, and would have craned their necks to see the images.

Although private silent reading was aided by such codicological developments as smaller books, spaces between words, and devotional literature apparently designed to be read alone and silently, public reading continued to entertain audiences.¹⁴⁵ Indeed, literature written in verse form may well have been vocalized to make the most of rhythm and rhyme, which come alive during audible performance. How did the illuminations in manuscripts of courtly literature function in the context of oral performance? In some images of prelection, the reader faces his gathered audience, with his book on a lectern, so that the book would be visible to the reader but invisible to the listeners. In this set-up, the audience may not be able to see the images. There might be reasons to include expensive illuminations in manuscripts even if an audience is not going to see them, such as the prestige of owning luxury items, especially at the royal court. However, not all illuminated

¹⁴⁵ Malcolm B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Routledge, 2016).

courtly manuscripts were made with the highest-quality materials nor made by the most prestigious illuminators, and not all would fulfill the requirements of a luxury manuscript. Moreover, other arrangements with the prelector, book, and audience are possible. I know from having been a curator for a number of years, and from having shown dozens of medieval manuscripts to hundreds of people, that the best way for the audience to see the manuscript is for a small group to gather around it, so that the prelector/demonstrator either forms part of this group or stands at the top of the manuscript. In the second scenario, at least six sets of eyes can look at the manuscript simultaneously. A medieval prelector in an analogous arrangement could have drawn the viewers' attention to areas of the illuminations by touching them or tracing the visual narrative.

Use-wear evidence suggests that prelectors used illuminations as visual aids that gave form to the characters from the stories they were reading. Prelectors literally pointed these out with their fingers, and in so doing, made abrasive contact with the images. Secondly, they used images to animate the plot twists by pointing to figures while dramatizing the figures' actions with their hands. Thirdly,—and I suggest this more speculatively—they used the images for rituals of reading that might have resembled those used by people taking oaths. These rituals referred to events in the texts and physically engaged their audiences (as in the case of the *Vows of the Peacock*, which I discuss later). My chief evidence to support these hypotheses is the patterns of wear in the manuscripts themselves.

I. Interacting with images of the Virgin

The Benedictine monk Gautier de Coinci (ca. 1177–1236) wrote *Miracles of Our Lady*, a collection of stories in praise of Mary. The stories demonstrate that venerating the Virgin yielded real-life results. Mary caught babies who fell out of windows, produced rose bushes on the graves of believers, squirted breath-freshening milk into the mouths of those with halitosis, and prevented wayward nuns from being caught and punished. Her interventions could be perceived in the physical world. Gautier set his text, the *Miracles of Our Lady*, to music; this meant that the poems had at least two outlets as forms of entertainment—as

songs or as stories told aloud.¹⁴⁶ Here I consider how a particular copy of the *Miracles of Our Lady* was read aloud (HKB, Ms. 71 A 24). I chose this volume because its provenance is known with some certainty and its early user exploited the images during recitations.¹⁴⁷

Male members of the high nobility were particularly keen to acquire a copy of his book.¹⁴⁸ The copy under scrutiny here, HKB, Ms. 71 A 24, was ordered in 1327 by Charles IV of France (d. 1328), from the Parisian stationer Thomas de Maubeuge.¹⁴⁹ As this manuscript eventually passed down to Charles V (d. 1380) and then to his son Charles VI (d. 1422), it touched the lives of at least three French kings. I argue that this book was read aloud in (semi-)public performances in which the prelector animated the images by touching them in order to amplify the stories' messages. In this process, the prelector broadcast a legitimated, physical way of interacting with the images. Audience members were not only edified and entertained by the stories, but they also learned new, acceptable ways of handling the images in their books.

146 For an invaluable overview of the music and songs in the Coinci manuscripts, see Elizabeth Eva Leach, "Gautier de Coinci's *Miracles de Notre Dame*: Links to online sources for Gautier's magnum opus," blog post, Mar 15 2013, <https://eeleach.blog/2013/03/15/gautier-de-coincis-miracles-de-nostre-dame/>

147 Not all copies of Gautier's miracles were deliberately smudged as those in the Hague manuscript were. Russakoff writes: "The 246 parchment folios [of a copy in Paris] are in excellent condition: they are ivory-white, with a minimum amount [sic] of holes or stitching. The miniatures themselves are in pristine condition, although smudging is present on a few passages of the text and on several initials" (Anna Russakoff, *Imaging the Miraculous: Les Miracles de Notre Dame, Paris, BnF, N.Acq.Fr. 24541* [New York University, 2006], p. 6); Kathryn A. Duys, "Performing Vernacular Song in Monastic Culture: The *Lectio Divina* in Gautier de Coinci's *Miracles de Notre Dame*," in *Cultural Performances in Medieval France, Essays in Honor of Nancy Freeman Regalado* (Boydell and Brewer, 2007), pp. 123–34, convincingly argues that the Coinci was read ritualistically.

148 A particularly rich example is now split into two: Paris, BnF, Ms. fr. 9198–9199 and Oxford, Bodleian, Douce Ms. 374. See Alexandre-Léon Joseph de Laborde, *Les Miracles de Notre Dame Compilés par Jehan Miélot: Étude Concernant Trois Manuscrits du xve Siècle Ornés de Grisaille*, 2 vols. (Société française de reproductions de manuscrits à peintures, 1929).

149 For a description and bibliography, see kb.nl/manuscripts. For the role of images in this text, see Anna Russakoff, "The Role of the Image in Illustrated Manuscripts of 'Les Miracles de Notre Dame' by Gautier de Coinci: Besançon, Bibliothèque Municipale 551," *Manuscripta* 47/48 (2003/2004), pp. 135–44; Tony Hunt, *Miraculous Rhymes: The Writing of Gautier de Coinci* (D. S. Brewer, 2007); Alison Stones, "Notes on the Artistic Context of Some Gautier de Coinci Manuscripts," in *Gautier de Coinci: Miracles, Music, and Manuscripts* (Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe), Kathy M. Krause and Alison Stones (eds) (Brepols, 2007), pp. 65–98.



Fig. 121 Folio from Gautier de Coinci, *Les miracles de Notre Dame*, with a miniature depicting the king reading. Paris, 1327. HKB, Ms. 71 A 24, fol. 72r

A miniature within HKB, Ms. 71 A 24 presents an image—albeit idealized—of how books at court were read publicly, which vindicates Coleman’s position (Fig. 121). One image, which accompanies the legend of the king reading a Marian story, depicts a king moving his finger along the text while reading from the inscribed page. His audience is single sex, which may reflect reality for some such courtly readings (but not all, as I will argue).¹⁵⁰ As the image refers to precisely the kind

150 Olivier Collet, “Du ‘manuscrit de jongleur’ au ‘recueil aristocratique’: Réflexions sur les premières anthologies françaises,” *Le moyen age: revue d’histoire et de philologie*, 113 (2007) pp. 481–97, considers female owners of anthologies of French courtly literature, including Clémence de Hongrie and Mahaut d’Artois.



Fig. 122 Folio from Gautier de Coinci, *Les miracles de Nostre Dame*, with a miniature depicting Theophilus praying to an image of the Virgin. Paris, 1327. HKB, Ms. 71 A 24, fol. 5v.

of public reading that the *Miracles of Our Lady* anticipates, it is self-referential; normally, however, the king would not have performed the reading aloud, but would have delegated it to a professional prelector. This image presents a meta-narrative—a story read aloud about a story being read aloud. In addition to the signs of wear in the volume itself, this image attests that the *Miracles of the Virgin* was the kind of book that would have been read aloud at court as a form of entertainment. The acts of public reading detailed in this chapter would have taken place in castles, in rooms such as the great hall, where entertainments were staged.

Bite-sized stories in rhyming French made for entertaining listening at court. Many of the stories describe images that have come alive and



Fig. 123 Miniature depicting the Virgin battling the devil for Theophilus's soul, from Gautier de Coinci, *Les miracles de Nostre Dame*. Paris, 1327. HKB, Ms. 71 A 24, fol. 6v

recount physical encounters with Mary and demons. There is a sense of yearning for the effects of prayer to be made manifest in the real world. The moralizing, episodic miracle stories tell of Mary intervening in sinners' lives, often in the form of her sculpted image, and confirm the efficacy of interacting with a sculpted Marian object. For example, the opening sequence tells the story of Theophilus who has sold his soul to the Devil. He repents by praying to an image of the Virgin (Fig. 122). In the accompanying miniature, the sculpture has come to life: Mary makes eye contact with Theophilus, and Jesus reaches out toward him. In the next scene, she has sprung from her throne to do battle with the Devil, poking him in the teeth with a crucifix while simultaneously grabbing the contract for Theophilus's soul (Fig. 123). She vanquishes the smooth-talking Devil by wielding her cross as a weapon and bludgeoning him in the mouth, the body part with which he had seduced Theophilus. She bodily destroys her foe. As I show below, the reader has imitated Mary by repeatedly attacking the Devil, or at least images of him, often focusing attention on the body parts that do the misdeeds. This turn of events—praying to an image of the Virgin in order to gain a physical benefit from an animate Mary—conditioned believers' expectations that

interacting with such images yielded real-world results. Rubrics and prayers throughout the book assume that images of the Virgin come to life, intervene, have opinions, and respond vocally to hearing prayers that praise them. Stories such as these shaped votaries' behavior in front of (sculpted) images, while the actual performance of this particular manuscript shaped their behavior toward painted images.

Therefore, the hero is Mary, who rescues Theophilus from his plight by intervening at the eleventh hour. The villains are the devils and the Jews. As we will see, Gautier was fiercely misogynistic and anti-Semitic, qualities that may have appealed to Charles IV, who had expelled the Jews from France in 1323. The plots in Gautier's stories concern the



Fig. 124 Folio from Gautier de Coinci, *Les miracles de Notre Dame*, with a miniature depicting the pilgrim Girard. Paris, 1327. HKB, Ms. 71 A 24, fol. 24v

Virgin rescuing people, but not just anyone: her favorites are rascals, heretics, thieves, adulterers, pregnant nuns, and converts.

Unlike the story of Theophilus, which serves as a frontispiece and receives six individual scenes, the other stories each receive only a miniature, two columns wide, and are concomitantly limited in the complexity of the stories they can tell. Most of these are divided into two vignettes, which show a before and an after. Many of the images are about characters externalizing their guilt. One miniature, for example, shows the legend of the Burgundian pilgrim Girard; he is possessed by the Devil, has an illicit sexual affair, and then cuts off his own genitals (Fig. 124). The Devil, who is possessing the pilgrim Girard, points to the knife with which the pilgrim makes the irreversible cut. One can



Fig. 125 Folio from Gautier de Coinci, *Les miracles de Notre Dame*, with a miniature depicting the legend of the monk adoring St Peter. Paris, 1327. HKB, Ms. 71 A 24, fol. 23v



Fig. 126 Folio from Gautier de Coinci, *Les miracles de Nostre Dame*, with a miniature depicting the legend of the monk who visited his lover by boat. Paris, 1327. HKB, Ms. 71 A 24, fol. 45r, and detail

imagine a public recitation in front of a group of courtly men, who would shift uncomfortably in their seats as their bodies reacted to a story of malevolent orchiectomy. In order to raise the drama, but also to dispel some of the tension through humor, the reader turned the book toward the audience and attacked the Devil's face, as if to reprimand and denature him. The prelector did this by drawing his finger across the image. With his audience tightly drawn in, they would have heard the prelector's fingers launching granules of pigment from the parchment. In other words, erasure formed part of the public performance.

Many of the images themselves are about touching images; their very themes normalize such acts to the book's original users, thereby making the touching of images in books a related, and equally normalized, aspect



Fig. 127 Folio from Gautier de Coinci, *Les miracles de Notre Dame*, with a miniature depicting the legend of the monk making an image of the devil and then robbing his abbey. Paris, 1327. HKB, Ms. 71 A 24, fol. 101v

of interacting with them. In one vignette, devils carry a monk away like a sack of potatoes while St Peter pleads with the Virgin (Fig. 125). He does this by bending in humility and placing his hand on her abdomen, as if appealing to the fruit it once held within. Once again, the image depicts an occurrence in which someone is using physical contact to try to effect a change. St Peter is touching the standing Virgin in order to convince her to intervene.

The stories recounting the travails of monks who had sexual affairs apparently amused courtly audiences. In one story, a monk is sailing toward his lover, who eagerly anticipates his arrival (Fig. 126). However, exteriorizing his guilt, devils (who both urge his transgression and torment him for it) begin shaking his boat to and fro, which makes the monk vomit over the side. In reciting the story, the reader has not only attacked the devils' faces, jabbing at the light brown one with particular rancor, but has also made a large, moist gesture, through the monk's head and then into the sea. One can see that the gesture involved not just a wet finger but a wet hand: the black line adjacent to the gold frame has been smeared far into the margin, and the gold frame itself has been worn down, as by the effects of many repeated gestures, not just one. Was the prelector dramatizing the monk's sickness by wiping his wet hand from the monk to the margin, as if to trace the trajectory of the vomit?

One story tells the legend of the monk making an image of the Devil and then robbing his abbey (Fig. 127). This story and its accompanying image form a twist of the Pygmalion myth. The monk may not fall in love with the object of his creation, but at least is so deeply affected by it that he turns into a thief, as if the Devil made him do it. What is particularly fascinating is that the illuminator has shown the artist-monk sculpting the face of the nearly life-size image, thereby giving final expressive form to his creation. But as swiftly as the sculptor can make the object, the reader blots it out: the reader has wiped the Devil's face to oblivion through repeated touching.

Likewise, in the legend of the woman having a child by her son, the illuminator has identified the transgressive son by giving him demonic horns (Fig. 128). An enthroned king shakes his finger at the man, and the Virgin shelters the impregnated woman, representing her before the king as if the Virgin were an attorney. The reader has demonstrated his moral stance on incest by inflicting a further humiliation on the man, by rubbing out his face. This is the ultimate badge of dishonor,



Fig. 128 Folio from Gautier de Coinci, *Les miracles de Notre Dame*, with a miniature depicting the legend of the woman having a child by her son. Paris, 1327. HKB, Ms. 71 A 24, fol. 145v

one that is indelible. The illuminator distinguishes between those who are possessed by the Devil (such as the man who had committed the Oedipal act with his mother) and those who are controlled externally by a physical, diabolical force. Examples include the legend of the cursing child, in which a cadodemonic puppeteer operates a young boy's face and jaw (Fig. 129). The book's prelector has attacked the devil but not the young boy, as if condemning the boy's behavior without erasing him altogether. In the legend of the hermit who saw a good and a bad soul ascending from two dead men, the structure of the miniature pits the two dead men against each other, with the devils on the left (or *sinister*) side of the divider (Fig. 130). As the two souls are lifted from their respective bodies, the one lifted by an angel is spirited away symmetrically and



Fig. 129 Folio from Gautier de Coinci, *Les miracles de Notre Dame*, with a miniature depicting the legend of the cursing boy. Paris, 1327. HKB, Ms. 71 A 24, fol. 150v

peacefully and only needs a single escort, while the soul destined for hell pitches and flails, and is ferried by two hairy heavies. The prelector has annihilated the devils' faces here, leaving only one red tongue in a sea of black blur. One can imagine the audience cheering as the prelector defaced the antagonists.

Not all the devils have been attacked. For example, the illumination on folio 23v, which visualizes the legend of the monk adoring St Peter, has not been rubbed. This suggests that the person who inflicted the damage was not a silent reader who slavishly went through the entire manuscript to destroy devils, but rather that the damage occurred during performance, and that the public reader simply skipped over some stories but told other favorite ones several times. Perhaps the audience was more interested in



Fig. 130 Folio from Gautier de Coinci, *Les miracles de Notre Dame*, with a miniature depicting the legend of the hermit who saw a good and a bad soul ascending from two dead men. Paris, 1327. HKB, Ms. 71 A 24, fol. 157r

hearing about the man who, possessed by the Devil, cuts off his own privates, than about the man who worships St Peter rather than Mary and is tortured for his choice. In fact, the prelector has largely ignored the stories concerning women protagonists. For example, the legend of the woman recovering her sight (folio 166r) remains in pristine condition. Likewise, the prelector either skipped or did not feel the need to animate the legend of the nun chased away from the cloister for burning the Devil (folio 25v). The illuminator, rendering his work in strong gestural language, gave his subject—a nun in a habit—large hands athletically outstretched in prayer as she tries to defend herself against a pit of barking monsters. Her plight, however, did not attract the performer, and there are no traces on the page



Fig. 131 Folio from Gautier de Coinci, *Les miracles de Nostre Dame*, with a miniature depicting the legend of the priest who lost a place in heaven for committing lechery. Paris, 1327. HKB, Ms. 71 A 24, fol. 119v, and detail

to indicate that he animated this one before a live audience. The prelector was both selecting and interpreting the stories and making meaning of the images for the audience. In short, he was curating the manuscript's public reception.

In addition to rubbing out devils, the prelector directed attacks against non-diabolic figures, and other body parts and objects. On folio 119v the image illustrates the legend of the priest who lost a place in heaven for committing lechery (Fig. 131), which rests upon the idea of touching: the lecherous priest is reaching out with both hands to grope the woman at the table. The left side of the image—where the priest's touching is taking place—has been smeared, and there is a visible fingerprint on the tablecloth, as if the prelector were also groping the woman and reaching approximately for her knees.

Folio 61v depicts the discovery of the real sex of St Euphrosyne: when she was unveiled, her uncloaked body revealed her sex. The prelector has wiped out her face, even though she is a saint. More important for him and his audience was the fact that she dressed as a man (Fig. 132).¹⁵¹ Her long slender neck—the most feminine feature that the illuminator gives her—has been annihilated. When she is uncloaked, both her accusers and the storyteller attack her femininity. This pattern of wear shows that the prelector did not want to attack the character's face but was more meticulous in his choices.¹⁵²

Likewise, in the story of the Devil defenestrating a child, the reader has attacked the antagonist in specific ways in order to nuance the performance (Fig. 133). The story takes place in Laon, a place of pilgrimage especially for the blind. A boy called Gaubert has travelled there and is staying in a hotel several storeys tall. The Devil, disguised

151 For a recent discussion on this topic, see Roland Betancourt, "Transgender Lives in the Middle Ages through Art, Literature, and Medicine," published online in conjunction with the exhibition *Outcasts: Prejudice and Persecution in the Medieval World*, Getty Museum, January 30–April 8, 2018, https://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/outcasts/downloads/betancourt_transgender_lives.pdf

152 This story of St Euphrosyne does not come from Coinci but was a fellow traveller with *Miracles de Notre Dame*. I am grateful to Anna Russakoff for clarifying the relationships among these texts. See also: Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers: Commercial Book Producers in Medieval Paris, 1200–1500*, 2 vols. (Harvey Miller, 2000), Vol. I, pp. 191–202; Amy Victoria Ogden, *Hagiography, Romance and the Vie de Sainte Eufrosine* (Edward C. Armstrong Monographs, 2003); Elizabeth Morrison and Anne D. Hedeman, *Imagining the Past in France History in Manuscript Painting, 1250–1500* (J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010), pp. 141–144.



Fig. 132 Folio from Gautier de Coinci, *Les miracles de Nostre Dame*, with a miniature depicting the discovery of the real sex of St Euphrosyne. Paris, 1327.HKB, Ms. 71 A 24, fol. 61v, and detail



Fig. 133 Folio from Gautier de Coinci, *Les miracles de Notre Dame*, with a miniature depicting the legend of the child defenestrated by the Devil and caught by Mary. Paris, 1327. HKB, Ms. 71 A 24, fol. 165r, and detail



Fig. 134 Folio from Gautier de Coinci, *Les miracles de Notre Dame*, with a miniature depicting the story of the illicit love child thrown in the toilet. Paris, 1327. HKB, Ms. 71 A 24, fol. 14r, and detail

as a man, pushes him out of a window. The fall breaks all the bones in the child's body. The shattered boy calls upon Mary, who sets him on his feet. One can imagine that the prelector—upon arriving at the story's climax—turned the open manuscript toward the audience, reached toward the miniature, and rubbed the hairy brown monster with a gesture of contemptuous negation. Signs of deliberate damage, still visible on the page, show that the prelector attacked the face of the Devil but also targeted his arms, which were the body parts the Devil used to perform his diabolical deed. Indeed, the Devil's shoulder has been rubbed all the way down to the parchment. Perhaps the prelector punctuated his theatrical gesture with a disdainful grunt. Rewarded by the audience for eliciting their engagement, the prelector used the same attention-grabbing gesture every time he revisited this story. The abrasion is clearly the result of several retellings.

Traces of wear reveal a similar performance in the story of the illicit love child: a woman is impregnated by a cleric and then throws the baby into a toilet (Fig. 134). The prelector's attack is even more pointed here. He condemns the woman by striking at her hands, as they are the agents perpetrating the infanticide. By licking his thumb and attacking the book, the prelector further dramatizes his performance, adding rhetorical flourish as if exorcising the woman's sin. One can imagine the audience booing when she is about to drop the baby and cheering when the reader condemns the act. In showing his disapproval with an iconoclastic gesture, the prelector once again condemns not the woman *per se*, but her behavior, by rubbing out the hand that is casting the child to its mucky death.

Later in the book, when the prelector reaches folio 176r, he tells his audience the story of the woman who has three children by her uncle. He shows his audience the illumination during the part of the story when one of the seductions takes place, but he does not touch the picture: a man at the French court would hardly be in a position to condemn infractions of consanguinity or extramarital sexuality.

I have shown how the illuminator anticipated the audience for the volume of Gautier de Coinci's miracles and that the damage to the miniatures reveals how the manuscript might have been used, not just as a substrate for the text, but as a prop in the narration of the tales. The attitude toward pregnancy and childhood is sanitized, aimed at a

courtly male audience, and its imagery therefore contrasts sharply with that in manuscripts made for women's private devotion. Like the image of Mary represented in the frontispiece miniature, the prelector can command the book and vanquish the illuminated Devil. Consequently, the late medieval reader and the audience he entrances fight alongside Mary and thereby become heroic players in the narrative.

I have argued that the prelector animates the images by physically interacting with them in front of his audience. Those audience members therefore witnessed a way of interacting with books that gave the image utmost relevance. The prelector will return the book to its shelf in the library. When a subsequent reader opens its pages, he will encounter the rubbed-out devils, the dramatic censure, the animated vomit, the bare elbows of the nefarious defenestrator, and other traces of the former performance. Through this encounter with the used book, the reader would learn a new way of reading and integrating outrage at the antagonists—by striking their images. Having become a prop in a dramatic performance, the book shapes the subsequent reception of its images.

II. Political touching

Just as tactile gestures between nobles were used to establish hierarchies or to publicly display amicability, touching also had political significance in certain illuminated manuscripts. The *Estoria de Espanna*, started for Alfonso X (1221–1284) around 1272–74, contains an account of Spain's history from Noah to Alfonso II of Asturias. The elaborated painted first folio did not co-originate with the rest of the manuscript (Ms. Escorial Y.I.2, fol. 1v; Fig. 135). It depicts Alfonso X, the Learned King, presenting a copy of the work to his heir, surrounded by members of the Castilian royalty in the upper tier, and lesser courtiers in the lower. The top of the sheet contains a laudatory poem in Latin about the virtues of Alfonso X, composed in a commemorative tone and written in a red display script, with decorated uncials and decorative line fillers between the stanzas: it is written in the language of ritual recitation, distinguished from the quotidian prose in dark brown ink in the rest of the manuscript. At the bottom of the folio, a later hand has inscribed a loose translation of the Latin poem into Castilian. Laura Fernández suggests that the vernacular

translation was inscribed in the fourteenth century, during the reign of Alfonso XI.¹⁵³ Just as the selection of his heir was controversial in the thirteenth century, so too has the identity of the figures in the image been debated by scholars. Alfonso's oldest son, Ferdinand de la Cerda, died at the age of 20 in 1275, and the next in line for the crown should have been Ferdinand's son, also called Alfonso. However, Ferdinand's brother, Sancho, built allies among the nobles and had himself declared King of Castile, León, and Galicia in 1284. He ruled as Sancho IV until his death in 1295. A powerful minority contested Sancho IV's legitimacy, but the new king cemented power by executing those who wanted to restore Alfonso de la Cerda, the son of Ferdinand, to power. In the image, whether the figure next to Alfonso X represents Ferdinand de la Cerda, Sancho IV, or Manuel, the youngest brother of Alfonso X, who later played a role in the dynastic conflicts against Alfonso, depends on the date of the leaf. Relevant to the context of the current book, the image has been heavily and deliberately touched.

Both Laura Fernández Fernández and Rosa Maria Rodríguez Porto have interpreted the image based on the signs of wear on the frontispiece miniature.¹⁵⁴ Two of the figures have been smeared to oblivion: Alfonso X and the figure seated to his right (the one apparently receiving the sword of rule). The latter's identity is uncertain because the exact type of hat he wears has been obscured by abrasion, but it is probably a short cap like those of the others at his hierarchical level. Alfonso is presenting a book to a man standing to his left, richly dressed in silk trimmed with gold. Following Ramón Menéndez Pidal, who published the *Estoria de Espanna* in 1906, Rodríguez Porto considers this figure to be Alfonso's heir, Ferdinand de la Cerda (1255-1275). This would suggest that the folio was made before 1275, but such an early dating is far from certain. Although Ferdinand de la Cerda died at the age of 20, he managed to have two sons first. Perhaps the gold-clad figure represents Ferdinand's son, Alfonso de la Cerda (d. 1284), who was next in line for the crown.

153 Laura Fernández Fernández, "Transmisión del Saber – Transmisión del Poder: La Imagen de Alfonso X en la *Estoria de España*, Ms. Y-I-2, RBME," *Anales de Historia del Arte* (2010), pp. 187–210, pp. 205–206, also notes the disjunctions between the "frontispiece" and the rest of the manuscript

154 Fernández (2010); and Rosa Maria Rodríguez Porto, "Inscribed/Effaced. The *Estoria de Espanna* after 1275," *Hispanic Research Journal*, 13(5) (2012), pp. 387–406, both with further literature.



Fig. 135 Folio painted after 1284 (?) depicting Alfonso X flanked by courtiers, inserted into the *Estoria de Espanna*, made ca. 1272–74. Madrid, El Escorial, Ms. Y.I.2, fol. 1v (photographed after restoration)

If so, then a date for the sheet between 1275 and 1284 is likely. Both Fernández and Porto see the smearing as hostile defacement, with Porto reading the miniature as one wiped with a wet cloth, a “criminal



Fig. 136 The same folio (Madrid, El Escorial, Ms. Y.I.2, fol. 1v), as printed in Diego Catalán, *De la silva textual al taller historiográfico alfonsí* (Madrid, Fundación Ramón Menéndez Pidal, 1997), Pl. 1 (photographed before restoration)

instrument,” in what amounted to an iconoclastic act. In short, they see an image attacked and effaced as a result of political upheaval. In their

interpretations, Sancho IV or someone in his court committed the deed, wiping away and thereby mutilating his foe, Alfonso de la Cerda.

Some time between 1997 and 2010, the Escorial cleaned the frontispiece in the name of restoration (Fig. 136). Significant smearing is evident in the pre-restoration image, whose comet-tails have been erased during restoration. Whereas the excess paint smeared onto raw parchment was swabbed away in a conservation studio, the paint losses on the figures have not been filled in or repainted (as would be the convention for a panel painting). Therefore, the restored image clearly reveals the losses, but mitigates the smears. However, when we are looking for motive for the damage, its shape, which indexes the causal gesture, is more important than its extent. In the pre-restoration photograph, it is clear that several gestures were in play, and that multiple people inflicted the damage. Some members of the Castilian court deliberately touched figures, and others hesitantly touched the architecture. Damaging gestures included those directed at Alfonso X's head, torso, feet, and at the area above his head; those directed at the two figures at Alfonso's right hand; and those directed at the architecture; as well as brushing strokes that extended beyond the frame in all directions, toward the upper, lower, and lateral margins. To my mind, these marks are consistent with multiple people each reaching into the proffered book to touch the folio out of veneration, not out of spite. To touch a figure's feet is to demonstrate humility and submission. (For an example, see Vol. 1, Fig. 29.) These gestures were enacted over a series of occasions, performed by multiple members of a courtly circle each touching the image in turn.

The damaging gestures may have accompanied an act of oath-taking, as the smears resemble those seen in the *Vows of the Peacock* manuscripts (to be discussed below), for which, I propose, French courtly audience members took turns ritualistically touching images with gestures related to pronouncing a public testimony. The fact that the trails extend in several directions can be explained when one imagines the events: multiple courtiers arranged around the book (not unlike the arrangement depicted in the image itself), and each person reached his hand toward the image to touch it. The multiple incidents created a diffuse pattern, since each person touched the folio in a slightly different way and from a different angle. When the courtiers withdrew their hands, some left trails of loosened pigment. These trails point in the direction in which

each participant stood around the open book. In this scenario, the damage was not made by a wet cloth, since wet cloths swipe a broader swathe and introduce significant moisture, which would cause the parchment to buckle. (See Fig. 9 above.) Furthermore, cloths remove pigment, yet I see pigment that has been smeared and rearranged, but not removed from the page in significant quantities. What Fernández and Rodríguez Porto regard as a single act of violence, I see as multiple acts of veneration. This alone is telling: love and hate can result in nearly indistinguishable forms of destruction.

I do agree with Rodríguez Porto that certain other manuscripts in circulation at the Spanish court were indeed touched in such a way as to deliberately obliterate particular figures; for example, someone has purposely attacked a figure in the thirteenth-century copy of *Las Cantigas de Santa María*, a compilation of Marian miracles set to music that was commissioned during the reign of Alfonso X. In his will, he stipulated that the manuscripts he commissioned be kept in the church where he was to be buried, and that the songs in the *Cantigas* be performed on the Virgin's feast days. This confirms, as their content suggests, that the songs were designed to be sung in performance which, of course, could have involved animating the illuminations with physical gesture. *Las Cantigas*, which are now in the Escorial library (Ms. B.I.2), contain many illuminations depicting musicians, usually two per frame. One of these shows two lutists, a dark-skinned Moor and a light-skinned European, whose racial identities are reiterated in their contrasting dress. In modern times this miniature has been used in innumerable books and websites to demonstrate the religious and racial tolerance of Andalusia, where Jews, Muslims, and Christians worked, played chess, and made music together. What no one has noted, however, is that the face of the Muslim has been rubbed in a violent manner. Specifically, his eyes have been gouged with a sharp instrument in a back-and-forth gesture of erasure or negation. Given that many of the songs within *Las Cantigas* emphasize the Muslims' failure to worship Mary, this anti-Islamic sentiment could have prompted the audience's negative response to the image. The way in which the figure of the Muslim has been handled (rubbed in short, quick gestures, and gouged, in what may be a singular attack) contrasts starkly with the way in which the figure of Alfonso has been abraded (with long gestures performed over multiple occurrences). Given the

strong contrast in handling of the two images, the readers of the *Estoria de Espanna* were probably praising Alfonso, not symbolically destroying him.

Moreover, other contextual clues, plus close attention to the patterns of wear on the frontispiece, reveal the positive motivation behind the damage. Whereas Rodriguez Porto suggests that the instrument of smearing was a wet cloth, I envision it as several wet and/or dry fingers, and the emotion behind the actions as exaltation, not wrath. Whereas deliberate destruction of a painted image often involves a vigorous side-to-side motion targeting the face, causing destruction in a single event, the gestures here are vertical, move through the entire face and body, and are the result of cumulative events. Those who touched the image also touched the architectural towers, part of the framing device around Alfonso. Touching decoration seems to accompany acts of reverence, not of destruction: participants wanted to make their mark on the page, as it were, but some opted to touch the frame rather than the figure. It is as if the person touching the image wanted to deflect some of his attention onto the decoration in order to preserve the image, in the same way that an osculatory target in a missal deflects wear away from the figure and onto an abstract shape instead. Essential to this act of touching was to demonstrate and register one's group belonging.

Given that the frontispiece of the *Estoria de Espanna* has different ruling, text block, and script from the rest of the book, and that it was painted on a singleton folio by a different illuminator from that of the other illuminations in the manuscript, there is no reason to assume that the folio was made during the same campaign of work as the manuscript it prefaces. Laura Fernández Fernández, calling attention to these codicological features, also points out that the architectural frame—the very one that has been touched—does not appear elsewhere in the Alphonsian repertoire. This image therefore departs from the large body of work—which includes *Las Cantigas* and the histories—made during Alfonso X's lifetime (1221-1284). I will not contribute to the debate about the dating of the leaf or the identities of the figures in the top row. However, I would like to revisit the chronology of the damage.

I suggest that performance involving the leaf encompassed an oral recitation of the laudatory Latin poem to a gathered courtly audience,

followed by the more easily graspable vernacular version, together with ritual touching of the image, as if to praise the memory of Alfonso X. But when did this take place? A scribe in the fourteenth century added the vernacular translation of the laudatory poem at the bottom of the page. Because Rodríguez Porto argues that smudging occurred in the thirteenth century, during the reign of Sancho IV's, she therefore must argue that the fourteenth-century scribe wrote on top of the smears. However, this cannot be the correct order of events. First, a scribe would not write over darkened, damaged parchment; instead, he would have avoided the marred areas. Moreover, the ink from the poem is also smeared, as the pre-restoration photograph shows. Therefore, the vernacular poem was inscribed on clean parchment, before the folio was ritualistically touched in the fourteenth century. The touching therefore postdated the vernacular poem. It did not condemn Alfonso, advance Sancho IV's legitimacy, or even take place during Sancho IV's reign. Instead, the touching post-dated the inscription of the vernacular poem in the fourteenth century and may have taken place during the reign of Alfonso XI (1311-1350). If the users had wanted to mutilate Alfonso X, they would have attacked the encomiastic poem, and they would not have bothered to translate it into the vernacular to make it more accessible. Rather, the courtiers handled the image glorifying Alfonso X in a manner consistent with the other fourteenth-century examples discussed in this volume: with gestures cementing group identity around a book. As an analogue, one can turn to the image depicting knights swearing an oath to King Louis of Taranto (Fig. 47 above).

Those who "conserved" the leaf in the twentieth century — by cleaning its grime and removing its smudges — obscured the use-history of this leaf. Dirt, dust, mutilations, fingerprints, gobs of wax, and trails from targeted touching all provide clues to a manuscript's biography. To clean a manuscript is to make its history less knowable.

III. Rubbing romances

Medieval courtly audiences sought entertainment and moral education from literature that would have been read aloud. A significant number of surviving manuscripts have signs of targeted wear, apparently incurred during public performances of the sort described above. Populating the court were writers and translators including Laurent de Premierfait (c. 1370 – 1418), who wrote *Des cas des nobles hommes et femmes*, an enlarged translation of *De casibus virorum illustrium* by Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375). At least one copy, written and illuminated in Paris around 1412, has been rubbed in a particular way, at the story of Anthony and Cleopatra (Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. Ser. n. 12766, fol. 236r; Fig. 137). The illuminator has shown the couple lying on a plinth, something between a bed and a tomb, to illustrate their double death. When Cleopatra saw that Anthony had stabbed himself, she held an adder to her breast to receive its venomous bite. The prelector has acted out this dramatic demise by striking at her breast as if his finger were the adder.¹⁵⁵ In so doing, he has heightened the drama of his performance. This gesture points to a large number of similar gestures, whose tracks can be found in courtly manuscripts.

When considering the image of Anthony and Cleopatra in the context of its book, one can think about how the book was handled during performance. The miniature fills the width of a column on a page which is quite large: the manuscript is folio-sized. The miniaturist has omitted extraneous details, simplifying the image to its salient components: two dead people on a plinth, languishing under their respective instruments of death. One can imagine the reader, pronouncing the words aloud, and when reaching the climax of the story, drawing the audience's attention to the image and enacting Cleopatra's death, to make it palpable.

¹⁵⁵ The illuminator has depicted two adders, but only one is severely rubbed, as if the prelector had aimed his finger very carefully. For a discussion of the image (although not the damage), see Anne D. Hedeman, *Translating the Past: Laurent de Premierfait and Boccaccio's 'De Casibus'* (J. Paul Getty Museum, 2008), pp. 178–179.



Fig. 137 Folio with the story of Anthony and Cleopatra, in *Des cas des nobles hommes et femmes*. Paris, ca. 1412. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Ser. n. 12766, fol. 236r, and detail

A. Performing dramatically

In most images—especially those made at court—that depict aurality, the audiences listening to a prelector are single sex. Images in a copy of the collected works by Christine de Pisan depict an all-female audience gathered around a book, not having it read to them, but witnessing its presentation (LBL, Harley Ms 4431; Fig. 138). The image shows Christine de Pisan presenting the book to Isabeau of Bavaria, queen consort of Charles VI of France, who receives the manuscript while framed by elegant furnishings. The manuscript also has a written dedication to queen Isabeau. She also receives the attention of all of the women in the room. Some of its images have been rubbed as if in the service of a dramatic performance, possibly to a female audience.¹⁵⁶

Some of the stories in the manuscript, including the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, are retellings of Greek myths that were also included in Christine de Pisan's *L'Epître d'Othéa* (Fig. 139). Late in life, King Peleus captured Thetis, a sea nymph, who tried to escape his clutches by transforming into various forces of nature. Eventually, however, Peleus caught and married her. They invited all the gods to their wedding except Eris, the goddess of the "twist," who crashed the party anyway. The accompanying miniature shows the wedding banquet, where the goddesses wear crowns. At the top table, King Peleus sits among other men, apparently Zeus and Poseidon, who had both competed for Thetis's hand in marriage (but backed off when it was prophesized that she would bear a son greater than his father).

The women who sit at the lower two tables converse rather than eat. Eris sows discord by gifting the wedding couple a golden apple, inscribed with the words "To the fairest." This eventually becomes the prize in the judgment of Paris, the event which will catalyze the Trojan War. In the image, Thetis is seated at the lower table, with her faithful dog at her feet. Several of the other goddesses fuss over her belly, as she is pregnant with Achilles. More goddesses and well-dressed women sit at the second table, where a smug, crowned figure dominates the middle. This is Eris. She is the only figure who stares out of the picture

¹⁵⁶ Graeme Small, 2023, pp. 136-137 discusses mixed-sex audiences of courtly literature, with further references.



Fig. 138 Folio from the collected works by Christine de Pisan with a miniature depicting Christine de Pisan presenting her book to Isabeau of Bavaria. Paris, ca. 1410–14. LBL, Harley Ms 4431, fol. 3r

plane. The represented women, as well as the live audience, are keenly aware of haughty Eris at the center.

A reader or prelector has drawn attention to Eris by touching the miniature. In particular she (or he) has pointed out the goddess of discord by repeatedly touching her face and neck, with a back-and-forth gesture, as if acting out “discord” with a finger, while at the same time negating or punishing Eris.¹⁵⁷ The reader has also targeted the golden object in front of Eris and has smeared the black ink that had visually rendered the gold disc into a three-dimensional plate. Perhaps the reader has, in drawing listeners into this image, attacked this item so

¹⁵⁷ The manuscript’s first and second owners were both women. Christine de Pisan gifted it to Isabeau of Bavaria, who gave it to Jacquetta of Luxembourg, who married the Duke of Bedford and moved to England in 1433. Jacquetta inscribed her name in Harley 4431. See Sarah Wilma Watson, “Jacquetta of Luxembourg: A Female Reader of Christine de Pisan in England,” *Women’s Literary Culture and the Medieval Canon* (blog) (27 February 2017). <https://blogs.surrey.ac.uk/medievalwomen/2017/02/27/jacquetta-of-luxembourg-a-female-reader-of-christine-de-pisan-in-england/>



Fig. 139 Folio from the collected works by Christine de Pisan with a miniature depicting the Wedding of Peleus and Thetis. Paris, ca. 1410–14. LBL, Harley Ms. 4431, fol. 122v, and detail

that it plays the role of “golden apple” in an animated retelling of the story.

The reader has also touched the men at the top table, particularly the one in blue. This is apparently Zeus (aka Jupiter), who obtained the golden apple. As if telling the story of the apple’s peregrinations, the reader has traced the apple’s trajectory from Eris to Zeus, who is pointing to it in the image, just as the reader was pointing to it in lived reality. Zeus would then give the apple to Hermes and instruct the winged messenger to deliver it to Paris. What happened after that was war and chaos.

In the absence of a guide, this image is difficult to parse. The numerous figures are not labelled, it is not clear who the women are, the men also look alike and have few distinguishing features, and the actions (eating and gossiping) are not particularly dramatic. However, one can imagine that having a storyteller re-tell the story of Thetis's wedding while pointing at the figures in the image and distinguishing them would make the re-telling vivid and immediate. In other words, the book's reader dramatically portrayed the prophetic events on the page with a finger to give clarity to a complex narrative, while also making a somewhat static image more tantalizing.

Similar signs of wear—which may signal dramatic performances that enhanced the vocalization—appear in manuscripts containing a variety of genres read and used at court, including Arthurian romances.¹⁵⁸ In surviving illuminated medieval romances, the amount of wear is often extreme (yet unstated by catalogues and commentators). For example, a manuscript made in Northern France in the 1260s, which contains the *Quest for the Holy Grail* and the *Death of King Arthur*,¹⁵⁹ has both inadvertent wear (brown crud in the lower and outer margins) and dramatic targeted wear (concentrated in the initial) (BKB Ms. 9627–28; Fig. 140). It opens with a historiated initial whose paint has flaked off to the point of near-illegibility. It may represent King Arthur and his knights taking leave from Queen Guinevere. The page, and indeed the entire manuscript, has been well-read and handled, but the degree of wear on the margins does not match that of the initial, in which about half of the paint has been worn off. This degree of pigment loss is consistent with the result of many readers who systematically touched the initial.

There are two major reasons for readers to touch an initial in this way. First: reader-performers touched images, including historiated initials, to draw the audience into the book and to animate the stories, as discussed earlier in this chapter.¹⁶⁰ Second: readers touched initials to

158 See Frank Brandsma, Carolyne Larrington, Corinne Saunders (eds), *Emotions in Medieval Arthurian Literature: Body, Mind, Voice* (D. S. Brewer, 2015).

159 These texts are sometimes attributed to the Welshman Walter (Gautier) Map (ca. 1140-ca. 1208). Their authorship is not important for the current discussion.

160 I have not performed a statistical analysis of targeted wear in manuscripts used at court, because doing so would constitute its own study. Among the many instances



Fig. 140 Opening folio in the *Quest for the Holy Grail*, with an illuminated initial. Northern France, 1260s. BKB, Ms. 9627–28, fol. 1r, and detail

mark the beginning of a session of reading. The topic of touching initials will be taken up again below.

Many Lancelot cycles—including Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Douce 199—contain images heavily worn through deliberate touch. Made in France, *ca.* 1425–50, the manuscript measures 352 × 246 mm (with a text block of 238 × 132 mm) and comprises 324 parchment folios. It is large enough that between ten and twelve people could have gathered around to see the images with ease. Its mediocre parchment contains repairs from the time of production, as if the book had been designed for utility rather than as a showpiece. Fingerprints, smudges, darkened areas, and dripped liquid mar its interior, attesting to intense social activity around the manuscript.

The painted and gilt initials and illuminations that announce each new story in Douce 199 have been intensely rubbed (Fig. 141). The first miniature depicts Lancelot's encounter with the knight Agravaing, with

of manuscripts handled in this way are Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Rawl. D. 899, in which a reader appears to have traced the depicted action with his finger.

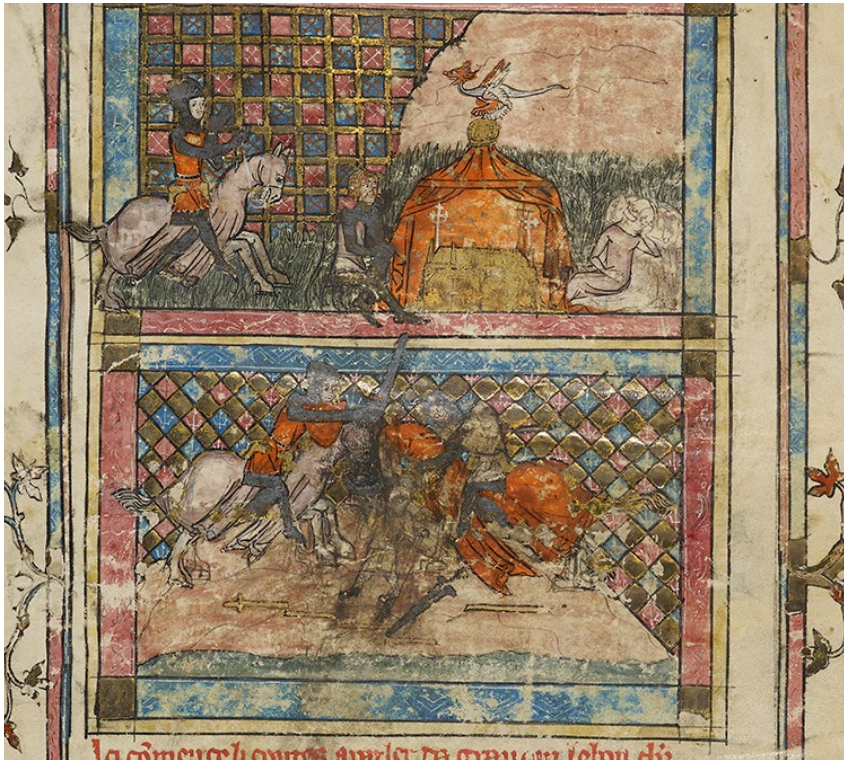


Fig. 141 Folio in a Lancelot manuscript, with Lancelot's encounter with Agravain.
France, ca. 1425–50. OBL, Ms. Douce 199, fol. 1r, and detail



Fig. 142 Folio in a manuscript with Arthurian romances, with the Story of Guerrehet and Sagremor depicted in a historiated initial. France, 1290–1300. New Haven, Beinecke Library Ms. 229, fol. 3v, and detail

the upper register showing Lancelot approaching a camp on horseback; the lower shows Agravaïn and a damsel, and Lancelot and Agravaïn again, this time at a tournament.¹⁶¹ The young Agravaïn had been warned to stay away from Lancelot, but he does the opposite and challenges the famous knight. In this uneven combat, Agravaïn breaks his lance, which lies in pieces on the ground. After that, the two fight on horseback. Lancelot (who moves from left to right, the direction of strength in most Western narratives) charges Agravaïn and wounds him grievously. The prelector has dramatized this duel by severely rubbing Agravaïn and even jabbing several times with a sharp instrument, a miniature sword brought to bear on the parchment. In other words, the reader himself embodies the protagonist by physically attacking representations of his foe.

The dramatic and physical reading continues. In the next scene, Agravaïn's brother Guerrehet, infuriated, attacks Lancelot and is thrown

161 For a discussion of the text, see Frank Brandsma, *The Interlace Structure of the Third Part of the Prose Lancelot* (D. S. Brewer, 2010), pp. 37–48.

from his horse. The illuminator has shown Guerrehet at the center of the miniature, small, horseless, and defeated. If my hypothesis is correct, then to underscore the brother's defeat, the prelector has rubbed Guerrehet's face and hands to dust. The reader has dramatized other illuminations in the manuscript, but none so vigorously as this series of decisive combats.

Traces of such performative reading behavior appear in a wide array of Lancelot manuscripts, including Beinecke 229 (New Haven, Yale University).¹⁶² This manuscript contains conspicuous stains and fingerprints—inadvertent wear—indicating that it was put to use, as well as showing signs of targeted wear. Among the touched miniatures is one within the story of Guerrehet (Fig. 142). It has been so damaged that the subject is difficult to discern from the abraded imagery and the story can only be gleaned from the text: Guerrehet encounters a woman whose husband has forced her to live as a chambermaid. In the top register of the image, another knight, Sagremor, arrives, and both knights are invited to lodge; however, the woman's husband becomes suspicious of the two knights and surrounds himself with bodyguards. The bottom register shows the main action of the story: when the husband strikes his wife, Guerrehet and Sagremor kill the husband, his brother, and nephews.

Patterns of wear in both the upper and lower registers suggest that the prelector has acted out the results of this attack by striking the image of the wife (whose figure is now nearly illegible), as if to enact the vile deed that launched the ensuing bloodbath. Then the prelector has rubbed out the vanquished knights, thereby violently rehearsing the combat and their demise. This act, performed with the prelector's body and voice, must have raised the dramatic tension of the story, as he recounted the *mêlée* with his finger on the painted page. One can imagine that the audience loved it, and demanded this story repeatedly, and that each time he did this, his dramatizations further damaged the book. This, at least, is a plausible explanation for the extensive damage, which has left the figures blurry and indistinct. The reader's gestures have amplified the mayhem of the story.

Other figures in the Beinecke manuscript have been touched deliberately, such as the figure of Lancelot on fol. 31r (Fig. 143). In that

162 Elizabeth M. Willingham, ed., *Essays on the Lancelot of Yale 229* (Brepols, 2007); see also <https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3433279>



Fig. 143 Folio in a manuscript with Arthurian romances, with a historiated initial depicting Lancelot enthroned and flanked by attendants. France, 1290–1300. New Haven, Beinecke Library Ms. 229, fol. 31r, and detail

image, Lancelot is seated among other characters, and only Lancelot's face has been rubbed, as if the prelector were drawing the audience's attention into the book and to the hero's face in particular. The gesture has changed from the previous example, where the prelector must have moved his finger vigorously to act out the mêlée. Here he has a different purpose—to point out Lancelot—and the gesture is slower and more precise. The reader's gestures aim to intensify the experience of the audience members and draw them into the stories. The marginal decoration reiterates this intention, with numerous images of figures blowing horns (such as on fol. 14r). The whole decorative program elevates the act of listening, by blowing the content of the book off the page and beyond!

B. Taking oaths on birds

A large range of courtly romances exhibit signs of targeted wear, and perhaps the most dramatic destruction of images appears in several manuscripts containing the long poems *Les Voeux du Paon* (*The Vows of the Peacock*) and *Le Restor du Paon* (*The Restoration of the Peacock*)—a pair of *chansons de geste* written in 1312.¹⁶³ Like other stories in this genre, the text was read aloud so that its audience could enjoy the performance of this particularly ribald tale in rhyming French verse. Full of sex and violence, the story forms part of an Alexander the Great cycle.¹⁶⁴ Central to the plot is a ceremony that cropped up at various medieval European courts: namely, that knights would make vows on birds. Such a ceremony occurred, for example, at the Feast of the Swans that Edward I in England organized on 22 May 1306, on the occasion of his son's dubbing ceremony, when his entire court took vows on a pair of swans.¹⁶⁵ Even more famously, at the Feast of the Pheasant on 17 February 1454, Philip the Good of Burgundy had his courtiers swear on a pheasant that they would take back Constantinople from the Turks.¹⁶⁶ *Les Voeux du Paon* presents a cultural *ménage à trois*: it marries a courtly practice (prelection) with a literary genre (romance) and a legal procedure (oath-swearing).

As the story opens, Clarus, the evil king of Ind, is trying to make Fesonas, the sister of Gadifer, marry him, so Clarus besieges the castle where Fesonas and other knights and ladies reside. While waiting out the siege, the nobles entertain themselves with sophomoric pranks. As a

163 Domenic Leo, *Images, Texts, and Marginalia in a Vows of the Peacock Manuscript (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library Ms G24): With a Complete Concordance and Catalogue of Peacock Manuscripts* (Brill, 2013), provides an overview of the Peacock manuscripts, their textual and visual contents; and Marie-Thérèse Caron, *Les Vœux du Faisan, Noblesse en Fête, Esprit de Croisade: Le Manuscrit Français 11594 de la Bibliothèque Nationale de France* (Brepols, 2003).

164 David J. A. Ross, "Illustrated Medieval Alexander-Books in French Verse," Maud Pérez-Simon and Alison Stones (eds), *Manuscripta Illuminata, 4*, (Brepols, 2019) provides a context for the genre. An intriguing conclusion (in Chapter III) is that the images in the Alexander manuscripts were often reused. It is possible that prelectors who encountered an image in one context would deploy similar gestures with the image when they read it in a different story.

165 See Liel Y. Boyce, *Knightly Bird Vows: A Case Study in Late Medieval Courtly Culture* (MA Thesis, Brigham Young University, 2014), with further references.

166 On the complexity and political meaning of this oath, see Rolf Strøm-Olsen, "Political Narrative and Symbolism in the Feast of the Pheasant (1454)," *Viator*, 46(3) (2015), pp. 317–342. <https://doi.org/10.1484/J.VIATOR.5.108337>



Fig. 144 Opening folio in *Vows of the Peacock*, with a miniature representing Alexander and Cassamus. France, ca. 1340. OBL, Ms Douce 165, fol. 1r

casualty of these, Fesonas's peacock is killed. They make the best of the situation: the peacock is made the object of vows, upon which various knights and ladies swear to perform chivalrous acts, to marry, and to resurrect the peacock in gold. The book's subject, therefore, is courtly entertainment and oaths, and these themes have been played out in the most physical way: several of the miniatures depict the vows, but rough handling — resulting from acting out the scene from the text — has rendered them nearly illegible.

Douce 165 (Oxford, Bodleian), which contains *The Vows* and *Restoration of the Peacock*, has images that are rubbed all over. Virtually all of the miniatures have been damaged, yet the book has no pervasive water damage: neither rain nor flood could have caused this mutilation. Nor can the degree of wear be explained by regular hard use; rather

the defacement most probably resulted from some form of ritualistic practice. This copy was made in Paris around 1340, and its illuminations preface the major narrative breaks. For example, the opening folio, which originally represented Alexander meeting Cassamus (the father of Fesonas and the enemy of Clarus), is heavily worn; its image has received targeted wear which demonstrates that this manuscript must have been handled in a ritualized and dramatizing way (Fig. 144).

Many people have laid their hands on the miniature and at the top of the open book. This is obvious because the paint has not just flaked off, but has been spread around, beyond the frame, and the marginal area at the outer top corner has become shiny with repeated touching. Is it possible that the prelector proffered the manuscript to members of the audience, each of whom touched the image? Did they imagine standing with Alexander as he pledged to fight alongside Cassamus? This stage trick of physically swearing would draw the audience into the book (literally) as the prelector read the text aloud. Each person touching the book once would explain this diffuse pattern of wear. Indeed, the bottom of the folio is also discolored, where the reader would have held the book to extend it to the audience. Given this physical evidence, it is plausible that the ritual surrounding this manuscript combined elements of oath-swearing and courtly entertainment, and that the audience's participation reiterated themes in the story.

The image on folio 10r may depict Gadifer and Clarus fighting on horseback with swords and shields (Fig. 145). Which figure represents the hero remains unclear, but what is clear is that the reader touched the left half of the image violently and repeatedly but left the right half relatively unscathed. I suspect that this is because the audience identified with Gadifer and took him to be the figure on the left. The prelector therefore touched him not in order to rub him out (as a loser), but in order to carry out his oath to fight Clarus. With his finger, the prelector made Gadifer the active party who charges across the page to destroy his foe. In this way, the pattern of wear is not erratic, but reinforces the messages of the text.

Later in the same manuscript an image depicts Betis being crowned "soothfast king" during the festivities in Venus's chamber (Fig. 146). Again, the image is smeared beyond the frame. Plausibly, the prelector may have invited his audience members to symbolically crown the



Fig. 145 Folio in *Vows of the Peacock*, with a miniature depicting Clarus and Gadifer fighting. France, ca. 1340. OBL, Ms Douce 165, fol. 10r

figure of Betis by placing a hand on the miniature. That most of the streaks extend into the right margin with paint that originated within the frame suggests that the touchers stood at the side of the book while the prelector stood at the bottom of the book, from which position he could continue to read. This has resulted in a diffuse pattern of wear, suggesting multiple people touching it, in a ritual of performance that played upon gestures of oath-swearing and king-crowning, and might have even involved an element of codified flirtation; there is no reason to envision a single-sex audience for this text. Participating in this smearing ritual could have formed part of the entertainment itself, as the audience enacted a coronation (such as that described in the coronation book of Charles V), with mirth and mock pomp.

While the manuscript presents scenes of oath-taking, lovemaking, and chess-playing, it also includes several *mêlées*, for example on folios 53v (on horseback) and 58v (with hand-to-hand combat, Fig. 147). The

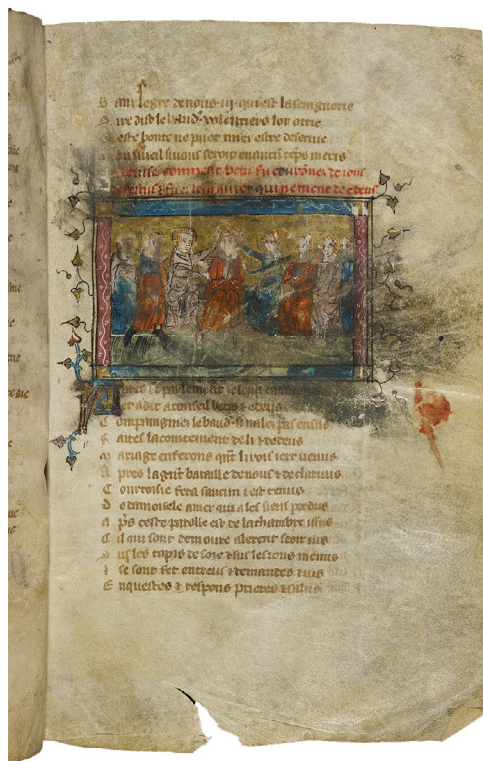


Fig. 146 Folio in *Vows of the Peacock*, with a miniature depicting Betis being crowned soothfast king during the festivities in Venus's chamber. France, ca. 1340. OBL, Ms Douce 165, fol. 24r, and detail

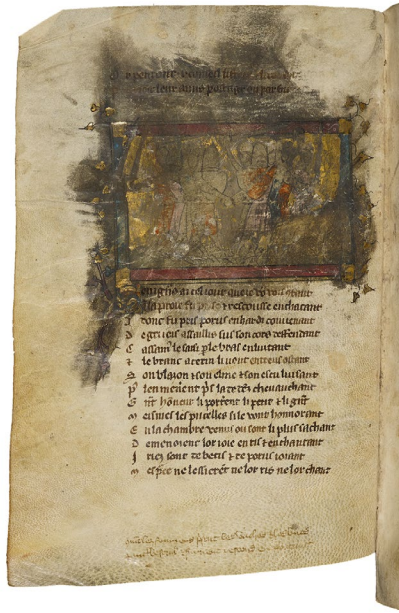


Fig. 147 Folio in *Voys of the Peacock*, with a miniature depicting hand-to-hand combat, possibly the capture of Porrus and Betis, in *Voys of the Peacock*. France, ca. 1340. OBL, Ms Douce 165, fol. 58v, and detail

wear on 58v is heavy, with the paint rubbed down to the underdrawing. The touching epicenter lies at the face-off, where the finger has scrambled the figures and traced the trajectories of the swords. I can

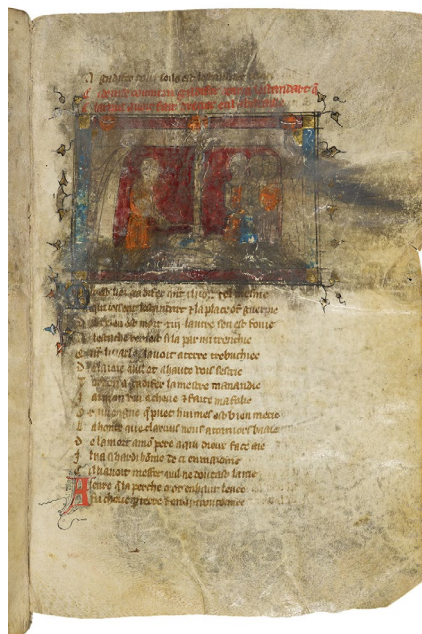


Fig. 148 Folio in *Vows of the Peacock*, with a miniature depicting Gadifer cutting down the standard of Clarus's army. France, ca. 1340. OBL, Ms Douce 165, fol. 113r, and detail

imagine an event, or series of events, in which the prelector enacted the *mêlée* in the image by making his finger dance over the picture, to which the crowd responded with whoops of appreciation, egging him on. If the book's destruction was part of the entertainment of the event, this would explain why it was produced on low-quality parchment full of holes, repairs, and stitches.¹⁶⁷ The parchment itself is yellowish, brittle, and particularly variable between thick and thin, which is a marker of low-grade material. It was designed to be obliterated.

Another miniature in the same manuscript depicts Gadifer cutting down the standard of Clarus's army (Fig. 148). How this miniature was handled is typical for most of the other illuminations—with extreme gestures, but not sharp instruments. This seems to have been carried out using a dry technique, which has disproportionately dislodged the blue pigment from the surface. (Blue pigment powder grains often have a large diameter, a small surface area to volume ratio, and poor adhesion.¹⁶⁸) The gesture may have involved audience members taking quick jabs at the miniature, as if to help Gadifer topple the standard. Again, one can imagine the reader offering the book to the audience to participate in ritualized image-touching, a jocular parody of oath-swearing.

On folio 138r the pattern of wear is different; the page marks the beginning of the second poem in the book, *Le Restor du Paon*. The miniature depicts men standing on the left and women on the right of a peacock on a pedestal, which has been "restored" as a golden statue (Fig. 149). Here the wear is more localized than in other miniatures. It appears that some readers dry-touched the men, and some dry-touched the women, and some the peacock. Therefore, it is possible that members of the audience identified with either the men or the women in the scene

167 Nancy K. Turner shows many examples in which the scribe or decorator calls attention to the repairs in the parchment, sometimes even incorporating them into drolleries. See Nancy K. Turner, "Beyond Repair: Reflections on Late Medieval Parchment Scarf-Joined Repairs," *Journal of Paper Conservation*, 22(1–4) (October 2, 2021), pp. 131–55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18680860.2021.2007040>

168 "Deep blue qualities, which were favored in medieval times, are relatively coarse and the pigment turns pale if it is ground too fine. A larger particle size leads to longer absorption paths of the incident light before reflection and thus a darker appearance, but on the other hand the applicability is becoming worse and it might be too gritty to be used as a pigment." in: W. Vetter, I. Latini, and M. Schreiner, "Azurite in medieval illuminated manuscripts: a reflection-FTIR study concerning the characterization of binding media," *Heritage Science* 7, 21 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40494-019-0262-1>



Fig. 149 Folio in *Vows of the Peacock*, with a miniature depicting men and women flanking a golden peacock on a pedestal. France, ca. 1340. OBL, Ms Douce 165, fol. 138r, and detail

and touched just the appropriate figures, perhaps making their own oaths while identifying with the characters. One can imagine that the narrative, read aloud, created a situation in which the listeners enacted the deeds of the characters by playing out the oaths on the manuscript itself. These stories invited audience participation.

C. Curiosity

A similar pattern of wear appears across many manuscripts read aloud at court, and such reading behavior extends beyond the *Vows of the Peacock*. Guillaume de Lorris wrote *Le Roman de la Rose* in French verse around 1230 entirely to entertain and instruct courtly audiences. He died before he could finish the project, and Jean de Meun (ca. 1240-ca. 1305) completed it by adding some 17,000 lines around 1275.¹⁶⁹ Despite being condemned by reformer and theologian Jean Gerson (1363–1429) as too salacious, the text survives in some 300 manuscripts, many of which date from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, indicating that the poem received sustained interest and continued to be recited over three centuries.¹⁷⁰

In the text, the Lover (*Amant*) recounts a dream, in which he enters a walled garden, where he is attracted to a particular rose that represents the female beloved and her sexuality. Characters including Joy (*Liesse*), Beauty (*Beauté*), Wealth (*Richesse*), and Generosity (*Largesse*) appear in the garden, which belongs to Delight (*Déduit*). The rules of courtly love are laid out through interactions with these allegorical characters. For example, when the Lover tries to steal a kiss from the rose, he cannot; instead, he finds that the rose is suddenly ensconced in impenetrable fortifications. Jean de Meun's contribution recounts innumerable antagonists for the Lover, who is blocked from the rose by Hatred (*Haine*), Iniquity (*Vilenie*), Lawlessness (*Feloniye*), Greed (*Avarice*), Envy (*Envie*), and Jealousy (*Jalousie*), among others. Moreover, Reason (*Raison*) discourages the lover. Nature alone eggs him on: Nature, who encourages human procreation, is the Lover's greatest ally.

169 For the text, see Frances Horgan (ed.), *The Romance of the Rose / Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun*; trans. Frances Horgan (Oxford University Press, 2008).

170 Sylvia Huot, *The Romance of the Rose and Its Medieval Readers: Interpretation, Reception, Manuscript Transmission* (Cambridge University Press, 1993); Sarah Kay, *The Romance of the Rose* (Grant & Cutler, 1995).



Fig. 150 Folio in *Roman de la Rose*, by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun., with a miniature depicting Shame and Fear chasing Danger, and a wet-touched initial. Paris, ca. 1350–1360. HvhB, Ms. 10 B 29, fol. 19r, and detail

Many manuscript copies of the text were illuminated, including one made in Paris in the 1350s (HvhB, Ms. 10 B 29).¹⁷¹ The manuscript brandishes many signs of use, including dripped wax, presumably from a candle, and wet-touched initials (Fig. 150). Several of the images have been touched, including one depicting Nature as a smith (Fig. 151). In some manuscripts, Nature forges babies, and in this one she has inserted and withdrawn a phallic piece of metal into and out of a furnace and is banging it with a hammer on an anvil.¹⁷² If this lump of metal is to become a baby, it will require considerably more hammering. Fortunately, the book's reader seems eager to help. Performed in front of an audience, the

171 For images and a description, see https://access.ecodices.nl/universalviewer/#?manifest=https://access.ecodices.nl/iiif/presentation/MMW_10_B_29/manifest

172 Mechtild Modersohn, *Natura als Göttin im Mittelalter: Ikonographische Studien zu Darstellungen der Personifizierten Natur* (de Gruyter, 1997); Sylvia Huot, "Bodily Peril: Sexuality and the Subversion of Order in Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose*," *Modern Language Review*, 95(1) (2000), pp. 41–61.



Fig. 151 Nature at her forge, in *Roman de la Rose*, by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun. Paris, ca. 1350–1360. HvhB, Ms. 10 B 29, fol. 89r

prelector's actions could have animated the image or made the content more libidinous: *whack! whack! whack!*

The figure is represented against a diaper background of blue and gold, in which each blue diamond contains the fleur-de-lis. The diaper background has been rubbed repeatedly (like that of the death portrait of Michel du Bec, discussed in Vol. 1, Chapter 6), to the point where the neat, geometric rectangles of gold have become globular organic shapes, and the black ink circumscribing them has been redistributed. Was the reader driven by the content of the story to touch the metal for him- or herself, up and down, several times? Was the reader acting out of curiosity about the textured surface of convex metallic squares interspersed with matte-finished high-friction blue and red ones? Did

the reader achieve a micro-thrill of tactility when he or she stroked the patterned background up and down? The reader seems to be reenacting the process of forging, prompted by the subtle knobs in the surface of the painting, and has chosen to do so at the left side of the image, probably because that is where the longest run of uninterrupted textured shapes lies. Or perhaps a private reader was acting out a ritual of personal fertility. Or perhaps a prelector invited the audience members to touch the image and give in to their curiosity, and thereby extend the meaning of Nature. As Aristotle said, all humans by their nature are curious.

IV. Versified religion and history

The same volume with *Le Roman de la Rose* contains a second, lesser-known poem penned by Jean de Meun called the *Testament* (HvhB, Ms. 10 B 29, fols 124r–148r). The two texts were frequent co-travelers. The *Testament*, written in quatrains, begins by evoking the Trinity (Fig. 152). The illuminator has depicted the subject in the form of a Mercy Seat, flanked by male and female votaries. Marginal figures echo the voiced nature of the recitation: the long-eared rabbit and the hound listen attentively, while a monkey and a hybrid man bang a drum and blast a horn. They all reinforce the aural experience of the poem. One can imagine that the prelector turned the book toward the audience, who mirrored the kneeling votaries in the miniature, and that he traced the path of the Holy Spirit from the area beyond the upper margin of the page, down to the represented dove. After doing so, he then touched the decorated initial that represents the inspired words—*inspired* from the same stem as *spirit*—before beginning his own recitation. This and many other manuscripts read aloud at court have smeared initials, indicating that touching the initial publicly was a widespread gesture of the prelector.

The same wet-touching techniques were practiced at Dutch-language courts with manuscripts authored by Jacob van Marlaent. Among his versified translations was the *Rhimebible* (rhyming Bible). One copy was written in Utrecht in 1332 and then illuminated by Michiel van der Borch (HvhB, Ms. 10 B 21).¹⁷³ Its repeated hard use has left signs of inadvertent

173 For a description and images, see <https://manuscripts.kb.nl/show/manuscript/10+B+21>



Fig. 152 Incipit of Jean de Meun's *Testament*, with a Mercy Seat framed by worshippers. Paris, ca. 1350–1360. HvhB, Ms. 10 B 29, fol. 124r, and detail

wear in the lower corners. Its reader has also targeted some of the images in specific ways. Like many readers of all kinds of performative literature, he has touched the first initial (Fig. 153). In this case, the image depicts Christ as *Salvator Mundi*, with his orb and bannered cross staff, as he glances across the fold to acknowledge God creating the world. The reader has touched the background behind Christ with a wet finger several times, near the sign of blessing, as if encountering the depicted gesture with a physical one. Deeper in the manuscript, the reader has enacted additional relevant gestures. For example, at the image depicting Jacob obtaining the blessing of his father Isaac in the presence of Rebecca, the reader has touched Isaac's mouth which pronounces the blessing, and also his fingers formed into the sign of benediction (Fig. 154). It is as if the prelector were acknowledging the character's speech act and tracing its constituent parts.

At the image of Moses and the burning bush, the reader has stroked Moses's ankle and foot downward, as if playing the role of the prophet removing his shoes out of respect before the wondrous sight (Fig. 155). The reader has used a different stroke when encountering the image depicting the Israelites looking at and venerating the brazen serpent as a cure for snake bites (Fig. 156). Here he has jabbed at the page, making



Fig. 153 Prefatory image and opening of Jacob van Maerlant, *Rhimebible*. Utrecht, 1332. HvhB, Ms. 10 B 21, fols 1v–2r, and detail

a twisting, negating motion upon contact. He has attacked the kneeling Israelite, and particularly targeted his folded hands that signify the man's veneration of the serpent, in order to register his moral stance against the threatening idolatry. Many of the images in this manuscript have



Fig. 154 Image depicting Jacob obtaining the blessing of his father Isaac in the presence of Rebecca, in Jacob van Maerlant, *Rhimebible*. Utrecht, 1332. HvhB, Ms. 10 B 21, fol. 15r

not been deliberately touched, but those that have attest to a lively and charged interaction with the images that bring them into a heightened state of moral relevance to the audience members.

Another copy of Jacob van Marlaent's *Rhimebible* (now Berlin, SBB-PK, Germ. fol. 622) was both produced with different parameters and used differently from the copy in The Hague.¹⁷⁴ Berlin Germ. fol. 622 was made in Utrecht in 1321, as indicated by a colophon at the end of the manuscript: "Anno domini .M^o. CCC^o. xxi. fuit finitus liber iste

¹⁷⁴ For a description, see Hermann Degering, *Kurzes Verzeichnis der Germanischen Handschriften der Preussischen Staatsbibliothek*, vol. III: *Die Handschriften in Oktavformat und Register zu Band I-III*, *Mitteilungen aus der Preussischen Staatsbibliothek* (K. W. Hiersemann, 1925), p. 67. As of March 2023, the manuscript has not been digitized.



Fig. 155 Opening in Jacob van Maerlant, *Rhimebible*, with a miniature depicting Moses before the burning bush. Utrecht, 1332. HvhB, Ms., 10 B 21, fols 22v–23r, and detail



Fig. 156 Miniature depicting the Israelites venerating the brazen serpent, Jacob van Maerlant, *Rhimebible*. Utrecht, 1332. HvhB, Ms. 10 B 21, fol. 35r

et scriptus a iacobo filio petri clerico in waterdunis commoranti .xiii. kalend mai" (On the 14th kalends of May in the year of our Lord 1321, this book was finished, and it was written by Jacob, the son of Peter the cleric, in Waterduinen; fol. 98v; Fig. 157). The volume contains historiated initials and Utrecht penwork (Fig. 158). The current binding, applied by H. Hoffmann von Fallersleben, who owned the volume in 1821, consists of medieval parchment cover that was once part of a late fifteenth-century illuminated music manuscript (Fig. 159). Handling this manuscript means *de facto* touching the miniature.

A note before the colophon reveals details about the production of the manuscript. It reads: "Summe xcviij blade. Ende xxxvm vers, hondert ende neghentien vers min" (In sum, there are 98 leaves, and 35,000 lines minus 119). In other words, someone is adding up the number of lines the scribe has copied. When one does the math, the inscription indicates that the scribe has copied 34,881 lines. The calculation is written in a hand different from that of the book, and different again from the scribe's colophon. It would appear that the person holding the purse strings has summed up all of the scribe's labor in order to calculate his payment. If this is true, the copyist is not working for the love of God, but for his daily bread. That would

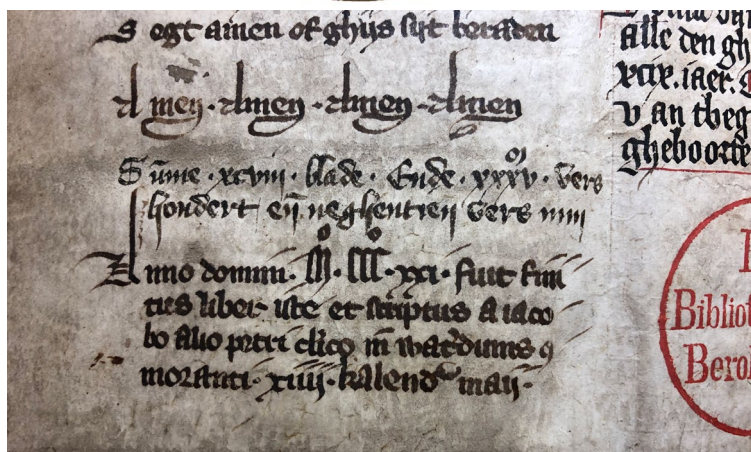
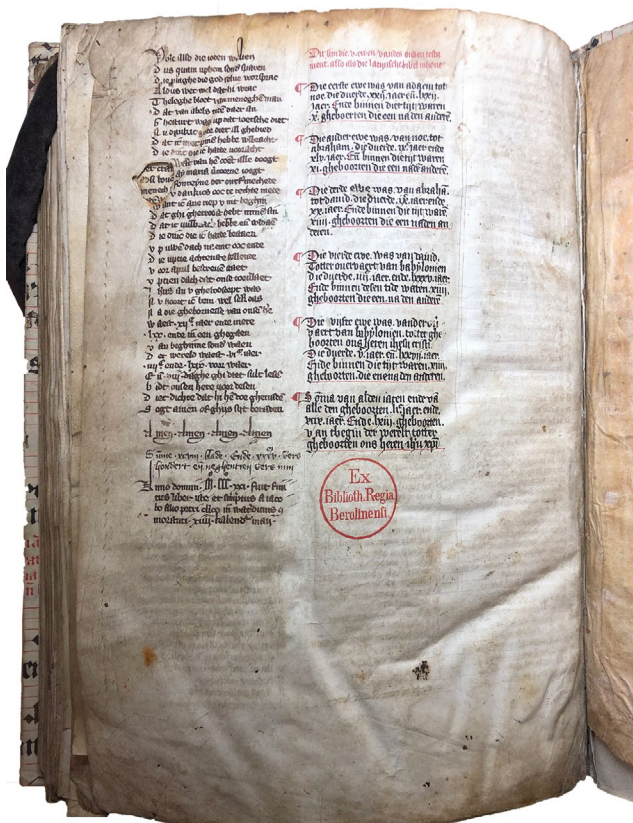


Fig. 157 Final folio in a *Rhimebible* containing the colophon and calculations of the manuscript's line count. Utrecht, 1321. Berlin, SBB-PK, Germ. fol. 622, fol. 98v, and detail

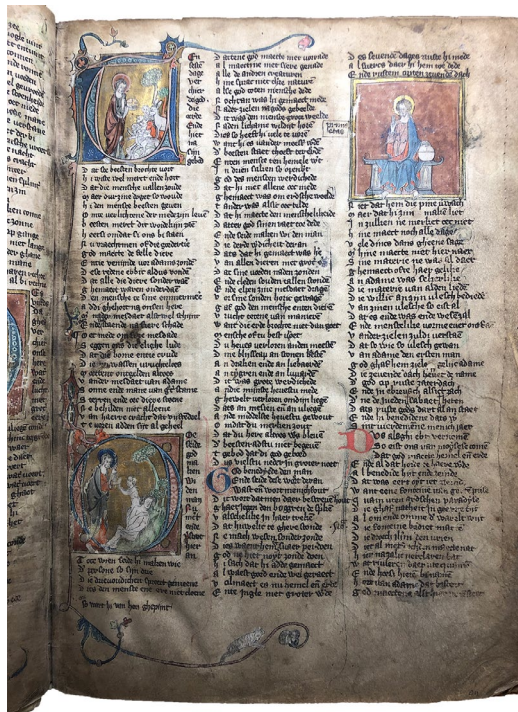


Fig. 158 Folio in a *Rhimebible* with miniatures depicting the final days of Creation. Utrecht in 1321. Berlin, SBB-PK, Germ. fol. 622, fol. 2r

make sense, since the scribe tells us in his colophon that he is the son of a cleric, which means a secular scribe in this sense. He is a second-generation pen-wielding artisan, who relies on writing for his living.

Typical of manuscripts for public recitation, the manuscript is large, with (now trimmed) folios measuring 365 × 254 mm, which is comparable in size to the *Rhimebible* in The Hague (Huis van het Boek, Ms. 10 B 21), which measures 345 × 235 mm. Why do these volumes need to be so large? Because that makes them easier to read aloud (just as a missal, for performing aloud, is larger than a breviary designed for “private devotion,” which would *not* be read aloud). Even though the Berlin *Rhimebible* was public-facing and illuminated, its maker selected parchment with holes, demonstrating that courtly manuscripts were not always copied on the best material. The parchment quality became worse and worse near the end of the



Fig. 159 Binding of a *Rhine Bible* made in Utrecht in 1321, made in the nineteenth century from a medieval illuminated and noted manuscript folio. Berlin, SBB-PK, Germ. fol. 622, front cover

manuscript, with a dramatic repair on fol. 83v (Fig. 160). This was a rather low-budget production.

Nonetheless, it was quite highly decorated: the manuscript has nine historiated initials, plus 16 large initials with internal pen flourishing. This is significant, because the user targeted them as part of the reading process. For example, the initial marking the beginning of the Book of

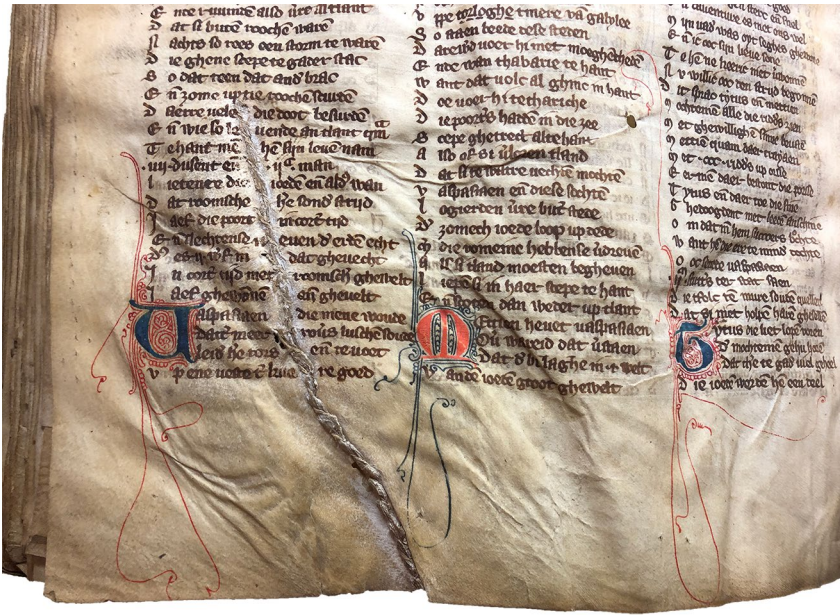


Fig. 160 Folio with a medieval repair in a *Rhimebible*. Utrecht, 1321. Berlin, SBB-PK, Germ. fol. 622, fol. 83v



Fig. 161 Rubbed initial at the beginning of Leviticus in a *Rhimebible*. Utrecht, 1321. Berlin, SBB-PK, Germ. fol. 622, fol. 15v

Leviticus has been wet-touched (Fig. 161). This is just one of the many indications that this book has been heavily used. The wet-touching, I suspect, was part of the gestural language of oral performance.

V. Prose histories

Versified texts were not the only ones to be touched, handled, and read aloud: courtly audiences also listened to prose histories. Like religious tales, chronicles of history blended real and mythical characters into gripping narratives to be read aloud. As Joyce Coleman states: “the public reading of histories served the [...] goal of imparting information and influencing individuals toward a single approved understanding of history and the key social values it is presented as illustrating.”¹⁷⁵ Damage to such manuscripts is rarely mentioned in catalogues and yet testifies to the heartfelt and corporeal delivery of these texts, so that the audience would understand not just their content but also their lessons. Uncovering the exact motivations for the touching is not always possible. Consider, for example, an illuminated copy of the prose *Brut*, which tells the history of Britain beginning in the time of Brutus, great grandson of Aeneas (Lambeth Palace, Ms. 6).¹⁷⁶ Known as the *Chronicle of St Albans*, the manuscript was copied in the fourth quarter of the fifteenth century by an English scribe and illuminated in the Southern Netherlands, probably in Bruges.

In one episode, King Vortigern and Merlin watch two dragons fight, the red one signifying the Britons and the white one, the Saxons (Fig. 162). Two fat drops of yellow wax are encrusted on the page: one in the upper margin, and one at Merlin’s hem. They do not appear to have been placed in those locations deliberately but appear to be the result of a splashing candle, revealing that someone was reading this text by candlelight. One can imagine a small audience gathered to hear these tales recounted in the evening, as part of a program of entertainment. Perhaps in that setting someone has rubbed the faces of the king and Merlin. In doing so the reader was not reinforcing the fast-paced action by tracing, with his finger, the combat between the dragons, but rather was carefully aiming his digit to indicate the two main figures from the story. I do not know why, precisely, he smeared the figures’ faces. To draw the audience in? To register his moral position toward the characters?

¹⁷⁵ Coleman (1996), p. 127.

¹⁷⁶ M. R. James *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Lambeth Palace: The Mediaeval Manuscripts* (Cambridge, 1932), cat. 6. Lambeth Palace, Ms. 6 has been digitized: <https://images.lambethpalacelibrary.org.uk/luna/servlet/media/book/showBook/LPLIBLPL~17~17~179003~125372>



Fig. 162 Folio from the *Chronicle of St Albans*, with a miniature depicting King Vortigern and Merlin watching two dragons fight. Written in England (?) and illuminated in the Southern Netherlands, ca. 1475–1500. Lambeth Palace, Ms. 6, fol. 43v, and detail



Fig. 163 Opening in *Les grandes chroniques de France* with a column-wide miniature depicting the Baptism of Clovis I. France, 1330s. Castres, BM, Ms. 3, fols 10v–11r, and detail of the miniature

Although not every motivation can be determined, what is clear is that readers of chronicles and romances treated images not as rarefied museum objects, but as utilitarian aids to compelling storytelling.

Across the channel, *Les grandes chroniques de France* were read: a chronological, episodic history of France, beginning with Troy and

brought up to the author's moment.¹⁷⁷ Like the prose Brut, *Les grandes chroniques* are characterized by multiple editorial stages, for which continuators brought it up to date several times in the late Middle Ages, which is a testament to its continued relevance. A courtly French audience consumed the action- and character-driven text written in plain French prose. I will consider one of the numerous surviving copies of this text, one made in the 1330s and owned by Jeanne d'Amboise (according to an inscription in the manuscript) and now preserved in Castres, BM as Ms. 3.¹⁷⁸ A large manuscript inscribed in two columns, it has column-wide miniatures marking the beginnings of text divisions. Its large size would enable approximately six people to see the images simultaneously. Although the manuscript begins imperfectly, and the surviving first folio is damaged from having spent time outside a protective binding, the other wear in this manuscript cannot be attributed to neglect, but rather to heavy use. Inadvertent signs of wear are apparent: margins throughout the manuscript are grubby, especially those on folios with miniatures, and many of the miniatures themselves have been the objects of targeted wear, suggesting that the book and its images stood at the center of a social gathering involving an animated retelling of history.

Many of the stories were selected for inclusion either because they emphasized the legitimacy and esteemed history of the French kings, or they provided prurient entertainment. Only a small selection of the events is illustrated in the column-wide miniatures. Highlights include the story of how St Remigius baptized Clovis I, King of the Franks, thereby Christianizing France. According to the text (Book 1, Episode XX), the event took place in the year 500 CE (Fig. 163). The accompanying miniature has been heavily touched, with the naked body of Clovis and the baptismal font particularly targeted. Stains in the lower

177 For a comprehensive study of the manuscript tradition, which focusses on hands and illuminators, see Anne D. Hedeman, *The Royal Image: Illustrations of the Grandes Chroniques de France, 1274–1422* (University of California Press Berkeley, 1991).

178 I am following Hedeman (1991), Chapter 4, for the dating and provenance of Castres, BM, Ms. 3. The manuscript has been digitized: https://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/resultRecherche/resultRecherche.php?COMPOSITION_ID=14131. For the full text, see Paulin Paris, *Les grandes chroniques de France selon que elles sont conservées en l'Eglise de Saint-Denis en France*, 6 vols (Techener, 1836–38). A closely related edition, which I found valuable as I prepared this section, has been digitized; see <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/33205/33205-h/33205-h.htm>



Fig. 164 Opening in *Les grandes chroniques de France*, with a miniature depicting the poisoning of King Childebert. France, 1330s. Castres, BM, Ms. 3, fols 58v–59r, and detail

and lateral margins around the opening, with some stains appearing to be ground in from pressure by the fingers. This is consistent with the prelector turning the book around to display the image. In this case, it is not clear whether the prelector or the audience members touched

the image—the prelector to magnify the images with his body for the benefit of the enthralled audience, or the audience members in order to join in with the small crowd of witnesses to Clovis's public conversion.

In Book 4, Episode X (for the years 595–596), the audience hears of King Childebert, who was poisoned when he was only 25 years old, together with his wife (Fig. 164). The couple were survived by two young sons, Theodebert and Theoderic, who went on to rule different regions. The accompanying image depicts the tense moment just before the regicide: the young princes shadow their standing father as he is about to receive a jar of poison from a messenger on bent knee. The reader has animated the image, strategically touching it and specifically targeting elements with the highest dramatic action. These are the jar of poison, the king's now withered hand that transported the poison to his mouth, and the king's mouth and throat. That the reader has aimed at these areas suggests that he was not an everyday reader, but a prelector who was trying to amplify his explanatory powers by dramatically touching the picture. He has pushed the still image toward the next moment in time, when the fatal action will take place. One can imagine him turning the book toward a small audience and enacting the major drama of the story with his finger running over the image as he dramatically reiterates the main lines of the narrative. Note that the surviving children standing behind the king are unscathed.

Another particularly gruesome episode, which took place in 613 CE (Book 4, Episode XX), recounts the awful death of Queen Brunhilda (Brunehaut), wife of King Sigebert I of Austrasia (r. 561–575). Sigebert and Brunhilda, who had come from Visigothic Spain, had a happy marriage. Chilperic I, who ruled in neighboring Neustria (r. 561–584), admired Brunhilda and married Brunhilda's sister Galswintha, but their marriage was not happy, in part because Galswintha forced her new husband to abandon his other lovers. The friction culminated in Galswintha's being strangled in her bed. After that Chilperic quickly married his lover Fredegund. Queen Brunhilda, outraged at the murder of her sister, developed a fierce rivalry with the new, low-born Queen Fredegund, and consequently, Austrasia went to war against Neustria. Taking decisive action, Fredegund sent a pair of assassins armed with poisoned daggers to kill Sigebert, leaving Brunhilda a widow. Fredegund also ousted the children whom her husband had fathered with his other



Fig. 165 Opening in *Les grandes chroniques de France*, with a miniature depicting the murder of Queen Brunhilda. France, 1330s. Castres, BM, Ms. 3, fols 63v–64r, and detail

lovers. Among these was the understandably disgruntled Merovech. Brunhilda married him, and the couple plotted against the despised Fredegund, but not for long: Fredegund sent some Neustrian strongmen

to apprehend the couple when they were in the Abbey of Saint-Martin d'Autun (which Brunhilda had founded, and in which she would later be buried). Merovech surrendered, was tonsured, and sent to a monastery. Because he was now a monk, his marriage with Brunhilda was annulled.

Meanwhile, upon Sigebert's death, Brunhilda and Sigebert's son Childebert II (r. 575–596) ascended to the throne. As the child was only five at the time, his mother Brunhilda served as regent. With the support of King Guntram of Orléans, she set about improving the region's infrastructure, streamlining its finances, and building churches. Despite her impressive effectiveness at the helm, the Austrasian nobility despised her. When Childebert II reached the age of majority, his mother Brunhilda retained considerable power, negotiating alliances, curating successions, and leading armies into battle. She eventually garnered significant resentment. When a war broke out between Neustria (led by Chlothar II) on the one side, and Austrasia and Burgundy (led by Brunhilda) on the other, many of the Burgundian aristocrats defected to the Neustrian side. Brunhilda fled north to seek Germanic allies but was captured. Chlothar II assumed rule over Austrasia-Burgundy and Neustria, uniting the Kingdom of Francia. Chlothar II blamed Brunhilda for the deaths of many aristocrats and clergy, and the Frankish soldiers eagerly put her to death.

One can understand how such a fast-paced story of power, deceit, and murder could enthrall a late medieval audience, especially when the story provided an explanatory narrative about how France became France. Stories like this would have provided models for succession strategies and warnings against hunger for power. Some of the stories were set in monasteries and churches that still existed 800 years later, and the audience members would have been able to connect the Church of St Martin, for example, with their own mental image of it, which would have made the story even more palpable.

The image accompanying this story depicts the murder of Queen Brunhilda (Fig. 165). According to the text, Chlothar II tortured her for three days by instructing his army at Renève to rape her. They tied her by her arm, her leg, and her hair to the tail of an untamed horse. Because the horse, as God's creature, thoroughly broke her body, this was taken as proof that God had abandoned her, for she, as queen, was supposed to have command over animals in the name of God. After breaking her



Fig. 166 Opening in *Les grandes chroniques de France*, with a miniature depicting Charlemagne's biographers, Eginhard (Einhard) and Archbishop Turpin of Rheims. France, 1330s. Castres, BM, Ms. 3, fols 92v–93r, and detail

body, they threw her on a fire. The image depicts her unnaturally bent body being beaten while she stares into the flames that will engulf her.

Several areas of the image have been touched vigorously, although it is difficult to discern the moral stance of the reader based on these

marks. On the one hand, the reader has rubbed the figure of Chlothar II, who commands the queen's destruction. Was the prelector condemning the king who has ordered the violence? On the other hand, the reader replays the violence wrought by the blue-clad lackey, who beats the queen with a stick. The prelector has rubbed the stick-wielding arm up and down, as if acting out the violence. However, the queen herself is not further touched, tormented, or mishandled by the reader. The prelector's vigorous motions with his finger on the image must have amplified the destructive actions and brought the story to grisly life.

Other scenes have been touched with different gestures. The Chronicle has five books dedicated to the deeds of Charlemagne. One can compare the way in which the reader enacted Brunhilda's execution with his finger, just discussed, with the way in which he touched the image of Charlemagne's biographers, Eginhard (Einhard) and Archbishop Turpin of Rheims, writing at their desks (from Charlemagne, Bk I, 1; Fig. 166). An "eye-witness" account of Charlemagne's army in its battle against the Muslims of Spain was ascribed to the latter, although the account of the eighth-century events was only penned later, and the work is now attributed to Pseudo-Turpin.¹⁷⁹ The *Chronicle of Pseudo-Turpin* recounted the death of Roland, one of the commanders under Charlemagne. Although partly fictional, the account served as source material for several *chansons de geste* including the Song of Roland, and for chronicles including the one under discussion here. Turpin was considered not only an archbishop and a chronicler, but also a warrior who wielded a sword alongside Roland in the Battle of Roncevaux Pass in 778.

It is perhaps because of Turpin's fame in multiple arenas that the prelector has touched Turpin's hands, face, and writing desk with a gesture of approbation. The prelector appears to have used a wet finger. It is as if he wanted to connect with the original source of the history and to touch the literary deed of someone considered a great writer. When Turpin reappears in the imagery a few chapters later, his image is touched with a different gesture altogether (Charlemagne, Bk. V, 7; Fig. 167).

179 The account is part of the manuscript known as the Codex Calixtinus, which is preserved in Santiago da Compostela. It also contains the "Pilgrim's Guide to Santiago de Compostela" and the "Miracles of St James." See Kevin R. Poole, *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Turpin: Book IV of the 'Liber Sancti Jacobi (Codex Calixtinus)'* (Italice Press, 2014).



Fig. 167 Opening in *Les grandes chroniques de France*, with a miniature depicting the Dream of Turpin. France, 1330s. Castres, BM, Ms. 3, fols 138v–139r, and detail

This image depicts the vision of Archbishop Turpin, in which a legion of devils visits him in a dream to tell him of the death of Charlemagne. The prelector seems to have lightly touched Turpin’s eyes, and to have vigorously rubbed the messenger-devils who resemble an airborne conga-line of zombie rats marching into the bishop’s imagination. By rubbing them vigorously, the prelector tries to denature their ill-tidings.



Fig. 168 Opening in *Les Grandes chroniques de France*, with a miniature depicting messengers delivering letters to Emperor Charlemagne. France, 1330s. Castres, BM, Ms. 3, fols 116v–117r, and detail

We can see the traces of other specific forms of touching elsewhere in the manuscript. At the image of messengers delivering letters to Emperor Charlemagne (Charlemagne, Bk. III, 5; Fig. 168), the prelector seems to have touched the first messenger's bent knee, which is thoroughly abraded. Was he emphasizing the diffident and deferential action appropriate to a messenger? The pattern of touching at images of coronations and deaths also reveals aspects of the audience's experience.

It is difficult to know exactly how each gesture enhanced the prelector's recounting of the story, but what is clear is that the touching was carefully targeted and that it differed significantly from one image to the next, meaning that the prelector adjusted his tone and gestures as he drew the audience into the frames in ways that emphasized the points he wanted to make about history: violence is chaotic, succession is not straightforward, and the wicked are often punished. These gestures hint at oral retellings of these stories during which the prelector repeatedly engaged the audience by bringing them into the book.

Coda

The few romances discussed above point to a much larger body of thoroughly rubbed vernacular manuscripts that were read to courtly audiences. Although versification implies orality and auralness, many prose texts used at court bear use-wear marks similar to their versified counterparts—touching that targeted figures, faces, and narrative-motivating objects. I have therefore read those signs of wear as traces deposited by gestures that helped prelectors to amplify their stories for audiences. This chapter has sampled different types of literature to show how the signs of wear on the images can reveal a world of animated performance. Although some manuscripts containing courtly literature have survived relatively unscathed, I suspect that nearly every library across Europe is housing one or more courtly manuscripts bearing images that have been touched in a targeted way, bearing traces of performance. A systematic study of these may shed light on the audiences' experience of these stories and may also reveal regional differences in performance style. For example, perusing Domenic Leo's recent book on *Vows of the Peacock* manuscripts reveals that several of them have been touched (although Leo did not set out to study this aspect of the manuscripts). Further comparative study of this and other illuminated texts in this genre will undoubtedly show that they were handled vigorously and with intent. Did prelectors compete to grip their audiences? Did audiences demand that prelectors engage with the books dramatically and bodily? To what extent did book makers and illuminators anticipate that the images would be used to animate the action with the prelector's

fingers? A team of people comprising literary historians, art historians, and historians of performance would undoubtedly find clues in the text about how prelectors drew audiences in.

The genre partly determined the gesture—with the *Vows of the Peacock* engendering the most vigorous performance (because the *Vows* parodied and probably amplified the gestures from formal oath-taking ceremonies), and the prose histories a more subdued performance, whose gestures were enacted in order to reinforce the moral lessons the audience should take away. Among the elite, courtiers may have internalized the idea of taking an oath on a book during entertainments such as interactive readings of the *Vows of the Peacock*. They may have delighted in the ritual implied by such an action, which would have led to feeling part of an exclusive group, one that had physical access to a precious book. The gestures from formal ceremonies spilled into entertainment contexts.



Fig. 169 Four canons and various saints by an open grave (*The Spes Nostra*). Oil on panel, Northern Netherlands, ca. 1500. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum

Chapter 5: Touching Death

Given the nature of Christianity—a religion of the book with a strong emphasis on death and resurrection—book-centered rituals, which mediated between the living and the dead, abounded. Because Christianity promised life after death, religious practitioners considered death a portal to a better world. The focus was not only on the death and resurrection of Jesus, but also on their own deaths. According to late medieval belief, the blessed (or elect) would go to heaven, some egregious sinners would go to hell, but most souls would go to Purgatory, which was like hell but had a terminus. As Jacques Le Goff showed in *The Birth of Purgatory*, this third place arose to provide believers with the comfort of knowing that the torture could come to an end.¹⁸⁰ In Purgatory, the soul would be refined in the furnace so that the impurities could run off. The future of the soul was modeled on a metallurgical metaphor. According to medieval Christian belief, the dead could not pray, so they relied on the living to pray on their behalf to help release them from the cleansing fires. To create networks in which the living agreed to pray for the dead, brotherhoods formed, such as the brotherhoods of St Nicholas and St Sebastian, discussed in Chapter 2.

Families could also outsource this duty to monks or nuns, who could be considered professional intermediaries. For example, the *Spes Nostra* painting in the Rijksmuseum depicts Augustinian canons in the foreground praying on behalf of the dead (Fig. 169).¹⁸¹ The decomposing

180 Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Scolar Press, 1984).

181 Mathias Ubl has written convincingly that the presence of Mary and Elizabeth refers to the Magnificat, a joyous prayer read at vespers. See Mathias Ubl, “The Office of the Dead’: A New Interpretation of the *Spes Nostra* Painting,” *Rijksmuseum Bulletin* (January 2013), pp. 322–337. For a full bibliography and high-resolution images, see <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/researchand-library/early-netherlandish-paintings>; J.P. Filedt Kok, “Meester van *Spes Nostra*. Vier kanunniken bij een graf,” in

corpse in the foreground represents those for whom the canons are praying. This is not a specific person, but rather a generalized corpse that has been buried for some time, and whose corresponding soul has spent concomitant time being cleansed in Purgatory. The success of the canons' prayers will determine whether the soul will reach Paradise, which is depicted in the background.

Both male and female monastics prayed for the dead, including laypeople, their own conventual brothers and sisters, their own families, and patrons who supplied them with material benefits in exchange for their prayers. All of this spiritual economy had to be recorded in necrologies, such as one owned and probably written by the Tertiaries of the Convent of St Lucy in Amsterdam (Manchester, JRUL, Ms Dutch 10).¹⁸² The manuscript contains two main texts: Usuard's *Martyrology*, an account of lives of the saints organized around the calendar, beginning with the Feast of the Circumcision on the first day of January (fols 1r–102r); and a necrology in the form of a perpetual calendar with extra-large spaces, so that the deaths of sisters and patrons could be recorded (fols 102v–114r; Fig. 170).¹⁸³ In this second section, while the standard feast days are written either in black or red ink in a neat *textualis* by a single scribe, the names of the recently dead are written in a variety of scripts, often with their year of death.

Filling in the blanks of the calendar, a cumulative task fulfilled by numerous hands over time, requires a particular form of enduring interaction; in this way, it is not dissimilar from the accumulated abrasion of an image by multiple people. Scores of scribes left their marks in the book and co-created its content. Nuns and religious women (such as Franciscan tertiaries) prayed for deceased members of their communities, as well as for their parents and the donors to their religious houses on

Vroege Hollanders. Schilderkunst van de late Middeleeuwen, F. Lammertse and J. Giltay (eds), exh. cat. Rotterdam (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2008), pp. 286–90.

182 Ker 1969–1992, III, p. 396. Fol. 115r: "Item dit boec is ghescreven int iaer ons heren m cccc ende lxxij ende hoert toe den susteren van sinte Lucien."

183 The manuscript can be compared with HKB, Ms. 70 H 53, which is also a copy of Usuard's *Martyrology* used as a conventual necrology; this manuscript has penwork associated with Haarlem ca. 1460 and was also used by the convent of tertiaries dedicated to St Catherine's in Haarlem. See Overgaauw (1993, pp. 446–450), which is the publication of his dissertation: E.A. Overgaauw *Martyrologes manuscrits des anciens diocèses d'Utrecht et de Liège. Étude sur le développement de la diffusion du Martyrologe d'Usuard* (Diss.) (University of Leiden, 1990).

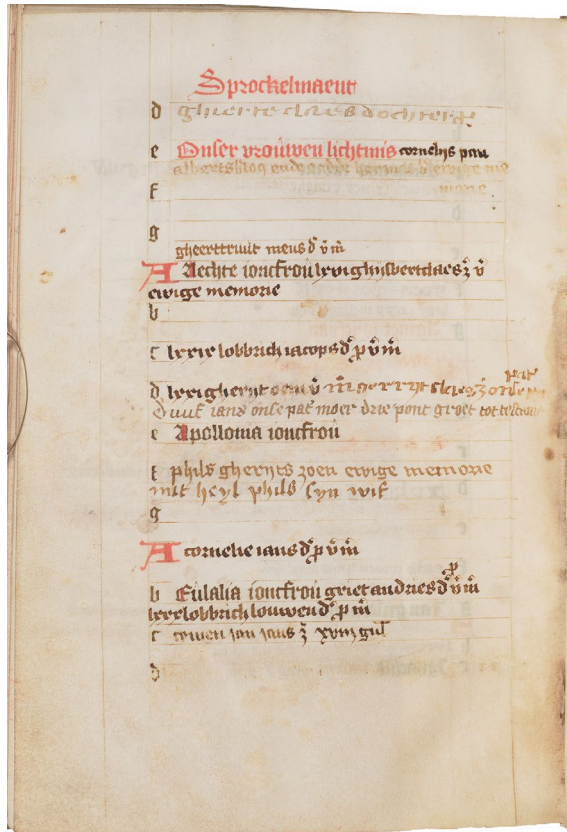


Fig. 170 Folio in a manuscript owned by the tertiaries of the Convent of St Lucy in Amsterdam, with an obituary calendar for the first half of February (Sprockelmaent). MJRUL, Ms Dutch 10, fol. 103v

the anniversaries of their deaths. To use the manuscript, the sisters of St Lucy would have read the relevant saint's *vita* from the first part of the manuscript, and then turned to the necrology in the second part to remember those who had died on that day. Sometimes such books were kept on the altar, so that the names could be mentioned as Masses were said in their honor on the anniversaries of their deaths.

Necrologies often had special forms of handling built into them, and one example, for a different female convent, had to be kept on the altar, because it was chained to it ('s-Heerenberg, Huisberghe, Ms. 31; Fig. 171). This necrological codex was begun around 1453 in Elten (on the modern-day Dutch-German border) for the canonesses regular of St Vitus. Its original binding consists of fifteenth-century tooled leather



Fig. 171 Chained binding of the necrology of the canoneses regular of St Vitus in Elten. Eastern Netherlands, fifteenth century (after 1453). 's-Heerenberg, The Netherlands, Collection Dr. J. H. van Heek, Huis Bergh Foundation, Ms. 31

over boards, and a chain that was used to secure it within the monastery, so that it could be visible and in a public space, not secreted away in a book cupboard. As a necrology, it would have been used daily.

The original campaign of work begins with an explanation of its contents on fol. 2r (Fig. 172). Some of the language in the book is in Latin, which lends it gravity, and some in Middle Dutch, heavily tinged with Germanic features typical of the Duchy of Cleves, where Elten was located. (The text begins on fol. 2r and is transcribed and translated in Appendix 6.) The text specifies the actions and rituals that must be performed in memory of the deceased Abbess Elza, Lady of Holzaten, following her death in 1402. As the text specifies:

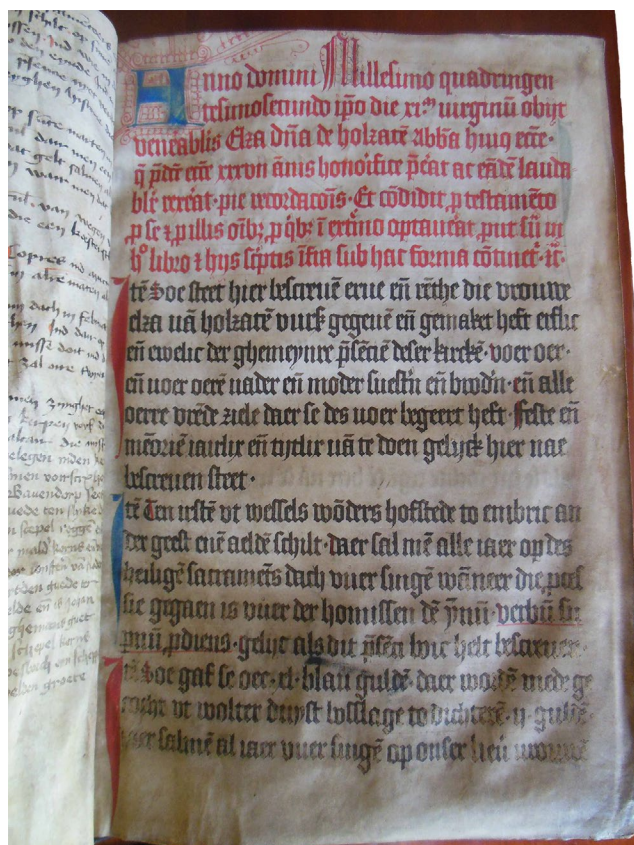


Fig. 172 Testament of Abbess Elza, Lady of Holzaten, in the necrology of the canonesses regular of St Vitus in Elten. Eastern Netherlands, fifteenth century (after 1453). 's-Heerenberg, The Netherlands, Collection Dr. J. H. van Heek, Huis Bergh Foundation, Ms. 31, fol. 2r

1. Lady Elza established a hereditary and perpetual endowment for the maintenance of the church, so that she and her family would be celebrated with annual feasts and memorials.
2. She gave money to Wessel's farmstead in Embric (Emmerich) and requested that on the feast day of the Holy Sacrament each year, the hymn *Verbum supernum prodiens* be sung before the procession and the homily.
3. She bequeathed 40 "blue" guilders, with which a yield of two guilders per year is to be used to sing the hymn *Ave maris stella* on Candlemas after the procession and before the Mass.

4. She donated two hundred Rhenish guilders, invested in Johannes's estate at Woirt in Hamersche and another small property in Veele. The income from these is to finance the singing of the Mass in honor of the Holy Cross every Friday, with proceeds distributed among the nuns and priests participating, in addition to two sextons and the schoolmaster.
5. Lady Elza provided property in Beke to Master Werner Boeskale's prebendary. In exchange, prayers for her soul are to be said each Sunday at vespers. If Master Werner and his descendants fail to pay for the prayers, the property will be transferred to the nuns and priests.
6. She gifted a portion of a felling forest to the altar of Saint Urban, with the requirement that the vicar pray for her and her family's souls during Mass.
7. She left two properties, in Velthusen and Lobede, to the nuns and priests for holding two weekly memorial services in her and her family's honor, with provisions determined annually by the output of these properties.
8. On her anniversary, following the Feast of the Eleven Thousand Virgins, specific rituals involving candles and offerings were to be conducted at her grave.
9. Land rent from the Velthusen property was to be collected every eight years and distributed annually to religious participants, excluding those who neglected their duties.
10. She gave small properties in Lobric to the canons, with the condition that one canon recite the *Miserere* plus another prayer at her grave daily. If neglected, the properties revert to the nuns and priests for the continuation of the prayers, and the canons would lose their rights to the property.

This will clearly expresses Lady Elza's wishes for the ongoing remembrance of herself and her family, as well as the financial support for religious services and the upkeep of the church. The opening of the manuscript therefore presents the reader with the deeds of the pious abbess who spent her entire working life in the service of the monastery where the book was chained. The abbess donated money for the church's

upkeep. The text reminds the reader that she made these donations with the expectation of a counter-gift, namely that prayers would be said for her soul and for the souls of her family and friends. Although the abbess died in 1402, this manuscript was not written until well after her death in the 1460s, in a situation similar to the construction of the mortuary rolls discussed above: it is not the deceased, but her survivors, who care for her soul, which is tantamount to maintaining her memory.

Maintaining her memory would not occur if the list of deeds, promises, and arrangements were kept in a dark archive. Two structural facts prevented this from being the case. First, the manuscript was to be physically chained in a semi-public place, not in an archive. Second, the will of Lady Elza is bound together with a necrology (similar to that of the Tertiaries of the Convent of St Lucy in Amsterdam), which was in constant use, as testified by the layers of additions it received until 1772. Those who wanted to keep Lady Elza's memory alive (and continue enjoying the rents on the parcels of land she had negotiated) stitched her will to the beginning of a book that they knew would be in use for centuries to come, and then they chained it to an accessible place, thereby ensuring its centrality in the social life of the convent. Members of groups that rely on survivors to pray for their souls use a chain—either physical metal links, or stitched/glued sheets—to create a chain of memory that will stretch into the future. Stitches, chains, laces, and glues to preserve one's memory for the future.

Another book form—the mortuary roll—circulated from one religious house to the next to announce the death of a bishop, abbot, abbess, or other important religious leader. For this reason, church records sometimes refer to these rolls as *circulars*. This chapter will look at three surviving examples to examine how such manuscripts were handled and how they fostered relationships between religious communities. Mortuary rolls are similar to nuns' professional briefs in their collective production and public function. Like nuns' professional briefs, some of their elements are highly conventional, and other elements necessarily personalized. Both are forms unique to conventual settings. While a nun constructed her professional brief at the beginning of her enclosure, an abbess's successor would organize the construction of a mortuary roll after her death. The latter object is both more intricate and more public.

It required a particular kind of handling that could be characterized as diachronically social.

The efficacy of the mortuary roll was predicated upon dozens or hundreds of people handling it and making their own mark on it. This book form calls into question basic facts about medieval manuscripts: who is the producer and who the recipient? Who is the scribe and who is the reader? What is appropriate: a display script or a book hand? When can a manuscript be considered finished?¹⁸⁴ These questions about the physical book arise in the context of the memorial culture, especially strong among late medieval religious.

I. A Benedictine abbess

Above we encountered the Abbey at Forest (Forêt, Vorst), a Benedictine priory for women, which administered the confraternity of St Sebastian in Linkebeek. When their abbess Elisabeth 'sConincs died in 1458 after having been in post since 1431, a written notice was dispatched to all of the religious institutions in the region to announce her death. Representatives from each religious house along the way appended a standardized promise to pray for the departed abbess in exchange for reciprocal prayers. The parchment membranes were rolled on a wooden spindle and the object may have originally been safeguarded in a box or bag (Fig. 173). Despite the limited number of surviving mortuary rolls, thousands were produced in Northern Europe and the British Isles from the ninth through the fifteenth centuries. Extant rolls are often preserved in archives and churches rather than in museums or libraries

184 For an overview of mortuary rolls, see Léopold Delisle, *Rouleaux des morts du IXe au XVe siècle, recueillis et pub. pour la Société de l'histoire de France* (Mme. Ve. J. Renouard, 1866), p. 485; at that time, the roll under discussion here was in Ashburnham Palace. It is now in the Rylands Library. Stacy Boldrick notes the slippage between maker and user in "An Encounter between Death and an Abbess: The Mortuary Roll of Elisabeth 'sConincs, Abbess of Forest (Manchester, John Rylands Library, Latin MS 114)," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 82(1) (2000), pp. 29–48, and *ibid.*, "Speculations on the Visibility and Display of a Mortuary Roll," in *Continuous Page, Scrolls and Scrolling from Papyrus to Hypertext*, Jack Hartnell (ed.) (Courtauld Books Online, 2020), pp. 101–121. Images are available at <https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/>



Fig. 173 Top of the mortuary roll of abbess Elisabeth 'sConincs, with spindle. Southern Netherlands, 1458. MJRUL, Ms. Lat. 114.

and have therefore received short shrift by historians of art and culture, since they followed a different route of historic preservation.¹⁸⁵

185 Examples of mortuary rolls survive in England and in Northern Europe. For an overview for these and other rolls, see the Medieval Scrolls Digital Archive based at Harvard University, which also includes a searchable database of known rolls/scrolls: <https://medievalscrolls.com/>. Studies of individual rolls, or groups of rolls, include Léopold Delisle, *Rouleaux des Morts du IXe au XVe Siècle / Recueillis et Pub. pour la Société de l'Histoire de France par Léopold Delisle* (Mme. Ve. J. Renouard, 1866); Jean Dufour, *Recueil des rouleaux des morts: (VIIIe Siècle-Vers 1536)*, 5 vols (Diffusion de Boccard, 2005–2013); Jean Dufour, *Les Rouleaux des Morts* (Monumenta Palaeographica Medii Aevi. Series Gallica) (Brepols, 2009), 3 vols. Léopold Delisle, *Rouleau Mortuaire du b. Vital, Abbé de Savigni, Contenant 207 Titres Écrits en 1122–1123 dans différentes Églises de France et d'Angleterre / Édition Phototypique avec Introduction*

Cumulative construction

Mortuary rolls contain two mandatory components: an encyclical, or letter authored by a representative of the house of the deceased, introducing the roll bearer, describing the deceased person's deeds, giving her death date, and soliciting prayers; and *tituli*, which affirm those requests. These are promises of prayer offered by the institutions that sequentially received the mortuary roll. Many mortuary rolls also incorporated a third component: a depiction of the deceased. The roll bearer was a particular kind of messenger—known variously in accounts as a *brevigerulus*, *brevetarius*, *rotulifer*, or *rolliger*—tasked with carrying the mortuary roll from one religious house to the next in order to announce the death and solicit prayers for the soul of the deceased. For Elisabeth 'sConincs's roll, the *brevigerulus* was Johannes Leonis, his name given at the end of the encyclical. He specialized in this niche service, and when he finished collecting the *tituli* for Elisabeth 'sConincs, he would have sought another similar gig. Given that deaths of abbots, abbesses, and other esteemed monastery members were announced this way, an efficient *brevigerulus* like Johannes Leonis would have had ample work.

He set off to collect *tituli* very soon after the abbess died in 1458. Each institution inscribed its *titulus*, typically filling two to ten lines, at the end of the roll. If there was insufficient space, the *brevigerulus* stitched on an additional membrane. As Stacy Boldrick has convincingly shown, Johannes had neither the frontispiece nor the illuminated encyclical in roll form when he set off to visit all of the churches, hermitages, and monasteries in the region. Rather, he probably carried a version of the encyclical in the form of a single sheet with a seal, which he could have brandished at each port of call along his itinerary in the Dutch-speaking region.

Up to four times a day for nearly a year, Johannes presented this letter of introduction:

We earnestly beseech you that you may wish to receive the bearer of the present roll, favorably and kindly, namely Johannes Leonis, when

par Leopold Delisle (Phototypie Berthaud frères, 1909); this item, which concerns a roll from the Manche Abbaye de Savigny (France), is noteworthy because the eulogy was written by a certain Héloïse (ca. 1095–1163/4), and because the *tituli* were added in both France and England. For English mortuary rolls, see Matthew Payne, "The Islip Roll Re-Examined," *The Antiquaries Journal*, 97 (2017), pp. 231–60, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003581517000245>, with further bibliography.



Fig. 174 Miniature with two pictorial registers, the upper one depicting the enthroned Virgin and Child flanked by Sts Benedict and Elisabeth, and the lower one depicting the death of abbess Elisabeth 'sConincs. Southern Netherlands, 1458. MJRUL, Ms. Lat. 114..

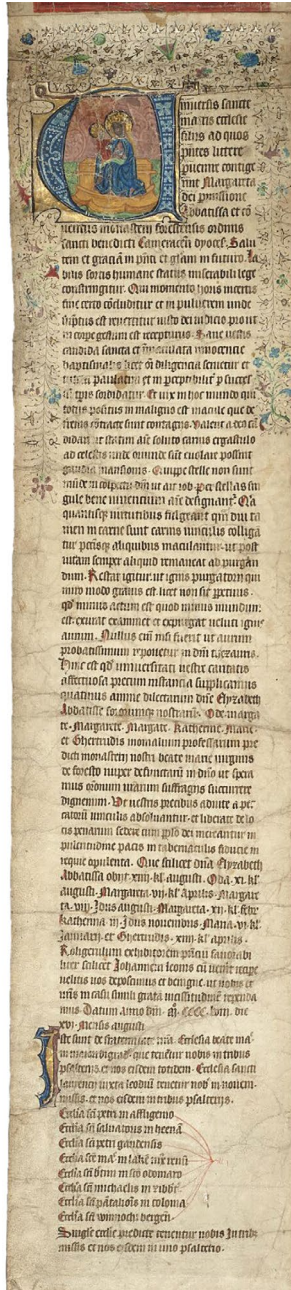


Fig. 175 Encyclical of the mortuary roll of abbess Elisabeth 'sConincs, with an illuminated initial. Southern Netherlands, 1458. MJRUL, Ms. Lat. 114.

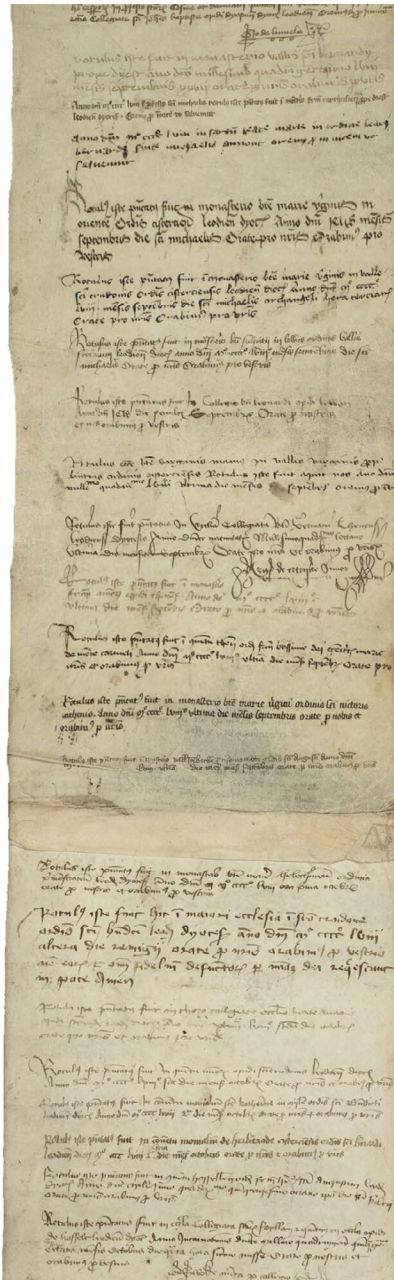


Fig. 176 Selection of *tituli*, written on unlined parchment forming part of the mortuary roll of abbess Elisabeth 'sConincs. Southern Netherlands, 1458. Manchester, Rylands Library, Ms. Lat. 114.

he comes, so that we may reciprocate our gratitude to you and yours in similar circumstances.¹⁸⁶

This sheet no longer survives. While he was touring, the encyclical now attached to the roll was being professionally copied and illuminated so that it could become membrane 2 of MJRUL Lat. 114. This implies that the religious houses were not the audience for the lavish decoration of Elisabeth 'sConincs's roll.

During his travels from 6 September 1458 to 8 July 1459, Johannes collected 390 *tituli*, but he also amassed reciprocal obligations for prayer that the Benedictine nuns at Forest were bound to honor. In essence, those institutions in a fraternal relationship with Forest (mainly other Benedictine houses) consented to pray for the abbess's soul on the condition that the Forest nuns pray for theirs. These mutual obligations are itemized as Mass counts and Psalter recitations. The roll served as a tangible record of this spiritual reciprocity.

Many mortuary rolls, including that of Elisabeth 'sConincs, begin with a frontispiece showing an image of the deceased. In her roll, the frontispiece occupies the first membrane (Fig. 174); the *encyclical*, the second membrane (Fig. 175); and the *tituli*, the subsequent membranes (Fig. 176). Boldrick revealed through her research that a mere ten days before the first anniversary of the abbess's death, Johannes Leonis returned to the abbey at Forest with 17 membranes teeming with *tituli*.¹⁸⁷ These *tituli* (now membranes 3–19) were then affixed to the illuminated encyclical (membrane 2) and to the ornate frontispiece (membrane 1), which a professional scribe and illuminator had had nearly a year to craft. Given this order of operations, those inscribing the *tituli* would not have seen the frontispiece. That was only readied in time for the ritual on the anniversary of the abbess's death, in the church in Forest, which took place on 19 July 1459. Those present at the ceremony would have seen the final roll, filling 19 membranes that stretched 1296 centimeters in length.

Even viewing the roll from a distance, the lengthy object would have been impressive. One could see, even from about three meters away,

186 The translation is published in Boldrick (2000, p. 39), where the original Latin is also given.

187 See Boldrick (2000) and Boldrick (2020).

that the roll comprised the scribal contributions of hundreds of different people. And that was the point of the roll: as opposed to a codex, where only one opening is visible at a time, the entire roll can be comprehended at once. Which is to say that the meaning was consistent with the form of the message: a cumulatively made object implies community, and the size and grandeur of that community is commensurate with the astounding length of the object. By contributing to the writing, each house formed the cumulative first viewers and handlers of the roll.

Although the scribes of all the *tituli* would not have seen the illuminated front matter that was eventually sewn to the top of the roll, they would have seen Johannes's travelling encyclical, as well as the *tituli* from the other houses. These *tituli* are written in a variety of scripts, including *textualis*, *hybrida*, and bookhands, often without ruling. While the script and ruling of the *tituli* were rather higgledy-piggledy, their words were quite formulaic, as the scribes would have modeled their respective texts on what was visible before them, unfurling it to see what company their own *titulus* was about to keep. Formalities around death were scripted.

The scribes of these *tituli* were both the producers and the users of the roll. With every use, they added specific marks, thereby co-producing the text with the members of the other houses visited, past and future. Like the oaths of profession, the texts themselves were not particularly original, but rather comprised copies with variations. Each scribe who added to it would have handled the roll in a performative way while the document grew in length.

The mortuary roll of the abbess of Forest created a permanent record of mutual obligations with neighboring institutions within the spiritual economy: those 390 institutions handled the object in order to add their hand-inscribed pledges. Moreover, the object would have been handled with particular techniques of the body, to use Marcel Mauss's term, wherein the unusual roll format must have played a role: it required a particular set of gestures while presenting a spectacle for those present at the abbess's anniversary Mass(es). The size of the gestures used to display the role were commensurate with the abbess's reputation.



Fig. 177 Master of Heiligenkreuz (Bohemian?), *Death of the Virgin*, ca. 1400–1401.
Tempera and oil with gold on panel. Cleveland Museum of Art

Imagery on the roll

The frontispiece at top of the roll has a miniature arranged in two registers to take advantage of the tall, thin format necessitated by the constraining, narrow form. These registers set out a clear hierarchy, with the enthroned Virgin and Child flanked by Sts Benedict and Elisabeth at the top, and the death of Elisabeth 'sConincs at the bottom. The Virgin Mary provides a model for the abbess, who will, with the help of the prayers offered by the neighboring institutions, rise up to the upper echelons to meet Mary.

The promised prayers in the *tituli* will help ensure that the abbess passes from the lower, earthly realm to the upper heavenly one.¹⁸⁸

The lower scene, set in an ecclesiastical interior, recalls images depicting the death of the Virgin, as in a panel made *ca.* 1400 for a convent in central Europe (Fig. 177). In the roll, Elisabeth 'sConincs occupies the position of the Virgin Mary in the scene, while her Benedictine nuns, who pray over her dying body and read from large tomes, take on the roles of the Apostles. A priest swinging a censor adopts the role of St Peter in the panel, while one of the nuns, reading from a large volume, becomes the mediator between the book and the breath.

Given the nature of the promises of mutual prayer, the mortuary roll functions as a binding legal document, cementing the relationships of all the 390 institutions promising prayers, and further stipulating mutual prayer bonds among the houses in Forest's confraternity. The format of the manuscript—a roll rather than a codex—may underscore this function, considering the connotation that rolls had with legal authority.¹⁸⁹ With this in mind, one could read other aspects of this imagery in terms of an authoritative function. Specifically, the spandrels in the corners contain the symbols for the four Evangelists: these convey the presence of the Gospel writers and their respective Gospels, which ripens the atmosphere so that vows and other sacred acts can take place in the presence of the divine.

The signs of wear on the roll reveal aspects of how it was handled after its assembly, once it was mounted into its spindle. First, the top was more subject to wear than the bottom, since the top has to be handled every time the roll was opened, whereas the bottom only had to be handled by those who unfurled the entire item. The very top of the miniature was trimmed away, probably because it was so frazzled with handling. The miniature has been heavily damaged, with numerous horizontal cracks caused by rolling and unrolling it. It is also possible that the image has incurred some damage from holy water, flung from a golden bucket with an asperge like the one pictured in the foreground. One can imagine that it was partially unrolled, to reveal the first membrane with the large illumination, and displayed on the altar during the Mass said for the abbess. Exposed, it would have been vulnerable to holy water.

¹⁸⁸ Boldrick (2000, p. 38).

¹⁸⁹ Michael Clanchy makes this point, echoed by Boldrick (2020, p. 110).

The faces of the figures in the deathbed scene have also been severely damaged, but the cause of this damage is ambiguous. The faces of most of the nuns have been damaged, but this may be due to a horizontal stroke inadvertently made across the sheet, rather than targeted touching. However, the face of Elisabeth 'sConincs is below the isocephalic band of nuns, and the damage to her face may have instead been targeted. Her face, and the blue pillow that frames it, have been abraded.

In thinking about how the roll may have been used, one could compare it with how the Grand Obituary of Notre Dame was used (according to my analysis in Volume 1). There I suggested that the patterns of targeted wear on the images of the deceased may have been



Fig. 178 Funeral of Cardinal Michel du Bec, on an added folio in the Grand Obituary, entry for August 22, 1318. Paris, BnF, Ms. lat. 5185 CC, fol. 265r

incurred during anniversary Masses, when those in the living memory of the deceased would have touched the image as a tangible gesture of remembrance. For example, the image of the funeral of Cardinal Michel du Bec (Paris, BnF, Ms. Lat. 5185CC, fol. 265r; Fig. 178) has been repeatedly and systematically touched. The book's users particularly targeted the face and body of the cardinal.

It is possible that the top of the roll was displayed on an altar in Forest during the annual Masses said on the anniversary of Elisabeth 'sConincs's death. Some might have touched the image of her face, or the faces of the other nuns. Some might have touched the image of the Virgin and Child in the initial of the encyclical, for this has also been abraded and crumpled. The ceremonies would have presented moments to reflect on the state of their former abbess's soul, to remember her funeral, and to help push her from the lower register to the higher eschatological register, to join Mary, St Benedict, and her name saint, Elizabeth. During these ceremonies, holy water and wax may have spilled on the roll. The mortuary roll was a band of text and imagery that literally unfurled and tied communities together, spatially and temporally, connecting the past, present, and future.

II. Remembering John Hotham, bishop of Ely

When John Hotham, the bishop of Ely, breathed his last on 7 Jan 1337, his surviving brethren wrote an encyclical to announce his death and request prayers for the repose of his soul (Canterbury, Cathedral Archives, ChAnt E 191).¹⁹⁰ As was the tradition, the mortuary roll comprises multiple parchment membranes, stitched end-to-end. Unlike Elisabeth 'sConincs's roll, this one has only three membranes, and it has received heavy-handed repairs (Fig. 179). The *brevigerulus* of John Hotham's roll was neither as talented nor as conscientious as Johannes Leonis: he did not add more sheets when the third membrane was full, and instead the subscribers had to turn the roll over and write on the back.

Although mortuary rolls, as we saw in the previous section, always have a eulogy and a series of *tituli*, and often have an image depicting the deceased, the forms for these individual components could vary, and the three examples examined in this chapter each present the deceased differently. For John Hotham's roll, the illuminator depicted the subject not as a corpse on a bier (as with the mortuary images in the Grand Obituary of Notre Dame, as discussed in Volume 1), but as a commanding figure in the prime of life. What passes for a "portrait" of John Hotham fills the initial *U*: a rather generalized man in bishop's garb, making the sign of benediction. The image is damaged, but it is not clear whether it was touched specifically, or whether the abrasion is an extension of the overall damage the roll incurred.

The initial marks the beginning of a eulogy, an essential (and usually second) component of a mortuary roll. John de Crauden (or John Crauden), prior of Ely Cathedral Priory, who wrote the encomium for John Hotham, had enough praise for the bishop to fill two membranes with 1180 words. Crauden has remembered the bishop in terms that are both intimate and role-specific, offering a spiritual biography of the

190 W.P. Blore, "Notes on the Mortuary Roll of John Hotham, Bishop of Ely, in the Cathedral Library, Canterbury (Chartae Antiquae E.191)," *Friends of Canterbury Cathedral 10th Annual Report* (1937), pp. 28–31; Albert Way, "Mortuary Roll Sent Forth by the Prior and Convent of Ely, on the Death of John de Hothom, Bishop of Ely, Deceased January, A.D. 1336–7," *Cambridge Antiquarian Society Antiquarian Communications*, 1 (1859), pp. 125–39, where the roll is transcribed. I have corrected it and included a translation in the appendix below.

bishop with a list of his virtues. The surviving John wrote of the deceased John: "He was angelic in the church, splendid in the court, bountiful at



Fig. 179 Composite digital image showing the entire recto of the mortuary roll of John Hotham, and detail showing the historiated initial *U* framing the image of the bishop. Ely, 1337. Canterbury, Cathedral Archives, ChAnt E

the table, strict in the chapter, reproving, admonishing, and beseeching subjects with all patience and teaching; devout to his superiors, gracious to his juniors, affable and kind to all, greatly circumspect in spiritual and temporal matters." (See Appendix 7 for a full transcription and translation.)

The audience for this eulogy was both the current and future denizens of Ely Cathedral Priory, as well as members of the religious houses elsewhere in East Anglia who may not have known John Hotham personally but were agreeing nonetheless to pray for him. As it reached these far-flung audiences, the content of the third membrane grew, although not on the scale of Elisabeth 'sConincs's mortuary roll: to wit, John Hotham's roll preserves only 24 *tituli*, each consisting of the name of the house and its order, a prayer for the bishop, and a request for prayers in return.

Because mortuary rolls have a phased genesis, they can reveal medieval itineraries and aspects of medieval travel. Lynda Rollason studied another mortuary roll—the Ebchester-Burnby roll produced by Durham Cathedral Priory in Durham—to do just that. Specifically, the *tituli* in the Durham roll list some 623 names of the institutions the *brevisgerulus* visited, and these can be mapped to understand the trajectory of the roll and its carrier.¹⁹¹ At over 11 meters long, the Ebchester-Burnby roll lists hundreds of stops along a journey lasting several months. John Hotham's roll, likewise, presents place names, and its trajectory can be reconstructed, although its journey and its physical length are at a more modest scale, and its 24 *tituli* are not dated (Fig. 180).

The first group of *tituli* on John's roll, inscribed on the recto, show that the *brevisgerulus* set out to the north and walked (or rode on horseback) for several days. Departing from Ely, he went first to Ramsey and then continued northward to Peterborough, Thorney, Crowland, Spalding, and Swineshead, before arriving at Boston. A modern Google map of this journey indicates that it would have taken about 24 hours on foot (Fig. 181).

John's roll is opisthographic, meaning that it is inscribed on both *recto* and *verso*. The *verso* of the roll is more difficult to interpret, and

191 Lynda Rollason, "Medieval Mortuary Rolls: Prayers for the Dead and Travel in Medieval England," *Northern History* (2011), pp. 187–223. <https://doi.org/10.1179/007817211X13061632130449>

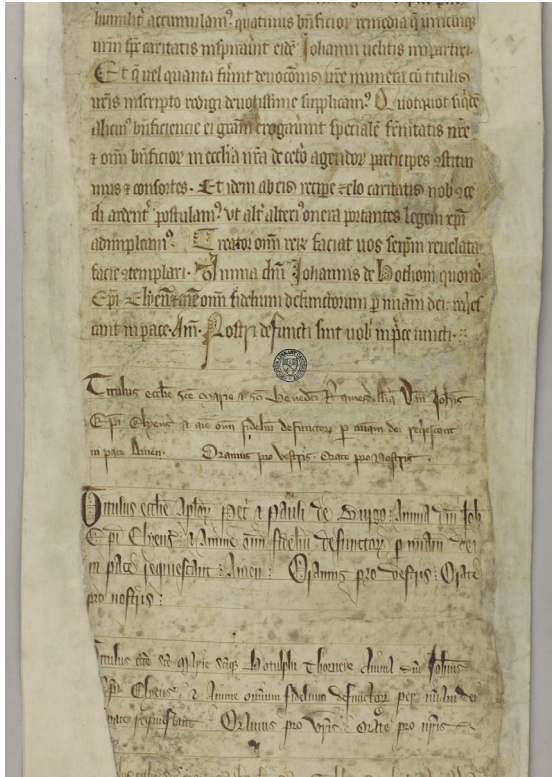


Fig. 180 Beginning of the *tituli* from the mortuary roll of John Hotham. Ely, 1337. Canterbury Cathedral Archives, ChAnt E, membrane 3 recto

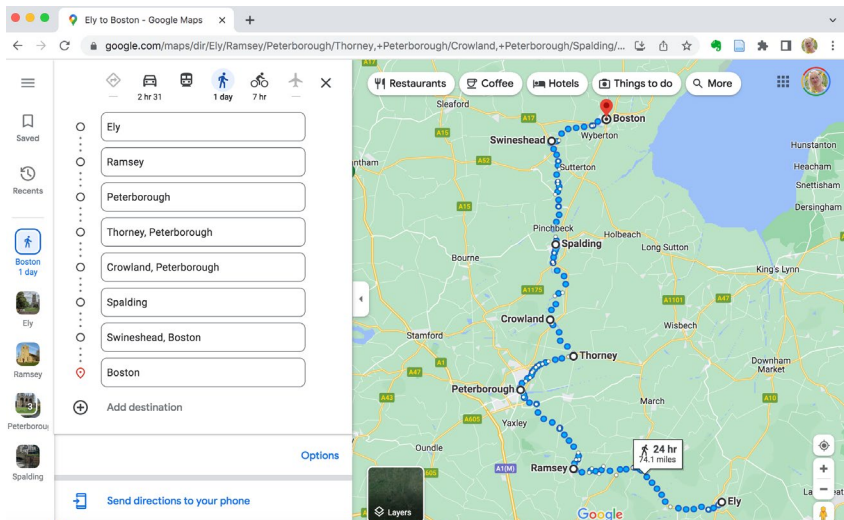


Fig. 181 Google map approximating the first journey of the *brevigerulus*, from Ely to Boston.

the *tituli* less orderly (Fig. 182). The locations on the *verso* of the roll lie south of Ely, and he may have returned to Ely before continuing on this south-bound leg; however, when the places are mapped in order of appearance, they create an illogical route. If he actually followed the

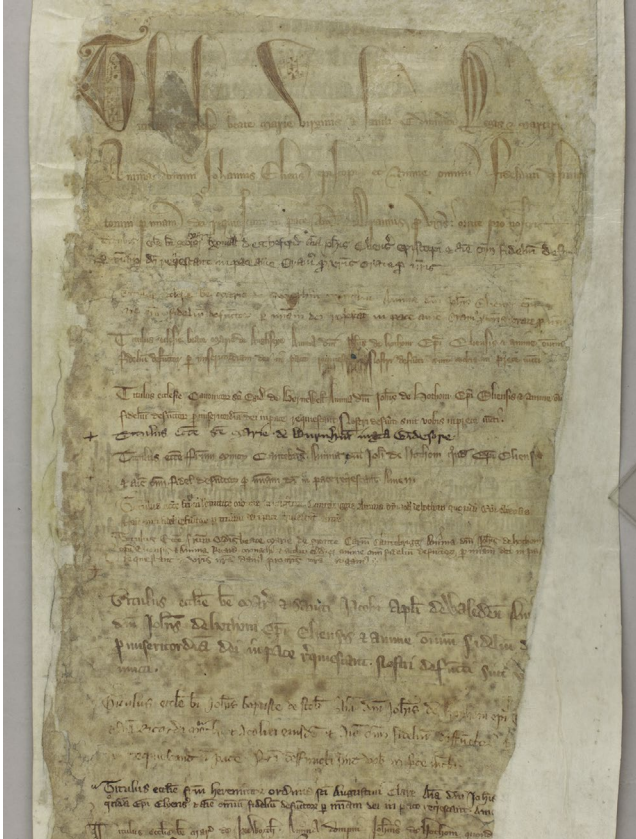


Fig. 182 *Tituli* on the mortuary roll of John Hotham beginning with Bury St Edmunds. England, ca. 1337. Canterbury Cathedral Archives, ChAnt E, membrane 3 verso

route as recorded on the sheet, his trajectory would have been a jumble, beginning with a jaunt to the east to Thetford, south to Bury St Edmunds, the richest monastery in East Anglia, and then west to Thetford (again), then west to the Priory of Swaffham Bulbeck, a Benedictine nunnery, then south-west for 13 on-foot hours to the Augustinian priory of Anglesey, followed by another thirteen-hour walk, north-west, to Barnwell to seek

prayers from the Augustinian canons of St Giles. After a 25-hour walk due south to the Church of Saint Mary of Burnham near Windsor, he would have returned to Cambridge, and then revisited Thetford, before ending with West Dereham Abbey in Norfolk (Fig. 183). Clearly, this route would be inefficient. The sequence of *tituli* on the roll may not be the same as the sequence in which the *brevisgerulus* visited them, since several of the *tituli* appear to be squeezed into gaps.

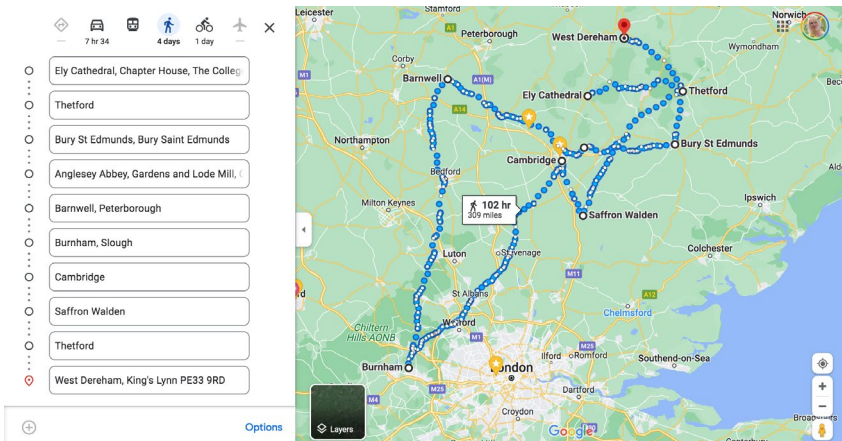


Fig. 183 Google map of the locations listed on the verso of the roll, from Ely to Westerham.

To explain this state of affairs, I submit the following: while the *rectos* of all three membranes of the roll were ruled by the original scribe who then carefully copied the eulogy and left some space at the bottom of the third membrane for the *tituli*, the *verso* of the roll was not systematically ruled, and it was filled in unsystematically. The *brevisgerulus* should not have allowed representatives from the religious houses to write on the *verso*; instead, he should have stitched—or commissioned a parchmentier to stitch—a fourth membrane to the roll, but he failed to do this. As a result, scribes from the institutions south of Ely turned the roll over and wrote on the bottom of the roll. When it came time for Bury St Edmunds to add its *titulus*, its scribe moved further toward the head of the roll, where he found sufficient space to add enormous, florid, and performative script. When there was little space left, the other houses on the *verso* abbreviated their *tituli*, sometimes using only a single line of text.

These facts lead to a few different kinds of analysis. First, the *breuigerulus* was interested in both the quantity and quality of the *tituli* he assembled. He picked the low-hanging fruit around East Anglia and nearly went door-to-door in Thetford. But he also obtained the promise of prayers from the Church of Saint Mary of Burnham near Windsor, not far from London. Perhaps he did not travel there at all, but rather encountered a representative from this church during his travels. In that case, he opportunistically obtained that traveler's textual contribution. If we assume that he did not travel south 110 miles to Burnham, and that

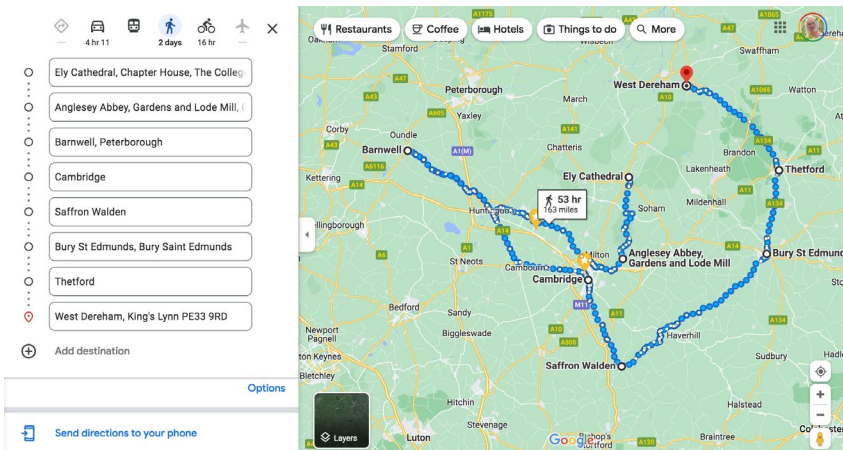


Fig. 184 Google map of the locations listed on the verso of the roll, from Ely to Westerham, but rationalized to omit Burnham.

he only visited Thetford once, then his route looks much more rational (Fig. 184).

The roll's intended purpose was to convey the promised prayers of far-flung religious houses back to the home institution of the deceased, with the ultimate purpose of strengthening shared bonds among the various churches and monasteries. However, the disparity in the size and boldness of the handwriting in the various *tituli* points to a secondary function for the roll. Namely, the houses jockeyed to show their dominance within the East Anglian network. The monks at Bury St Edmunds, the famous and wealthy Benedictine monastery that boasted the relics of St Edmund, reflected their self-importance in the size, style, and placement of their script.

Even though the bottom of the roll is damaged, it is unlikely that it was originally longer — since, as the analysis above shows — the *tituli* were crammed in and abbreviated because of lack of space. This presents an interesting state of affairs: writers of the later *tituli* had to handle the roll, study it, see others' solutions to the space problem, and make adjustments to their contributions so that they would fit properly. Doing so required more interaction with the previous scribes' *tituli*. All of the scribes had to handle the roll intensely, and to make their respective marks on the lower part of the final (third) membrane. This roll already has always had three membranes; unlike the abbess's roll, the image was not added as a separate membrane to the top. And also unlike the abbess's roll, more sheets were not added to the bottom to accommodate *tituli*. This means that each of the 24 signatories has handled the roll, seen the image of the bishop, delighted in the fine calligraphy of the encomium, and measured up how he (or she) would make a mark for posterity.

III. Retouching, reusing, and restitching elements

A mortuary roll made to commemorate abbots from the Abbey of Saint-Bénigne in Dijon reveals another set of handling practices (Fig. 185).¹⁹² The obverse of the roll collects prayers dated 1439–1441 for the abbots Etienne de La Feuillé (1430–1434) and Pierre Brenot (1435–1438) and therefore circulated shortly after the death of the latter. The roll has a two-tiered frontispiece that depicts the martyrdom of St Bénigne in the upper register and the two abbots in the lower. As was the convention, the dead are laid out on something that has features of both a deathbed and a monumental tomb. Close inspection reveals that the imagery was pieced together from several campaigns of work, with the martyrdom scene having little in common stylistically with the depiction of the recumbent abbots, and the text sections having surprising origins.

192 The roll is now in BM de Troyes, Ms. 2256. See Léopold Delisle, *Rouleaux des Morts du IXe au XVe siècle* (Historical Press, 1866), pp. 477–84; Lucien Morel-Payen and Emile Dacier (eds), *Les plus beaux manuscrits et les plus belles reliures de la Bibliothèque de Troyes* (Paton, 1935), pp. 152–153; “Troyes, BM, 2256,” *Initiale: Catalogue des manuscrits enluminés* (<http://initiale.irht.cnrs.fr/codex/4969>). The *tituli* are transcribed in Jean Dufour, *Recueil des rouleaux des morts: (VIIIe Siècle-Vers 1536)*, 5 vols (Diffusion de Boccard, 2005–2013); Vol. 3, no. 317, pp. 442–445 (for the sections written from 1420–22); and Vol. 3, no. 333, pp. 614–658 (for the sections written from 1439–1441).



Fig. 185 Two painted membranes in the mortuary roll circulated in 1439–1441 for abbots Etienne de La Feuillé (1430–1434) and Pierre Brenot (1435–1438) of the Abbey of Saint-Bénigne in Dijon. Troyes, Médiathèque Jacques-Chirac, Ms. 2256

In thinking about how the Dijon roll was assembled, it helps to consider Rollason's analysis of the Ebchester-Burnby roll, which underscores a practical approach to the physical handling of mortuary rolls by medieval scribes and ecclesiastical users.¹⁹³ She points out that elements of the rolls, particularly the pictorial membranes, were carefully disassembled and reassembled, indicating a tactile interaction that went beyond mere writing or reading. The frequent restitching and adaptation of these materials for reuse demonstrate a tangible, hands-on aspect of monastic work, where the reconfiguration of earlier rolls into new ones was a common practice, highlighting a resourceful and physical engagement with these objects. Rollason suggests that medieval mortuary rolls, like the Ebchester-Burnby roll, often survived in fragmented forms, their components repurposed for new uses. The rolls' pictorial and textual elements, seen as creative investments, were sometimes salvaged and incorporated into later works, as indicated by recurring stitch holes and stylistic discrepancies. This practice reflects a broader pattern of resourcefulness within monastic scriptoria, where the recycling of materials, such as the reapplication of a picture membrane from an older roll for new requests for prayers, was not uncommon.

The physical substrates of all mortuary rolls (with a few exceptions such as John Hotham's, discussed above) are built over time. The Dijon roll is unusual in that not only are several of the membranes anopisthographic, but that the text on the *versos* of membranes 2 and 3 (which are the two membranes containing the illuminations) concerns the death of an earlier abbot from the Abbey of Bénigne de Dijon.¹⁹⁴ The *tituli* on the backs of these membranes are dated from 1420–1422; therefore, these parts of the roll circulated during the abbacy of Jean V

193 Lynda Rollason, "Medieval Mortuary Rolls: Prayers for the Dead and Travel in Medieval England," *Northern History* (2011), pp. 187–223.

194 See Dufour (Vol. 3, no. 317, pp. 442–445), which concerns the sections written from 1420–22; and Vol. 3, no. 333, pp. 614–658 for the sections written from 1439–1441. When I studied the roll in Troyes, I was not able to unroll it because of its fragile condition. I was only able to study the top of the roll, containing the illuminations. The rest of the roll I studied via digital proxy, with thanks to Hanno Wijsman for providing a full set of images, kept by the IRHT; these images, however, were overexposed and only partially legible. Based on my limited first-hand study, I take issue with the way in which Dufour has numbered the membranes. What he counts as "membrane 1," I see as two pieces of parchment, and likewise for his "membrane 2." His numbering system is nevertheless adopted here, with the caveat that it needs to be revisited when the roll's state of conservation allows.



Fig. 186 Two recumbent abbots, begun before 1420, with additions ca. 1439. Mortuary roll circulated in 1439–1441 for abbots Etienne de La Feuillé (1430–1434) and Pierre Brenot (1435–1438) of the Abbey of Saint-Bénigne in Dijon. Troyes, Médiathèque Jacques-Chirac, Ms. 2256

de la Marche (who served from September 18, 1417, to September 22, 1421). These *tituli* must therefore concern his predecessor, Alexander of Montaigu (1379–1417). Because these *tituli* from the 1420s are inscribed on the backs of the images, we can deduce that the images circulated with the growing roll at that time.

The membranes that circulated in the 1420s to remember Jean V de la Marche contain two distinct images on separate membranes. One of these depicts a pair of recumbent abbots, with the two figures labelled at their feet: *Stephanus* and *Petrus* (Fig. 186). The image has in fact been repurposed to depict two abbots, when originally, it had depicted only one: the one now labeled *Stephanus* (i.e., Etienne de La Feuillé). When it circulated in the 1420s, this figure was apparently understood to represent Jean V de la Marche. Although previous art historians have studied this roll, none has pointed out that the illuminator who repurposed the membrane in 1439 added a second dead abbot to the picture and called the fresh figure Pierre Brenot. Pierre's black-clad body was painted atop the white ground that formed the marble plinth, which a single abbot had previously occupied alone. To change the image, the second artist

extended the plinth, and—like M.C. Escher—turned the vertical surface of the plinth’s side to a horizontal one. Onto this ambiguous platform, the painter has squeezed in Pierre Brenot’s narrowed body and then used the abbot’s miter to hide the awkward corner of the composition. Adding the second body prompted the painter to disambiguate their identities by labelling them *Stephanus* and *Petrus*. The stratigraphy of the image explains why Petrus looks more damaged than Stephanus: because Petrus was painted over a white marble ground, the white lead paint is seeping through his black-clad body.

In fact, the abbot in the superior position cycled through multiple identities. The figure may have originally been meant to depict an even earlier abbot than Jean V de la Marche, as the blue and gold diaper background typifies an era earlier than the 1420s. Alexander of Montaigu (1379–1417) may have commissioned the image (and the core of the roll) around 1379 to commemorate *his* predecessor. Successive abbots then used the “portrait” of the abbot to memorialize their respective predecessors, until Pierre Brenot’s successor turned parts of the roll into a double memorial, one that would collect prayers for both Etienne de La Feuillé (1430–1434) and Pierre Brenot (1435–1438). That enterprising and corner-cutting abbot was Hugo III de Mosson, who was elected head of the Abbey of St Bénigne on January 14, 1439. Shortly after his election, he sent the roll on its journey to collect *tituli* that would fill 824 cm of parchment. He was able to act quickly because he repurposed as much of the old roll as he could, namely, the 126 cm of the roll’s total length that contained the painstaking images.

Not only did Hugo III de Mosson repurpose the older roll for its images, but he also adapted the older *encyclical*, which begins:

Universis Sancte Matris Ecclesie fidelibus illis precipue qui sub regulari habitu Domino famulantur frater **Hugo** permissione divina abbas humilis et meus conventus ecclesie Sancti Benigni Divionensis ordinis sancti Benedicti Lingonensis dyocesis salutem cum augmento continuo celestium gracıarum...¹⁹⁵

[To all faithful of the Holy Mother Church, especially those who serve the Lord under a regular habit, brother **Hugo** by divine permission, humble abbot, and my convent of the Church of St Bénigne of Dijon of

195 The encyclical is transcribed in Dufour (Vol. 3, pp. 619–621).

the order of Saint Benedict of the diocese of Langres, greetings with an increase of continuous heavenly graces...]. [emphasis mine]

The word “Hugo” is written over an erasure. To update the found text,



Fig. 187 The name Hugo written over an erasure. Encyclical from the mortuary roll of the Abbey of Saint-Bénigne in Dijon, circulated in 1439–1441. Troyes, Médiathèque Jacques-Chirac, Ms. 2256 [image made from a microfilm]

Hugo has simply scraped out his predecessor’s name and inscribed his own instead (Fig. 187). The audiences for this *encyclical*—representatives from religious houses across Burgundy and beyond—would have heard from the *brevigerulus* that Abbot Hugo was exhorting them to offer prayers for the dead of St Bénigne’s Abbey.

Hugo made his mark on the roll in another way, as well: he added a message to the very top of the roll, one titled “Debts owed by the visited churches to the *brevigerulus*” (Sommes dues par les eglises visitees au porte-rouleau; Fig. 188).¹⁹⁶ In other words, each time the roll, which requests prayers for the deceased, was carried to these institutions, the *brevigerulus* was entitled to specific payments, as established by historical agreements. Cluny Abbey, for example, would owe 5 sols tournois, the Holy Trinity Monastery at Fécamp (in Normandy) would owe 10, Saint-Stephen of Dijon 3, the priory of Saint-Vigoul near Bayeux 20, the Church of Mont Saint-Michele, or “maritime peril,” 5, with additional

¹⁹⁶ Hugo’s introductory letter about debts is transcribed in Dufour (Vol. 3, pp. 618–619).

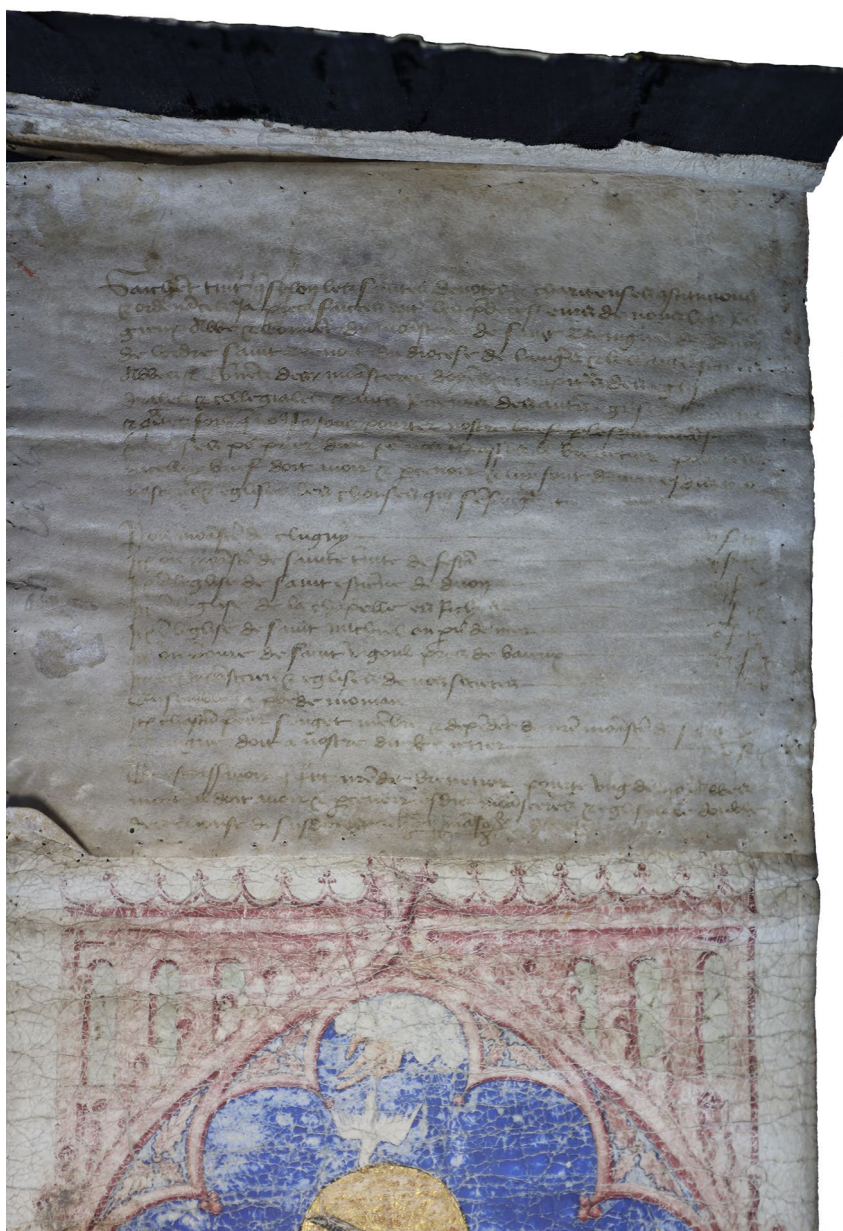


Fig. 188 Account of debts inscribed on the first membrane of the mortuary roll of the Abbey of Saint-Bénigne in Dijon, circulated in 1439–1441. Troyes, Médiathèque Jacques-Chirac, Ms. 2256

monasteries and churches owing other amounts. Additionally, there was a prebend for those near death, and each subordinate institution of Saint-Bénigne's monastery would owe 5 sols tournois. If the deceased were an abbot, the payment would be doubled. Hugo III de Mosson signed this opening section, which is the first item audience members would encounter. These dues reflect the roll's function in mediating the spiritual—and financial—economy between monasteries, supporting prayer for the dead, sustaining religious community networks, and making known Hugo's name across a wide swathe of France.

The sheet with Hugo's price list also serves as a protective wrapping for the two images. Hugo's name appears just above the martyrdom of St Bénigne. The image with St Bénigne did not co-originate with that depicting the recumbent abbots. The dramatic martyr's image, made in a much brighter palette with no fussy diaper patterns, shows the saint withstanding multiple tortures. St Bénigne, who lived in the second century CE, was said to have Christianized the region around Dijon until he was persecuted and killed under the reign of Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius (161–180 CE). According to his hagiographers, he was



Fig. 189 Detail of Saint-Bénigne, on the mortuary roll of the Abbey of Saint-Bénigne in Dijon, circulated in 1439–1441. Troyes, Médiathèque Jacques-Chirac, Ms. 2256

beaten with beef tendons, bludgeoned on the head with a metal rod, thrown in jail with hungry dogs, and subjected to molten lead poured over his feet. In the image, Marcus Aurelius, with his crown and scepter, oversees these tortures.

The most visible of these tortures, however, appears at the saint's hands: they have been stretched, so that the distal phalanges hover above the hand, connected to the middle phalanges by a thin peninsula of tortured skin (Fig. 189). Frozen in the orans position, his unnaturally elongated fingers stand boldly silhouetted against the blue background. His partially severed fingertips are the sensory organs for the sense of touch, the very digits one must apply with dexterity to unroll the eight-meter-long roll. It is impossible to empathize with the saint's pain without becoming aware of one's own hands and fingers. To unfurl this image is to cause the saint's body, bones, and paint to crack even further. Even when the roll was new, its handlers realized that it needed to be protected, as a matter of conservation. Hugo III de Mosson died on February 22, 1468. If his successor circulated a mortuary roll for him, it has not survived. Hugo was the last in a series of abbots to redeploy the cracked and broken images of the dead abbot(s) and St Bénigne.

Coda

In the mortuary rolls discussed in this chapter, each followed a different set of steps for its construction, which in turn were predicated on different forms of handling. For the mortuary roll of the Abbess of Forest, the various elements—prefatory image, *encyclical*, and *tituli*—each had a separate genesis and were stitched together later. John Hotham's roll, on the other hand, was made as one unit and sent around to collect its *tituli*. This created a problem, because no extra membranes were stitched to the roll, and the surface of the *verso*, which should not have been inscribed, became a disorganized mess. In the Dijon abbots' roll, the pictorial elements were made separately, recycled, adjusted, and reused, so that their current state represents their final context. The reassembly and reuse of the elements destabilizes the fixedness of the object, while also calling into question who the maker, user, and audience is. Their roles shift as they co-create the object.

Moreover, the size and style of the added *tituli* call into question whom or what a mortuary roll memorializes. On the mortuary roll of John Hotham, the scribe from Bury St Edmunds who dominated the dorse with his enormous ascenders was peacocking to the scribes down the road. Sure enough, 687 years later, we do indeed hold Bury St Edmunds more vividly in our collective memory than we do John Hotham. Like the prelectors of courtly literature, the scribes of *tituli* on mortuary rolls conducted performances in the moment but also diachronically.

There is a strong relationship between the kind of cumulative authorship of the mortuary rolls and the letters of profession discussed in Chapter 1. In both cases people are making marks on parchment as a form of speech act. This is a different form of writing from authorship and relies on producing formulaic words. In both cases, the operation of stitching enhances the meaning of the respective objects, since as a stitched unity the individual parts play a role that buttresses concepts such as historical continuity, widespread esteem, and institutional strength.

We can compare necrological codices, discussed earlier, with mortuary rolls. Whereas the necrology from the Franciscan convent of St Lucy stayed in the convent and recorded the deaths of many people, a mortuary roll, such as that of Elisabeth 'sConincs, travelled outside the conventual walls and only recorded the death of one person. Both objects have a memorial function, which is about ensuring that prayers be recited on behalf of the deceased. In the case of the necrology, the assurance is temporal: the Franciscan sisters of the future will continue to recite prayers on the death dates of those inscribed. In the case of the mortuary roll, the assurance is spatial and temporal: institutions from a broad geographical swath around the Benedictine convent will offer their prayers. In both cases, the objects only function when they are handled in specific ways. Like all manuscripts, they have to be opened and read to be used, but these manuscripts are special in that they also have to be cumulatively inscribed to make meaning. In both cases, the manuscript is collectively written and regularly used to organize memory as a social affair.

That each *titulus* in a mortuary roll is written in a different hand testifies to the willingness of these individuals, acting on behalf of their

respective institutions, to pray for the subject. Each scribe leaves a clear sign of wear—a legible testimony—to his promise. In this way, the *tituli* are similar to the signs of the cross, “made with my own hand,” inscribed on the professions of obedience. They bear weight because the hand that has inscribed them is the extension of a speech act, a promise that strengthens invisible social ties.

The way that memorial books were made testifies to the collective forces they exerted, but so do the ways in which they were handled. The spindles at the cores of the mortuary rolls protected them (by forming a rigid support, and in some cases, a protective hilt), and they also orchestrated a particular set of gestures for someone who wanted to operate the book. The rolls imply a long table (perhaps an altar), multiple people, some ceremonious unfurling. When that unfurling takes place, what is exposed is not only the extraordinary length of the roll, which is commensurate with the number of prayers being recited for the deceased subject, but also the variety of scripts on display. Each script represents a voice in the collective agreement to pray for the deceased. The medium (of multiple hands) is very much the message to the roll’s future users. Whereas a codex can be opened at any folio, every inch of a roll has to be touched in order to see and read it. To read a column of text is to handle it.

In Lady Elza’s necrology, one more detail suggests the text was read: the blue initial A (for *Anno domini*) that opens her testament has been deliberately touched. In particular, the thick vertical of the letter bears the marks of multiple, indistinct fingerprints. These, I believe, were left by readers as a gesture to initiate reading, as I will argue in the next (and final) chapter.

Conclusion

I. Models of transmitting gestures

Manuscripts discussed in this volume each contributed in some way to forging social bonds through gestures of touching the parchment page. To step back and gain a clearer overview of the ways that book touching created bonds, I want to reflect on the five models for transmission introduced in the first volume, which operate throughout this multi-volume study:

1. Someone is required, by the script of the ritual, to carry out particular actions (vertical)
2. A person in authority models behavior that others follow (vertical)
3. A person in authority (for example, a teacher or confessor) actively shapes the behavior of others through instruction (vertical)
4. Individuals apply haptic habits from one realm into another (horizontal)
5. Peer groups forge and copy behavior as a route to group formation (horizontal)

To this list, I add another model of transmission:

6. The demands of the physical object require a particular physical interaction (structural)

About this sixth category: many of the manuscripts discussed in this study were designed with blanks to be filled in. This includes calendars with obituaries to be added; mortuary rolls, with promises for prayers

to be added on the ever-growing tail; lists of confraternity members who entrust their souls to the future living members; lists of lands, rents, and properties whose residual profit covers the costs of praying for dead abbesses. All of these book types require future interaction. When the book is being properly used, it is recording the past and future. Every new inscription implies a living continuity.

All six models of transmission permeate this volume. As is clear from the many references to Volume 1, I have argued that manhandling certain categories of manuscripts (Gospels, missals, books of legal code), which persons in authority did to carry out public rituals, conveyed techniques of book-handling that trickled into less formal and more inclusive rituals. Witnesses to those rituals sometimes carried these newly legitimated forms of book handling into new arenas and treated their own manuscripts in similarly physical ways. For example, bishops who professed obedience to the archbishop of Canterbury then imposed similar rituals on the clergy below them on the hierarchy. Such rituals expanded to include laypeople, such as the castle governors who took oaths to ecclesiastical deacons. When this happened, some of the trappings of earlier profession rituals stayed in place (such as making an utterance in formal language at an altar), while other aspects of the ritual changed (so that the text of the profession was no longer copied out for each individual, but rather written in a formulaic way in a Gospel manuscript, and in the vernacular instead of Latin). Some of the trappings of these rituals were adopted by religious, and eventually, lay confraternities. The ritual spread downward to include many more kinds of promises and even re-emerged as a form of courtly entertainment, on oaths taken on exquisite birds and on representations of those birds in manuscripts, around which prelectors and audiences gathered.

Laypeople were copying what Marcel Mauss would call a “technique of the body,” that is, a particular culturally learned corporeal behavior.¹⁹⁷ Mauss argued that techniques of the body were passed from persons of authority downward, to those who imitated and copied them. Applying this concept to book handling, I have argued that those in control of the culture’s authoritative legal and religious books modeled the behavior of others, who applied techniques of the body in order to attain status

¹⁹⁷ Marcel Mauss, “Techniques of the Body,” in *Incorporations*, Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter (eds) (New York, 1992), pp. 455–477.

or solidify group identity. When those techniques of the body include roughly handling books and deliberately touching images, they leave traces. Central to this study is the idea that marks of wear help to determine how medieval books were used. Therefore, my methods have expanded the kinds of evidence that can be used to write history and the kinds of questions that can be asked, by reverse-engineering the handling techniques based on the use-wear evidence.

Book-handling behaviors were shaped in childhood during reading lessons, which by their nature were social and book-oriented. Signs of wear in books made for juvenile audiences reveal that the reading lessons had a physical component. Teachers actively taught with their hands, mouths, and fingers what their charges were to do with books. Such demonstrations could continue into adolescence and adulthood, when preachers and confessors replaced mothers and teachers as the ones teaching reading, comprehension, and visual skills while also making morals manifest.

No one made morals manifest with more bombast than did the courtly prelectors who used their hands and fingers in dramatic ways as they read stories aloud. Their audiences clamored for vernacularized tales. By the evidence presented above, prelectors gave them a show. Signs of wear in manuscripts made for French, English and Spanish courts reveal that some readers not only looked at the pictures, but they used them as springboards for dramatically engaging their audiences. Part of the reason to enact gestures was to magnify the images for the benefit of a listening public. In the service of drawing their listeners into the events and helping to position their moral reception, prelectors partially destroyed the miniatures.

When I have discussed these acts of targeted destruction in front of twenty-first-century audiences, they have protested: the purpose of the images in the book was to add prestige and value, and early owners would never have willfully destroyed their precious manuscripts! But prestige only accounts for part of the motivation for illuminating manuscripts. Doing so had several other purposes: to locate particular passages in the book; to aiding the imagination; to add color; to interpret the stories; to buttress the social function of reading. While adding prestige played some role, what greater display of prestige is there than to casually consume something of great monetary value?

How, exactly, original audiences thought about damaging their books requires a complicated response. The abrasion visible to us a half millennium later suggests that the original audiences, too, were able to see the abrasion caused by these gestures. That osculatory targets were invented suggests that painters lamented the damage to their work. It is apparent that users wanted to preserve their images by sewing curtains over images (a topic to be explored in greater detail in the next volume). In keeping with this preservationist mindset, they (occasionally) confined their touching to border decoration or only touched the edges of initials and images. (I am reminded of being told, as a child, to handle photographs by the edges so as not to fingerprint them.)

But the situation was more complicated, and some some book owners welcomed the signs of wear. Users might have believe that old or worn images conferred tradition and solemnity. That appears to have motivated the officials in Utrecht to have selected Gospel manuscripts that were several hundred years old to repurpose as oath-swearing objects. The mob bosses of Chicago likewise chose very old books for oath swearing, to confer antiquity upon a borrowed tradition. Rubbed folios with mangled images could also attest to an audience's affection for a given manuscript and its stories, just as smeared images in the *Douce Vows of the Peacock* could have given elderly courtiers a sentimental sigh. A well-worn children's manuscript could attest to lessons learned, just as a well-thumbed confraternity manual could attest to (new) traditions maintained.

It is not always clear whether the traces of touching point to a private event or one witnessed by an audience. I have tried to point to evidence for public rituals, when it exists. I have also concentrated on manuscripts made on parchment, partly because parchment was expensive and durable, able to withstand considerable mechanical stress. Its expense meant that owners had a strong motivation to keep parchment books in circulation, even if the images were degraded from wear. In fact, if they were, then the prelector had all the more reason to explain what was happening in the now-murky images. Without an explicator, the images in the *Douce Vows of the Peacock* would be all but unintelligible: the more they were explained, the more they *needed* to be explained.

One idea that operates across these volumes is that imagery in books elicits behavior in readers, and some of that behavior reiterates the



Fig. 190 Opening folio of *Facta et dicta memorabilia* by Valerius Maximus, with a miniature depicting Simon de Hesdin presenting his translation to the king. France, c. 1400–1410. HKB, Ms. 71 E 68, fol. 1r, and detail

action taking place in representations. That includes representations in miniatures showing figures physically interacting with books, which then inspired real-world, physical interactions with books. But there's a catch: the mirrored behavior might be translated into a micro-gesture involving a finger rather than an entire body. For example, the first miniature in an illuminated French manuscript made in the first decade of the fifteenth century shows Simon de Hesdin presenting his French translation of the *Facta et dicta memorabilia* by Valerius Maximus to Charles V, king of France (Fig. 190).¹⁹⁸ The image has been touched in a specific way: most tellingly, the image of the book, which the translator is passing to the king, has been touched. Three depicted hands make contact with the book, which is represented in a red binding with two black clasps. This may in fact represent, self-referentially, the very volume in which the miniature has been painted—HKB, Ms. 71 E 68—although this volume was rebound in the fifteenth century in a white binding, so it is not clear whether the illuminator was aiming for verisimilitude.¹⁹⁹ It is also not clear whether the first or a subsequent owner was responsible for the damage. What is clear is that a user has added his hand to the depicted hands and touched the site of the exchange in the open book. The depicted hand beckoned the physical one. Perhaps the same reader has also touched the now pock-marked hem of the translator's black mantle, as if he were a venerable figure. This image of a book is the site of celebrating the book, and the reader has identified with the figure offering the tome. The presence of represented hands in the image invites a physical hand to the page. The image both reflects and shapes a set of social gestures centered upon handling the book.

To stay with the *Facta et dicta memorabilia*, a reader has also touched, quite possibly with a moistened finger, the baguettes in the borders. This gesture is especially noticeable because of the way in which medieval manuscripts were made: areas of burnished gold were usually outlined in black ink in order to make the gold "pop." The ink is relatively water soluble, and it has weak adherence to non-porous surfaces such as burnished gold. Where the small amount of ink overlaps the gold area,

198 All the miniatures were cut out but later glued back in with paper tabs.

199 In the fifteenth century, the coats of arms were added to the initials; this heraldry belongs to the Berlaimont family, who may be the book's second owner. This may be the party who rebound the volume in white.

it is especially vulnerable. When a moist finger comes in contact with an ink-gold combination, the ink is easily smeared away, but then is “feathered” onto the more porous parchment surface.

Considering the qualities of the smears and their locations on the page can help to point to the rituals and emotions behind their genesis. The areas of a manuscript that are most often dry-touched are the lower corners (for folio-turning) and images for oath-swearing (often depicting the Crucifixion, the Last Judgment, Mary, St Christopher, or a group’s mascot-saint). Those areas of the book that are most often wet-touched are different:

1. Frontispieces
2. Opening miniatures (and within them: faces, hems, images of books, representations of hands, coats of arms)
3. Initials
4. Frames around miniatures
5. Diaper backgrounds
6. Baguette decorations

The first three categories all relate to the beginnings of texts, which suggests that touching these areas relates to initiating the act of reading. It is a *hic et nunc* gesture, a setting of the body toward the constructed world of the text. The oral performance of certain manuscripts led to the repeated handling of a particular category of paratext: the initial.

II. Touching beginnings

In *The Name of the Rose*, essayist, medievalist, and fiction author Umberto Eco writes a mystery set in a medieval monastic library, where a series of deaths and murders takes place. The protagonist, an itinerant monk and sleuth played by Sean Connery in the movie version, discovers that the instrument of death is a manuscript containing ideas so dangerous that its keepers are willing to booby-trap it. They do so by spreading poison on the book’s margins, so that the poison is transferred to readers’ mouths as they moisten their fingers to turn the folios. The victims present with swollen, blackened tongues before breathing their last. However, anyone who has handled medieval manuscripts on parchment

will know that wetting the finger would not improve the reader's grip: this is a page-turning gesture suitable only for books printed on fine, thin paper, especially when the book block has been guillotined. In such a book it can be difficult to isolate just the top sheet, and licking the finger can help. Licking the finger is not a gesture that would help someone turning a parchment folio: the gesture depicted in the film is a backdated projection of the gesture of licking the finger to turn a paper page. Instead of the fictive scenario from *The Name of the Rose*, I propose an alternative: the gesture that does involve connecting the mouth with the parchment manuscript through the hand is that of wet-touching the initial, not the corner of the page.

Touching initials is one habit of reading that bridges many of the different book types. I have argued above that prelectors touched images — including historiated initials — in order to draw the audience's attention to the imagery and to heighten drama by animating the action with a finger. However, prelectors and other performative public readers also wet-touched initials that were not historiated. For example, the *Battle of Woeringen*, a manuscript introduced earlier, has a touched initial (HKB, Ms. 76 E 23, fol. 9v; Fig. 117). The ten-line letter that initiates the text "Vrouwe Margriete van Inghelant..." [Lady Margaret of England...], is filled with an abstract linear design, not a figurative one.²⁰⁰ Careful inspection with an unaided eye reveals that this initial has been touched multiple times with a wet finger, with several touch points across the grid. Since the initial is not figurative, the reader could not have been trying to honor or attack a represented figure, nor would it make sense to turn the manuscript toward the audience to look at an abstract design.

The small number of wet-touched initials presented in this book is not commensurate with the vast number I have encountered in 25 years of studying medieval manuscripts. Currently my file of "wet-touched initials and decoration" burgeons with some 600 items. So pervasive are smeared initials that they deserve an explanation: not all can be stray marks. This topic will return in the next volume, which treats prayer books, but I am discussing it here because I believe the gesture belongs

200 Recent scholars have considered the complexity of abstraction. See the essays in Elina Gertsman (ed.), *Abstraction in Medieval Art: Beyond the Ornament* (Amsterdam University Press, 2021).

to social formations around the book. With this in mind, and in advance of further development in the next volume, I cautiously put forward four proposals.

First, prelectors touched historiated initials in the same way they touched images: to draw the audience in while animating the figures. As I have touched upon throughout this book, some of the most emphatic book-handling practices took place in front of an audience. Prelectors' activities were not limited to courtly reading, and historiated initials damaged by wet-touching appear in both secular and sacred

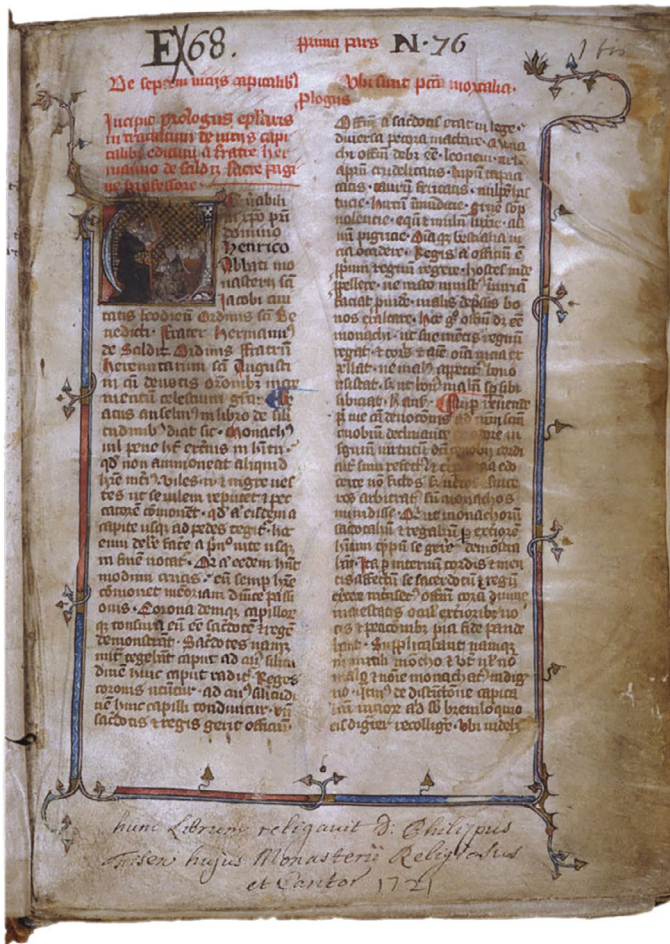


Fig. 191 Incipit of *Tractatus de septem vitis capitalibus duplex* by Hermannus de Schildesche. France, 1316–1342. Tilburg, TF, Ms. Haaren 13, fol. 1bis recto.

manuscripts, such as at the opening of a copy of *Tractatus de septem vitiis capitalibus duplex*, written by Hermannus de Schildesche and copied by a Benedictine monk at the monastery of St James in Liège some time between 1316 and 1342 (Fig. 191).²⁰¹ The opening initial depicts a teacher in monastic robes reading from a book to a group of students on the floor in front of him. The initial has been repeatedly touched and smeared, as if touching the initial belonged to the process of prelection, as depicted in the image.

Second, prelectors even touched initials that lacked figurative imagery in order to mark the beginning of a session of reading. A twentieth-century equivalent, from the era before teleprompters, occurred on the nightly news, when the newsreader would tap a sheaf of typescript papers to square them up. In my lifetime, when all newspapers were physically larger, people would often flick the center of the open newspaper with the middle fingernail before beginning to read. These are medium-specific conventions of initiating reading.

Third, prelectors would touch their tongues and then smear the opening initial as a gesture which brought the voice of the text into contact with the tongue of the reader. This culturally pervasive gesture was shared by religious and lay people alike. The tongue-to-initial gesture forged an intimate bond between the words written on the page and the words uttered from the lips of the reader.

A fourth reason late-medieval readers may have touched initials was by way of testament: perhaps they were taking a casual oath promising to stay true to the words on the page and not to deviate from the script. This is an extension of the book-centered gestures individuals made when they swore oaths to a leader, group, or office. In the current context, perhaps they swore to be true to the text. In our current screen-based culture, public readers (including, for example, newscasters) put textual evidence on the screen and read the words verbatim, as a way of demonstrating that their oral performance is true to the text they are reading.

I suspect that in the printed age, by some means of social transmission, that gesture of wet-touching initials morphed into wetting the finger for the purpose of gripping the paper page (especially one

²⁰¹ For a description of this manuscript, see <https://bnm-i.huygens.knaw.nl/tekstdragers/TDRA00000001226>

with a guillotined edge) more effectively. In other words, the gesture of touching the tongue may have changed meaning with the new substrate of paper. I leave it to a historian of early-modern public reading practices to confirm or debunk this hypothesis. Because my purview stops at the edge of the handwritten parchment world, I only seek an explanatory model for this pervasive gesture that left its tracks in manuscripts.

The gesture of wet-touching initials not only occurs across genres of manuscripts, but also across the stretch of Western Europe. Most of the examples I have given in these volumes have come from Northern Europe, but in fact wet-touching initials also occurred in the British Isles as well as in Southern Europe. I will provide some examples, which supplement those discussed above. The topic will return in the next two volumes.

III. Touching initials across Europe

The social scene around initial-touching is corroborated in many manuscripts that have a social function. The effects of this gesture appear, for example, in numerous English courtly manuscripts, such as

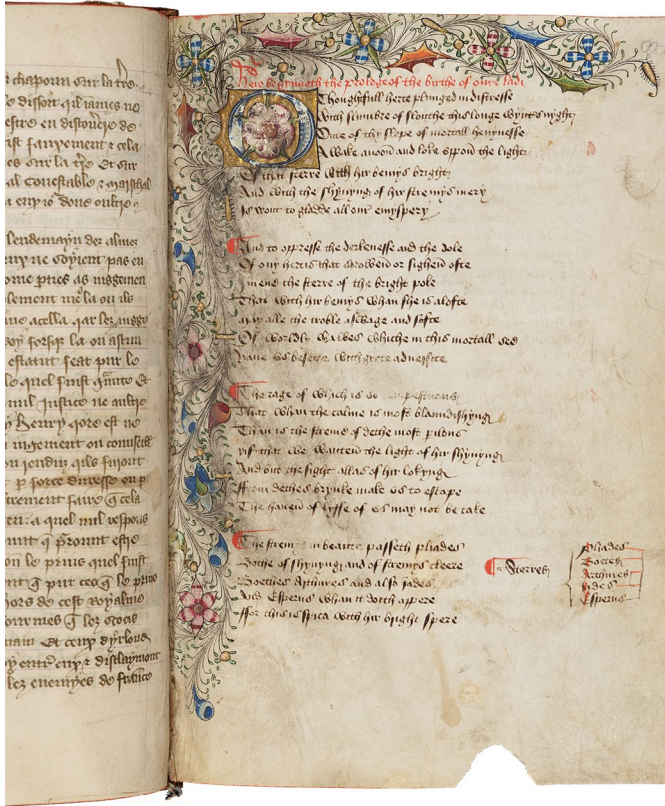


Fig. 192 Folio in a compilation volume, at the incipit of John Lydgate's *Lyfe of our Lady. England*, ca. 1450–1475. Oxford, BL, Ms. Bodley 596, fol. 86r

a copy of John Lydgate's poem called the *Lyfe of our Lady* (Oxford BL, Ms. Bodley 596; Fig. 192).²⁰² Since the text is written in rhyming verse,

²⁰² See *The History of English Poetry from the Close of the Eleventh to ...*, Volume 2 (1840), pp. 386–388. Heather Blatt, *Participatory Reading in Late-Medieval England* (Manchester University Press, 2018), discusses “haptic visuality, in which the eyes facilitate touch” (p. 267) in terms of the manuscripts of John Lydgate, but this approach

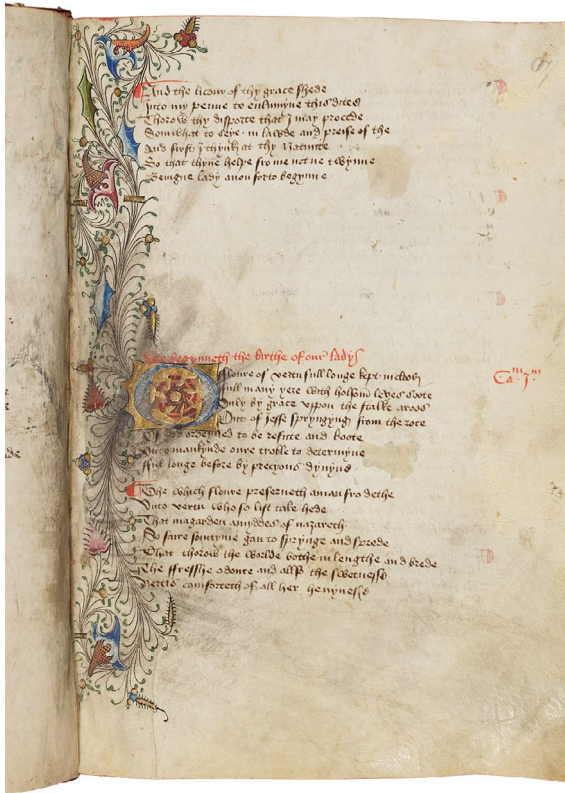


Fig. 193 Folio in a compilation volume, at the incipit of John Lydgate's *Birth of Our Lady*. England, ca. 1450–1475. Oxford, BL, Ms. Bodley 596, fol. 87r

one can assume its auralty. The initial O, which opens a prayer “O thoughtfull herte plonged in distresse,” has been severely wet-touched. The reader has also stroked the border decoration, as if it were long tresses tumbling down the spine of the stanzas. In particular, the reader has targeted the red rose at the center of the letter.²⁰³ Furthermore, the other initials within the text have been similarly rubbed. The stanza detailing the “Birthe of our Lady” has been heavily wet-touched. The ritualized action has lifted the blue paint around the initial and liquefied the black ink outlining the gold (Fig. 193). Subsequent internal initials

owes more to the theories of Gilles Deleuze than to the close examination of the parchment manuscript.

²⁰³ There is no corresponding offset on the facing page, which indicates that these pages did not originally face each other.

display evidence of similar treatment, where the reader has brought his moist breath to the page time and again.

Texts not written in verse, but nevertheless charismatic with potential public appeal, often have wet-touched initials, as if a prelector were performing with the manuscript. Such is the case with the Bestiary of Anne Walshe (Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek Gl. kgl. Saml. 1633 4°), an English manuscript of the early fifteenth century.²⁰⁴ Although the



Fig. 194 Folio from a bestiary with an entry on the eagle. England, ca. 1400–1425. Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek Gl. kgl. Saml. 1633 4°, fol. 70v

manuscript has some water damage, that does not explain the targeted touching that has obliterated selected initials (Fig. 194). The reader

²⁰⁴ The manuscript has been digitized: <http://www5.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/221/eng/Binding+%28front%29/> For this bestiary in its manuscript context, see Elizabeth Morrison, *Book of Beasts: The Bestiary in the Medieval World* (J. Paul Getty Museum, 2019).



Fig. 195 Folio from a bestiary depicting snakes and salamanders. France, ca. 1450.
HvhB, Ms. 10 B 25, fol. 42v

touched a subset of the initials, possibly corresponding to the beginning of a session of reading. She or he did not touch the images. In a French bestiary made around 1450 with overlapping content, one of the readers has ignored the initials but has traced the length of one of the serpents, as if re-iterating what the illuminator had already communicated with the frame: that the beast is extraordinarily long and skinny (Fig. 195).²⁰⁵ Even though the texts are similar in the two manuscripts, the patterns of

205 The Hague, Museum van het Boek, Ms. 10 B 25; contains: *Bestiarium*, *Herbarius*, *Anatomia corporis humani*; and *Lapidarius* by Marbodius Redonensis. Only the images for the bestiary have been completed: space for the miniatures was not reserved after fol. 43v. See Anne S. Korteweg et al., *Splendour, Gravity & Emotion: French Medieval Manuscripts in Dutch Collections* (Waanders, 2004), cat. 25.

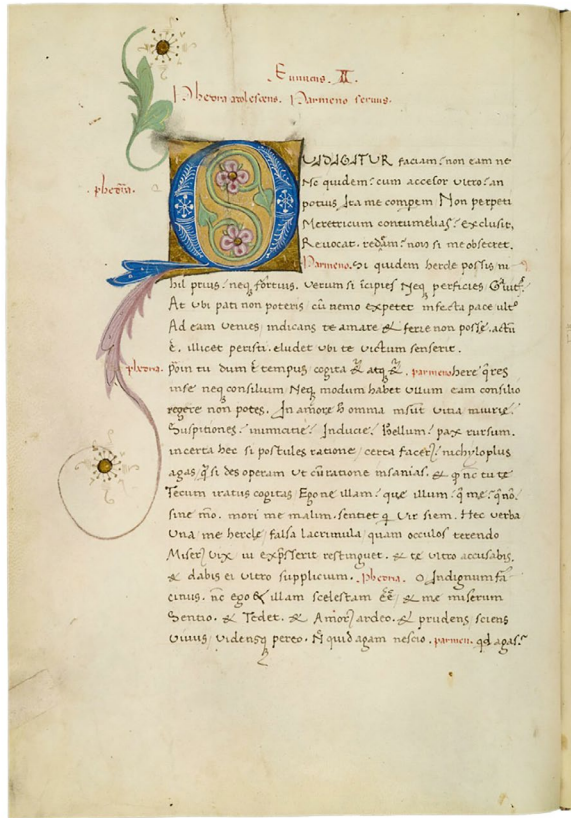


Fig. 196 Folio from the Comedies of Terence. Northern Italy, ca. 1440–60. HKB, Ms. 128 E 8, fol. 23v

wear speak to two different emphases in reading, one involving reciting the words, and the other, collective looking.

Stage plays and dialogues imply a spoken performance, so it is not surprising to find wet-touched initials in a copy of the Comedies of Terence, made in Northern Italy ca. 1440–60 (HKB, Ms. 128 E 8). This manuscript has delicate humanist script executed with a narrow nib and is decorated with painted and gilt initials (Fig. 196). Other texts with obvious aurality also have wet-touched initials. For example, a copy of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*—a text wrongly attributed to Cicero in the Middle Ages—was made in Italy c. 1400–1410: it has an opening initial that has unmistakably been touched with a wet finger (Fig. 197). This book would have been read by those who wanted to improve their

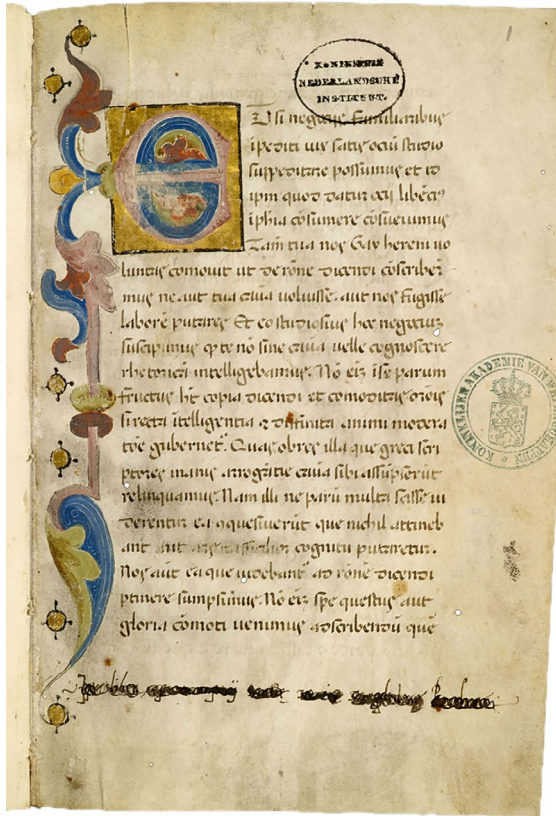


Fig. 197 Opening folio of Pseudo-Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. Italy, 1400–1410.
HKB, Ms. KA 1, fol. 1r

performance as rhetoricians, to give convincing oral arguments. The book has other signs of wear, including inscriptions at the bottom of the first folio, and various stains, suggesting that an early user considered it a utilitarian object. Its readers have smeared text and dripped wax.

Ritually wet-touching initials could also contain a gesture of collective veneration. That seems to be the case at the convent of Corpus Domini in Ferrara, where the sisters began venerating Caterina Vigri da Bologna shortly after her death in 1463, when it was discovered that her body was uncorrupted.²⁰⁶ Caterina, an Observant Franciscan nun, had

²⁰⁶ Serena Spanò Martinelli and Irene Graziani, “Caterina Vigri between Gender and Image: La Santa in Text and Iconography,” in *The Saint between Manuscript and Print in Italy, 1400–1600*, Alison K. Frazier (ed.) (Toronto Centre for Reformation and



Fig. 198 Initial C with the Christmas Eve Vision, in Caterina da Bologna, *Le sette armi spirituali*. Ferrara, after 1463. Ferrara, Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea, MS Cl. 1.354, fol. Lr

experienced visions, which she then described in texts by her own hand. The nuns who survived her produced some 20 copies of her book *Le sette armi spirituali* (*The Seven Spiritual Weapons*) for their own use and for the use of Clarissan convents in the region. One of these is now preserved in Ferrara (Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea, MS Cl. 1.354, fol. Lr; Fig. 198). Overall, the opening folio is moderately worn, with light fingerprints in the lower corner. Dramatically, however, the initial has been repeatedly touched, which has abraded the upper and lower right corner, as

Renaissance Studies, 2015), pp. 351–378, argue that the cult of Caterina was growing just as printing entered Italy; consequently, two different audiences venerated the saint, one through the medium of print and the other through manuscript.

well as the green paint that was on the altar. The initial C represents Caterina as a nun in Ferrara, experiencing a vision that appeared to her on Christmas Eve when she was praying at an altar: the Christ Child embraced her, and she smelled his sweet scent. The desire to touch this initial could have had complex motivations: a desire to touch the words that Caterina wrote, where the initial stands as a synecdoche for the whole; a desire to touch Jesus as Caterina had; a desire to touch the beatified Caterina herself; a desire to involve the body in reading, just as Caterina involved her tactile and olfactory senses when she held the Christ Child in her vision; a desire to engage listeners with a theatrical gesture as a preamble to reading a Christmas story aloud.²⁰⁷ Whatever the desire, the impact on the paint was severe.

It is difficult to know whether the middle of the initial was originally fully painted, or whether it originally consisted only of a pen drawing with a green altar cloth and gilded haloes. Certainly, the letter itself was magenta and green but is now the color of parchment. The image shows a sculpture depicting Mary and Jesus on an altar, where the Christ Child lunges toward Caterina da Bologna who kneels before the altar to receive him. Perhaps the image was never completed, but the manuscript was deemed so urgent that the sisters began using it in its half-finished state.

What is clear is that users have touched the initial with a wet finger, dislodging the detail of Caterina's face, abrading the other colors in the letter, and causing the gold leaf to flake off and reveal the red primer. One or more readers wet-touched the initial many times. Some of that activity was directed at the four gilt corners of the letter; this has smeared paint nearby, including all rubrication in the vicinity of the initial. Some of the touching was directed at the halo of Catherine, and the area just behind her head in the image, as if the reader consciously avoided destroying the image. What is most telling is that the entire folio is buckled, as if the wetness has caused that part of the page to

207 Theresa Zammit Lupi, "Books as Multisensory Experience," *Tracing Written Heritage in a Digital Age*, Ephrem Ishac, Thomas Casandy and Theresa Zammit Lupi (eds) (Harrassowitz, 2021), pp. 21–31, carefully considers the impact of the physical book on the user's senses, including the sense of smell. Henrike Lähnemann considers how the sisters at the Cistercian convent of Medingen enhance their devotions with the physical qualities of the book; see Henrike Lähnemann, "The Materiality of Medieval Manuscripts," *Oxford German Studies*, 45(2) (April 2, 2016), pp. 121–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00787191.2016.1156853>

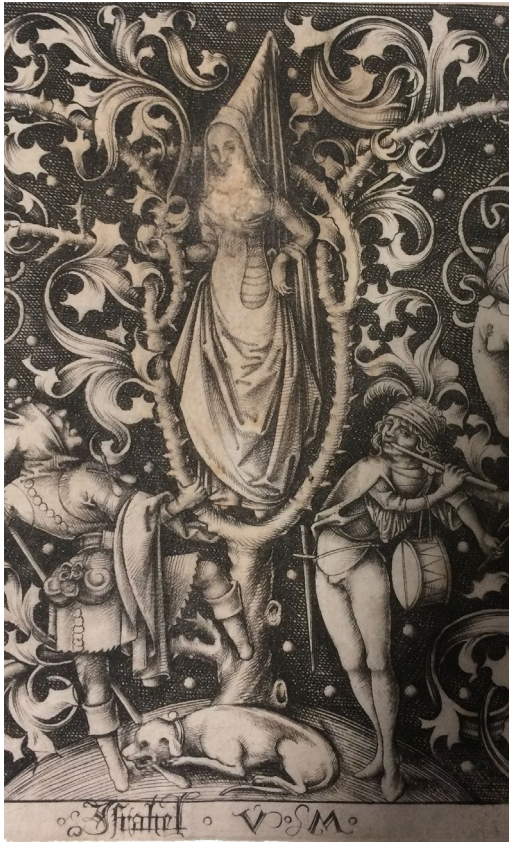


Fig. 199 Israel van Meckenem, Horny, thorny dance moves in a curvilinear structure of acanthus, with a woman at the center. Print on paper made from an engraved copper plate, Middle Rhine, before 1503. Bologna, Print Cabinet. PN21342, and detail

shrink and stiffen, with textural consequences across the expanse. I took the photograph reproduced here and purposely shot it in raking light in order to reveal the wrinkles in the parchment, caused by introducing moisture, probably in the form of a saliva-wetted finger.

I strongly suspect that wet-touching initials is a culturally-formed habit that initiates the reading process and has different valences in different contexts: with this gesture, readers can announce their intention to read; show respect for the page, the image, or the letter; make physical contact with the author of a text (which, in certain Christian contexts, conveys divinity); respond to the subject of a figurative initial; draw listeners' or choral members' attention to the beginning of a text; or leave a mark in order to announce that reading has occurred. I wonder whether this gesture has survived in the way that some readers (especially older people) lick their fingers before turning pages. This cultural habit may be dying out now, not just because screens have overtaken printed paper, but also because fingerprint recognition systems will not recognize a wet finger.

My perennial and unanswerable question is: did people wet-touch initials without an audience? Did they do so while reading privately and silently? If licking the finger is a cultural habit, then the answer leans toward yes. But if touching the initial is a form of demonstration, then no: the gesture lacks meaning outside a social context. And how much reading took place alone and silently? This is difficult to know. The term "private devotion" is probably overused and may not reflect social practice effectively. There may have been a significant amount of silent reading alone in certain monasteries, but the microcultures of such reading are difficult to gauge. I will take up this thread in the next volume.

By way of closing, I acknowledge that users transferred some of these practices onto printed paper, although I leave it up to others to investigate the flavor and extent of such practices, as, with the introduction of the printing press, the sheer number of books swelled and the range of their subjects shifted and soared. Thanks to the work of David Areford, Suzanne Karr Schmidt, and Kimberly Nichols, we know something

about how practices of handling translated to the early print.²⁰⁸ There is more to learn in this arena by deploying use-wear analysis.

Consider an engraving signed by Israel van Meckenem depicting leggy men in tights making music and dancing around a woman who has hooked up her skirt slightly to prevent herself from tripping as she dances (Fig. 199). It presents a fantasy of joyous reverie. The male dancers cavort gingerly, for each is confined to a thorned hoop, a structure which taunts: touch if you dare! The print would have originally had larger margins, but these have been trimmed down to the quick, as is the case for most of the fifteenth-century prints in the collection. It is in excellent condition, except for one visibly abraded area: the woman's chest. Whatever the feelings that the songs, dances, and costumes have engendered, they have resulted in the beholders' reaching into the picture to fondle female flesh. Whatever prurient interests users of parchment manuscripts might have had, I leave it to others to investigate the role of sexuality in touching printed material in the early modern age and beyond. The subject is too racy for me, and in the next volume, I will return to piety to consider ways in which people expressed devotion by touching their manuscripts.

Public activities involving codices in the late Middle Ages all attempt to make religious devotion, social belonging in the context of brotherhoods, civic duties, and group entertainment more experiential. In so doing, they leave marks—often cumulative marks—in the books that provided their authoritative structures. Participation in religious and civic life makes tangible marks on history. Users of books become agents in the formation of the images and texts. By wearing them down in specific ways, they mold their own books to reflect their own use-history. They become part of the making process, one stroke and kiss at a time.

208 David S. Areford, *The Viewer and the Printed Image in Late Medieval Europe: Visual Culture in Early Modernity* (Routledge, 2017); Suzanne Kathleen Karr Schmidt and Kimberly Nichols, *Altered and Adorned: Using Renaissance Prints in Daily Life* (Art Institute of Chicago; distributed by Yale University Press, 2011).

Afterword: The recent past

I have presented a few dozen examples and could present hundreds more. My goal in these volumes continues to be to offer new tools for thinking through the early reception of manuscripts, and therefore to better understand users' emotions and motivations. May these ideas provoke a discussion!

In thinking about the legacy of book-touching behaviors in the twenty-first century, one can consider the real sense of loss that readers feel when they handle digital books instead of their paper counterparts. Book reading formerly took place on trains, in waiting rooms, living rooms, and libraries. These spaces are increasingly harboring only digital reading of a much different sort than the sustained reading of full books. Digital reading is both more social (because of its potential for connectivity) and more solitary (as those immersed in screens are often absent from the people in their immediate sphere). Certain social functions of the book persist, but they are negligible: writing comments in guest books comes to mind.

As I finish writing this book, a story about swearing an oath on a book has made the news: Makenzie Lystrup was appointed Director of Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland. When she took her oath of office, she eschewed the Bible traditionally used for this ceremony but rather placed her hand on a copy of Carl Sagan's 1994 book, *Pale Blue Dot*. One could say her oath-prop had historical continuity: it was written by an enlightened being, Carl Sagan, and concerns a world beyond earth. In this way, she updated the medieval procedure but fully adapted it to the secular space age. The idea of performing rituals on a book has survived from the Middle Ages, even if the credulity in the supernatural content of the text has been questioned, at least in some arenas.

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Appendices

I have silently expanded the abbreviations and capitalized proper nouns in the following transcriptions. By imposing punctuation but not diacritical marks, I have not endeavored to make comprehensive annotated editions as a philologist might do, but rather to make these texts useful and accessible for the purposes of this study.

Between the preparation of Volumes 1 and 2, OpenAI launched ChatGPT. Using it has changed my working methods for transcribing and translating medieval texts. ChatGPT-3.5 caught errors I had made in the Linkebeek transcription ten years ago, and which a native speaker had checked. For finding solutions to ambiguous letters in the manuscripts and generating accurate and fluid translations, ChatGPT-3.5 was more effective than human assistants.

I transcribed the texts from St Loup, Utrecht, Valenciennes, and Brussels (St Gorik's) manually from digital photographs, without using Transkribus or any optical character recognition system. The AI did not have access to the photographs. I then used ChatGPT-4 to improve the transcriptions, specifying that the AI should not modernize the spelling. The process took approximately 120 hours and involved going through each text 10-15 times with the digital scans at hand. I then used ChatGPT-4 to generate the translations. These I improved manually, working iteratively through short segments of the translated text to weed out the machine's misplaced confidence. I combed through each text 8-10 times. To gain the best results, I performed these operations from 5:00-9:00 a.m. in the UK and Europe, when North America was still asleep and not diminishing the AI bandwidth. In writing these paragraphs, at a moment in AI's history when some are using it furtively, while others are skeptical about its applications in humanities research, my aim is transparency.

Appendix I: Gospels of St Loup

Transcription and translation of selections from the Troyes Gospels (Troyes, Médiathèque Jacques-Chirac, Ms. 2275, fol. 85r).

Manuscript on parchment, 305 × 198 mm. Main document (fols 1–84) form an incomplete Gospel manuscript. Fol. 85, transcribed here, forms a singleton added in the fifteenth century.

Decorated with historiated and ornamented initials. Commissioned by Henri le Libéral, Count of Champagne, and donated to the Abbey of Saint-Loup under the abbacy of “Guitherus” (1153–1197) by Henri le Libéral to honor his son Henri (born post-1164).

[85r] Iuramentum fieri solitum per abbates huius monasterij. In prima sive [read: sive] receptione et institutione.

Ego frater N huius monasterij sancti Lupi Trecentij ordinis sancti Augustini humilis abbas, juro voveo et promitto deo omnipotenti beatissime virgini Mariae eius matri et beato Lupo eiusdem patrono quod jura consuetudines antiquae dicti monasterij et in eodem fieri et observari consuetas toto posse tenebo et observabo.

Item, quod reliquos eiusdem fraternaliter et caritative secundum regulam beati Augustini. Et antiquae ipsius monasterij statuta tractabo [erasure].

[added text] Item, quod privilegia concessa pro summis pontificibus sive [read: sive] regibus Franciae novissimis diebus observabo et defendam pro posse meo.

Oath customarily made by the abbots of this monastery. At first or during the reception and establishment.

I, Brother N of this monastery of Saint Loup of Troyes of the order of Saint Augustine, a humble abbot, swear, vow, and promise to almighty God, the most blessed Virgin Mary his mother, and the blessed Loup, the patron of the same, that I will hold and observe with all my power the laws and old customs of the said monastery and those that are usually carried out and observed within it.

Furthermore, [I swear] that I will treat the others of the same [monastery] fraternally and charitably according to the rule of Saint Augustine. And [I will] deal with the old statutes of the same monastery [erasure].

[added text] Furthermore, [I swear] that I will observe and defend, to the best of my ability, the privileges granted by the highest pontiffs or the current kings of France.

Item, quod eisdem reliqui et aliis eiusdem monasterij subiectis omnia vircuria[?] prout in eodem ab antiquo fieri est consuetum. Et secundem ipsius facultates ministrabo.

Item, quod iura fructus et proventus ipsius monasterij bene et fedeliter regam et gubernabo Ipsiusque maneria domos et eddifficia toto posse secundem ipsius monasterijs facultates et fructuum possibilitatem manutenebo sustinebo nec aliquae bona ipsius monasterij aliquantur alienabo. Et sigue alienata fuerint ad jus et proprietatem eiusdem monasterij toto posse redire procurabo.

Item, quod residenciam personalem in eodem monasterij nisi casus alius exigerit faciem. Et in eodem diunam officium prout fieri ab antiquo est consuetum continuabo et pro relique eiusdem facere et continuare procurabo.

Sic deus me adiuuet et haec sancta dei evangelia.

Furthermore, [I swear] that for the same relics and others subjected to this same monastery, I will [do] all duties as has been customary from ancient times in the same [monastery]. And I will serve according to its capabilities.

Furthermore, [I swear] that I will rightly and faithfully govern the rights, fruits, and revenues of the same monastery and I will maintain, support, and not in any way alienate the manors, houses, and buildings of the same with all my power, according to the capabilities and potential fruits of the monastery. And if some [assets] have been alienated, I will endeavor with all my might to return them to the right and property of the same monastery.

Furthermore, [I swear] that unless another circumstance demands, I will make my personal residence in the same monastery. And in the same [monastery], I will continue the daily service as has been customary from ancient times and I will ensure that the rest of the same [services] are done and continued.

So help me God and by these holy Gospels of God.

Appendix 2: Chapter of Utrecht Gospels

Transcription and translation of oaths added to a Gospel manuscript (Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Ms. 1590)

Gospel (13th century, in Latin), with parchment and texts (primarily oaths) added in the 14th-17th centuries in Latin and Dutch, and used at the Chapter of St John, Utrecht. 109 folios on parchment, 230 × 160 (168 × 108) mm, 13–14 lines. Binding: 16th-century black leather. The manuscript is in poor condition with many losses, repaired folios, and blanks.

fols 1v–30v: 15th century [added oaths]

30v–31r: 16th-17th century [added oaths]

32–101r: 13th century [Gospels]

101v–109v: 14th century [liturgical texts]

[fols 1v–2v] [rubric damaged] Ego N, prepositus **et archidiaconus** ecclesie sancti Iohannis Traiectensis, juro ad hec sancta dei ewangelia que manu mea hic tango, qui concordiam olim inter venerabiles et egregios viros et dominos ...

Oath for the provost and archdeacon. I, N, provost and archdeacon of the Church of St John of Utrecht, swear by these holy Gospels of God that I take here with my hand, who once established a concord between the venerable and excellent men and lords...

[3r–10r] *rub.* **Iuramentum prepositi nostri.** Inc: Ego N prepositus ecclesie sancti Iohannis Traiectensis juro per hec sancta dei ewangelia que manu mea tango, qui iura ecclesie mee sanctus Iohannis et libertatem ipsus pro posse meo conservabo, honestas consuetudines hac tenus observatas observabo...

Oath for our provost. I, N, provost of the Church of St John of Utrecht, swear by these holy Gospels of God, which I take with my hand, that I will preserve the rights of my Church of St John and its freedom to the best of my ability, I will observe the honorable customs observed heretofore. [sections and illegible; continues with a description of the role]

[11v–13r] *rub*: **Iuramentum canonicorum.** Inc: Ego N canonicus ecclesie sancti Iohannis Traiectensis iuro per deum qui me sanguine suo redemit et per hec sacrosancta dei ewangelia [12r] que manu mea tango obedienciam decano et capitul... Secreta capitula numquam revelabo...

[13v–15v] *rub*: **Iuramentum vicariorum.** Inc: Ego N iuro per hec sancta dei ewangelia que manu mea tango...

[15v–16r] *rub*: **Iuramentum Notarij Capitoli.** Inc: Ego N iuro ad hec sancta dei ewangelia que manu mea tango...

[18r–21v] *rub*: **Iuramentum nuncijsive sculteti nostri.** Inc: Inden eersten dat hij den Deken ende den heren [18v] vanden Capittel tSainte [*rubbed*] Iohanne getruwe wesen sal in allen dinghen. Item, dat hij onse bootschappen daer hem die deken ende dat Capittel of yemant vanden officiaten vander kercken wegen seinden sellen trouwelic doen sel...

Oath of the canon. I, N, canon of the Church of St John of Utrecht, swear by God who redeemed me with his blood and by this the sacred Gospel of God that I touch with my hand to obey the deacon and chapter... I will never reveal the secrets of the Chapter...

Oath of the vicar. I, N, swear by these holy Gospels of God that I touch with my hand...

Oath of the Notary of the Chapter. I, N, swear by these holy Gospels of God that I touch with my hand...

Oath for the messenger or magistrate. In the first place, the deacon and the lords of the Chapter of St John shall trust him in all things. Item, that he shall perform the services requested by the deacon and by the Chapter or any of the officials from the church in a trustworthy manner, and that he shall return home without delay after completing his errand...

[21v–23r] *rub*: **Iuramentum prepositi de castro sive fortalitio in Midrecht.** Inc: We, N, bider genaden goids proefft der kerker tsinte Johanne Tutrecht maken kenlic allen luden dat wij in onsen ghemenen ca[22r]pittel daer wi capittelic zaten ende vergadert waren in onsen Capittel huse gheloeft hebben loven ende zekeren bi onser truwen eren ende zekerheit ende hebben onse hand op onse borst geleit ende heflie ten heilighen gezworen ende geloeft aen hande ons eerbaren des Dekens ende Capittels onser kercken tsinte Johanne voers' alsoe dat wij tot geenre tijt op onsen huse tot [22v] Midrecht onsen Casteleyn aldair versetten en sellen voir die tijt dat die ander Casteleyn die dair opcomen sel mit sinen besegelden brieven geloeft heeft dat hij onsen huys voirsch' niet versetten noch versellen en sel nochte geenrehande commer noch scoude dair op maken noch tot gheenre tijt van onser voirseider kercken ende Capittel ontferren vervreem[23r]ten noch veranderen...

23v: *rub*: **Iuramentum castellaninti Midrecht.** Inc: Alle den ghenen die deser brief zellen zien of horen lessen doe ic verstaen, N, dat ic geloeft ende ghesekert hebbe love ende zekere bi mijnre truwen eren ende zekerheit ende hebbe mijn hand op desen brief gheleit ende lifelike ten heiligen gezworen mit hande, mit monde, mit opgerechten vijngeren...

28v: **Iuramentum decani nostri.** Inc: Ego N Decanus ecclesie sancti Iohannes Traiecteni iuro per hec sacrosancta dei ewangelia que manibus meis tango...

Oath for the provost of the castle or fortress in Mijdrecht. Inc: We, N, by the grace of God, provost of the Church of Saint John at Utrecht, make known to all people that we, in our common chapter, where we sat capitularly and were gathered in our Chapter house, have pledged, promised, and assured on our truth, honor, and surety, and have placed our hand upon our breast and solemnly sworn upon the holy relics to the hands of our venerable Deacon and the Chapter of our Church of Saint John aforestated, that at no time shall we alienate or encumber our house at Mijdrecht, our castle there, before the time that another Castellan who shall come upon it has pledged with his sealed letters that he shall not alienate nor sell the aforesaid house, nor shall he create any encumbrance or debt upon it, nor at any time remove, alienate, or change from our aforesaid church and Chapter...

Oath of the castellan of Mijdrecht. Inc: To all those who shall see or hear this letter, I, N, do make known that I have pledged and assured with love and certainty by my faith, honor, and surety, and have placed my hand upon this letter and solemnly sworn by the holy [relics or saints] with hand, with mouth, with uplifted fingers...

Oath of our deacon. Inc: I, N, Deacon of the Church of Saint John of Utrecht, swear by these most holy Gospels of God, which I touch with my hands...

Appendix 3: Valenciennes Confraternity

Transcription and translation of the *Statuts de la confrerie de St Nicolas de Valenciennes* (Valenciennes, BM, Ms. 536).

Manuscript on parchment, 24.7 × 17 cm, made *ca.* 1475–1490. Written in French and Latin. Original binding of tooled leather over wooden boards, clasps missing. Eleven partial-page miniatures, probably executed in Valenciennes.

[1r] Saint Nicolay en Vallench

[1v] Ce sont les couleurs que les confreres de monseigneur Saint Nicolay doibuent entretenir et avoir pour leurs viestures chacun an pour suiwaument. Premiers.

Vert erbut

Sanguine

Blancq

Gris brun

Vermeil

Noir

Et azure

[2r] Tous cheulx qui ce present publique instrument veront ou oront nous les confreres de dieu de sa benoite mere et du benoit. Et glorieux confeis monseigneur St Nicolay en Valenchiennes salut et dilection savoir faisons que nous de commun accord consentement et vraye assentement de nous tous emsamble concordablement et de voye aimable advons ordonne devise et constitue Les devises constitutions et ordonances pour la compagnie et confraternite de le fietre dudit glorieux confeis Monseigneur Saint Nicolay. En le fourme et manière qui cy apres sensieust.

[1r] Saint Nicholas in Valenciennes

[1v] These are the colors that the confrères of lord Saint Nicholas must maintain and have for their garments each year, as follows:

Grass green

Blood-red

White

Dark gray

Bright red

Black

And azure

[2r] To all who come upon this public instrument, be it seen or heard, we, the confrères of God, of His blessed mother, and of the blessed and glorious confessor lord St Nicholas in Valenciennes, send greetings and affection. We make it known that we, in mutual agreement, consent, and true assent, all of us together, harmoniously and in a friendly manner, have ordained, devised, and established the emblems, constitutions, and ordinances for the company and confraternity of the reliquary of the aforementioned glorious confessor, lord Saint Nicholas. In the form and manner that follows hereafter.

[2v] **Premiers.** Que li nombre de chienquante confreres ne soit point sourmontes. Et que nulz ne soit reclus aconfrere fil nest agiez ayant sens et discretion estant prebstres ou clerck portant tonsure ou que aultrefois sayent porte. Et que cheulz soyent en habit de clerck de bonne vie et conversacion honneste et de leal mariage. Et doit lung des confreres maistre de le fietre ou aultre confreres pour ce esleus prebstres ou clerckques et nulz aultres prendre et recevoir le ferment ou sermens des nouviaux confreres en la chapelle stituee et ordonnee en le eglise parociale de dieu et de Monseigneur sanct Nicolay en Vallenchiennes ou la ditte fietre repose.

Et anchois [3r] que nulz confreres soient rechups ne sermentez ou luy doibt lire les Cha[r]tres ou au mains luy en advertir en brief. Et doibt celuy qui le serment recevera demander au novel entrant lealment sil porte tonsure ou se austre foix la porte. Et sil est de leal mariage come desus est dit.

Et ausy sil est en haynne ou mal amour a aulcuns des confreres, et especialment en nulles trieuvez. Et sil yestoit en ce ignorans sans maise ocquoison quil se raportast ou volift reporter ens ou droit confraternal des iiij maistres et quatres esleus pour luy apaisier en droit et en raison sauf enc e se droit de justice.

[2v] **Firstly,** the number of 50 confrères should not be exceeded. And no one should be admitted as a confrère unless he is of age, possessing sense and discretion, being a priest or cleric, bearing the tonsure, or having borne it previously. And these individuals should wear the cleric's habit, leading a good life with honest conduct and loyal marriage. One of the confrères, the master of the reliquary, or another designated confrère, specifically a priest or cleric and none other, should take and receive the vows or oaths of the new confrères. This should be done in the designated chapel within the parish Church of God and lord Saint Nicholas in Valenciennes, where the said reliquary rests.

Furthermore, [3r] no confrères should be accepted or sworn in unless the charters are read to him, or at the very least, he is notified of them in brief. The one administering the oath must ask the newcomer sincerely if he currently has the tonsure or if he had it at a past time. And if he is in a lawful marriage as previously stated. Moreover, it should be asked if he harbors ill-will or malice toward any of the confrères, especially if he's involved in any disputes. If he claims ignorance in this matter without good reason, he should refer or wish to be referred to the fraternal rights of the four masters and four elected ones to address the issue fairly and justly, except in a court of law.

Et recevoir aceluy novel entrant la somme de quatre livres tournois (xx sols tournois pour la livre) monnaie coursable en haynne [3v] pour tourner en convertir au profit de le fabricque de la dite fietre.

Et ne doibt nulz yestre rechups aconfreres sil nya present a voecq les maistres et les eslus xviiij confreres du mains sachant certainement aleur povir que cest ly acors gres et consentment de la chertaine et plus grande partie des confreres. Et doibt ung prebstre estre sermentez sour les ordenes et en parolle de priebstre. Et ung seculier engenoulz dechins et sour les saintes evvangilles se main misse sour le messel qui doit yestre aportes a cely cause en la desus ditt chapelle. Et est le serment telz que cy apres sensieult.

Le serment

[4r] Vous jurez lealment par vo foy par vo lealte crestienne et sur les saintes evvangilles que par humble devocion et par bonne et vraye intention vous supplyes rengrez et volez yestre de la confrairie dieu et monseigneur saint Nicolay. Et tant quen ycelle demores amour paix honneur droit raison, et leaulte a tous vos confreres porterez et leurs secrez vous garderez lealument.

The newcomer should pay an amount of four livres tournois (20 sols tournois per livre)²⁰⁹ as negotiable currency, as a form of penance or reconciliation [3v], which will be used to benefit the construction of the aforementioned reliquary.

No one should be accepted as a confrère unless there are present, along with the masters and the elected, at least eighteen confrères, knowing to the best of their ability that this is the agreement, favor, and consent of the certain and majority of the confrères. A priest should take his oath based on his clerical orders and with the integrity of his priestly word. A layperson should kneel down and, over the holy Gospels, place his hand on the missal, which should be brought for this purpose to the aforementioned chapel. The nature of the oath is as follows, which will be detailed subsequently:

The oath

[4r] You solemnly swear by your faith and your Christian loyalty, and upon the holy Gospels, that out of humble devotion and with genuine intention, you willingly join and wish to be part of the confraternity of God and lord Saint Nicholas. As long as you remain in it, you will carry love, peace, honor, right, reason, and loyalty toward all your brethren; you will faithfully guard their secrets.

²⁰⁹ There were 20 sols to the livre, and 12 deniers to the sol.

Et leur damage vous noncherez sy tos et a toutes heures que vous le sarez. Et les ordonnances dicesse confraternite et [4v] compaignie faicte ou affaire. si avant quelles sont ou seront fonderes et ordonnees par voie de droit et de raison a vo leal povir vous tenrez et accomplirez et pour nulle autres en raison vous ne lairez la dit confrairie. Si vous aut dieus et tous ly saints de paradis a vie et amout.

La bien venue

Item, doubt avoir ly varles de la dicten confrairie a celui nouvel entrant trois saulz tonnois, et pour collacion avoir les dessus dis maistres et confreres au joyeux advenement dicesuy nouvel entrant doit payer pour sa bien venue la somme de xl sols tournois de plus que veult et nient de mains. Et debuera [5r] chacun confrere qui de la ditte compaignie et confraternite ystera soit par mort ou autrement pour son yssue ou sy hoir pour luy labit tel que il lara ou aroit eult au jour de la procession ou dit an. Et se point navoit de habit de celui an. Et pajeroit la somme de cent saulz tournois. Et pour le tout au profit de la ditte fabricque sans maise ocquoison.

Le nuit de la procession

Item, doibuent les iiij. maistres le nuit et vigile de la nativite Nostre Dame en septembre que on dist la procession avoir a pointiet a disner bien et honnourablement en lieu honeste.

You will avoid causing them harm, always and at all times when you become aware of it. You will uphold and fulfill the ordinances of this confraternity and [4v] company, whether already made or yet to be established, as long as they are founded and determined by right and reason using your honest abilities; you will not leave the said confraternity for any other reason. By this, may you be beholden to God and to all the saints of paradise, in life and in death.

The welcome

Item: It is stipulated that the servants of the said confraternity should give to the new entrant three sols tournois. Furthermore, for a meal shared by the aforementioned masters and confrères upon the joyful arrival of the new member, he must pay for his welcome the sum of 40 sols tournois, more if he wishes, but not less. [5r] Each confrère, who departs from the said company and confraternity, whether through death or otherwise, must leave behind for his heirs his outfit, just as he would wear it or would have worn it on the day of the procession that year. If he did not have an outfit from that year, he would owe the sum of one hundred sols tournois. All proceeds go toward the maintenance of the said church, with the best intentions.

The night of the procession

Item, it is incumbent upon the four masters, on the night and eve of the Nativity of Our Lady in September [8th]—when it is proclaimed the procession is to be held—to ensure their timely and honorable dining in a seemly place.

A leurs esluets les maistres de ladite fabrique auscuns de aisnes et les [5v] confreres de dehors sil en ya demorans parvir payant pour le vin chacun ij sols tournois et puis apres disner doibuent estre tous les confreres assamblet en leurs habis equal de la pourcession et annee precedente a heure competente et acoustumee en lieux honneste sur le marchiet que les maistres doibuent avoir pourveu pour faire fenestre comme il est de coustume.

Et puis aller querir la fiette en l'eglise de saint Nicolay. Et ycelle ordonnement et reveranment porter par les confreres desudis. A l'eglise Nostre-Damme la Grande par grace et l'iscence de reverend pere en dieu monseur le abbet de Hasnon, ou a son commis au quel les maistres doibuent avoir demandet grace et l'iscence de cely fiette porter et assir oudit lieu. [6r] Et raporter ou elle doibt estre. Et doibuent les confreres faire dire une viespre sollempess de nostre dame. Et avoir pour reverenche dicesse pourcession et de leurs ditte fiette trois menestrez et deux trompettez souffissant seloncq l'anchienne coustume.

Et aussy les consagnons les quatre torse ardans et deux chirons pour le fiette et tout ce y appertenant.

In accordance with their election, certain elder masters of the aforesaid building maintenance, along with the [5v] confrères from outside Valenciennes (if any are arriving and lodging), shall contribute to the wine, two sols tournois each. Subsequently, after dinner, all the confrères ought to convene, adorned in their procession attire from the previous year, at the fitting and accustomed hour, in a respectable place on the central market. The masters are obliged to have readied this for setting up the customary window displays, as is tradition.

They are then to proceed to retrieve the sacred reliquary from the Church of Saint Nicholas, and it shall be transported with due order and reverence by the aforementioned confreres to the Grand Church of Our Lady, by the grace and permission of the reverend father in God, the lord Abbot of Hasnon, or his appointed emissary. The masters are bound to have beseeched aforesaid the grace and permission to transport and place said reliquary in the designated locale. [6r] They are further tasked to report its rightful placement. The confrères are required to commission a solemn vespers ceremony in honor of Our Lady. In reverence of this procession and the said reliquary, the services of three minstrels and two trumpeters are requisite, in keeping with ancient custom.

The companions too shall provide four lighted torches and a pair of candles for the reliquary, and all pertaining thereto.

Et eulx faire proceder allans et venans en rieugle de pourcession bien et de voltement en espasse raisonnable sand sourder ne parler emsamble par les ruez sur xij denier tournois damende et apres les dittes vespres chantee doibuent li dis confreres revenir par rieugle ordonnement ainsy qui dit est au lieu devant dit ou les [6v] maistres doibuent avoir pourveu vin et espespez pour fair collation. Et envoyer au cure et as prebstres vin et espespez pour eusz et pareillement avoir pourveu par les dis maistres poires ou austres fruicts pour les clerchons des escolles sil ysont.

Et doibuent pareillement lesdis maistres avoir pourveu la ditte nuit pour l'endemain as confreres as menestrux et as porteux des torses: de torses de consagnons, et de bouteille servans a la dit confrairie, blancques choroies, bourssettes vermeilles, et chapiaux de verde venque.²¹⁰

They are to proceed in a processional manner there and back again, observing the processional rule with decorum and alacrity, within a reasonable interval, without murmuring or speaking amongst themselves on the streets, under penalty of a 12 denier tournois fine. Upon the conclusion of the aforesaid chanted vespers, the aforementioned confrères are to reconvene, adhering to processional order as previously detailed, to the prior mentioned locale. Herein, the [6v] masters are obliged to furnish wine and spices for a refined repast. An offering of wine and spices ought also to be dispatched to the incumbent parish priest and the prebendaries. Similarly, the aforesaid masters ought to have provisioned pears or other fruitage for the choirboys from the school, should they be in attendance.

The masters are further bound to make preparations the preceding night for the morrow, for the confreres, the minstrels, and those bearing torches: torches for the companions, vessels serving the aforesaid confraternity, small white leather pouches, vermillion satchels, and sashes of greenfinch.

210 I am uncertain of this term. As the brothers already have skull caps (*capiel*), the meaning of *chapiaux* may be "sash." As this description corresponds to the image on fol. 7r, the most obviously green items are the oddly textured bright green sashes worn over the white robes. The word *venque* is also difficult to parse. The first letter is odd, as the first stroke of the *v* turns to the right; a similar *v* appears in the word *venus* on fol. 15r. I have considered alternative transcriptions (*benque*, *unenque*, etc.). If it is *venque*, then this may be a cognate with the Dutch word *vink*, meaning finch, and the term may refer to "sashes of greenfinch."

Et as confreres singulierement esquierpe, capiel et bourdon amanche tournee, poins de se couleur des cottes de sa ditte annee, aussy blancques coroyes bourses et [7r] ung denier a chacune bourse pour offrir a la messe que on dist devant le fiestre en l'eglise de Nostre Dame la grande.

For the individual confreres: a surplice,²¹¹ a coif,²¹² and a staff with an ornate handle, pins matching the hue of his coat for the relevant year, as well as small white leather pouches, with a single denier accompanying each satchel, intended for offering at the Mass proclaimed in the presence of the reliquary in the Grand Church of Our Lady.

Pour le jour de le procession

Item, se doibuent tous confreres a venir et assanbler amoureuement en les nouveaux habis equals au jour de la procession au lieu desudit accompaignies de leurs menestres et torses. Et puis aller a la ditte eglise nostre damme le grande par devant [7v] leur fiestre. Et faire dire et celebrer unne messe de nostre damme par leurs chapellain. Et cely messe ditte prendre et lever le fiestre par les maistres et leur commis. Et pour sieuwir la procession ordonneement et parrieugle chacun confrere seloncq chequil est entres en la ditte confrairie, excepte les signeur des prebstres, lesquelz ont prerogative daler au deseure des seculliers ung chescun ainsy comme il sera entrez sans quelqu'un estat, ne a cely cause avoir presumption ne orgueil. Et ensieuwir sans moyne comme il doibt estre la fiestre dou glorieux martir monseigneur Sanct Jorge.

For the day of the procession

Firstly, all confrères are to come and gather lovingly in their new attire, appropriate for the day of the procession, at the aforementioned place, accompanied by their minstrels and torchbearers. Then they should proceed to the said Grand Church of Our Lady, proceeding to the front of [7v] their reliquary. A Mass in honor of Our Lady should be celebrated by their chaplains. Once the Mass is said, the reliquary should be taken and raised by the masters and their deputies. To follow the procession in an orderly manner and by rank, each confrère according to his entry into the said confraternity, except for the lords of the priests, who have the privilege of walking before the laypeople, each according to his admission, without any rank and without bearing any presumption or pride. The reliquary of the glorious martyr, lord Saint George, should then follow, as it should be.

211 A liturgical vestment of white linen, usually with wide sleeves.

212 A close-fitting cap.

Et doibuent les dis confreres allant et venant a la dite procession porter le fiette de monseigneur St Nicolay [8r] parmy la ville humblement estre descaux comme chil qui au lay peuple doibuent estre lumiere et exemplaire en l'honneur doudit glorieux confeis monseigneur Sanct Nicolay de bien et de devocion sur samede de iij sols tournois, excepte tous confreres priebstres ou seculliers en desevre leage de lx ans lesquelz peulet avoir pour leur eage anchien unne quinteches en leurs pieds nuds au gre des maistres et leurs esluets sans en deporter nulz desoubs ledit eage sinon quil moustre as dis maistres certaine cause pour luy escuser.

Et doibuent estre par devant ycelle fiette les consagnons iiij torse ardante. Les menest et trompette sy comme dit est par dessus. Et puis les maistres ou leurs commis doibuent humblement appeller les [8v] confreres, prebstres ou clerks sans orgoel pour porter le fiette lung apres l'autre parmi la ville. Et ne doibt nulz confreres presumptuesement empreindre le fiette a porter sil ne luy est commande. Et se aucuns confrere estoie rebelle de porter la ditte fiette au commands defois maistres. Il seroit attains et en queus en lamede dune livre de chire. Et pareillement cheux qui le prendient sans commandement. Et doibuent aller en espasse raisonnable bien et ordonneement comme il apertient.

The confrères must, when going to and coming from the said procession, carry the reliquary of lord Saint Nicholas through the city, and they should humbly walk barefoot, serving as a light and example to the laypeople in honor of the said glorious confessor lord Saint Nicholas. On Saturdays they should contribute three sols tournois for goodwill and devotion. However, any confrère, priest or secular, over the age of 60 can, due to their age, wear some protection on their feet at the discretion of the masters and their elects. Those below this age should not have exceptions unless they provide a valid reason to the masters.

In front of this reliquary, there should be four burning torches. Minstrels and trumpets should be present as previously mentioned. Then, the masters or their deputies must humbly call upon the [8v] confrères, priests, or clerks, without arrogance, to carry the reliquary one after the other through the city. No confrère should presumptuously grasp the reliquary unless instructed to do so. And if any confrère refuses to bear the said reliquary against the wishes of the masters, he would be fined a pound of wax. Similarly, those who take it without being commanded to do so. They must proceed at a reasonable pace, properly and orderly as is appropriate.

Et sont tenus les deux maistres de le fabricque ou deux confreres par eusx commis destre au dehors de le ville tous iours dempres la fiette li ung adestre et l'aultre a feniestre. Avoec les porteurs par quoy se mestier estoit ou aulcun [9r] inconuement sourdoit a la dite fiette che que ia naviengrie quelle fuise et puist yestre tantost et hativement par eulx conforter secourue et aydie.

Et pour la ditte fiette conduire hors de la ditte ville, les iiij maistres doibuent a boecq eulz deux in mains appeiller jusques a xij confreres de plus jannes et nouviaulz entres que pour ycelle fiette par eulx acompaignier. Et les rebelles de non y volloir aller yestre a samende dunne livre de chire come dessus est dit. Et peulent les deux des quatres maistres par acord retourner en la ville pour l'ordoinance du disner faire et appillier et les confreres recevoir. Et a leur revenue doibuent les confreres trouver honnourablement de liave caude pour laver cheusx qui [9v] aront este descausx et aussy blans linchoes pour eulz essuer les maistres tout ce que pourveu doibuent sans avoir nulle faulte.

The two masters of the organization, or two confrères appointed by them, are obliged to be outside the city every day, one on the right and the other on the left of the reliquary. Along with the bearers, they are there to swiftly offer support and assistance [9r] should an unexpected event befall the reliquary, ensuring it remains safe and protected.

To escort the said reliquary outside the city, the four masters, two in the lead, should summon up to twelve younger and newly admitted confrères to accompany the reliquary. Any who refuse to join in this duty are to be fined a pound of wax, as previously mentioned. Two of the four masters can agree to return to the city to organize the dinner preparations and to greet the confrères. Upon their return, the confrères should be provided with warm water to wash those who [9v] have been barefoot and also clean towels to dry themselves; the masters should ensure everything is adequately provided for.

Pour le disnier

Item, achely jour de le pourcession doibuent tout lez confreres disner emsamble en lieux honeste sans taverne ne cabaret commum. Le quel [10r] lieu les dis maistres doibuent avoir pourveu et apparelliet et les confreres faire feir a table tout a ung les ordonnement seloncq ce et ainsy que entret sont en la ditte confrairie. Et doibuent demorer a tout leurs habis de la dite journee sur samende dune siure de chire.

Et doibt on servir trois atrox en la mainere que cy apres sensiuat. Premiers de vendenge, de pronnes, ou daultres fruicts seloncq ce que le tamps la donra. Et pius faire assise en jour de char de poix de lart et de mouton et de deux manieres de rost. Cest assavoir pourcellez et oisons. Si come en chacun plat ung quartier de porcesset et se moittiet dung oison, et en jour de poisson assise danguillez ou de locques. Et pius de deux manieres [10v] de poissons. Si comme de carpes et de becques, et auoecq pastez danguillez, et tout chez mes soit char ou poisson estoffez de bonne chauze cameline, comme il est de coustume, et watelez au bure et au fromage.

Iceux mes en quelque jour appartenant bons et honnourable ale compaignie sy quil loist et en quelqz jour en la fin de fruict, et de four, et bon vin blancq et vermeil et non plus, se les maistres ne le fot[bar] de leur grace,

For the dinner

On this day of the procession, all brethren should dine together in a respectable place, avoiding both taverns and common inns. [10r] The said masters must have arranged and prepared the venue. All brethren should sit at the table uniformly, following the rules and customs of our fraternity. They must remain in their fraternity attire for the entire day, under penalty of a wax seal.

And one should serve in groups of three, in the manner described hereafter. Firstly, a course of grapes, plums, or other seasonal fruits, as the time of year allows. Then, on a meat day, dishes of pea, pork, mutton, and two types of roast: namely suckling pigs and geese. Each dish should have a quarter of a suckling pig and half a goose. On a fish day, dishes of eels or other fish should be served. Then, two types [10v] of fish, such as carp and pike, alongside eel pies. Whether meat or fish, all should be well-seasoned with a fine cameline sauce, as is customary, and followed by wafers with butter and cheese.

These courses, whenever served, should be good and honor the company, provided in kind, and at the end, fruit and oven-baked goods. Good white and red wines, nothing more unless the masters provide out of their own grace.

et ace disner doibt chacun confrere avoir appilliet devant luy x sols tournois monnaie coursauble, tant pour son escot du disner, comme pour aligier les fraix que les maistres aront eult en aultre maniere acauze de leur maitrise. Et ne doibt nulz des confreres faillir ace disner ne [11r] laisser la compaignie pour aller a boec aultres queconques excepte cheux qui seront ou seroient ace jour et heure du disner hors de la ville ou du pays griesment malade, gissant en son lit en prison ou en aultre loial besoing, loialement aparut as maistres entendu que se a l'heure du disner, venoit aulcuns de par confrere ou confreres absent ou absens ala necessite dessus ditte aportant le dit escot de x sols tournois. Les dis maistres luy doibuent donner deny escueille de viande ung lot de vin, se blancque, coroye, se bourse, sen bourdon, son escerpe, et son capiel de venque. Et se nulz y failloit sans les dittes necessites appues les maistres puelllet lever et cachier le dit escot sans [11v] y faire ne envoyer quelque envois.

Et acely disner, les maistres ne aultres confreres que conques ne doibuent prijer appeiller ne faire assir nulz de leurs amis, ne aultres estrangiers sil nest ou sont ou serment des confreres, excepte les menestres.

At this dinner, each confrère should have ten sols tournois set before him, both for his meal's contribution and to alleviate the expenses the masters incurred for other reasons due to their office. No confrère should miss this dinner or [11r] leave the company to attend another gathering unless they are, on that day and time of the dinner, out of town, seriously ill in bed, imprisoned, or have some other genuine need known to the masters. If any absent confrère, under the aforementioned necessities, arrives at dinner time with the said contribution of ten sols tournois, the masters should give him half a serving of food and a jug of wine, his white coif, red hood, staff, scarf, and cap of veneration. If anyone defaults without the mentioned valid reasons, the masters may take and keep the said contribution without [11v] providing any food or sending anything.

At this dinner, neither the masters nor any other brethren should invite, call, or seat any of their friends or strangers unless they are sworn brethren, except for minstrels.

Et les servans qui seront ordonnez pour les disner seulement, ne nulles femmes ne doibunt venir servir ne apparoir le disner durant pour certaine cause, bonne et honnourable. Et en ce disner durant doibuent les meistres faire deux envois si comme aostel ou la samblee cest faites et fenestre de sa procession. Et pareillement alescollastre des clerchons se il ont acompaignet le fiette avecque les confreres achun des dis envois demy lot de vin. et puis doit lung des maistre cueillier et recevoir lescot de [12r] chacun confrere. Et audeure de ce tout le surplus des fraix et despens tant pour le nuit comme pour le jour est as despens des quatres maistres de susdis comme il est de coustume.

Nouviaulx maistres

Item, apres leur escot rechupt ainchois que onserve dou forne dou fruit, les quatres maistres [12v] regnant pour lannee doibuent appeller en leur conseil les confreres qui maistres aront estet es annees precedentes. Et avoir parlet aeuix devant le disner et chil confreres et non aultres dacorf amiablement doibuent et debueront faire iiij maistres pour lannee a venir. Et ces maistres faix doibuent et peulent prendre par bon conseil iiij eslus qui maistre aront estet. Et non aultre pour ayde et confort en toutes les besoingnes quil aront affaire.

No women should come to serve or appear during the dinner for specific, honorable reasons. During this feast, the masters should make two offerings, reminiscent of those made at a hostel or assembly where the procession takes place. Similarly, to the bell-ringers if they accompany the fraternity, they should be given half a jug of wine for each of the said offerings. Then, one of the masters should collect the contribution from [12r] each confrère. All additional expenses, both for the night and the day, are to be borne by the aforementioned four masters, as is the custom.

Newly appointed masters

Item, after they receive their contributions, before serving the baked fruit tart, the four masters [12v] reigning for the year should call into their council the brethren who have been masters in previous years. They should discuss with them before dinner, and these brethren—and no others—must amicably choose four newly appointed masters for the upcoming year. These newly appointed masters can, with good counsel, select four elected individuals who have previously been masters for support in all the affairs they will handle.

Et doibuent estre eslicts nouveau maistre de deux ainez et deux jones, ou ung ainet et troix jones pour estre chacun gardez en raison de le yestre a son thour au regart du nombre des anchiens et des jones seloncq le tour du [13r] registre. Et doibuent les quatres maistres chacun aleux election faire porter le vin, tout atour comme il est de coustume, et donner aboire au miastres nouvel. Et les maistres nouvel pareillement aleurs eslus et en ce faisant doibuent corner les menestrez, et chilz Nouviaulx maistres le doibuent rechepvoir liement en signe damoux. Et guil ayent ycelle maistrisse pour agreable.

Des maistres

Item, sely ung des maistres qui seroit noiviellement eslus absent ou present estoit rebelle de volloir accepter la [13v] ditte maistrisse ou sil leavoit rechut et acceptet et de puis par arrogance ou aultrement. il ne volsist faire son debvoir ou dit offise de maistrisse comme les aultres sslus en ce cas. it seroit attains et encheus en le paine de cent sols tournois moitiet ala dite fabricque des confreres. Et laultre moitiet au juge souverain ordinaire espirituel ou temporel, qui celuy confrere constrainderoit de le paine.

The newly appointed masters should be chosen with two older and two younger, or one older and three younger, members so that everyone is accounted for in terms of age and according to the register's rotation. The four masters, at their election, should bring wine, as is customary, and offer a drink to the newly appointed masters. The newly appointed masters should similarly offer a drink to those who elected them. In doing this, they should signal the minstrels, and these newly appointed masters should be graciously received as a gesture of affection, hoping they find their new role agreeable.

Of the masters

Should one of the masters, newly elected, whether absent or present, refuse to accept the [13v] designated mastership, or if having once refused, later accepts, but then due to arrogance or other reasons neglects to perform his duty or the stated office of the mastership as other elected members do in such a case, he would be subject to a penalty of a hundred tournois sols. Half of this fine would go to the maintenance fund of the brethren and the other half to the sovereign judge, be it spiritual or temporal, who would enforce this penalty upon the confrère.

Et aussy lever se cotte telle quil aroit eust pour lannee. Et avoecq ce priez de la compaignie de confreres. Et se de puis rentrer y volloit par le plaisir de yceulx confreres, il payeroit ottellement que ung aultre qui oncquez my aroit estet. Se ensy nestoit que il moustrast auscurie cause bonne [14r] et raisonnable approuvee souffissamment as maistres et confreres pour luy escuzer et deporter.

Et aussy pareillement se sy ung des confreres eslucs maistre pour lannee en dedens lan de sa maistrisse aloit dehors de la ville ou du pays demourer, ou trespasloit de ce siecle sans avoir fait ne acompli se ditte maistrisse, il doibt commettre souffissanment en son lieu et pour luy en la presence de ses compaignos maistres et confreres. Et doibt mettre en la main de son eslus ou auscuns de sen remanant pour luy or ou argent pour paijer loialment sa part et portion de tous les fraix de lannee pour luy bien acquiter de son dit office sy que deffaulte ny aist, car se deffaulte yavoit par luy on poursieu[14v]roit son eslus de ce faire et acomplir. Et sour le deffallans yestre atains et enqueus en la paine de cent sols tournois a chassier sour luy et sour ses biens comme dit est. Et pareillement priver de la compaignie.

Moreover, he would forfeit his annual contribution and be expelled from the fellowship of the brethren. If he later desired to rejoin by the goodwill of the brethren, he would have to pay as if he had never been a member before, unless he could present a just [14r] and reasonable cause, sufficiently approved by the masters and brethren, to excuse and pardon him.

Furthermore, if any confrère, elected master for the year, were to leave the town or country during his mastership or were to pass from this life without having fulfilled his said mastership, he ought to duly appoint someone in his place and on his behalf in the presence of his fellow masters and brethren. He must entrust to his successor, or any of the remaining brethren, gold or silver to faithfully cover his share of all the expenses for the year, ensuring he fulfills his said duty without any shortcomings, for if there were any default on his part, his successor would be pursued [14v] to act and fulfill these responsibilities. Should he be found failing to do so, he would be subject to the penalty of a hundred sols tournois, levied upon him and his assets as aforementioned, and similarly be deprived of fellowship.

Le jour dou v^e

Item, doibuent tous les confreres devant dis est assavoir cheulx de dehors et dededens doibuent estre assamblent a l'eglise [15r] de sanct Nicolay, le jour dou v^e a le soumonce du varlet viestus de leurs habis de le porcession

acompaigniez de iiij torses et menestres pour aller requere le fiestre aleglise nostre damme le grande. Et doibuent les maistres liurer deux chirons pour mettre et porter devant le fiestre. Et eulx venus a le dit eglise de nostre damme ordonneement et par rieuagle doibuent chanter ou faire chanter unne anthienne et une oroison de nostre demme devant lez fiestre. Et puis prendre et lever icelle fiestre et rapporter par ordene comme dit est en la dit chapeille de saint Nicolay. Et ycelle remise en son lieu. les confreres doibuent faire chanter par leur cappellain unne messe dou glorieux confeis monseigneur saint Nicolay a diacre [15v] et soudiacre et faire juer des orghenes.

Et tous les defallans diceluy journee generalment ceulx dedens seront a xij sols tournois dainede loial soigne hors. Et celuy jour disner emsamble a tout leurs robes de se procession. Et les deffallans au disner aussy bien ceulx de de hors que ceulx de dedens seront a iiij sols tournois pour recompenser les pourveances par eulx faictes. Et ou cas que nulx ne face le preste des iiij sols tournois de deffaulte les gouverneurs le doibuent prester. Et en faire compte comme daults chose.

The day of the fifth [of December]

Item, all the confrères previously mentioned, both those from outside and within, should assemble at the Church [15r] of Saint Nicholas on the fifth day [of December], at the summons of the appointed varlet, dressed in their robes for the procession,

accompanied by four torches and minstrels, to retrieve the reliquary from Our Great Lady's Church. The masters are to provide two young boys to carry the said reliquary. Upon their orderly and regulated arrival at the mentioned Church of Our Lady, they should sing or have sung an antiphon and a prayer in honor of Our Lady before the reliquary. They should then pick up and carry the said reliquary, returning it in order as mentioned to the chapel of Saint Nicholas. Once deposited back in its place, the confrères should have their chaplain sing a Mass of the glorious confessor, lord Saint Nicholas, with a deacon [15v] and subdeacon, and ensure the sounding of the organs.

And all those failing their duty on that day, particularly those from within, will incur a fine of 12 sols tournois, to be meticulously accounted for. On that day, they shall dine together, wearing their procession robes. Those absent from the dinner, whether from outside or from within, will be fined four sols tournois, as compensation for the provisions made on their behalf. Should anyone fail to pay the aforementioned four sols tournois, the governors are obliged to provide it and account for it as any other matter.

Et doibuent les iiij maistres au deseure de leur escot le somme de xx sols tournois cest chacun v sols tournois et pareillement offant a chacune des troix solempintez ensuiant cest assavoir, les deux jours de saint Nicolay et le jour du sacre, et en ce dit jour du x^e doibuent les gouverners [16r] de la fabricque rendre compte du gouvernement de le dit confrairie ainchoix que nulx des confreres soient assis a table pour disner et aussy pour besoignier daultre chose se mestier en est.

Le iour St Nicolay en decembre

Item, doibuent tous les confreres demorant dedens la ditte ville ester [16v] assemble ten leurs habis de le procession ale soumonsce du varlet ale maison de laisnet des maistres, le nuit de la nativitet Monseigneur Saint Nicolay en decembre pour venir a l'eglise, ou le fiette repose a compaignines de menest et tompettes. Le nuit a vespres et lendemain a messe. Et les deffallans pour cescunne foix a xij deniers tournois damende leal soingne hors comme dis est. Et celui jou Sainct Nicolay doibuent tous les confreres disner emsamble a tous leur habis sur lamende devant dite. Et tous deffallans a ce dit disner comme dessus a iiij sols tournois. Et a ce jour de saint Nicolay doibt cescun confrere a porter et pajer, le moietiet du tax des messes que il doibt pour unne demy annee. Et en ce ne doibt point avoir defaulte.

Furthermore, the four masters, in addition to their regular contributions, should offer a total sum of 20 sols tournois, that is, each contributing five sols tournois, and similarly make offerings on each of the three subsequent solemnities, namely, the two days of Saint Nicholas and the day of the consecration. On this said tenth day, the governors [16r] of the fabric should render an account of the management of the said confraternity, before any of the confrères sit down to dine, and also attend to any other necessary matters.

On the day of St Nicholas in

December It is required that all the confrères residing within the said town assemble [16v] wearing their procession garments upon the summons of the servant at the house of the eldest of the masters, on the night of the Nativity of lord Saint Nicholas in December, to come to the church where the reliquary rests, accompanied by minstrels and trumpets. Prayers are to be held on that night and a Mass on the following day. Those failing to attend each time shall be fined 12 deniers tournois, with careful attention to exclusions as previously stated. On Saint Nicholas's Day, all the confrères are to dine together, wearing their full ceremonial attire, as per the aforementioned fine. Any absentees from this said dinner will be fined four sols tournois. On Saint Nicholas's Day, every confrère is obliged to carry and pay half of the tax for the Masses that he owes for half a year. There should be no failures in this matter.

[17r] **Le iour St Nicolay en may**
 Item, doibuent tous les confreres
 especialment ceulx de dedens la ville
 estre assamblet audit lieu de la maison
 doudit maistre le nuit [17v] de la
 translation monsigneur Sainct Nicolay
 en may ale semonce dudit varlet pour
 aler ale dite eglise de St Nicolay le
 nuit as vespres et lendemain a messe
 a compaignies de leurs menest et
 trompettez comme dit est. Et les
 deffallans de nuit ou de jour loial
 soign hors alamende dessus ditte cest
 de xij sols tournois. Et pareillement
 doibt on pajer laultre moietiet du tax
 des messes. Et sur les rebelles de non
 volloir pajer tant des messes ainne
 des et fourfaityres estre priuez dele
 dite companignie sans en deporter
 nulz queconques. Cest a entendre
 que tous ceulx qui naroiert pajet
 une annee en dedens le iour de le
 procession il seroit attains et enqueus
 en la mende de unne livre de chire
 et se plus [18r] d'une anne yavoit ce
 saroit pour en user ale discrecion de
 le ditte confrairie comme cy devant
 est dit. Et doibuent ce dit jour aussy
 disner emsamble, et les deffallans a iiij
 sols tournois comme dit est.

[17r] **The day of Saint Nicholas
 in May** It is decreed that all the
 confrères, especially those from
 within the city, should assemble at the
 designated location of the master's
 house on the evening [17v] of the
 translation of lord Saint Nicholas
 in May, at the summons of the said
 varlet, to go to the aforementioned
 Church of Saint Nicholas on the
 evening for vespers and the following
 day for Mass, accompanied by their
 minstrels and trumpeters as stated.
 Those who default, either by night
 or day, without a legitimate reason,
 are subject to a fine as previously
 mentioned, amounting to 12 sols
 tournois. Similarly, one must pay the
 other half of the Mass fees. Those who
 stubbornly refuse to pay, whether for
 the Masses, the annual contributions,
 or incurred penalties, will be excluded
 from the said confraternity, with
 no exceptions. Be it known that any
 confrère failing to pay his annual
 dues by the day of the procession will
 incur a penalty of one pound of wax.
 And if it extends beyond [18r] a year,
 the matter will be at the discretion of
 the said confraternity as previously
 mentioned. They must also dine
 together on this specified day, and any
 defaulters owe four sols tournois, as
 mentioned.

Le iour du sacre

Item, le jour du sacre doibuent tous les confreres estre assemblez a le semonsce du varlet vestus de leurs habis de le pourcession en l'eglise de St Nicolay, ou leur fiette repose, especialement ceulx de dedens le ville pour [18v] acompaignier le saint sacrement.

Et les deffallans a lamende dessus dite cest de xij sols tournois, excepte tout signe de prebster pour cause licitte et raisonnable dedens et de dehors sans amende nulle de l'eglise ne du disner, mais tous aultres seculiers deffallans pour le disner alamende de iiij sols tournois, et cedit jour du sacre doibt on avoir menestrez et tompettes se avoir on en peult. en doib on cedit iour faire lire le chartre ains que nulz soit sevis ne assis au disner. Et ydoibuent estre sans point faillir les derains entrez pour entendre et scavoir les ordonnances de ceste chartre pour tant mieulx acquicter leur serment sollempnel que il ont juret. Et celuy jour doibt on scavoir par acord le couleur de quoy on volra ou debuera estre vestis ale [19r] pourcession ensuiwant, et doibuent les maistres donner a chacun confrere ung escantillon sur la ditte couleur.

On the day of the consecration

On the day of the consecration, all the confrères must gather upon the summons of the valet, dressed in their robes for the procession, at the Church of St Nicholas, where their reliquary is kept. Especially those from within the town should [18v] accompany the Holy Sacrament.

Those who do not attend are subject to the previously mentioned fine of 12 sols tournois, with the exception of any clergy for justifiable reasons, both inside and outside; they shall incur no fine from the church or for the meal. However, all other secular individuals missing the meal will be fined four sols tournois. On this consecration day, there should be minstrels and trumpets if they can be acquired. Before anyone is served or seated for the meal, the charter should be read. The newest members must be present, without fail, to understand and become acquainted with the decrees of this charter, to better uphold the solemn oath they have taken. On this day, a decision should be made, by agreement, about the color they should or will wear for the subsequent [19r] procession. And the masters should provide each confrère with a sample of the chosen color.

Pour farre cottes

Item, doibt chacun confrere sour le couleur de lescantillon que on luy baillera faire cotte honeste sans deshecquier ne descoper qui soit de longueur iusques au genoulz ou plus. Et tous confreres seculiers generalment doibuet faire ouvrer sur le fenestre manche de broudure dargent. le croche telle quelle est anchienement acoustumee. Et les signeurs de pribstres a leur usage et quil ont acoustume [19v] cest de bonne longueur seloncq leur estat. Et ne doibuent les confreres porter leur cotte sinon au jour de semonsce. Et as sollempnitez ou il sont tenus dobeir ou en ung bon jour a ung honneur se mestier en est sur lamende de unne livre de chire. Et tous deffallans de faire cotte de couleur pareille ans aultes ou au plus pres soient prebstres ou seculiers de dedens out de dehors chacun an au jour de la pourcession seront attains et en queus en lamende de lx sols tournois. Et tousiours faire le cotte et sans delay au command des maistres et non deffaire se misseur ne le veult faire. Et ledit habit avoir vestut toutes les sollempnitez par cy devant declarees. Et aussy atous [20r] enterremens et services fais ale cause de la ditte confrairie. Et les deffallans pour chacune foix a xij sols tournois damende.

On making coats

Each confrère, based on the color sample provided to him, must make a modest coat without extravagance and without visible repairs that should extend at least to the knees or longer. All secular confrères, in general, should have an emblem of silver embroidery on their sleeve, a *cloche*, as has been the ancient custom. The dignitaries of the priests should have theirs tailored to an appropriate length according to their status. [19v]

Confrères should only wear their coats on days when summoned. On solemn occasions when they are bound to obey or on any esteemed day when required, they risk a fine of a pound of wax for not wearing it. Those failing to produce a coat of a similar color or as close as possible, be they priests or seculars, from within or outside the town, each year on the day of the procession, will incur a fine of 60 sols tournois. They must always have the coat made promptly upon the order of the masters and not undone unless the master decides otherwise. [20r] This attire should be worn during all previously declared solemnities and also at all funerals and services conducted for the confraternity. Each default will result in a fine of 12 sols tournois.

Et doibt les dis confreres disner atout leurs robes de le pourcession as sollempnites devant ditte. Et seront tenus atous confreres demorant hors de la dite ville de unne foix lan du mains eulx remoustrer en le compaignie de confreres en lune des sollempnitez dessus ditte vestut de labit que devant est dit, et aussy de paijer les messes fourfaitures et amendes se il en doibt nules.

Et sil advenoit que les aulains des confreres portassent leurs cottes de lannee a tout le croche de puis le nuit de tous sains apres celuy an ou quil vendissent donnassent ou aleuwassent en quelque maniere que se fust a tout le dit croche [20v] Il seroit esqueus et atains alamende de xx sols tournois au profit de la dite fabricque. Et sur celuy ou ceulx des confreres qui defaulroit de sa promesse en abusant le dite confrairie yestre priuez de la compaignie. Et a voec de reprendre le damage sur cely uceulx deffallans des choses desus dites.

Du gouvernement

Item, nue par election de le plus saine partie des confreres soyent faix et eslus deux confreres comme procureux ayans le gouvernement. Et rechette de le dite fabricque, et de ce rendre bon compte juste et leal, le iour dou x^e present tous les confreres ou le plus grande partie.

These confrères must dine wearing their procession robes during the aforementioned solemnities. All confrères residing outside the city must, at least once a year, join the confraternity during one of the listed solemnities wearing the specified attire. They are also obligated to pay for any Masses, forfeitures, or fines they owe.

Should the descendants of the confrères wear their coats of the year with the hook emblem after All Saints' night of that year, or if they sold, gifted, or in any manner passed them on with the said emblem, [20v] they will be fined 20 sols tournois, benefiting the said building maintenance. Any confrère breaking his vow and abusing the confraternity will be expelled from the company. And measures shall be taken to recover damages from those defaulting in the aforementioned duties.

Concerning governance

By the election of the majority of the confrères, two should be appointed and chosen as stewards, having the management and receipts of the said building maintenance. And from this, to provide a true, just, and loyal account on the tenth of the current month to all the confrères or the majority.

Et d'iceulx comptes baillier et delivrer [21r] le coppie as anchiens confreres, la ordonnes pour les recevoir. Et ainsy chacun an pour suiwant, affin que les confreres puissent scavoir le gouvernement et l'argent en depos de le dite confrairie, le quel argent on ne doibt consentir ne requerir qui soit expose mis ne convertis a sul despens de bouche²¹³ excessivement, fors en cause de raison, se besoing est.

Ains doibt estre mis et convertis a le fiette bien retenir et garder quil ny ait nulle deffaulte. Aussy es pourveances des confagnons [read: compagnons] retenir de pignons et d'aultres aornemens appartenant ala dite confrairie, ou en acquerir rentes, ou cantuaires perpetuel ou annuel pour le salut des ames des confreres tres passez. Et de tous les biens faiseurs ale dite confrairie et doibuent avoir les dis maistres et [21v] gouverneux pour leurs paines et sollaires et pour eulx tant mieulx en acquitter chacun sa somme de xx sols tournois.

Du trespas des confreres

Item, se aucuns confreres aloit de vie a trespas, en on lentierast de deus le ville ou ban lieuwe de Vallenchiens tous les confreres demorant dedens ycelle doibuet estre au porter en terre vestus de leurs habis de lannee presente atout deux torsse, de la confrairie

And of these accounts, distribute and deliver [21r] a copy to the elder confrères, appointed to receive them. Henceforth each year, ensuring that the confrères are informed of the governance and the money deposited for the said fraternity. This money should not be allowed or requested to be expended or converted for frivolous or excessive personal expenses, except for a just cause when necessary.

It should be used and converted to ensure the reliquary is well maintained and without any insolvency. Moreover, in terms of provisions for the associates, funds are allocated for pennants and other ornaments related to the confraternity, and for securing rents, as well as for establishing perpetual or annual chantries dedicated to the salvation of the souls of deceased confrères. And of all the goods offered to the said fraternity, [21v] the mentioned masters and stewards should, for their efforts and salaries, and to better fulfill their duties, each receive a sum of 20 sols tournois.

On the passing of the confrères

Should any confrères pass from life to death, they shall be carried through the town or the surrounding areas of Valenciennes. All confrères residing within should attend, dressed in their habits of the current year, and with two torches of the confraternity.

213 "Despens de bouche" directly translates to "mouth expense" but is more idiomatically rendered as "personal or daily expenses."

par le semonse [22r] des amis qui le doibuent comander au varlet de le confrairie par le quel doibt estre semonse faicte parmy payant ii sols vi deniers pour sa paine. Et tantost comme dit est par desus lever labit tel quil est pour lannee presente par les deux gouverneurs devant dis ou cent solz tournois se il na point de habis, et aultres biens faix se sy trespasset la ordonnet a la compaignie, et as vigilles et messe du corps que les amis dou trespasset seront faire en leglise parochiale ou li trespassez demoroit ou en aultre eglise ce cest dedens le ville ou banlieuwe de le ville de Vallenchiennes pareillement ydoient yestre les dis confreres. Et tous les deffallans tant a l'entherement comme as services a l'amende de xij deniers.

Et aussy pareillement se aulcune femmes [22v] de confreres aloit de vie a trespas. Et ce soit son plaisir ou de ses amis de faire semonse pour avoir le confrairie tous les confreres pareillement ydoient estre ainssy que pour ung confrere. entendut que les amis des dittes femmes seront tenus de paijer et delivrer as gouverneurs desus dis la somme de xl sols tournois de fourmorture sur quelle somme le dis gouverneurs prenderont les despens pour faire le service de vigilles et des messe en la chappelle de saint Nicolay. Et le remain au deseure de che sera pour recreer les confreres emsamble au disner. Et tous les deffallans a lamende devant ditte.

By the summons [22r] of friends, the varlet of the confraternity must be ordered—for which he should be paid two sols six deniers for his effort. The current year's habit should be taken by the two governors, in exchange for the previously mentioned 50 or 100 sols tournois, if he does not possess a habit. If he passes without a habit, any other good deeds he might have shall benefit the confraternity. And at the vigils and the Mass for the deceased, which the friends of the departed will hold in the parish church where the deceased resided, or in another church if it is within the town or the outskirts of the town of Valenciennes, similarly, the aforementioned confrères should be present. And all those absent, whether at the burial or the services, are subject to a fine of xij deniers.

And likewise, should any [22v] wife of the confrères pass from life to death, and if it is her wish, or that of her friends, to summon the confraternity, all the confrères should similarly attend, just as for a confrère. It is understood that the friends of these wives are obligated to pay and deliver to the aforementioned governors the sum of 40 sols tournois for the death rites, from which sum the said governors will cover the expenses for the service of vigils and Masses in the chapel of Saint Nicholas. The remaining sum will be used to host a comforting meal for the confrères. And all those absent are subject to the previously mentioned fine.

[23r] Le service de la chapelle

Item, doibuent les deux gouverneurs de sus dis avoecq aucuns des plus notables de la dite compaignie adviser et estre dacordt dedens le mors prochain que li confrere ou femme de confrere seroit allez de vie atrespas de faire dire vigilles et messe de requiem a diacre et soudiacre hounorablement comme il est de coustumme en le dite chapelle de saint Nicolay ou le fiette repose et ypourveyr luminaire pour ledit service. [23v] Et se les maistres ont pris certain iour de ce faire il doibuent ce faire nonchier par le curet de saint Nicolay et aussy faire semondre tous les confreres, especialment ceulx dededens le ville en leurs habis de lannee presente pour estre tant et si longhement en le dite eglise que les services seront faix et celebres et besoingnier daultres choses se mestier en est. Et les deffallans alamende desus ditte.

Ordonnances

Item, que toutes foix que on ara abesoignier en se dite confrairie les iiij maistres debueront remoustrer le cause ou les causes pour quoy on sera assambles. Et [24r] ne se doibt nulx advanchier de parler devant son tour se on ne luy demande. Et sur lamende ditte: Et quant on ara a faire aulcune election de confrere ou aulcune question ou ordonnance les dessus dis maistres doivent avoir ung cent de bouttons de drap cest assavoir de deux couleurs, si comme l de lune et l de laultre.

[23r] The service of the chapel

The two aforementioned governors, along with some of the most notable members of the said company, must discuss and agree, within the next month after a confrère or a confrère's wife has passed from life to death, to have vespers and requiem Masses said by a deacon and subdeacon, honorably, as is customary in the said chapel of Saint Nicholas where the reliquary rests. They should also provide lighting for the said service. [23v] And if the masters have chosen a specific day for this to be done, they must ensure it's done diligently by the priest of Saint Nicholas and also summon all the confrères, especially those within the town, in their attire of the current year, to be present in the said church for as long and until the services are done and celebrated and attend to other matters if needed. Those who fail to attend are subject to the previously mentioned fine.

Ordinances

Whenever there arises a necessity within this esteemed confraternity, the four masters are obliged to elucidate the reason or reasons prompting their assembly. [24r] No one should presume to speak out of turn, unless solicited. Concerning the aforementioned fine: When there is to be an election of a confrère or any question or ordinance, the aforementioned masters should have a hundred cloth buttons, specifically of two colors: one of one kind, and one of the other.

Et dorbuent baillier a chacun confreres deux bouttons des dites deux couleurs et advertir a quil pourpos chacune couleur fert. Et puis avoix unne laiette troee²¹⁴ defeure et faire mettre ens le dite lacette et faire mettre ens le dite lacette a chacun confreres ung bouton de le couleur dont il veult tenir le pourpos. Et puis compter de quelle coulleur on ara le plus et tenir le plus saine partie [24v] pour plus amiablement faire et parler de tous pourpos sans ce que nulz aist [read: aust] malgre de soustenir quelque opinion contre personne non plus lung que laultre pour mieulx amour entretenir emsamble car pluisse foix trouble sont venus par trop parler. Et aussy que tout ce que ainsy seroit fait et passet soit tenus ferme et estable sans ce que nulx face ne die du contraire sur le contredisant estre alamende dunne livre de chire a le dite fiette. Et au defeure de la dite amende il estoit encorre oppositte. Il seroit prieuz de la dite confrairie. Et non jamaix y rentrer fors ainsy et par le maniere que par cy devant est plus plainnement et clerement deviset.

They should then distribute to each confrère two buttons of the said colors, informing them of the purpose each color serves.

Subsequently, employing a perforated container, each confrère is to place therein a button of the color that signifies his preference. They will then count which color is most represented and consider the majority [24v] to amiably decide and discuss any matter. No one should find himself bound to uphold any viewpoint against another, neither this nor that, to better cultivate harmony and unity. For, verily, tumults frequently emerge from superfluous discourse.

Also, whatever is thus decided and passed should be held firm and stable without anyone acting or speaking to the contrary. Whoever opposes this will be fined one pound of wax to the said reliquary. Should he fail to pay the said fine and continues in his opposition, he shall find himself stripped of membership within this esteemed confraternity. And he may never return except in the manner which has been more plainly and clearly laid out before.

214 This means "container with holes" and refers to a basket or some other container into which the brothers drop their cloth tokens to vote on A-B issues.

[25r] Jour differens

Item, se auscuns laix parlers, dementirs, tenchons, rancunne ou haynne ou que fraude, deception ou aultre mal mouvoit nottoirement entres les confreres de main misse ou aultrement, paix et concorde ydoibuent mettre sans delay les iiiij maistres, les eslus, et les gouverneurs de le fabricque, par le conseil de le plus saine partie des confreres, sauf en ce droit de justice. Et le confrere ou confreres qui rebelles seroit de luy rapporter en le dite confrairie seroit par celuy cause a cent saulz tournois damende apaijer en le maniere que dessus est dit, cest [25v] assavoir moietit au juge et laultre moietit a la ditte confrairie.

Et avoec ce privez de la compaignie sans y povir jamais rentrer fors par le maniere devant ditte. Et se auscuns confreres ce que ia naviegne estoit nottoirement et publicquement diffamez de auscuns villains cas apparut as maistres et as confreres evidamment, il seroit et doibt estre a tous jours privez de la compaignie et confraternite par lacord et consentement de la plus saine partie des confreres celuy ou ceulx pour ce souffissamment convocquies et ossy aceluy acuy le deffaulte saroit et non aultrement.

[25r] Day of disputes

Item, if there arise any idle talk, lies, disputes, grudges, or hatred, or should fraud, deception, or any other ill-intention be manifestly evident amongst the brethren, whether expressed by hand gesture or other means, peace and harmony must be restored without delay by the four masters, the elected, and the governors of the building, guided by the advice of the wisest among the brethren, while preserving the rights of justice. And the confrère or confrères who might be remiss in reporting this to the said fraternity would, for such neglect, incur a fine of a hundred sols tournois, in the manner previously described, that is [25v] half to the judge and the other half to the said fraternity.

Furthermore, he would be excluded from the company and never allowed to return, except in the previously described manner. And if any confrère—may it never come to pass—is notoriously and publicly defamed for any base act and it becomes clear to the masters and to the brethren, he should, and indeed must, be forever excluded from the company and confraternity with the agreement and consent of the wisest among the brethren, those being duly convened for this purpose, and also to the one to whom the fault is attributed, and no one else.

Des semonses

[26r] Item en tous taimps et toutes foix que besoing sera pour cause touchant le bien commun de le ditte confrairie peulent et doibuent les iiij maistres et les deux gouverneurs de le fabricque faire et assambler a chertain jour les confreres en leux pour ce assignet pour eulx dire et remoustrer le cause ou les causes pour les quelles on les assambleroit et celui iour de convocation ydoibuent estre tous les confreres demorant en la ville. Et aussy cheulx de dehors qui bonnement ypolroient estre leal soing hors a le semonse et signification du varlet qui doibt avoir pour chacun semonse sur le confrairie la somme de ij sols vi deniers sans son principal sollaire qui monte a C sols tournois [26v] chacun an.

Et tout ce enthierement qui sera fait deviset et acordet en bonne foy par les iiij maistres les iiij eslus les deux gouverneurs estans en nombre toute foix de le plus saine partie des confreres par voye de droit et de raison il doibt et debuera estre entretenus observet et accompli en bonne foy de tous les aultres sans de riens aller alecontre. Et a toutez semonses et assamblees que on sera nulz des confreres ne se doibt ne peult partir jusques ace que conclus sera ce pour quoy on seroit assamblet et sur samende ditte loial soing hors.

Regarding summonses

[26r] At all times and whenever necessary concerning the common good of said confraternity, the four masters and the two governors of the building should and must gather and assemble the brethren on a designated day at a designated place to explain and demonstrate the reason or reasons for which they would be assembled. On this day of convocation, all the brethren residing in the town should be present, as well as those from outside who can feasibly attend, given the summons and notification from the servant, who should receive for each summons to the confraternity the sum of two sols and six deniers, excluding his main salary of 100 sols tournois annually. [26v]

Everything that will be discussed, agreed upon, and finalized in good faith by the four masters, the four elected ones, and the two governors, being always in the presence of the majority of the brethren by way of right and reason, should and must be upheld, observed, and executed in good faith by all the others without opposing anything. And at all summonses and assemblies that will be held, none of the brethren should or can leave until the matter at hand, for which they assembled, is concluded, under the aforementioned penalty.

Et le rebelle ou les rebelles contredisant aulcun nement ace arogans pour differer contre lordonnance ou les ordonnances ainsy faictes comme dit est, estre attains et enqueus en le paine de C sols tournois apaijer comme dit est, et privez [27r] de la compaignie sans y povoir rentrer fors par le maniere devant ditte, cest assavoir sil ne le requiert humblement as dis maisters acompaignies de la plus saine partie des confreres en recongnissant et estre repentant de sa maise et contraire oppinion et rebellion en ce faisant par le plaisir des confreres se il samble bon on le peult reprendre cest assavoir en payant son entree comme nouvel venus qui oncque ny aroit este et non plus avoir de prerogative. Touttes lesquelles choses constitutions devises et ordonnances dessus escriptes et chacune delles ont este et sont par le gret acordt. Et assentement de nous tous les confreres faictes et ordonnees constituees et acordees par tel maniere et condicion [27v] que par le commun acordt de plus saine et grande partie de nous par suscession de tamps, elle puissent estre touttes ou enpartie muees corigie acruttes ou amenriez ou en mieulx pour le plus pourfitable et plus raisoimable reformeez nous touttes foix pource premiers et souffissamment convoquies et appelez en moustrant droit et raison anos loiaux pooirs prebstres et clercs seculers

And those refusing to comply, or acting in opposition, especially in arrogance against the ordinance or ordinances as previously mentioned, upon being found guilty, will face a penalty of 100 sols tournois to be paid as mentioned, and [27r] will be excluded from the company without the possibility of rejoining, unless they humbly appeal to said masters, accompanied by the majority of the brethren, acknowledging and repenting for their wrongdoing, contrary opinion, and rebellion. In doing so, by the brethren's discretion, if it seems appropriate, they may be accepted again, provided they pay an entry fee as if they were newcomers who had never been a part before, and shall have no more privilege. All the aforementioned items, decisions, and rules, each of which have been and are, by the great agreement and assent of all of us, the brethren, made, ordered, constituted, and agreed upon in such a manner and condition [27v] that, by the mutual agreement of the wisest and majority of us over time, they may all or in part be changed, corrected, sharpened, or amended, or improved for the profitable and more rational reform. We, for this very reason, having been firstly and sufficiently convened and called, showing rightful cause to our faithful priests and secular clerics,

advons obligiet et obligons ypotiquiet
 et ypotiquons li ung alaultre par
 institucion sollemprnesse nous
 meismes et tous nos biens pns
 [presents*] et avenir tant espirituelz
 comme temporelz quel et par tout ou
 quil soient et seront.

Et nous sommes soumis et submetons
 et aussy tous nos biens dessus dis ale
 juredicion de tous juges et fouverains
 ordinaires de sainte eglise et
 temporels [28r] pour nous et chacun
 de nous et nos biens contraindre
 atout ce enthierement que dit est
 dessus bien et parfaitement temir et
 aconplir de point en point.
 Et avoecq ce pour bien de paix pour
 hoster toutes questions et estas qui
 de ce se polroient ensuiwir. Ossy
 pour mieuly savoir retenir la maniere
 comment nous advons jure nous
 gens d'eglise en parole de prebtre
 sur nos pis et sur nostre ordrenes.
 Et nous clercs seculers a venir en
 amour ensamble et enconfraterniet
 le advons juret et solempnement sur
 les saintes evangilles. Et avoecq ce
 en aprobacion de verite nous tous
 ensamble a voecq le signe acoustume
 du nottaire cy desoubz escript
 avons mis et prendu nos proppres
 seaulx aceste presente chartre et
 instrumens publicque acta fuerunt hec
 Vallenchiennes.

have obligated and do bind ourselves
 and pledge each one to the other by
 solemn institution. We ourselves, and
 all our present and future belongings,
 both spiritual and temporal, wherever
 they may be and will be, are thus
 pledged.

We submit and do commit, and also
 all our aforementioned possessions,
 to the jurisdiction of all judges and
 sovereign ordinates of the holy church
 and the secular authorities [28r] for
 ourselves, and each one of us, to be
 compelled concerning all that has
 been stated above to uphold and
 perfectly execute from point to point.
 Furthermore, in the interest of
 maintaining peace, to set aside all
 potential disputes or questions that
 might arise from this matter. Also,
 to better retain the manner in which
 we have sworn, we, the clergy, in
 priestly words, swear upon our souls
 and our orders. And we, secular
 clerics, in coming together in love
 and confraternity, have sworn and
 solemnly upon the holy Gospels. And
 with this, in approval of truth, all of
 us together, with the customary sign
 of the notary written below, have
 placed and affixed our own seals
 to this present charter and public
 instruments. These actions were
 undertaken in Valenciennes.

Appendix 4: Linkebeek Confraternity

Transcription and translation of selections of the *Guldenboek* (Golden Book of the Brotherhood of St Sebastian from Linkebeek (Linkebeek, parish church, unnumbered manuscript).

Manuscript on parchment, 32.2 × 21.5 cm, bound in oak boards covered in leather, with copper plates and bosses. 149 folios: one pastedown; three added leaves; two original leaves [A-B]; 135 original leaves, partially foliated partly in Roman numerals by the original hand in ink [I-CXXXV]; seven added leaves, unnumbered; 1 pastedown. For a description of the complicated codicology, see J. Bols, “Guldeboeck van St.-Sebastiaansbroederschap te Linkebeek,” *Verslagen en mededelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Taal- en Letterkunde* (1903), pp. 97–108 (reproduced on https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_ver025190301_01/_ver025190301_01_0015.php).

Written and illuminated in the Southern Netherlands, beginning in 1467, with additions made until the seventeenth century.

Transcribed here are two sections that date from the fifteenth century. I thank Manon Foster for looking over the Middle Dutch. Any errors remain my own.

A. The miraculous healing of Charles the Bold (added in 1477)

[A verso] Het tes te weeten hoe dat
hertoghe Carole ons gheduchtege
prinche van Brabant in devocien
ghenomen heeft dese heyleghe kerke
van sinte Sebastiane, martelere gods,
bi tot Linckenbeke patroen ziinde, die
redene es dese:

[A verso] Let it be known how Duke
Charles our mighty Prince of Brabant
has expressed devotion for this holy
Church of Saint Sebastian, martyr
of God, being the patron saint at
Linkebeek. The reason is this:

Anno lxxvij tic opden lesten daech van julio omtrint der noenen op eenen gonsdaech int paleys mins heere bisscoppen heers, herens-heeren Loduwic van Borboeyn bisscops vanden landen van Ludicke, jnder stat van Ludicke, quaem hertoghe Carolen heere van Ludicke de pestilencie ommer ziin oexelen ende woert zeere flaeu ende siech zeere.

Ende doen ghinc hij heere hertoghe Carole ter stont alle leyne sonder yemande daer yet af te segghene ende daer af laten te weetenen om diets wille dat die beroerte ende groeten drucke die zijne eedelen soudou moeghen maken. Ghinc hij al stille swighene vander tafelen in zijn oratoer sijnde op sinte Lambrechts kerke te Ludicke droekelike doen hij die stat van Ludicke hadde ghewoenden metten swerde ende doen gaf hij hem op met zijnen live ende ziele onsen lieven heere God, zijnder liever moeder Marien, sinte Sebastiane onsen patroenen tot Linckenbeke.

Ende woer ter stont verloest ende ghesont terstont wael ectenne. Ende dese pijn hadde hy hertoghe Carole van xij ueren tot twe uren lanch naer der noenen. Ghenesen ziinde claede hy zeere zijnen edelen zijnen noet met groeten love van Gode, onser liever vrouwen, ende onser heylegghen vader sinte Sebastiaene martelere gods.

in the year [14]67 on the last day of July around noon on a Wednesday in the palace of my Lord Bishop's Lord, Lord Louis of Bourbon, bishop of the lands of Liège, in the city of Liège, the pestilence came upon Duke Charles, Lord of Liège, around his armpits, and he became extremely weak and very ill.

Lord Duke Charles then immediately left all alone without saying anything about it to anyone or letting them know, because of the noise and the commotion that his nobles would cause. Silently he left the table and went anxiously to his oratory, which has been at Saint Lambert's Church in Liège since he won the city of Liège with his sword, and then he gave himself with his body and soul to Our Dear Lord, to his dear Mother Mary, to Saint Sebastian our patron saint at Linkebeek.

He was immediately delivered and healed and well thereafter. In total, Duke Charles suffered from 12 o'clock until two o'clock in the afternoon. When he had been healed, he cloaked his malady thoroughly from his nobles but deeply praised God, Our Beloved Lady and Our Holy Father Saint Sebastian, martyr of God.

Ende besøeken sinte Sebastiaens kerke van Linckenbeke met allen zynen edelen heeren met groeten devocien ende deede aldaer groete dinste van offerande ghevende eenen guldene man ende eenen man van waesse. Ende daer nu over mits der groeter devocien ende der miraculen die sinte sebastiaen heeft ghedaen inner onsen prinche van Brabant. Zoe heeft ons joncfrouwe, hertoghe Caroleys van Borgonden doechter, gh(?) joncfrouwe Marie van Borgonden, princhesse van Brabant, zoe alle daghe messe voer haeren vader erfelic besegt ende ghefunden, g[e]formert vanden bisschoppe van Camerike inder kerken van sere sinte Sebastiaene tot Linckenbeke patroen ziinde. Anno mcccc en(de) lxxvij tic

He visited Saint Sebastian's Church of Linkebeek with all his nobles with great devotion and did them a great service of offerings by bestowing upon them one golden figure and one figure made of wax. Now, because of the great devotion there and because of the miracles that Saint Sebastian has performed within our Prince of Brabant, our Lady, daughter of Duke Charles of Burgundy, Lady Mary of Burgundy, Princess of Brabant, has therefore established and commissioned daily Masses for her father, performed by the bishop of Cambrai in the Church of Saint Sebastian at Linkebeek being patron. In the year 1477.

B. Rules for the confraternity of St Sebastian at Linkebeek (written in 1467)

[fol. Br] *rub:* Dit es tguldeboeck ende dor[d]enantie vander bruederscap mijns heeren sinte Sebastiaens, patroen der prochiekerken te Linkenbeke, marscalck vander haestegher pestelentien ende onversiender doot.

This is the guild book and statutes of the brotherhood of my lord Saint Sebastian, patron saint of the parish church at Linkebeek, who fends off swift pestilence and unforeseen death.

Inc: Het es te weten, soe wat personen, geestelic of werlic, van wat state sij sijn, devotie ende minne hebben, in deser bruederscap ende bescermenesse sinte Sebastiaens gescreven te sine, die moet voerinscriven, geven sijn devotie ende te minsten enen stuver. Ende hier in, soe es hem een iegelic goetwilich mensche te quiten sculdich, soude de bruederscap na scout onderhouden sijn. Welke bruederscap men als noch onderhoudt ende om bat onderhoudenen, soe sijn geordeneert, ter eeren gods ende sijnder liever moeder ende des werdigen ridders sinte Sebastiaens, drie gesongen messen de weke. Te wetene: dierste messe van onser liever vrouwen des saterdaegs. Dander messe alle donderdage van sinte Sebastiaene. Die derde messe alle maendage van requiem voer alle sielen, en sunderlinge voer alle brueders ende susters die in deser bruederscap gestorven sijn, ende voer alle goetdoenders der goetwillegher menschen. Welke drie voirscreven messen niet sekens [fol. Bv] en weten, dan den stuver voirscreven, so dat dicke gevallen heeft als hem een yegelic niet en quijt al vore, dat de kerke te groeten laste dan comt ende vele toeleggen moet, soe dat sij tot geender reparation en conste gecomen om tonderhouden de voirscreven ordenantie ende godlike diensten, ten ware bijder gratien gods.

Let it be known, if any individuals, clerical or lay, whatever their status, have devotion and love to be enrolled into this brotherhood and receive protection from Saint Sebastian, he must first register, pledge his devotion and [pay] at least one stuiver. And in this, every willing person is obliged to pay, should the brotherhood come up short. To maintain said brotherhood as well to support it better, three sung Masses per week have thus been ordered, in honor of God and of his sweet Mother and of the worthy knight Saint Sebastian. To wit: the first Mass [dedicated to] our Lady on Saturdays. The second Mass every Thursday [dedicated to] Saint Sebastian. The third Mass every Monday [is] a requiem for all souls, especially for all the brothers and sisters in this brotherhood who have died, and for all benefactors of the benevolent people. Those who don't know the three aforementioned Masses for sure [should then pay] the aforementioned stuiver, as it often happens when everyone has not acquitted himself as before, that the church comes under too a great burden and must lay out too much, so that it could not pay sufficient compensations to maintain the aforementioned statute and the holy services, except by the grace of God.

Want ons geduchtege prince
 Carelois, hertoge van Bourgoren
 ende van Brabant, uut devotien
 hem berverende met vele sijnder
 edelder heren ende sinen officieren,
 in properen persone versocht heeft
 te weten opten lesten dach iulij, anno
 lxxvij, ende doen scriven gelijc hier
 na tuyget ende bescrevene steet,
 mits welken versueke ende gunsten
 doen[en] sint dicke ons bewijst ende
 sijn goede edele heeren ende officiren
 ons dagelics bewijsen ende oec alle
 andere goetwilge personen daer met
 den godliken dienst ende reparatien
 der selver kerken seere ghevordert
 wert.

Because our formidable prince
 Charles, duke of Burgundy and of
 Brabant, out of devotion, carrying
 himself with many of his noble lords
 and his officers, has personally visited
 [Linkebeek], notably on the last day
 of July in the year [14]67, and has
 caused to be written, as attested and
 described hereafter, through which
 visits and favors, which are often
 bestowed upon us, his good noble
 lords and officers daily remember
 us, as well as all other benevolent
 persons through whom the divine
 service and the repairs of the same
 churches are greatly supported.

C. Prayer to Godfrey the Bearded (written in 1467)

[fol. 1r] In nomine patris et filii
 et spiritus sancti et in nomine
 gloriosissime virginis Marie matris
 Ihesu Christi. Necnon in nomine
 sancti Sebastiani militis Ihesu
 Christi patroni prochialis ecclesie de
 Linkenbeke ac omnium sanctorum
 and sanctarum domini. Amen

Mijn edel werdich heere hertoghe
 Godevaert metten barde, die int
 godshuijs ende clooster te Haffligem
 begraven leijt, voervorders,
 keijseren van Roeme, coninghen van
 Vrankerijke, hertoge [1v] van Lotrike,
 van Brabant ende van Lymbourch,
 marckgrave des heylichs rijcx, grave
 van Loon, ende oeck alle sijn vorderen
 sij sij manspersoenen oft vrouwen
 persoenen die gestorven sijn ende van
 dien bloede dat hij comen es.

In the name of the Father and the Son
 and the Holy Spirit and in the name
 of the most glorious virgin Mary
 mother of Jesus Christ. And also in
 the name of Saint Sebastian, soldier
 of Jesus Christ, patron of the parish
 church of Linkebeek, and [in the
 name of] all male and female saints of
 the Lord. Amen.

My noble and worthy lord duke
 Godfrey the Bearded, who lies
 buried in the church and monastery
 at Affligem, forefathers, emperors
 of Rome, kings of France, dukes of
 Lorraine, of Brabant, and of Limburg,
 margraves of the Holy [Roman]
 Empire, counts of Loon, and also all
 his ancestors, be they male or female
 persons who have died and who are
 of the blood from which he has come.

Ende hij oeck selve salegher
gedachten, die de selve prochiekerke
van Linkenbeke dede funderen,
stichten ende maken.

Ende stelde daer ghiftersse der curen
aldaer der werdegen vrouwen der
abdissen des godshuys ende cloosters
van Vorst.

Ende de selve heere voerscreven gaf
aldair beyde der kerken ende der
cueren al dat sij daer te Linkenbeke
voerscreven houdende sijn: huysen,
hoven ende beempden, bosschen,
lant, tseins ende renten al vryeigen.
Soe ment aldaer claerlijck tot her
toe ende al noch oppenbaerlijck
bevint. Ende daer toe gaf hij daer der
selver kerken datmen daer dagelicx
sien mach vanden selven werden
houtte daer ons lieve heere god die
bitter doot aen starf opten goeden
vriendach. Ende hij starf doen men
screef duysent hondert ende veertich,
ende leit int clooster voerscreven.

Ende oeck soe bidt men daer ende
houtse daer voer brueders [II recto]
die ghene die van des selven hertogen
bloede comen, sijnt manspersoenen
oft vrouwen personen, soe van wat
state sij sijn sullen. Ende voertane,
die van desen voerscreven bloede
sijn ende oeck allen die hem int
voerscreven bruederscap begheren,
doen te scriven die sal men
perfectelick hier na met namen ende
met toenamen scriven dus: In mijns
voirseits heeren sinte Sebastiaens
van hemelrike ende van Linkenbeke
bruederscap boeke.

He himself [is] of blessed memory,
who founded, established, and built
the same parish church of Linkebeek.

He supervised the ecclesiastical
properties there, for the worthy
women, for the abbesses of the
convent, and for the Abbey of Forest.

The same aforementioned lord gave
both the church and the ecclesiastical
properties—all that they hold there in
Linkebeek: houses, farms and fields,
forests, land, duties and rents, which
they all own, as one can clearly still
find there today, and in freehold. He
also gave the same church [a piece] of
the same worthy wood upon which
our sweet Lord God died the bitter
death on Good Friday, which one
can still see there every day. He died
in the year 1140²¹⁵, and he lies in the
aforementioned monastery.

One should also pray for, and
consider as brothers, those who come
from this same duke's blood, be they
male or female persons, of whatever
station they may be. And forthwith,
those who are of this forementioned
blood, and also those who desire
[to be] in the aforementioned
confraternity, in order to sign them
up, hereafter, they shall be inscribed
in the correct way with both family
name and forename thus: In [the
name of] my aforementioned lord
saint Sebastian of Heaven and in
the book of the confraternity of
Linkebeek.

215 In fact, Godfrey died in 1139.

Appendix 5: St Gorik's Confraternity

Transcription and Translation of the Book of Ordinances of the Confraternity of Saint Sebastian, in the Church of Saint Gorik (Gaugericus, Gory) in Brussels (City Archives of Brussels, Privéarchief 852).

Manuscript on parchment. The original sections were inscribed in 1468, with annotations and additions continuing until 1847.

The manuscript contains 100 paginated pages; dimensions 14 cm × 21 cm. It contains one miniature and several decorative initials. The binding is secured with two metallic clasps.

The transcription focuses on the pages from the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, excluding later additions which fall outside the remit of this project. I extend my gratitude to Remco Sleiderink for his invaluable contribution to the transcription process; any errors remain my own.

The unpublished description, courtesy of Remco Sleiderink, is printed unmolested below:

Serment royal Saint-Sébastien des Archers de Bruxelles, 1468-2005. - Don Remco Sleiderink (2012) (Collection des archives privées 852-868 - 8A)
 1. Registre des ordonnances du Serment de Saint-Sébastien des Archers de Bruxelles ("Boeck vander ordinantien vander bruederscap des gloriosen sant ende martelare Sinte Sebastiaens"): Manuscrit, 1468-1847 [parchemin]. - registre relié : paginé (100 p.) ; avec une miniature, enluminures et plusieurs lettrines ; 2 fermoirs métalliques; 14 cm × 21 cm. - Contenu : en page 12, une miniature de saint Sébastien tenant une arbalète, entouré de prêtres et de bourgeois de Bruxelles, à l'intérieur de l'église Saint-Géry à Bruxelles ; règlement du Serment ; liste des membres avec la mention de la profession, parmi lesquels des artistes et artisans célèbres comme le peintre Bernard van Orley, le sculpteur Jan Borreman et l'imprimeur Thomas van der Noot ; inventaire des biens du Serment, commencé au 16e siècle et poursuivi aux 18e et 19e siècles ; - Le Serment était étroitement lié à la chambre de rhétorique De Corenbloem (Le Bluet): le manuscrit est en effet décoré de bluets, contient la devise de la chambre "Jueght sticht vrueght" ainsi qu'une liste de ses membres (125 rhétoriciens). - Néerlandais (Collection des archives privées 852 - Kardex n°2 (tiroir 69).

[13] In't iaer ons heeren duser vierhondert ende lx viij hebben Jan de Costere geheeten de moleslegere meester in arten ende Joes Verleys proefsten te dier tijt vander bruederscap des gloriosen sant ende martelare Sinte Sebastiaens inder kerken van Sinte Goericx in Bruessele geordineert ende doen scriven desen yegenwoerdegen boeck van der ordinantien. Aengaende der voirseider bruederscap den diensten gods aldair ende des daer anders oic toebehoert welke or[14]dinantie overdragen es ende ghesloten by beyde den prochianen doen ter tijt wesende. Te wetene her Willem Bouwens ende her Amelreck Matten by ons proefsten vorseyt ende meer anderen goeden mannen brueders sijnde der voirscreven bruederscap om dat de proefsten die na comen ende ghemaect selen werden te cleerder mogen weten de voirseide bruederscap te regere ende alle de ordinantien die overdragen ende gesloten sijn. Hier na vercleert ende bescreven te onderhouwene.

Tot den love, eeren ende weerdicheden gods almechtich, ende des gloriosen marteleers Sint Sebastiaens, beschermers vander haesteger siecheit, hebben eenege vanden priesteren ende goede mannen der prochien van Sinte Goericx in Brussel gheinstituert ende geordineert een minlike bruederscap te houdene ende te achtervolghene inder manieren hier na vercleert.

In the year of our Lord 1468, Jan de Costere, also known as the master of the mill, alongside Joes Verleys—at that time the provosts of the Brotherhood of the glorious saint and martyr, Saint Sebastian, in the Church of Saint Gorik in Brussels—established and commissioned the writing of this present book of ordinances. Pertaining to the aforementioned Brotherhood and the divine services therein, and whatever else is relevant, the ordinances were passed and agreed upon by both parish priests of that period, to wit: Sir Willem Bouwens and Sir Amelreck Matten, with our aforementioned provosts and several other good men, members of the said Brotherhood. This was to ensure that future provosts, and those appointed, might have clear guidance on how to govern the aforementioned Brotherhood and uphold all the ordinances that were established and agreed upon. These will be clarified and described henceforth.

For the praise, honor, and glory of Almighty God and the glorious martyr Saint Sebastian, protectors against swift ailments, certain priests and virtuous men from the parish of Saint Gorik in Brussels have instituted and established a benevolent brotherhood, to be maintained and pursued as described hereafter.

Inden iersten hebben de voirseide heeren ende goede mannen geordineert ende opgesedt datmen voertdaen alle weken des disendaechs opten outaer van [15] Sinte Sebastiane inde kerke van Sinte Goericx voirseide singhen sal een messe met dyaken ende subdiaken. Ende daer toe salmen beyaerden ende orgelen ende inder selver missen bidden gode ende Sinte Sebastiane voer alle de bruederen ende susteren inde selve bruederscap sijnde.

Item, men sal alle iare opten dach van Sinte Sebastiane inder voirseide kerken predicken smorgens ende singen de misse met alsulken chierheiden ende solempniteit alsmen can. Tot welken sermonen ende diensten te hoerne selen comen de bruederen ende susteren dien dat ghelieven sal te doen daer toe devocie hebbende ende begheerende beschermt te sine biden voirseide den Sinte Sebastiane.

rub: **Van Incomenne**

Item, men sal gheven van innecomenne een stuvete ende die ghehuwet sijn ende met hueren huysgesinde begheren inde voirseide bruederscap te sine selen geven twee stuvete.

rub: **Vanden jaersculde**

Item, die inde voirseide bruederscap sijn selen gheven alle iare elc man voer hem [16] selven eenen stuvete. Ende desghelijcs de vrouwen behoudelic dat de mans met hueren getrouden wijfs inde selve bruederscap sijnde voer hem ende huysghesinde gheven selen onderhalven stuvete.

Firstly, the aforementioned lords and virtuous men have decreed that from now on, every Tuesday at the altar of Saint Sebastian in the Church of Saint Gorik, a Mass with both a deacon and subdeacon shall be sung. And for this, bells shall ring and organs play, and during this Mass, prayers shall be offered to God and Saint Sebastian for all the brothers and sisters within this brotherhood.

Annually, on the day dedicated to Saint Sebastian in the aforementioned church, a morning sermon will be delivered, and a Mass will be sung with all possible solemnity and grandeur. To these sermons and services, the brothers and sisters who feel the devotion and desire to be protected by the aforementioned Saint Sebastian are expected to attend.

On the Topic of Entry Fees

Firstly, one is to pay an entry fee of one stuiver. Those who are married and wish to join the aforementioned brotherhood with their household will pay two stuyvers.

On the Topic of Annual Dues

Members of the aforementioned brotherhood shall each pay an annual due of one stuiver for themselves. Likewise, the women should understand that the men, with their lawful wives being in the same brotherhood, for them and their spouse shall pay half a stuiver.

rub: **Vanden uuytghave**

Item, oft yeman vanden brueders oft susters uut der voirseide bruederscap begeerde te sine die selen moeten gheven elc voer hem selven vier stuvers sonder hem der vore eenege uutvaert te doen.

Item, met den gelde, inder voirseider manieren inncommen salmen houden den voirseiden dienst chierheit vanden outare ende dat daer ane cleeft na ordinancie vanden procefsten der voirseider bruederscap.

rub: **Vander dootscult**

Item, als eenich vanden voirseiden bruederen oft susteren sterft, soe salmen ten yersten als dat gesijn can opten voirseyden outaer singen een messe voer de uutvaert van dien brueder oft suster. Maer dies sal de bruedere oft susteren daer voreculdich sijn te ghevene vij stuvers.

Item, dient gelieft met hueren leven [17] den live te ghevene dien salmen daer afquijt houden. Ende den selven dienst voer hen doen, doen als si afflinich sijn.

On the Topic of Expenditure

If anyone from the brothers or sisters wishes to exit the aforementioned brotherhood, they should each pay four stuivers for themselves without having any departure ceremonies conducted for them.

The money collected in the aforementioned manner shall be used to maintain the service and the altar's splendor, and whatever is associated with it, according to the ordinances of the provosts of the aforementioned brotherhood.

On the topic of funeral services

Whenever any of the aforementioned brothers or sisters passes away, a Mass shall be promptly arranged on the aforementioned altar for the repose of that brother or sister. For this service, a fee of seven stuivers is to be levied from the estate of the deceased.

However, for those who choose to make a contribution of seven stuivers during their lifetimes [17], this obligation is fulfilled in advance, and the same funeral service will be provided for them without further charges.

rub: Vander dootscult vanden armen brueders etc.

Item, ware enich vanden voirseiden brueders oft susters als si storven, soe arm datse de voirseide vij stuvers niet gegeven en consten, soe sullen de proefsten nochtan den dienst vander uutvaert doen, doen ten costen der gemeynder bruederscap, welke uutvaerde altijd des sondaechs inde gebode selen gecondicht werden, vanden prochiaen. Op wat dage men die doen sal ten welken de brueders ende susters dient gelieft, comen selen ende houden alsoe wel bruederscap inder zielen als inden lichame.

Item, ten tide als dese bruederscap ierst geordineert wert, te wetene int iaer xiiij^c lxxix waren geordineert voer dat iaer proefsten te sine Heinrick Heenkenshoet, Jan vander Nat, ende Ghijsbrecht van Schoeneycke.

rub: Vander maeltijt te houdenne

Item, men sal alle iare des sondaechs op Sinte Sebastianes dach houden een minlike maeltijt te cleynder cost. Ende daer toe [18] selen de proefsten ten tide sijnde vermanen alle de brueders. Ende de brueders die daer geloven selen ter selver maeltijt te comene die selen betalen geheel gelach weder si comen oft niet. Ende een maent oft twee na de maeltijt selen de voirseide proefsten rekeninge doen vore de brueders die die begheren te horene van hueren ontfange ende bewinde.

On the topic of funeral services for the poor brothers, etc.

If any of the aforementioned brothers or sisters were so poor at their death that they could not give the aforementioned five stuivers, the provosts shall nonetheless perform the funeral service at the cost of the common brotherhood. Such funerals shall always be announced on Sundays, by the parish priest, specifying the date it will be conducted. On that date, all brothers and sisters who wish to do so shall come and maintain brotherhood both in spirit and in body.

At the time when this brotherhood was first organized, namely in the year 1469, those appointed as provosts for that year were Heinrick Heenkenshoet, Jan van der Nat, and Ghijsbrecht van Schoeneycke.

On the topic of holding a meal

Every year, on the Sunday before Saint Sebastian's day, a modest meal will be held for a reasonable cost. For this, the current provosts will invite all the brothers. And the brothers who commit to attending this meal shall pay for their share, whether they come or not. A month or two after the meal, the aforementioned provosts shall present their accounts to any of the brothers who wish to hear about their income and expenditures.

Ende voert salmen inder maeltijt spreken om de voirseide bruederscap tonderhoudene. Ende nader maeltijt kiezen drie nuwe proefsten: eenen van den geslechten ende twee vander natien, om dat toecomende iaer der selver bruederscap te diene.

rub: **Vanden eertteekenen te gheven**

Item, die proefsten ten tide sijnde selen doen maken teekenen. Ende die selen halen oft doen halen de vrouwen inde voergenoemde bruederscap sijnde ende met dien teekenen selense halen, oft doen halen, een scotele eerten ende ij broede.

rub: **Hier na volcht die ordinancie van der messe diemen alle disendage doen sal opten outaer van Sinte Sebastiane inder kerken voirseit.**

[19] *rub:* **Gebet vanden prochiaens ende den loon.**

Item, om dat elc prochiaen alle sondage alst hem ghebuert de geboden te doene bidden sal ende doen bidden opten preecstoel voir alle de bruederen ende susteren, sijn si levende, sijn dy doot. Ende oec voer alle die goetdoenders toten dienste gods diemen doet opten outaer van Sinte Sebastiane. Ende oec toter reparatien des selfs outaers aldaer. Ende daer vore salmen elcken prochiaen gheven telken feest dage van Sinte Sebastiane ij stuyvers.

Moreover, during this meal, discussions will be held about the upkeep of the aforementioned brotherhood. And after the meal, three new provosts will be chosen, one from the patrician families²¹⁶ and two from the community, to serve the brotherhood in the coming year.

On Giving out the Tokens

The current provosts shall have tokens made. And they shall fetch or have fetched the women of the aforementioned brotherhood. And with these tokens, they shall fetch, or have fetched, a bowl of peas and two loaves of bread.

What follows are the regulations for the Mass to be held every Tuesday on the altar of Saint Sebastian in the aforementioned church.

[19] **Prayers by the parish priests and their compensation**

Every Sunday, each parish priest, when it is his turn to issue the commandments, shall pray and have prayers said on the pulpit for all the brothers and sisters, whether they are living or deceased. Also, for all the benefactors toward the service of God performed on the altar of Saint Sebastian, and also for the repairs of that very altar. For this, every parish priest shall be given two stuivers every feast day of Saint Sebastian.

²¹⁶ This term suggests that one of the provosts had a quasi-hereditary position.

**rub: Vanden dienst vanden knape
ende sinen loon.**

Item, de knape vander voirseider bruederscap sal gehouden sijn alle saterdage avont te comene tot onser vrouwen love ende de keerssen ontsteken voer Sinte Sebastiane ende daer omtrint. Ende wederom uitdoen. Noch sal hi gehouden sijn alle disendage den outaer van Sinte Sebastiane te deckene ende oec de kiste daer die proefsten aen sitten goets tijts eermen de messe van Sinte Sebastiane doen sal. De keerssen aldaer ontsteken ende des der toe behoert halen. Ende de messe gedaen sijnde, den priesters oec haer loet geven, alsoe dat geordineert es. Ende al weder om opdoen. Noch sal hi alle sondaghe [20] ende alle heilichdage comen ten tiden als men onse vrouwen messe singht, den voirseide outaer ende kiste decken na de behoerlicheit vanden tide. Ende ten appoerte aldair sitten toter noenen. Het si dat die proefsten comen oft niet en comen.

De keerssen te hoech messe ende te vesperen ontsteken, ende weder om uitdoen, alsoe dat behoert. Ende desgelijcs soe wanneer datmen eeneghe uutvaerden doen sal. Soe sal hi besorgen dat daer toe hoert van outaer ende kiste te deckene. De bare te settene, de keerssen te ontstekene, de spinden daer de bruederen ende susteren mede offeren souwen te doen berren, ende elken eene te ghevene. Ende al weder om op doen alsoet behoert.

**Duties of the servant boy and his
wages.**

The servant boy of the aforementioned brotherhood shall be required every Saturday evening to attend the prayer to Our Lady and light the candles in front of Saint Sebastian and its surroundings, and later extinguish them. Furthermore, every Tuesday he must cover the altar of Saint Sebastian and the chest where the provosts sit, well before the Mass of Saint Sebastian is held. He must light the candles there and fetch whatever is necessary. Once the Mass is over, he should give the priests their share, as arranged. And then, he should clean everything up again. Also, he must come every Sunday [20] and every holy day at the time when the Mass of Our Lady is sung, cover the aforementioned altar and chest according to the propriety of the season. He should sit there until noon, whether the provosts come or not.

Lighting the candles during the high Mass and vespers, and likewise extinguishing them, as appropriate. Also, whenever a funeral is to be conducted, he should ensure that everything needed, including the altar and the chest coverings, is prepared. Setting up the bier, lighting the candles, preparing the baskets through which the brothers and sisters would make their offerings, and giving each one to someone. And also, to pack everything back as it should be.

Voert sal de voirseide knape, den proefsten ghereet sijn, daer si hem sinden willen. In orbore oft om profijt, der voirseide bruederscap. Ende men sal hem gheven voer sinen loen van eenen heelen iaer dit aldus te besorgene ende te doene x scellinghe grote.

rub: Den loon vander disendach messe te singhen

Item, den priestere die de messe van Sinte Sebastiane alle disendaghe celebreren ende singen sal salmen gheven van enen heelen iare lanc xx s grote brabant. [21]

Item, de priesteren die aendoen. Te wetene dyaken ende subdyaken dien salmen elken telker voirseide messen geven: xv [e-bar]

Item, alle die ghene die de voirseide disen dach messe comen hulpen singen: ix [e-bar]

Item, elcken prochiaen: xii [e-bar]

Item, soe wat priestere tsy prochiaen oft capellaen, die niet te tide en ware ten lesten kyrieleison vanden voirseide messen, diemen van sinte Sebastiaens wegen doet ya wat messen dat sijn, ende ooc ten magnificat vanden vesperen diemen doen sal opte feestdagen van sinte Sebastiaene, die en souden te dier tijt niet winnen, het en ware dat die prochiaenen becommert waren. In anderen diensten gods, te wetene dat si metten heileghen sacramente uut waren, dat si biechten muenichden, oft messe lasen.

Furthermore, the aforementioned servant should be readily available to the provosts, wherever they may send him. Whether it's for work or for the benefit of the aforementioned brotherhood. And for his service throughout a full year, ensuring and doing all this, he should be given ten shillings of the groat value.

The remuneration for singing the Tuesday Mass

It has been decided that the priest who celebrates and sings the Mass of Saint Sebastian every Tuesday shall be given, for the whole year, 20 Brabant groats. [21]

Furthermore, the priests who assist—the deacon and subdeacon—for each of the aforementioned Masses, each shall receive: 15 Brabant groats.

Also, all those who come to help sing the aforementioned Tuesday Mass: nine Brabant groats.

To each parish priest: 12 Brabant groats.

Moreover, any priest, be it a parish priest or a chaplain, who is not present in time for the last Kyrie eleison of the aforementioned Masses, which are conducted on behalf of Saint Sebastian, and also for the Magnificat during Vespers to be held on the feast days of Saint Sebastian, shall not earn [his due] at that time unless the parish priests were impeded. In other services of God, namely if they were out with the Holy Sacrament, if they were hearing confessions, or reading Mass.

Ende oic soude een capellaen oft twee mogen messe gaen lesen binnen den voirseide messen, sy alsoe datter priesters genoeg waren, om de voirseide messen hulpen te singhene ende anders niet.

[22] Item, de priestere die de voirseide messe doet sal gehouden sijn te biddene vore alle de bruederen ende susteren in alle de voirseide messen alsoe ende daert behoert.

Item, den orghelleere vanden voirseide messen te orgellene van eenen heelen iare lanc salmen gheven xvi stuvers.

Item, den beyaerdere voir sinen arbeyt toten voirseide disendaechs messen te beyaerdene Ende den orgellen te blesene salmen gheven van enen heelen iare xvi stuvers.

rub: Hier na volcht de ordinatie vanden dienste de doene op Sinte Sebastianes dach vallende den xxten dach in januario ende des daer toe behoert.

Inden iersten, soe salmen den prochiaen tsondaechs vore doen gebieden opten stoel den toecomenden voirseide feestdach. Ende oec salmen scriven oft doen scriven briefkens daer af. Ende die sinden inde cloesters om dat si oic alomme cont maken souden den volke, ende den aflaet die dan daer es te verdienene.

And also, a chaplain or two may go read Mass during the aforementioned Masses, provided that there were enough priests to help sing the aforementioned Masses and nothing else.

[22] Moreover, the priest who conducts the aforementioned Mass shall be obligated to pray for all the brethren and sisters in all the said Masses accordingly and where it is due.

For the organist to play the organ during the said services for the duration of a full year, he shall be given sixteen stuvers.

And for the carillonneur for his labor in playing the carillon and blowing the organ at the said Tuesday Masses, he shall be given sixteen stuvers for the duration of a full year.

What follows are the regulations regarding the services to be performed on Saint Sebastian's day, falling on January 20th, and what pertains to it.

First and foremost, one should instruct the parish priest to make an announcement—from the pulpit on the preceding Sunday—about the upcoming aforementioned feast day. Additionally, one should write or commission someone to write little notes about this and send them to the monasteries so they can also inform the people everywhere. They should also notify people about the indulgence available on that day.

[23] Item, soe salmen svrydaechs voer den voirseide feestdach den belleman doen bellen, alle Bruessel dore den voirseide feestdach ende aflaet ende der vore salmen hem geven ij stuvers.

Item, alle de priesteren selen comen opten avont van Sinte Sebastiane. Inde vesperen uten choere, voir den outaer van Sinte Sebastiane singen den magnificat. De antifoon ende collecte metten benedicamus. Ende die prochiaen die dat dan behoert, oft een ander in sijn stadt, sal comen met eender coer cappen ane ende ij coralen voer hem met twee berrende torttysen, ende wieroec aldaer worpen, alsoe dat behoert. Ende desghelijcx salmen oic doen opten dach in de ij^{te} vesperen.

Item, by alsoe dat den avont vanden voirseide feestdage quame op enen sondach oft heilgendach, soe salmen twee sermonen doen, doen deen opten avont, na vesperen, ende dander opten dach smorgens. Ende op dat den avont gheen heylichdach en ware, soe en salmen maer een sermoen doen, ende dat smorgens op sinen dach. Ende van elken sermoen sal[24]men geven den genen diet doet ij stuvers.

Item, opten voirseide dach van Sinte Sebastiane salmen doen singen twee messen op sinen outaer. Deene daer af corts na tsermoen, ende dandere te hoehmissetide. Ende in die messen selen die priesters diese doen gehouden sijn te biddene hertelijc voer alle de bruederen ende susteren.

[23] Furthermore, on the Friday preceding the aforementioned feast day, one should have the bell-ringer sound throughout all of Brussels to announce the feast day and the indulgence. For this, he should be given two stuivers.

All the priests should come on the eve of Saint Sebastian. During vespers, outside the choir, they should sing the Magnificat in front of the altar of Saint Sebastian. They should also sing the antiphon, collect, and the Benedicamus. The parish priest, or another in his place, should come wearing a choir cap with two choirboys in front of him holding two burning torches. They should also spread incense as is customary. Similarly, this should also be done on the actual day during the second vespers.

If the eve of the aforementioned feast day happens to be a Sunday or a holy day, two sermons should be held: one in the evening after vespers and the other in the morning of the feast day. If the eve is not a holy day, only one sermon should be held in the morning of the feast day. For each sermon, the person delivering it should be given two stuivers.

On the aforementioned day of Saint Sebastian, two Masses should be sung on his altar. The first shortly after the sermon, and the other during the high Mass time. During these Masses, the priests who perform them are obliged to pray earnestly for all the brothers and sisters.

Item, elken priestere salmen gheven van alker der voirseide messen diese celebreert ende singht [] eenen braspenning.	For each of the aforementioned Masses that a priest celebrates and sings, he should be given a brass penny.
Item, elken priestere die aen doet toten voirseide ij messen te wetene dyaken ende subdyaken, salmen gheven van elker messen i plc	Every priest who takes part in the aforementioned two Masses, namely as a deacon and subdeacon, shall receive one plack for each Mass.
Item, elken prochiaen salmen geven van elker messen voirseide ende elker vesperen te wetene deen opten avont. Ende dandere opten dach die hulpen te singhene xvij[e-bar] ²¹⁷	For each Mass and each vespers, namely the one during the day and the one in the evening, the assisting priests shall each receive 18 Brabant groats for their help in singing.
Item, elken capellaen van elcker der voirseide messen ende elcker vesperen hul[25]pen te singhene salmen geven xij[e-bar]	For each of the aforementioned Masses and each vespers, each chaplain assisting in singing shall receive 12 Brabant groats.
Item, den onder costere oic gelijc eenen capellaen, salmen gheven van singene xij [e-bar]	The assistant sacristan, equal to a chaplain, shall receive 12 Brabant groats for singing.
Item, den tween coralen, oft choerkinderen, die aendoen te beide de messen, ende ij vesperen, salmen gheven van al elcken xvij [e-bar]	The two choristers, or choir children, who participate in both Masses and two vespers, shall each receive 18 Brabant groats in total.
Item, den orgelleere van elcker messen ende elker vesperen te orgellene, xvij[e-bar]	The organist, for playing at each Mass and each vespers, shall receive 18 Brabant groats.
Item, den beyaerdere van beyaerdene toten voirseide twee messen. Ende ij vesperen, ende oic tsnoenens, ende den orgelleere te blesene van al, i stuuvere	The bell-ringer, for ringing the bells during the aforementioned two Masses and two vespers, and also at noon, and for billowing the organ for everything, shall receive one stuiver.
Item, ghi sult weter dat den offer die ter stoelen comt inde messen vanden feestage voirseit ghevolcht heeft ende noch volgen sal geheel ende al den proeftsten ter tijt sijnde iairlicx Ende dat toten profite van Sinte Sebastiane. Ende desgelijcx oic opten tweesten feestdach van Sinte Sebastiane.	You should know that the offering that comes to the chair during the Mass of the aforementioned feast day has, and will continue to, go entirely to the provosts currently in office annually. And this is for the benefit of Saint Sebastian. Similarly, also on the second feast day of Saint Sebastian.

217 The unit of currency designated as a superscript e with a bar is the Brabant groat, a silver coin equivalent to half a stuiver, or to four pennings.

[26] *rub*: Hier na volcht de ordinatie vanden tweesten feestdage van Sinte Sebastiane

Item, ghi sult weten, datmen den tweesten feestdach van Sinte Sebastiane hout den naesten sondach vanden feestdage van sinte Peter ingaende oeghst.

Item, alle de selve ordinancie van desen tweesten feestdage salmen onderhouden van allen tallen gelijc vore verclaert staet, inde ordinantie vanden iersten feestdage.

Item, op dese tweesten feestdach, sal vallen te betaelene de iaerscult vanden bruederen ende susteren.

Item, soe wat brueder oft suster die hem doet scriven inde voirseide bruederscap een half iaer voer den voirseiden dach, dat de iaerscult valt, sal gehouden sijn inde iaerscult te betalene. Ende ooc inde dootscult, by alsoe dat hi binnen den voirseiden tide aflivich worde.

Item, op desen voirseide tweesten feestdach [27] salmen houden den maeltijt vanden bruederen. Ende hen daer toe vermanen. Ende elc brueder die ter maeltijt comt eten sal gheven dan sijn maeltijtgelt.

[Section in italics written in a different fifteenth-century hand]

Item, die proefsten sellen goets tijts te voren alle de broederen noeden ter voirseide maeltijt, ende die gene die ter voirseide maeltijt geloven te comene, ende dan niet en comen, selen moeten geven halfgelach.

[26] What follows are the regulations for the second feast day of Saint Sebastian.

You should know that the second feast day of Saint Sebastian is observed on the next Sunday of the feast day of Saint Peter, entering August.

All the same regulations for this second feast day shall be observed for all numbers, as previously explained, in the regulations for the first feast day.

On this second feast day, the annual dues of the brothers and sisters are to be paid.

Any brother or sister who has themselves registered in the aforementioned brotherhood half a year before the aforementioned day when the annual dues fall due, shall be obligated to pay the annual dues. And also the death dues, in case he/she dies within the aforementioned period.

On this aforementioned second feast day [27], the meal of the brothers will be held. They will be reminded about it. And every brother who comes to eat at the meal will give his meal money then.

The provosts shall, well in advance, invite all the brothers to the aforementioned meal, and those who promise to attend the aforementioned meal but then do not show up, shall have to pay half the cost.

*Item, de susteren inde voirseide
bruederscap sijnde die selen halen een loot
aen de proefsten dan ter tijt sijnde. Daer
met si selen halen oft doen halen. Daer
men den maeltijt houden sal, een scotele
erryten ende twee broede, elck van viere
miten.*

rub: Hier na volcht die ordinantie
vanden uutvaerden te doene voir de
bruederen ende susteren die inder
voirseide bruederscap gestorven sijn.

Inden yersten soe salmen den iersten
mandach na dat de voirseide maeltijt
gehouden sal sijn, een scoen rijckelike
uutvaert doen, met dyaken ende
subdyaken, opten outaer van Sinte
Sebastiane. Int ge[28]meene voer
alle de bruederen ende susteren, die
inde voirseide bruederscap wesende
ghestorven sijn.

Item, tot deser uutvaert sunderlinghe
salmen den prochiaen dan ter tijt
doen vermanen ende seggen te voren
opten stoel dat mense doen sal. Ende
daer toe vermanen alle bruederen
ende susteren die in levenden live
sijn, om toter voirseider uutvaert te
comene.

Ende hier toe selen de proefsten
dan ter tijt sijnde besorgen wessen
spinden, vore alle de bruederen ende
susteren. Om daer mede tot dier
messen vander voirseide uutvaert te
offerene. Ende voer de ielen vanden
overledenen bruederen ende susteren,
gode herttelijc te biddene, alst wel
betaemt.

*The sisters in the aforementioned
brotherhood shall get a share from the
provosts at that time. With this, they shall
get or have someone get, where the meal
will be held, a dish of peas and two loaves,
each costing four mites.*

**What follows are the regulations
for performing the funerals for the
brothers and sisters who have passed
away within the aforementioned
brotherhood.**

Firstly, the Monday following the
aforementioned meal, a grand and
solemn funeral should be held, with a
deacon and sub-deacon, at the altar of
Saint Sebastian. This is intended [28]
for all the brothers and sisters who,
being part of the aforementioned
brotherhood, have departed.

Furthermore, especially for this
funeral, the parish priest of the time
should be reminded and make a prior
announcement from his pulpit about
this planned event. All living brothers
and sisters are also to be reminded to
attend the aforementioned funeral.

For this purpose, the provosts at that
time should ensure that there are
enough oblations for all the brothers
and sisters, to be offered during the
Mass of the aforementioned funeral.
They are to pray fervently to God for
the souls of the departed brothers and
sisters, as is fitting.

Item, alsmen dese uutvaert doen sal, sal men tierst stellen eermen den dienst aengaet, ter siden vanden outare van Sinte Sebastiane inden ganc vander kerken een bare gedect metten swerten lijcclee de metten cleedekens van Sinte Sebastiane wapenen, daer aen hanghende, dwelc de proefsten onder hen hebben [29] met twee de groetsten keerssen berrende deen voir de bare over ynde staende, ende dander achter.

Item, vore de messe sal een vanden prochianem[sic] oft een ander capellaen in sijn stadt voer de voirseide bare lesen: Commendatien ende wieroect ende sywater daer over worppen. Alsoemen dat gewoonlic es te doene. Ende daer vore salmen hem gheven i plc vi [e-bar]

Item, de ondercostere sal luyden ende doen luyden met alle den clocken, al die wile datmen de voirseide commendatien leest. Ende daer vore salmen hem gheven xij [e-bar]

Item, de priestere die de messe van requiem vander voirseider uutvaert celebreren ende singen sal, die sal gehouden sijn herttelijc Gode te biddene alsoe. Ende daert behoert voer alle die bruederen ende susteren int gemeene, die inder voirseide bruederscap wesende gestorven sijn. Ende daer vore salmen hem geven ½ stuvère.

[30] Item, tot deser messen vander voirseider uutvaert, selen oic twee priesters aendoen, te wetene dyaken ende subdyaken, ende men sal elcken van hen beiden geven xviiiij [e-bar]

Additionally, when this funeral is to be conducted, before the service begins, a bier should be placed next to the altar of Saint Sebastian in the church's aisle. This bier should be covered with a black shroud adorned with the insignias of Saint Sebastian, which the provosts possess among them. Two of the largest candles should be lit, with one standing in front of the bier and the other behind it.

Before the Mass, one of the parish priests or another chaplain in his stead shall read the *Commendatio animae* before the aforementioned bier, and then sprinkle incense and holy water over it, as is customary. For this service, he shall be given one plack and six Brabant groats.

The sacristan shall ring and continue ringing all the bells while the aforementioned *Commendatio animae* is being read. For this service, he shall be given twelve Brabant groats.

The priest who will celebrate and sing the requiem Mass of the aforementioned funeral shall be obligated to sincerely pray to God on behalf of all the brothers and sisters who were part of the aforementioned brotherhood and have since passed away.

For this service, he shall be given half a stuiver.

[30] For this requiem Mass of the aforementioned funeral, there will also be two priests serving, specifically a deacon and a subdeacon. Each of them shall be given eighteen Brabant groats.

Item, elcken prochiaen van deser kerken die de voirseide messe vander uutvaert comt hulpen singen salmen gheven xvij [e-bar]

Item, elcken capellaen salmen oic geven van singene de voirseide messe xij [e-bar]

Item, den ondercostere oic van singene de voirseide messe gelijc enen capellaen, xij [e-bar]

Each parish priest from this church who assists in singing the aforementioned requiem Mass shall be given eighteen Brabant groats.

Each chaplain will also be given twelve Brabant groats for singing the aforementioned Mass.

The sacristan, for singing the aforementioned Mass and in a role equivalent to a chaplain, shall also be given twelve Brabant groats.

rub: Hier na volcht de ordinantie van de uutvaerden te doene voir elken brueder oft suster besundere ende alleen.

Item, ghi selt weten dat alle de selve ordinantie die voer vercleert es.

Inde uutvaert te doene int gemeyne datmen die ooc onderhouden sal.

Inde uutvaerden diemen doen sal, voir elcken brueder oft suster besundere ende alleen.

[31] Item, ende oft gebuerde dat yemant den voirseide proefsten vander voirscreven bruederscap laste ende begeerde eeneghe messe van eenegen sant oft santinne gedaen te hebbene opten outaer van Sinte Sebastiane, ende hueren in oec daer af hadden, het waer luttel oft vele, soe es overdragen ende gesloten als vore.

Dat de voirseide proefsten souden aen de priesteren ghestaen te geven van alsulchen messen, hen te doen singen gelijc vore inde ordinantie vanden messen vanden uutvaerden vercleert staet, sonder eenich becroen oft oic wederseggen.

What follows are the regulations for the funerals to be conducted specifically and individually for each brother or sister.

You should know that all the same regulations that have been explained earlier regarding the general funeral should also be maintained for the funerals conducted specifically and individually for each brother or sister.

Should it happen that someone instructed the aforementioned provosts of the aforementioned brotherhood and requested a Mass for any saint, male or female, to be conducted at the altar of Saint Sebastian, and if they had made a payment for it, whether small or large, it has been decided and concluded as before.

The above-mentioned provosts should give to the priests as established for such Masses, to have them sung, as previously detailed in the regulations for the funeral Masses, without any exemption or objection.

Ende den orghelleere soudemen oic gheven van elker messen gelijc vore inde feesten van Sinte Sebastiane vercleert es.

The organist should also be compensated for each Mass, as previously detailed in the feasts of Saint Sebastian.

rub: Hier na volcht de ordinancie alsoe men de proefsten maken sal

What follows are the regulations regarding the appointment of provosts.

Item, men sal twee goede mannen inder bruderscap sijnde kiezen, die men proefstien maken sal nu voertane om de vorseide bruederscap te regerenne in alle noetsaken der selver aengaende ende oec besorgen, alsoe dat behoeren [32] sal. Ende inder maeltijt der bruederscap voirseide salmen spreken om de voirseide bruederscap te onderhouwene. Ende van oirboirliken saken der voirseide bruederscap aengaende. Ende na de maeltijt salmen den enen proefst vanden tween goeden mannen, die twee iaer gedient heeft verlaten, ende enen anderen kiezen in sijn stat om metten genen dat toecomende jaer te dienene. Ende maer een iaer gedient en heeft. Ende alsoe van iare te iare tachtervolgene. Gelijcmen dat nu een lange wile tijts, onderhouwen heeft, alsoe dat elc proefst die aldus aengesedt werdt, sal twee iaer der voirseide bruederscap dienen eer hi af gaet.

Two esteemed men from the brotherhood should be appointed, who shall be entrusted to oversee the previously mentioned brotherhood in all relevant matters and to ensure its well-being as is fitting. [32] During the brotherhood's meal, discussions are to be conducted on sustaining the said brotherhood and on pertinent beneficial topics. After the meal, one of the provosts, who has served for two years, will step down, and another will be chosen by the two appointed men to serve in his place, with the one who will serve in the coming year and has only served for one year. And so on, year after year. As it has been maintained for a long while now, every provost who is appointed in this manner will serve the aforementioned brotherhood for two years before he departs.

[33-40 either blank or inscribed ca. 1660]

[41] Eerweerdege heere, u wille gelieven den volke te seggene dat in sondaghe naestcomendes es de feeste van Sinte Sebastiane inder kercken van Sint Gorics in Bruessel daer vele aflaten gegeven sijn, van xij cardinalen ende ooc twee bisscoppen, die elc mensch verdienen mach, die alsdan die voirseide plaetse comt visenteren met huere gebede, ende offeranden, ende sunderlinge die brueders oft susters sijn, dat si hen comen quiten.

rub: Dits den hogen heiligen weerdegen aflaat ende quijscedinge van ghebiechter sonden ende penitencien verleent toten weerdegen outare Sinte Sebastianes ende der minliker bruederschap ende enen yegeliken devoten mensche staende in state van graciën ende haer goedertieren hantreckinge doen tot reparacien ten weerdegen outare ende bruederscape.

Item, inden iersten den roemschen aflaat van xij cardinalen van el[42]ken besondere hondert dage aflaets maect tsamen xij[c] dage aflaets op dese navolgende genoemde dagen:

Item, ierst op Onser Liever Vrouwen dach in meerte.

Item, op beide de feestdagen van Sinte Sebastiane.

Item, op Sinte Goricx dage.

Item, op den dach der kerken wydinge van Sinte Goricx.

[41] Venerable sir, please inform the people that the upcoming Sunday is the feast of Saint Sebastian at the Church of Saint Gorik in Brussels. Many indulgences are granted there by twelve cardinals and also two bishops. Every individual can earn these, especially those who come to visit the aforementioned place on that day with their prayers and offerings. Particularly, the brothers or sisters should come to redeem themselves.

This signifies the high and holy value of the indulgence and the forgiveness of sins confessed, and penance. These are granted at the noble altar of Saint Sebastian and the esteemed brotherhood. It's for every devout person standing in a state of grace, and they show their benevolent contribution toward the repair of the noble altar and the brotherhood.

Firstly, the Roman indulgence from twelve cardinals, with each granting a separate hundred days of indulgence, amounts in total to 1200 days of indulgence on the following specified days:

Firstly, on our beloved Lady's Day in March.

On both the feast days of Saint Sebastian.

On Saint Gorik's day.

On consecration day at the Church of Saint Gorik.

Item, voert op die selve
voergenoemde dage van onsen
vader den bisscop van Camerike,
Jan van Bourgondien, die den aflaet
geconformeert heeft, ende xl dage
daertoe op alle onser vrouwen dagen
op beide de feestdagen van Sinte
Sebastiane ende op Sinte Goricx
dagen, op elc van desen dagen, van
minen heere van Camerike xl dagen
ende vanden suffrigaen ooc xl dagen.
[43–46 blank]

[47] *rub*: Hier na volghen die namen
vanden bruederen ende suster der
bruederscap van Sinte Sebastiane inder
kercke van Sinte Goerickx in Bruessele

Inden yerstern
Meester Anthonijs Haentkens hoot sijn
wijf
Anthonijs Willems
Als van Evere en sijn wijf
Andries collet sijn wijf inden Sluetel

Andries de Beyser Tymmerman
Anthonijs Mathijs, tijcheldeckere
Andries Diericx
Adriaen van Antwerpen
Adriaen der weduwen sijn wijf
Aert van Couwenberghe
Adriaen Gheerts legwerckere
Adriaen de Lactsi
Aert de Coninc

[48] Amerijck vanden Bossche,
potbecker en sijn wijf
[plus additions from later centuries]

Baltasar van Lomergum
Boudewijn Brutet sijn wijf, gout
slaghere
Meester Bernaert doerloy sijn wijf
Scieldere

Furthermore, on those previously
mentioned days, from our father, the
bishop of Cambrai, Jan of Burgundy,
who has confirmed the indulgence,
and added 40 days to it on all of our
Lady's Days, on both the feast days of
Saint Sebastian, and on Saint Gorik's
days. On each of these days, from my
lord of Cambrai forty days, and also
40 days of suffrages.

[47] Here follow the names of
the brothers and sisters of the
brotherhood of Saint Sebastian in the
Church of Saint Gorik in Brussels

To begin:
Master Anthonijs Haentkens and his
wife
Anthonijs Willems
Als van Evere and his wife
Andries inde Sleutel and his wife
Collet

Andries de Beyser, carpenter
Anthonijs Mathijs, tile layer
Andries Diericx
Adriaen van Antwerpen
Adriaen der Weduwe and his wife
Aert van Couwenberghe
Adriaen Gheerts, tapestry weaver
Adriaen de Lactsi
Aert de Coninc

[48] Amerijck van den Bos, potter
and his wife

Baltasar van Lomergum
Boudewijn Brutet and his wife,
goldsmith
Master Bernaert d'Oerloy and his
wife, painter

Bertelmeeus als de neue muyldere sijn wijf [<i>plus additions from later centuries</i>]	Bertelmeeus, known as the new miller, and his wife.
[49] Heer Claes Boellaert Colijn Lemmers legwerck en sijn wijf	[49] Sir Claes Boellaert Colijn Lemmers, tapestry weaver and his wife
Colijn de Drueve smet en Cornielijs vander Ghuecht Claes vandere Doolegen legweerke	Colijn de Drueve, blacksmith Cornielijs vander Ghuecht Claes vandere Doolegen, tapestry weaver
Claes Clottaert en sijn wijf Cornelwijs Bouwens gareel maken [sic] en sijn wijf	Claes Clottaert and his wife Cornelwijs Bouwens, harness maker and his wife
Colijn de Keermerlijnc cleemakere en sijn wijf	Colijn de Keermerlijnc, tailor and his wife
Coenaert Conts inde meesserie cappelle Cornielijs vanden Damme en sijn wijf Cornielijs vander Meeren scioldere	Coenaert Conts in de leper chapel Cornielijs van den Dam and his wife Cornielijs vander Meeren, painter
Claes Cobert en sijn wijf Cornelwijs van Outres [<i>profession blank</i>] en sijn wijf [<i>plus additions from later centuries</i>]	Claes Cobert and his wife Cornielwijs van Outres and his wife
[50] Daneel step verwere Daneel van Bevere beckere en sijn wijf	[50] Daneel Step, dyer Daneel van Bevere, baker and his wife
Dierijck van Muysen tijmmerman en sijn wijf Danijs Moen tymmerman en sijn wijf Daneel Huighe ende sijn huysvrow fette vaerier	Dierijck van Muysen, carpenter and his wife Danijs Moen, carpenter and his wife Daneel Huighe and his wife, fat merchant (grocer)
Ector van Engen en sijn wijf Elle vander Horst inde gulde poerte Ector vanden Hove vettewaerrier en sijn wijf	Ector van Engen and his wife Elle vander Horst in de Golden Gate Ector van den Hof, fat merchant (grocer) and his wife
Francis de Vorstез en sijn wijf [<i>plus additions from later centuries</i>]	Francis de Vorstез and his wife
Ghelijs Jans en sijn wijf Gielijs vanden Velde Gielijs Roes legweerckere en sijn wijf	Ghelijs Jans and his wife Gielijs vanden Velde Gielijs Roes, tapestry weaver and his wife
Geert vanden Moelen brieder en sijn wijf	Geert vanden Molen, brewer and his wife

[51] Ghelij's de dobbeleere en sijn wijf	[51] Ghelij's de Dobbeleere and his wife
Gabriel de leenere legweerckere en sijn wijf	Gabriel de Lener, tapestry weaver and his wife
Gelij's Rood[?] legweerckere en sijn wijf	Gelij's Rood, tapestry weaver and his wife and his wife
Gelij's de Bloeyer op Galissie en sijn wijf	Gelij's de Bloeyer in Galicie and his wife
Gelij's van Hamet[?] brieder en sijn wijf	Gelij's van Hamet, brewer and his wife
Gheert Comans legweerck en sijn wijf	Gheert Comans, tapestry weaver and his wife
Gheert vanden Berghe legweercker	Gheert van den Berge, tapestry weaver
Gelij's Pauwels	Gelij's Pauwels
Govaert de Herdde	Govaert de Herder
Gelij's vanden Borre	Gelij's vanden Borre
Gorij's Ruttens Wijf	Gorij's Ruten's wife
Gheleyn de Neve	Gheleyn de Neve
Gelij's Wans oudecleercopere en sijn wijf	Gelij's Wans, old cloth dealer and his wife
Gelij's Stevens cleemaker en sijn wijf	Gelij's Stevens, tailor and his wife
[<i>plus additions from later centuries</i>]	
[52] Heyndrick Pennens brieder en sijn wijf	[52] Heyndrick Pennens, brewer and his wife
Henderijck van Heerent bode	Henderijck van Heerent, messenger
Henderijck de Voerster verwere en sijn wijf	Henderijck de Voedster, dyer and his wife
Henderijck de Dobbeleer scrynmaker	Henderijck de klaplooper, cabinet maker
Henderijck de Visscher leettouwere en sijn wijf	Henderijck de Visser, leather worker and his wife
Henderijck Coolen brieder en sijn wijf	Henderijck Coolen, brewer and his wife
Henderijck de Boergher	Henderijck de Burger
Henderijck van Schoen eycke tyechel decker en sijn wijf	Henderijck van den Schonen Eik, tile roofer and his wife
Hermen van Affeliers	Hermen van Affelers
Henderijck de Costere	Henderijck de Coster
Henderijck de Cnape tijmmermaen en sijn wijf Laettersse	Henderijck de Cnape, carpenter and his wife Laettersse
Henderijck vander Tijmmermaen en sijn wijf	Henderijck van den Timmerman and his wife

Henderijck vander Talen en sijn wijf	Henderijck van den Talen and his wife
Henderijck de Leeuwe becker en sijn wijf	Henderijck de Leeuw, baker and his wife
Henderijc Moriaens opden poel	Henderijc Moriaens opden poel[?]
Henneken de becker	Henneken the baker
[<i>plus additions from later centuries</i>]	
[53] Heer Ian van Engen priester	[53] Sir Ian van Engen, priest
Jan van Halle	Jan van Halle
Jacop Maeys coopman en sijn wijf	Jacop Maeys, merchant and his wife
Jan Laerman en sijn wijf	Jan Laerman and his wife
Jan vanden Beemde	Jan van den Beemde
Jan Rogman brieder en sijn wijf	Jan Rogman, brewer and his wife
Jan Coppens verwer en sijn wijf	Jan Coppens, dyer and his wife
Jan vanden Cloester verwer en sijn wijf	Jan van den Klooster, dyer and his wife
Jacop de meester Druechsceerder en sijn wijf	Jacop de Meester, scissor sharpener and his wife
Jan Step en sijn wijf	Jan Stap and his wife
Jan de Dobbeleer scrijnmaker en sijn wijf	Jan de Dobbeleer, cabinet maker and his wife
[54] Ian Borreman beldersnyder en sijn wijf	[54] Ian Borreman, image cutter [sculptor] and his wife
Jan van Bavegum droechscheeder en sijn wijf	Jan van Bavegum, carder and his wife
Jan de Slach, moelder en sijn wijf	Jan de Slach, miller and his wife
Jan vander Smessen scrijnmaker en sijn wijf	Jan vander Smessen, cabinet maker and his wife
Jan vander Meeren leettouwer en sijn wijf	Jan vander Meeren, leather worker and his wife
Jan Peertsevael cousmacker en sijn wijf	Jan Peertsevael, shoemaker and his wife
Joes vander Haghen en sijn wijf ende sijn twee kinderen Joelken ende Lijsken beyde om twee blancke tsaers	Joes vander Haghen and his wife and his two children Joelken and Lijsken, both for two "blanks" each year ²¹⁸
Jan van op Stalle sijn wijf	Jan van op Stalle and his wife
Jan vanden Put en sijn wijf	Jan vanden Put and his wife
Jan van Obberge	Jan van Obberge
Jan Eetter beker bontwercker	Jan Eetter, baker, fur maker

218 This phrase may refer to the annual dues of "two blanks" for the children.

Jan van Yser tijmmerman en sijn wijf	Jan van Yser, carpenter and his wife
Jan Boon cleermaker	Jan Boon, tailor
Jan inde Rooy porte en sijn wijf	Jan at the Red Gate and his wife
Jan Luenus[?] leegwercker en sijn wijf	Jan Luenus [or Luemis], tapestry weaver and his wife
Joës Confans brieder en sijn wijf	Joës Confans, brewer and his wife
[55] Jan de Bloeyer en sijn wijf	[55] Jan de Bloeyer and his wife
Jan Roes Kerver vander stadt [?] en sijn wijf	Jan Roes Kerver from the city of [?], and his wife
Jan Lippens meeytser	Jan Lippens, mason
Jan vanden Voorde	Jan vanden Voorde
Jan Mytens schepmaker	Jan Mytens, boat maker
Jan Zeghers als Luenus de jonghe legwercker en sijn wijf	Jan Zeghers as Luenus the Younger, tapestry weaver, and his wife
Jan Reynbonts en sijn wijf	Jan Reynbonts and his wife
Jan Linthout becker de jonghe	Jan Linthout the Younger, baker
Joës de Grootte	Joës de Grootte
Jan de Cock int gheesthuys en sijn wijf	Jan de Cock in the guesthouse, and his wife
Jan Beersels mulder en sijn wijf	Jan Beersels, miller, and his wife
Jan de Vos weever en sijn wijf	Jan de Vos, weaver, and his wife
Jan de Rave legwercker	Jan de Rave, tapestry weaver
Jan Leniers legwercker en sijn wijf	Jan Leniers, tapestry weaver, and his wife
Jasper Hasaert en sijn wijf	Jasper Hasaert, and his wife
Jan Core mulder en sijn wijf	Jan Core, miller, and his wife
Joës vanden Wielle legwercker en sijn wijf	Joës vanden Wielle, tapestry weaver, and his wife
Jan vander Lijnnen twijnverwer en sijn wijf	Jan vander Lijnnen, rope maker, and his wife
[56] Ian de Neve visscher	[56] Ian de Neve, fisherman
Jacop Buys en sijn wijf	Jacop Buys, and his wife
Jacop van Herdesem	Jacop van Herdesem
Jan van Stratem	Jan van Stratem
Jan de Vleeshouwer	Jan de Vleeshouwer [butcher]
Jan vander Haghen	Jan vander Haghen
Jan Droeshout vettewaerrier en sijn wijf	Jan Droeshout, fat merchant, and his wife
Jan Scakelaert en sijn wijf	Jan Scakelaert, and his wife
Jan de Maeyer	Jan de Maeyer
Joës van Grimbergen visscher en sijn wijf	Joës van Grimbergen, fisherman, and his wife

Jacop Caye berbier	Jacop Caye, barber
Jan Collaerts schilder en zijn wijf	Jan Collaerts, painter, and his wife
Jan de Magelere	Jan de Magelere
Meester Jan Anderlecht	Meester Jan Anderlecht
Joes Govaerts	Joes Govaerts
Jan Bouwens douwe	Jan Bouwens, douwe ²¹⁹
Jan van Bogaerder wevere en zijn wijf	Jan van Bogaerder, weaver, and his wife
Jan vanden Damme oproeper [plus additions from later centuries, 57–58 are blank]	Jan vanden Damme, announcer
[59] Kerstiaen van Lier kerreman	[59] Kerstiaen van Lier, cart driver
Kerstiaen de Visscher leettouwer en zijn wijf	Kerstiaen de Visscher, harness maker and his wife
Lauwereys Bocxhoren en zijn wijf	Lauwereys Bocxhoren and his wife
Lijbrecht van Hamme en zijn wijf	Lijbrecht van Hamme and his wife
Lyoen de Smet legwercker en zijn wijf	Lyoen de Smet, tapestry weaver and his wife
Lowijs van Liere scrijnmaker en zijn wijf	Lowijs van Liere, cabinet maker and his wife
[more additions from later centuries]	[plus additions from later centuries]
Merten de Vleeminck legwercker	Merten de Vleeminck, tapestry weaver
Mathijs de Waeyes scrijnmaker en zijn wijf	Mathijs de Waeyes, cabinet maker and his wife
Machiel vanden Moelen	Machiel vanden Moelen
[60] Merten de Cock	[60] Merten de Cock
Merten Raes	Merten Raes
Nicolaes Brummeels	Nicolaes Brummeels
O	O
Peeter de Vleeschouwer visscher en zijn wijf	Peeter de Vleeschouwer, fisherman and his wife
Peeter Bacx brieder en zijn wijf	Peeter Bacx, brewer and his wife
Peeter Tijmmerman St Christoffels	Peeter Tijmmerman, St Christopher ²²⁰
Peeter vander Elst legwercker	Peeter vander Elst, tapestry weaver
Philips van Zeebroecken en zijn wijf	Philips van Zeebroecken and his wife

219 May be related to *douwen*, to push or stamp.

220 "St Christopher" may be part of the confraternity member's name, or it may refer to his occupation, such as ferry operator.

Peeter vander Elst brieder en sijn wijf	Peeter vander Elst, brewer and his wife
Peeter de Cammaker	Peeter de Cammaker
Pauwels Mechelman en sijn wijf	Pauwels Mechelman and his wife
Peeter Boot en sijn wijf	Peeter Boot and his wife
Peeter de Peickmaker en sijn wijf	Peeter de Peickmaker and his wife
Peeter Inghels coopman en sijn wijf	Peeter Inghels, merchant and his wife
[61] Peeter Coel vleeschouwer en sijn wijf	[61] Peeter Coel, butcher and his wife
Philiphs [sic] Sorgheloos bode	Philiphs Sorgheloos, messenger
Peeter Inden Olyfant en sijn wijf	Peeter in the "Elephant" and his wife
Peeter de Coninck legwercker en sijn wijf	Peeter de Coninck, tapestry weaver and his wife
Peeter vander Hostadt cleerck	Peeter vander Hostadt, clerk
Pauwels Moriaens legwercker	Pauwels Moriaens, tapestry weaver
Peeter van op Leeuwe	Peeter van op Leeuwe
Peeter de Bloeyer houtvercooper	Peeter de Bloeyer, wood seller
Pauwels van Galmarden	Pauwels van Galmarden
Peeter van Watrmale	Peeter van Watrmale
[<i>more additions from later centuries</i>]	
[62] Quinten Nolij cleemaker en sijn wijf	[62] Quinten Nolij, tailor and his wife
[63] Reynier Rogman leethouwer en sijn wijf	[63] Reynier Rogman, harness maker and his wife
Reynier van Hasdonck	Reynier van Hasdonck
Rogier vander Heesen en sijn wijf	Rogier vander Heesen and his wife
Romeyn vander Plaetsen en sijn wijf	Romeyn vander Plaetsen and his wife
[<i>more additions from later centuries</i>]	
Stoffel Catroey druesscheerd	Stoffel Catroey, carder
Stoffel Arnouts cleemaker	Stoffel Arnouts, tailor
Sijnoen Stevens	Sijnoen Stevens
Sakarijas legwercker en sijn wijf	Sakarijas, tapestry weaver and his wife
Segher van Delle	Segher van Delle
Thoomas vander Noot sijn wijf	Thoomas vander Noot, his wife
Thoosijn de Vianen beck en sijn wijf	Thoosijn de Vianen, baker and his wife
[64] Willem Broeckmans brieder en sijn wijf	[64] Willem Broeckmans, brewer, and his wife
Willem vander Eelst cousmaker	Willem vander Eelst, shoemaker

Willem vander Vueren en sijn wijf	Willem vander Vueren and his wife
Wouter Kijps brieder en sijn wijf	Wouter Kijps, brewer, and his wife
Vranck de Vos verwer en sijn wijf	Vranck de Vos, dyer, and his wife
Willem vanden Clooster sijn wijf	Willem vanden Clooster, his wife
Willem Schepper verwer	Willem Schepper, dyer
Vranck van Boochout droechsceerder	Vranck van Boochout, wool carder
Vranck de Puessele sloetmaker en sijn wijf	Vranck de Puessele, locksmith, and his wife
Willem Gorijs Clach muld en sijn wijf	Willem Gorijs Clach, miller, and his wife
Vranck de slootmaker en sijn wijf op sinte Goerijcx kerchof	Vranck, the locksmith, and his wife at Saint Gorik's churchyard
Wouter Ghijsels brieder en sijn wijf	Wouter Ghijsels, brewer, and his wife
Willem Moens legwerker en sijn wijf	Willem Moens, tapestry weaver, and his wife
Willem vanden Vuiere legwerker en sijn wijf	Willem vanden Vuiere, tapestry weaver, and his wife
Willem Eyssaems lettuerer	Willem Eyssaems, harness maker
Vroen vanden Leene	Vroen vanden Leene
[65, 66, blank]	
[67] Anelberge Daens	[67] Anelberge Daens
Else Vander	Else Vander
Margriete van Ruysbroeck	Margriete van Ruysbroeck
Sijmoens van Doorens wijf nu es	Sijmoens van Doorens' wife, currently known as [...]
Joes Raes wijf Antonijne	Joes Raes' wife, Antonijne
Marie vanden Beemde Abrahams wijf	Marie vanden Beemde, Abraham's wife
Jacops huys wijfs moeder	Mother of Jacop's wife
Marte van Bruessel	Marte van Bruessel
Jans tseverts wijf eremere	Jan tSweert's wife, a nun
Joes Platte Borre wijf	Joes Platte Borre's wife
Henderijc Feyters wijf	Henderijc Feyter's wife
Kathelijne Wildemans	Kathelijne Wildemans
Kathelijne Kemerlinck	Kathelijne Kemerlinck
Kathelijne de Warsschesse	Kathelijne the washerwoman
Lijsken de Wasscherse	Lijsken the washerwoman
Margriete Wildemans	Margriete Wildemans
Margriete van Nuwen hove	Margriete van Nuwen hove
Getruyt van Gruder achter	Getruyt van Gruder achter
Jffrouwe vander Keelen	Miss vander Keelen

Margriete tSmeyers	Margriete tSmeyers
Margriete tScrauvels	Margriete tScrauvels
Claes der Weduwen wijf	Claes der Weduwen's wife
[68] Anne vander Stroyten Puttaers wijf	[68] Anne vander Stroyten, Puttaer's wife
Marie tSpaeps op de Hoochstrate	Marie tSpaeps on the High Street
Margriete Diericx	Margriete Diericx
Margriete vanden Bossche	Margriete vanden Bossche
Lijsken tSos Iansdochter copman	Lijsken tSos, Jan's daughter, merchant
Geertruyt Mattijs aen Dakeleye	Geertruyt Mattijs at Dakeleye
Hier na volghen die weduwen	These are the widows
De weduwe Coloens op Spieghele B[r]ugge	Coloen's widow at the Mirror Bridge
De weduwe vanden haumoelen	The widow of the mill
De weduwe tsoeden Ghelij's wijf was	Ghelij's widow
De weduwe Soetmans	Soetman's widow
De weduwe vanden breede inde waghe	The widow from the broad street at the scales
De weduwe Salemoens	Salemoen's widow
De weduwe vander Elst	Vander Elst's widow
[69] De weduwe Cootens	[69] Cooten's widow
De weduwe van Bolenbeke	Bolenbeke's widow
De weduwe Capt's	Capt's widow
De weduwe Gheerts	Gheert's widow
De weduwe vander Eycken	Vander Eycken's widow
De weduwe Boelaerts Int baghijn hof	Boelaert's widow in the beguinage
De weduwe vanden Put	Vanden Put's widow
De weduwe Steens	Steen's widow
De weduwe Remeus	Remeu's widow
De weduwe tmet's	tMet's widow
De weduwe van Beyberghe	Beyberghe's widow
De weduwe vanden Beemde	Vanden Beemde's widow
De weduwe Callen gerghe	Callen Gerghe's widow
De weduwe van Horijck	Horijck's widow
De weduwe vander Haghen	Vander Haghen's widow
De weduwe inde quaeygote	The widow from the canal
De weduwe inde Wijssele tSweerts	The widow from Wijssele of the Sweerts family ²²¹
De weduwe van Bastiaen anderlechts	Bastiaen Anderlecht's widow

221 One of the patrician families of Brussels.

De weduwe tScocx	tScocx's widow
De weduwe Cools	Cool's widow
De weduwe in oesterijc	The widow in the east
De weduwe Pijlmakers Ende [70]	Pijlmaker's widow and Heilken her niece
Heilken haar nyechte	
De weduwe inde Vetteware	The widow in the grocery store
De weduwe vanden Hert	Vanden Hert's widow
De weduwe Scerdaens	Scerdaen's widow
De weduwe Salmslach	Salmslach's widow
Goele Valet lake vercoepesse	Goele Valet, the sheet seller
De weduwe Simeoens vanden voerde	Simeoen vanden Voerde's widow
De weduwe Stocks Berteresse	Stock's widow
De weduwe vander Sleenhaghen letuersse	Vander Sleenhaghen's widow, harness maker
[<i>more additions from later centuries</i>]	
[71–74 blank]	
[75] Dit sijn die gheene die inde Cooren Bloeme sijn ²²²	[75] These are the people in the "Cornflower" guild
Bertel de Keeghel, scrijnmaker	Bertel de Keeghel, cabinet maker
Willem de Buyst	Willem de Buyst
Henderijc Stevens	Henderijc Stevens
Jan Stevens	Jan Stevens
Peeter van Monden	Peeter van Monden
Peeter Jans	Peeter Jans
Joes vander Bruggen	Joes vander Bruggen
Joes Batens	Joes Batens
Jan van Eelewijc	Jan van Eelewijc
Jan van Bolenberghe	Jan van Bolenberghe
Claes de Moldere	Claes de Moldere
Pauwels Thielman	Pauwels Thielman
Joes vanden Nuwermolen	Joes vanden Nuwermolen
Matheeus de Lathouwer	Matheeus de Lathouwer, lathe worker
Kaerle Bont	Kaerle Bont
Henderijc van Schoen Eycke	Henderijc van Schoen Eycke
Gieljcs van Schoen Eycke	Gieljcs van Schoen Eycke
Oddijn vander Ouweer Moelen	Oddijn vander Ouweer Moelen
Henderijc vander Meeren	Henderijc vander Meeren
Hubrecht de Roovere	Hubrecht de Roovere
[76] Geleyn de Neve	[76] Geleyn de Neve

222 According to Sleiderink (2014), this section was added *ca.*1520.

Jan de Neve	Jan de Neve
Jan van Liere ende sijn wijf	Jan van Liere and his wife
Peeter vanden Cleeren	Peeter vanden Cleeren
Gielijs vanden Cleygate	Gielijs vanden Cleygate
Jacop de Witte de Stamelere	Jacop de Witte de Stamelere
Gielijs de Pape	Gielijs de Pape
Pauwels vande Venne	Pauwels vande Venne
Aert Wolfaert	Aert Wolfaert
Jan vanden Voerde	Jan vanden Voerde
Thomaes Zeeghers molder	Thomaes Zeeghers, miller
Peeter de Vos verwere	Peeter de Vos, dyer
Joes de Rooselere fruytenier	Joes de Rooselere, fruit merchant
Merten van op Leeuwe	Merten van op Leeuwe
Jan van Wyningen	Jan van Wyningen
Jan de Cock	Jan de Cock
Jan Moncornet	Jan Moncornet
Jan de Borste verwere	Jan de Borste, dyer
Joes Oetsebeen gelaes maker	Joes Oetsebeen, glass maker
Jan vander Hagen legwercker	Jan vander Hagen, tiler
Peeter vanden Bossche	Peeter vanden Bossche
Jan van Obberge	Jan van Obberge
Henderijc Naghels	Henderijc Naghels
Jan Wassonberch	Jan Wassonberch
[77] Jan vander Seyne	[77] Jan vander Seyne
Amelrijck Colijns	Amelrijck Colijns
Jan Moeys	Jan Moeys
Ghijsbrecht de Keysere	Ghijsbrecht de Keysere
Claes de Vos	Claes de Vos
Jan Carens	Jan Carens
Jacop Rosseel	Jacop Rosseel
Adriaen Baert	Adriaen Baert
Jan van Baveghem	Jan van Baveghem
Peeter Myten	Peeter Myten
Meester Joes de Muntere	Meester Joes de Muntere
Mester Willem de Raymakere	Mester Willem de Raymakere
Willem vanden Houmoelen	Willem vanden Houmoelen
Gommaert de Coninck	Gommaert de Coninck
Peeter van Bruysteyn gheheten Emele	Peeter van Bruysteyn called Emele
Jan de Putter	Jan de Putter [well-digger]
Gielijs Zwanaert	Gielijs Zwanaert
Jan Joerdaens	Jan Joerdaens
Meester Henderijc de Boey	Meester Henderijc de Boey

Jan Marijsijs	Jan Marijsijs
Peeter Duy Douwe	Peeter Duy Douwe
Peeter Duy de Jonghe	Peeter Duy de Jonghe
[78] Ian Trompet	[78] Ian Trompet
Peeter Driesman	Peeter Driesman
Jan Casteleyn	Jan Casteleyn
Kerstiaen Trimens	Kerstiaen Trimens
Jan vanden Damme	Jan vanden Damme
Jan Muyldere	Jan Muyldere
Jan van Brabant	Jan van Brabant
Jan van Wambeke	Jan van Wambeke
Jan vander Beken	Jan vander Beken
Jan de Riemslegere	Jan de Riemslegere
Peeter Meerfroet	Peeter Meerfroet
Peeter Eemelens	Peeter Eemelens
Peeter vanden Houmolen	Peeter vanden Houmolen
Peeter Vliege	Peeter Vliege
Jan Calle Dienere	Jan Calle, servant
Merten Raes	Merten Raes
Willem van Roe	Willem van Roe
Thoenen Severman	Thoenen Severman
Jan de Herpenere	Jan de Herpenere
Franschen vanden Poele	Franschen vanden Poele
Joes de Key	Joes de Key
Joes Ruelens	Joes Ruelens
[79] Merten Smesman	[79] Merten Smesman
Paschier de Kaerdemaker	Paschier de Kaerdemaker, card maker
Jheronimus de Mandemaker	Jheronimus de Mandemaker, basket maker
Meester Peeter Diefijn	Meester Peeter Diefijn
Peeter vanden Bossche	Peeter vanden Bossche
Sakarijas Legwerckere	Sakarijas, tiler
Henderijc van Zelleke	Henderijc van Zelleke
Lijppen van Bernen	Lijppen van Bernen
Joen Weldeman	Joen Weldeman
Joes Zeeghers	Joes Zeeghers
Jan van Gaesbeke	Jan van Gaesbeke
Franschen van Wambeke	Franschen van Wambeke
Jan Pluym	Jan Pluym
Adriaen Beeckman	Adriaen Beeckman
Augustijn Myten	Augustijn Myten

Mathijs van Sint Jan Belleman van Sint Goelen	Mathijs van St Jan Balleman van C Goele
Jacop vanden eynde	Jacop vanden eynde
Henderijc Wijfman	Henderijc Wijfman
Andries de Keyser	Andries de Keyser
Jan Oddaert	Jan Oddaert
Janijn de Clerck	Janijn de Clerck
Karel Bont	Karel Bont
[80] Ian vanden Eey	[80] Ian vanden Eey
Jan van Belle	Jan van Belle
Jan van Wesele	Jan van Wesele
Henderijc Coppens	Henderijc Coppens
Henderijc vanden Houmolen	Henderijc vanden Houmolen
Machiel van Kaets	Machiel van Kaets
Willem heyman	Willem heyman
Jan Hoolaert	Jan Hoolaert

[81] *rub*: Dit sijn die Renten van Sinte
Sebastiaen St Goerijcx in Bruessel²²³

Inden yersten, vi Rinsguldenen op
een huys staenden aen de spiegel
brugge. Daer inne woent de weduwe
van Janne Coloens vallende half te
kersmesse ende half sint Jans messe.
Noch iii Rinsguldenen tiaers op Jan
van der Haghen huys stande inde
Volder Strate vallende te kersmesse
en St Jantsmesse.

Noch ii Rinsguldenen tiaers op
Henderijc van Schoen Eycken huys
daer hij inne woent ter overmolen
vallende xxviii Augustij.

Noch i Rinsguldenen tiaers op Jan
Mytos[?] huys staende achter ten
bruers vander derde oerdenen te
kersmesse vallende.

[81] *These are the rents of Saint
Sebastian of Saint George's in
Brussels*

Firstly, six Rhenish guilders on a
house located by the Spiegel Bridge.
In it resides the widow of Janne
Coloens, half payable at Christmas
and half at Saint John's Mass.

Also, three Rhenish guilders annually
on Jan van der Haghen's house
located in Volder Street, payable at
Christmas and Saint John's Mass.

Also, two Rhenish guilders annually
on Henderijc van Schoen Eycken's
house where he resides, near the
Overmolen, payable on the 28th of
August.

Also, one Rhenish guilder annually
on Jan Mytos[?]'s house located
behind the brewers of the third order,
payable at Christmas.

²²³ The words in the entries in this section are unclear, because they have all been crossed out.

Noch xvij stuyvers tiaers op een huys [82] ghelegghen op den borch van daer Lyon de Smet inne gheguet es. Daer voer moet men doen een iaer ghetijde op Sinte Bernaerts dach oft des sanderdaechs daer na best van Meester Bernaert Balterman in sijn testamente.²²⁴

Noch x plecken en x miten die staen op Gielij de vyvelere Ryemaker vallen de te kersmesse.

Noch xi stuyvers die betaelt Jans van Coudenberghen huysvrouwe van Berbele Coomans weghen.

[83–86 blank; 87–99 have additions from later centuries]

Also, 18 stuivers annually on a house [82] situated at the castle where Lyon de Smet currently resides. In return, one must hold an annual service on Saint Bernard's Day, or the next day, as best arranged by Master Bernaert Balterman in his will.

Also, ten placken and ten "miten" that are due from Gielij de Vyvelere, belt maker, payable at Christmas.

Also, 11 stuivers that are paid by the wife of Jans van Coudenberghen on behalf of Berbele Coomans.

[83–86 blank; 87–99 have additions from later centuries]

224 The brotherhood prays for the man on his name saint's day, in exchange for his house.

Appendix 6: Necrology of the canonesses regular of St Vitus, Elten

's-Heerenberg, Huis Bergh Castle, inv. no. 273, Ms. 31

The manuscript contains the necrology of the monastery of the canonesses regular of St Vitus, Elten, in Latin and eastern dialect of Middle Dutch. Writing and assembling began after 1402, with most of the sections written in the 1450s and later. The first recorded obituary is that of Elza Holzaten, who died in 1402 (transcribed below); the last is of Conrad ten Brinck on March 1, 1772. The manuscript also contains testaments and contracts, including the testament of abbess Lucia van Kerpen in Dutch (fol. 1). The manuscript, in Dutch and Latin, was made for, and possibly by, the canonesses regular of St Vitus (Stift) in Elten. The manuscript has not been extensively studied, and it remains unedited. For a brief overview and bibliography, see <https://bnm-i.huygens.knaw.nl/tekstdragers/TDRA000000002761>.

Manuscript on parchment, 44 fols, with pen-flourished initials, 267 × 185 mm. Written in various scripts by several scribes. The medieval binding, contemporary, has its original chain.

Codicological notes: fols 1–5 are all singletons with different origins; fols 6–9 form a quire made of thin, creamy parchment; four quires (fols 10–17; 18–27; 28–37; and 38–39) are on thick parchment and form a calendrical necrology; the final quire (fols 40–44, with a stub at the end) is on much thinner parchment.

Abbess Lucia van Kerpen's testament

[1r] In den jaer ons heeren dusent vierhondert drie ende viertich des derden daches vander maent januarij starff vrou Lucia van Kerpen Abdiss deser werlijker kijrcken van Elten, der god genadich sij. Ind hefft dyt gaidhuys ind kijrck xl iaer gotlich ind eerlich regiert [...] oer restamet gemaecht ind ingesatt als hiernae beschreven steet...

In the year of our Lord 1443, on January third, Lady Lucia van Kerpen, abbess of this worldly church of Elten, passed away, may God have mercy on her. And she has divinely and honorably governed this guest house and church for 40 years [...] made her testament and established it as is described hereafter...

Abbess Elza Holzaten's testament

2r: Anno domini millesimo quadrigentesimo secundo, ipso die undecim^m virginum, obiit venerabilis Elza, domina de Holzaten, Abbatissa huius ecclesiae, quae praedecessit tricesimo septimo annis honorifice praefuit ac eandem laudabiliter rexerat, piae recordationis. Et condidit pro testamento pro se et pro illis omnibus pro quibus in extremo optaverat, prout in huius libro et huius scriptis infra sub hac forma continetur. Ic[itur].

Item, soe steet hier bescreven erve ende renthe die vrouwe Elza van Holzaten vurscreven gegeven ende gemaket heft erflic ende ewelic der ghemeynre presencien deser kircken voer oer ende voer oeren vader ende moder, suesteren ende broderen ende alle oerre vrende ziele daer se des voer begeert heft feste ende memorien iairlix ende tijtlix van te doen gelijk hier nae bescreven steet.

Item, ten iersten ut Wessels wonders hofstede to Embric an der geest enen aelden schilt. Daer sal men alle iær op des heiligen sacraments dach vuer singen wanneer die processie gegaen is vuer die homissen, den ymnum "verbum supernum prodiens" gelijk als dit processien boic helt bescreven.

In the year of our Lord 1402, on the day of the Eleven Thousand Virgins, the venerable Elza, lady of Holzaten, abbess of this church, passed away. She had honorably presided for 37 years and had commendably governed the same in pious memory. And she made a will for herself and for all those for whom she had prayed at the end, just as is contained in this book and in these writings below in this manner. Thus.

Item, it is described here the estate and rent that Lady Elza of Holzaten, previously mentioned, has given and established as a hereditary and perpetual endowment for the regular upkeep of this church on her behalf and on behalf of her father and mother, sisters and brothers, and all the souls of her relatives whom she has wished to commemorate with feasts and memorials annually and at other times, as described below.

Item, firstly from Wessel's wondrous farmstead in Embric [Emmerich] on the Geest,²²⁵ one old shield.²²⁶ There, every year on the day of the Holy Sacrament, one should sing before the procession has passed and before the homily, the hymn *Verbum supernum prodiens* just as this processional book has described.

²²⁵ The town of Emmerich lies two hours' walk south-east of Elten, on the Rhine. The text may refer to a different place, however, that lies on the River Geeste to the north.

²²⁶ The "aelden schilt" probably refers to a form of currency.

Item, soe gaf se oec xl blau gulden daer worden mede gecocht ut wolter duyst bosslage te dichten ij gulden iaer salmen al ier vuer singen op onser liever vrouwen [2v] dach to lichtmissen na der processien vuer der homissen den ymnum Ave maris stella gelijck voirscreven steet.

Item, soe gaf se ij^c rijsche gulden die wurden geleet an Iohannas erve ter Woirt in Hamersche ende an die smalmaet to veele, wes dair iaerlix af comet, daer sullen al vridage des wirkendages die iuncferen ende priesteren die homisse vuersingen van den heiligen Cruce ende die presencimeister sal geven elker ireke mallic sijn deel daer van die dat verdient hebt als sich dat belopt na der summen den twee costeren ende den schoelmeister elk half feste. Ende sullen oec oer commendacie nae doen nae der homissen.

Item, so gaf se in die pravende die her Werner Boeskale to der tijt hadde een guetken to Beke mit sijnen toebehoere als se dat cochte tegen den here van den Berge. Ende daer sal herwerner vurscreven ende sijn nacomelinge der vurscreven pravende to ewigen dagen alle sonnendage in der vromissen sunderlinx vuer oer ziele bidden ofte doen bidden apenbaer opten predixstole eer men die gelove segret

Item, she also gave 40 blue guilders with which were purchased from Wolter Duyst Bosslage two guilders per year. Every year they shall sing for this on our dear Lady's [2v] day at Candlemas after the procession and before the Mass, the hymn Ave maris stella, as previously written.

Item, she gave two hundred Rhenish guilders, which were invested in Johannes's estate at Woirt in Hamersche and in the small property in Veele. From the yearly proceeds thereof, every Friday of the working week, the nuns and priests shall sing the Mass in honor of the Holy Cross. The master of the assembly shall give each of their number their deserved portion from what is earned, as it is calculated according to the sum, to the two sextons and the schoolmaster, each at mid-feast. And they shall also perform their commendations after the Mass.

Item, she gave to the prebendary that Master Werner Boeskale held at the time, a small property in Beke with its appurtenances, which she purchased from Master van den Berghe. Master Werner as previously mentioned, and his descendants of the aforementioned prebendary, shall, for all eternity, every Sunday during vespers, pray especially for her soul or have prayers said publicly from the pulpit before the creed is recited.

weert sake dattet uer sumet worde of vergeten so dat dat gebet voer oir ziele niet geschiede ofte gedaen en worde, so mochten die ioufrouwen ende priesteren dat vurscreven guet nemen in oer gemeyne presencie ende laten dat gebet daer van doen. Ende so en hedde [3r] dan voert die pravende vurscreven geenrehande recht anden vurscreven guede.

Item, soe gaf se in sunte Urbaens altaer opden hogebedde een vierdel van enen slageholts in stockenmermarcke dat se cochte tegen Lambert Ywens ende leget in den selven slage dair dat vurscreven altaer ix heegeswijn in hevet. Daer vuer sal die vicarius al wege wanneer he misse duet vuer oer sunderlinge ende vuer oerre vrende ziele bidden daer se des vuer begeert hevet.

Item, dat guet to velthusen ende dat guet to lobede dat gecocht wert tegen den heer van den berge mit den holte dat op velthusen stont hevet se in de gemeyne presencie gegeven ioncfrouwen ende priesteren al weke ij memorien vuer te doen wanneer anders gheen memorie en is vuer oer oren vader ende moder susteren ende broederen ende alle der geenre ziele die om oren wille ende in oeren dienste gestorven ende doet bleven sin gelijk als se in oeren testamente des begeert hevet ende inhelt ende men sal elker weke to memorien geven dat iar ut wes men daer op sechet na den dat die guede beide iaerlix utbrenghen.

Should it happen that it is forgotten or omitted so that the prayer for her soul is not done or performed, then the nuns and priests can take the aforementioned property into their communal assembly and have the prayer done from it. And then, the aforementioned prebendary will have no rights to the aforementioned property thereafter.

Item, she gifted to the altar of Saint Urban a quarter of a felling forest, located in Stocken Market, which she had purchased from Lambert Ywens. Within this same area, the aforementioned altar possesses nine swine enclosures.²²⁷ For this gift, the vicar will always pray for her and her family's souls during the Mass whenever he performs it, as she has specifically requested.

Item, she has given the property of Velthusen and the property of Lobede, which was purchased from Master van den Berghe, along with the forest that stood on Velthusen, to the nuns and priests during a communal assembly. Every week, they are to conduct two memorial services whenever no other such service is held: for her, her parents, siblings, and for all the souls who have passed away in her service or because of her. This is as she has desired and stated in her testament. And, for this weekly memorial, one should offer what is declared annually, based on the yearly output of the two properties.

227 The meaning of *heegeswijn* is unclear. I have interpreted the term as swine enclosures to be consistent with the farm and forestry benefice from the same donor.

Item, soe salmen se alle iaer begaen op oer iaertijt dat is des neesten dages na der xi^m megeden dach mit iij keersen to vier eynden oers graves ende elke van enen lb wasses ix keersen ten hovenen ende ix ten voten elk van enen halven lb was ende twe evenlangen voert wijn ende weitenbroet vissche [3v] of vleissche als gewoenlic is van anderen abdissen to begaen vuer oere aveleye.²²⁸

Item, die iouferen ende priesteren sollen dat ackermale van den guede to velthusen vercopen tot allen viij iaren ende secten die betalinge van der summen viij iaer lanck elkes iaers allike vele, ende deilen ende geven ellike iaerlix summe op oer iaertijt vurscreven den ionferen ende priesteren die dat verdienen mit vigili missen Cursen ende Commendacien als gewoenlick is, ende niet den ghenen die dat versumen.

Item, soe gaf se fuyx²²⁹ guetken to Lobric dat se cochte tegen den here van den berge den canoniken, daer vuer sal oerre een alle dage nae der homissen eer he sich ut duet gaen in albis mit eenen wijquast tot oren grave ende lesen daer miserere mit eenre collecten sunderlinge vuer oer ziele.

Item, every year, she shall be commemorated on her anniversary, which is the day after the Feast of the Eleven Thousand Virgins. Four candles, each weighing a pound, will be placed at the four corners of her grave. Additionally, nine candles, each weighing half a pound, will be placed at the head and another nine at the foot. Furthermore, offerings of wine, wheat bread, fish or meat will be given, as is customary for commemorating other abbesses, for their funeral rites.

Item, the nuns and priests should collect the land rent from the property in Velthusen every eight years and then arrange for the payment over the course of the next eight years, distributing it equally each year. On their aforementioned memorial day, the yearly amount should be given to those nuns and priests who have earned it through their religious duties, including vigils, Masses, curses, and commendations as is customary, and none to those who neglect their duties.

Item, she provided six small properties in Lobric, which she acquired from the Master van den Bergh, to the canons. In return for this, one of them [the canons] should, every day after the Mass and before he leaves, approach in an alb with an aspergillum to her grave and there recite the Miserere along with a particular prayer especially for her soul.

²²⁸ Related to *havelike*, meaning a funeral service.

²²⁹ The text gives *fuyx*, which I have read as *suyx* and translated as *six*, but this is not altogether clear.

Ende weert sake dat die canonike oerre een of se alle des gebedes niet en deden ofte doen lieten, soe mochten die iouferen ende priesteren dat guet in oer ghemeyne presencie nemen ende laten dat ghebet doen, ende als dan voert en behelden die vurscreven canonik gheen recht aen den vurscreven guetken, gelijc dat vurscreven stec van den guede to beke dat se in her Werners pravende hevet ghegheven.

Should it occur that any of the canons, or all of them, neglect this prayer or fail to ensure it is done, then the nuns and priests may take possession of the property in their communal assembly and ensure the prayer is conducted. From then on, the aforementioned canons would have no rights to the said small property, just as with the designated marker of the property at Beke that she bestowed as a prebend in Master Werner's provision.

Appendix 7: Mortuary roll for John Hotham

Canterbury Cathedral Archives, Ms ChAnt E 191

Mortuary roll for John Hotham, bishop of Ely (d. 7 Jan 1337), with the eulogy composed by John de Crauden, prior of Ely Cathedral Priory.

Parchment, three membranes

The transcription is adapted from Albert Way, "Mortuary Roll Sent Forth by the Prior and Convent of Ely, on the Death of John de Hothom, Bishop of Ely, Deceased January, A D. 1336-7," *Cambridge Antiquarian Society Antiquarian Communications*, 1 (1859), pp. 125-39.

Universis lumine trinitatis ac religionis catholice cultoribus Johannes Prior Ecclesie Cathedralis Elyensis, et totus eiusdem loci humilis conventus salute. Et post erumpnas presentis vite ad futuram immortalitatis gloriam felici cursu transmeare. Humane societatis et unitatis catholice fedus exposcit, et innate virtutis mentisque bene disposite clarum est indicium, gratum et meritorium ante conspectum divine maiest[at]is, lamentabilis casus anxietate et acerbi subitique meroris pondere quassatis manus porrigere subsidii spiritalis, et levamen adhibere pie consolacionis. Nam qui ad misericordiam prona mente flectitur in beatorum sorte computatur.

Decessum igitur eximii patris, pastoris et pontifices nostri, Domini Johannis de Hothom, qui nuper ab hac valle peregrina deposito carnis onere ad beatam patriam inter apostolicos sacerdotes aggregatus transmigravit, ut speramus,

To all who are devoted to the light of the Trinity and the Catholic faith, John, the Prior of the Cathedral Church of Ely, and the humble community of the same place, send greetings. And may they pass from the storms of this present life to the blessed glory of immortality in a joyful course. The covenant of human society and Catholic unity demands it, and it is a clear sign of innate virtue and a well-disposed mind, pleasing and meritorious in the sight of the divine majesty, to extend helping hands to those shaken by the anxiety and weight of sudden and bitter sorrow, and to provide them with the solace of compassionate support. For those who are inclined with a merciful mind are reckoned among the blessed.

Therefore, we mourn the departure of our esteemed father, our shepherd and pontiff, Lord John of Hothom, who recently, having laid down the burden of the flesh in this foreign valley, migrated to the blessed homeland among the apostolic priests, as we hope.

plangimus planctu magno nos filii desolati, filii inquam mestissimi patrem piissimum, oves pastorem optimum, monachi abbatem dignissimum, clerici presulem serenissimum, plebs prelatum, et navicular Petri gubernatorem prudentissimum, filii denique patrem qui nos fovit et aluit quemadmodum gallina congregat pullos suos sub alas.

Grex pusillus pastorem plangimus qui nos de ore leonis et a luporum rapacitate liberavit. Plangimus eum quasi unigenitum, et vox turturis viduate audita est in terra nostra; vox inquam Rama audita est ploratus et ululatus, Rachel nostra plorans, non filios set [sic] sponsum, non parvulos set patrem parvulorum, tutorem orphanorum, pauperum recreatorem, afflictorum consolatorem, miserorum refugium, protectorem viduarum, ecclesiam dei impugnantium expugnatorem validum, impiorum prosecutorem, patrie defensorem, qui superbiorum et sublimium colla potenti virtute calcavit, et omnibus ad se clamantibus affuit prompto iuvamine in tempore tribulacionis.

We, the desolate sons, mourn with great lamentation, truly the most sorrowful sons, the most pious father, the best shepherd of the sheep, the most worthy abbot of the monks, the most serene bishop of the clergy, the prelate of the people, and the most prudent helmsman of Peter's boat. Finally, we mourn the loss of a father who nurtured and nourished us, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.

We, a small flock, mourn the shepherd who delivered us from the mouth of the lion and the rapacity of wolves. We mourn him as an only-begotten, and the voice of the bereaved turtledove is heard in our land; indeed, the voice of Rachel is heard in Ramah, our Rachel weeping, not for children but for her spouse, not for little ones but for the father of the little ones, the guardian of orphans, the comforter of the afflicted, the refuge of the miserable, the protector of widows, the vanquisher of those who oppose the Church of God, the fierce prosecutor of the impious, the defender of the fatherland, who with mighty power trampled the necks of the proud and lofty, and was present with swift aid to all who called out to him in times of tribulation.

Talis erat dilectus tuus, O Rachel
 nostra pulcherrima mulierum!
 confortate filii manus matris vestre
 dissolutas, que dilectum suum,
 desiderabile oculorum suorum,
 iam ablatum, quem dum tenuit et
 osculabatur nemo despexit eam, pro
 eo quod iam abiit et recessit, et ultra
 iam non comparet, plangit et plorat,
 et non est qui consoletur eam ex
 omnibus caris eius.

Plangimus ecce nos filii Israelis
 patriarcham nostrum alterum Iacob,
 qui die noctuque gelu urebatur et
 estu pre amoris magnitudine serviens
 pro Rachele. Hic velut alter Moyses
 dux populi nos a servitute gravi
 liberavit. Hic alter Aaron vir eloquens
 sacerdos magnus erat, qui in diebus
 suis placuit deo et inventus est iustus.
 Hic alter Mathathias legis dei zelator
 strenuus. Alter Machabeus patrie
 protector fortis viribus a iu[v]entute
 sua.

Hic Jonathas amabilis, et Symon vir
 consilii, ac David manu fortis, potens
 in opere et sermone fidelis in omni
 regno, in omnibus prudenter agens,
 ingrediens et egrediens, et pergens
 ad imperium regis domini sui terreni;
 cui licet primo in quibusdam officiis
 aulicis et negociis fiscalibus, ac
 postmodum in dignitate cancellarii
 et thesaurarii strenue militasset, tota
 tamen animi intencione in deum
 ferebatur.

Such was your beloved, O our
 most beautiful Rachel among
 women! Strengthen the hands of
 your children, O mother, that are
 weakened, for she weeps and mourns
 for her beloved, now taken away,
 whom no one despised while she
 held him and kissed him, because he
 has departed and gone beyond and
 will no longer appear. She weeps
 and laments, and there is no one to
 console her among all her dear ones.
 Behold, we, the children of Israel,
 mourn our other patriarch Jacob, who
 was consumed by frost and heat day
 and night, serving for the greatness
 of his love for Rachel. He, like another
 Moses, delivered us from heavy
 bondage. He, like another Aaron, was
 an eloquent man and a great priest,
 who pleased God in his days and was
 found righteous. He, like another
 Matthias, was a zealous observer of
 the law of God. Another Maccabeus,
 strong in his defense of the fatherland
 from his youth.

This amiable Jonathan and this wise
 man Simon, and this strong-handed
 David, powerful in deed and faithful
 in speech throughout the kingdom,
 acting prudently in all things,
 entering and exiting, and going forth
 to the command of his earthly lord
 and king. Though he was permitted
 at first to diligently serve in certain
 court offices and fiscal matters, and
 subsequently in the positions of
 chancellor and treasurer, nevertheless
 his whole intention of the mind was
 directed toward God.

Et in quantum moles carnea permisit omnes actus suos pro utilitati [sic] reipublice et ecclesie sue ad honorem creatoris sui dirigebat. Hic talis et [sicut] nimirum plangitur quia similis ei superstes vir [non] reperitur. Nunc denique de medio sublatum merito plangimus quod dum ipsius mores, vitam, actus, sobrietatem, et virtutum multitudinem quasi in quodam vasculo gracioso aggregatam ab etate sua tenera usque in diem quo migravit a corpore ad memoriam revocamus, a fletibus, suspiriis et gemitibus abstinere nequimus.

Erat namque honestis parentibus procreatus, in domibus regum et procerum educatus, morum generositate et magnorum operum aggressionem nobilitatus. Studiis liberalibus et philosophicis disciplinis ac utriusque iuris preceptis imbutum, volumineque legis divine cibatum, implevit eum dominus spiritu sapientie et intellectus. In annis quippe adolescentie cepit deo devotus existere, honeste vivere, alterum non ledere, coetaneos et sodales suos in Christi dulcedine diligens, ut decebat, superioribus suis promptum famulatum, paribus bonitatis incentivum, iunioribus pium subsidium, et omnibus impendebat seipsum speculum et exemplar virtutum. Et propterea magnificavit eum dominus in conspectu regum et regni magnatum, diffuditque gratiam in labiis suis.

To the extent that the burden of the flesh allowed, he directed all his actions for the benefit of the state and his church to the honor of his Creator. This man indeed is mourned, truly, because a similar surviving man is not found. Now finally taken away from our midst, we rightly mourn because, while recalling his character, life, actions, sobriety, and the multitude of virtues, gathered together as if in a graceful vessel from his tender age until the day he passed from the body to memory, we cannot abstain from weeping, sighing, and groaning.

For he was born to honorable parents, raised in the homes of kings and nobles, ennobled by the nobility of his character and the undertaking of great works. He was imbued with liberal and philosophical studies and the teachings of both laws, and nourished by the volume of divine law, the Lord filled him with the spirit of wisdom and understanding. In the years of his youth, he began to exist devoutly for God, to live honorably, not to harm others, to love his contemporaries and companions in the sweetness of Christ, as was fitting, to serve his superiors diligently, to encourage his equals in goodness, to be a pious support to his juniors, and he bestowed himself as a mirror and example of virtues upon all. And therefore the Lord magnified him in the presence of kings and magnates of the kingdom and poured grace upon his lips.

Et propter veritatem et mansuetudinem et iusticiam deduxit eum mirabiliter dextera dei, et gradientem de virtute in virtutem prerogative meritorum in ecclesia sua merito prerogavit.

Cu[ius] fama bonitatis, sciencie, et pietatis, sicut odor agri pleni cui benedixit dominus, ita per regni climata redolevit quem exaltavit dominus electum de plebe sua, et statuit illi sacerdocium magnum collocans eum cum principibus populi sui, et a filiis Israel, velud [sic] alter Samuel, in principem et presulem, non assumens sibi honorem, sed, domino vocante, canonicè et concorditer sublimatus est in nostra Elyensi Ecclesia, post obitum felicitis recordacionis domini Johannis de Ketene Episcopi eiusdem loci.

Adepta siquidem tante dignitatis apice, deo devocior cepit existere, mutatus in alium virum, elemosinis, ieiuniis, vigiliis sacris, et oracionibus sedulo insistens; non obstante quavis occupacione mundana psalterium Daviticum cotidie ex integro regi regum decantavit. Iusticia, iudicio, misericordia et veritate semper gaudebat, sobrie et iuste et pie vivendo, pius, prudens, humilis, pudicus, sobrius, castus fuit, et quietus vita dum presens vegetavit eius corporis artus.

And on account of his truthfulness, gentleness, and justice, the right hand of God led him wonderfully, and as he advanced from virtue to virtue, he was justly exalted by the prerogative of his merits in his church.

His reputation for goodness, knowledge, and piety, like the fragrance of a fruitful field blessed by the Lord, spread throughout the regions of the kingdom, whom the Lord exalted, choosing him from his people, and appointed him to a great priesthood, placing him with the princes of his people, and from the children of Israel, like another Samuel, as a leader and ruler, not assuming honor for himself, but called by the Lord, he was canonically and harmoniously elevated in our Ely Cathedral, after the death of the blessed memory of Lord John of Ketene, Bishop of the same place.

Having indeed reached the pinnacle of such dignity, he began to exist even more devoted to God, transformed into another man, persistently engaging in acts of charity, fasting, sacred vigils, and prayers; regardless of any worldly occupation, he chanted the Psalms of David in their entirety daily to the King of kings. He always rejoiced in justice, judgment, mercy, and truth, living soberly, justly, and piously, he was devout, wise, humble, chaste, temperate, pure, and in the present life, the limbs of his body thrived peacefully.

Erat quoque vir tocius prudencie,
 in sermone verax, in iudicio iustus,
 in consilio providus, in commissis
 fidelis, in rebus bellicis strenuus,
 in probitate conspicuus, in omni
 morum venustate preclarus, et
 erat ei species digna imperio. Erat
 utique in ecclesia angelicus, in aula
 splendidus, in mensa dapsilis, in
 capitulo severus, arguens, increpans
 et obsecrans subditos in omni
 paciencia et doctrina; maioribus
 devotus, iunioribus blandus, omnibus
 affabilis et benignus, in spiritualibus
 et temporalibus valde circumspectus.

Et, ut enucleacius bonitatis sue
 prominencia elucescat, pontificali
 decoratus infula omnibus se
 amabilem exhibuit, omnibus omnia
 factus ut omnes lucrifaceret in Christo
 Ihesu, complens illud ecclesiastici,
 principem te constituerit noli extolli,
 sed esto in eius quasi unus ex illis.

Quum quedam prelibavimus que
 venerabilem patronum nostrum
 memoratum titulis preconiorum
 extollunt, et resonant laudes tanti
 viri, nunc autem excitat nos dileccio
 spiritalis ad vos, O filii Syon!
 stilum supplicacionis convertendo
 universitatem vestram devote
 deprecari ut animam dicti Johannis,
 qui biennali languore corporis
 correptus,

He was also a man of complete
 prudence, truthful in speech, just
 in judgment, provident in counsel,
 faithful in entrusted matters, vigorous
 in military affairs, conspicuous in
 integrity, illustrious in every charm
 of character, and he had a dignified
 appearance befitting authority.
 Truly, he was angelic in the church,
 splendid in the court, bountiful at the
 table, strict in the chapter, reproving,
 admonishing, and beseeching subjects
 with all patience and teaching; devout
 to his superiors, gracious to his
 juniors, affable and kind to all, greatly
 circumspect in spiritual and temporal
 matters.

And, so that the brilliance of his
 goodness may shine more brightly,
 adorned with the pontifical insignia,
 he showed himself lovable to all,
 becoming all things to all in order to
 gain all in Christ Jesus, fulfilling that
 saying of Ecclesiasticus, "Be humble
 in your station, and you will be more
 loved than a noble."

When we have previously extolled
 certain things that exalt our venerable
 patron with the titles of his merits
 and resound the praises of such a
 great man, now the spiritual love
 arouses us, O children of Zion,
 turning the pen of supplication to
 humbly implore all of you, that the
 soul of the said John, who was seized
 by a two-year-long bodily illness,

ut si que ei macule de terrenis contagiis adhererunt tam diuterna virga clementis dei castigentur, in senectute bona sicut verus catholicus ab hac instabili luce ad lucidas et quietas transivit mansiones, ut credimus, quintodecimo die mensis Januarii, Anno gracie Millesimo cccmo. xxxvito, in communibus beneficiis vestris recipiatis, et aliquid specialis remedii quod decreverit dileccionis vestre benignitas superaddatis, cum sancta et salubris sit cogitatio pro defunctis exorare ut a peccatis solvantur.

Nescit enim homo utrum odio vel amore dignus sit, seu opera illius sint accepta coram deo, nec ullus adeo perfecte stat in bono dum nexibus carnis detinetur quin aliquando labatur. Nam sepcies in die cadit iustus, et nemo mundus a sorde, nec infans quidem unius diei. Et ob hoc ineffabilis dei miseratio humane fragilitati pie preordinavit, ut qui sibi non sufficit pro suis reatibus satisfacere de suffragiis alienis reconciliacionis remedium misericorditer consequatur.

Unde iterato vestris pedibus pietatis intuitu provoluti crebris gemitibus preces precibus humiliter accumulamus, quatinus beneficiorum remedia que unicuique vestrum spiritus caritatis inspiraverit eidem Iohanni velitis impartiri.

so that if any stains from earthly contagions adhered to him, they may be chastised by the merciful rod of God, that in his good old age, as a true Catholic, he passed from this unstable light to the clear and peaceful mansions, as we believe, on the fifteenth day of the month of January, in the year of grace one thousand three hundred and sixty-six, that you may receive him into your common benefits, and with your benevolence of special remedy, which your kindness of love has decreed, add something, since it is a holy and salutary thought to pray for the deceased, that they may be freed from sins.

For no man knows whether he is worthy of hatred or love, or whether his works are acceptable before God, nor does anyone, while bound by the chains of the flesh, stand so perfectly in good that he does not stumble at some point. For the righteous falls seven times a day, and no one is free from filth, not even an infant of one day. And for this reason, the incomprehensible mercy of God has piously ordained for human frailty, so that the one who is unable to satisfy for his own sins may mercifully obtain the remedy of reconciliation through the suffrages of others.

Therefore, prostrated before your feet once again, with the gaze of piety, we heap humble prayers with frequent sighs, so that you may be willing to impart to the same John whatever remedies of benefits the spirit of charity inspires in each of you.

Et que vel quanta fuerint devocionis vestre munera cum titulis vestris in scripto redigi devotissime supplicamus. Quotquot siquidem alicujus beneficencie ei gratiam erogaverint specialem, fraternitatis nostre et omnium beneficiorum in ecclesia nostra de cetero agendorum participes constituimus et consortes. Et idem ab eis recipere zelo caritatis nobis concede ardentem postulamus, ut alter alterius onera portantes legem Christi adimpleamus.

Creator omnium rerum faciat vos seipsum revelata facie contemplari. Anima domini Iohannis de Hothom, quondam Episcopi Elyensis, et anime omnium fidelium defunctorum per misericordiam dei requiescant in pace. Amen. Nostri defuncti sint vobis in preci iuncti.

[*recto, different hand*]

Titulus ecclesie Sancte Marie et Sancti Benedicti Ramesey. Anima domini Iohannis Episcopi Elyensis et anime omnium fidelium defunctorum per misericordiam dei requiescant in pace. Amen. Oramus pro vestris. Orate pro nostris.

Titulus ecclesie apostolorum Petri et Pauli de Burgo. Anima domini Iohannis...

Titulus ecclesie Sancte Marie Sanctique Botulphi Thorneye. Anima domini Iohannis ...

Titulus ecclesie Sancte Marie, Sancti Bartholomei, Sanctique Guthlaci Croyland. Anima domini Iohannis etc. Vestris nostra damus, pro nostris vestra rogamus.

Titulus Sancte Marie et Sancti Nicholai de Spaldynge. Anima, etc.

And we devoutly beseech that the gifts of your devotion, with their titles, be written down. Indeed, as many as have bestowed the grace of any benefaction on him, we establish them as participants and partners in our fraternity and in all the benefits to be performed in our church in the future. And we ardently ask that the same may receive from them, with the zeal of charity, that we may fulfill the law of Christ by bearing one another's burdens.

May the creator of all things make you contemplate him with his face revealed. May the soul of Lord John Hotham, former Bishop of Ely, and the souls of all faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen. Our departed ones are joined with you in prayer.

The title of the Church of Saint Mary and Saint Benedict of Ramsey. May the soul of Lord John, Bishop of Ely, and the souls of all faithful departed rest in peace through the mercy of God. Amen. We pray for yours. Pray for ours.

The title of the Church of the Apostles Peter and Paul of Peterborough. May the soul of Lord John, etc.

The title of the Church of Saint Mary and Saint Botolph of Thorney. May the soul of Lord John, etc.

The title of the Church of Saint Mary, Saint Bartholomew, and Saint Guthlac of Crowland. May the soul of Lord John, etc. We give ours to yours, we ask yours for ours.

The title of the Church of Saint Mary and Saint Nicholas of Spalding. May the soul, etc.

<p>Titulus ecclesie Sancte Marie de Swyneshed. Anima, etc. Vestris nostra, etc. [Titulus ecclesie fratru]m ordinis beate Marie de Monte Carmeli de Sancto Botulpho. Anima, etc.</p>	<p>The title of the Church of Saint Mary of Swineshead. May the soul, etc. We give ours to yours, etc. The title of the Church of the brothers of the Order of Blessed Mary of Mount Carmel of Saint Botulph [Boston]. May the soul, etc.</p>
<p>On the reverse [<i>in large capitals</i>] Titulus ecclesie beate Marie Virginis et Sancti Edmundi Regis et Martiris. Anima, etc. Titulus ecclesie beati Georgii martiris monialium de Theford. Anima, etc.</p>	<p>The title of the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Edmund, King and Martyr. May the soul, etc. The title of the Church of the Blessed George, Martyr, of the Nuns of Thetford. May the soul, etc.</p>
<p>Titulus ecclesie beate Marie de Swaffham monialium. Anima, etc.</p>	<p>The title of the Church of the Blessed Mary of Swaffham, of the Nuns. May the soul, etc. [Swaffham Bulbeck, Cambridgeshire, Benedictine convent of nuns, near Newmarket]</p>
<p>Titulus ecclesie beate Marie de Angle[se]ye. Anima, etc. Nostri defuncti sint vobis in prece iuncti.</p>	<p>The title of the Church of the Blessed Mary of Angelsey. May the soul, etc. May our deceased be joined with you in prayer. [Augustinian priory of Angelsey in the bishopric of Ely]</p>
<p>Titulus ecclesie canonicorum Sancti Egidii de Bernewelle. Anima, etc.</p>	<p>The title of the Church of the canons of Saint Giles of Barnwell. May the soul, etc.</p>
<p>Titulus ecclesie Sancte Marie de Burnham iuxta Windesore.</p>	<p>The title of the Church of Saint Mary of Burnham near Windsor. May the soul, etc.</p>
<p>Titulus ecclesie fratrum minorum Cantebriggie. Anima, etc.</p>	<p>The title of the Church of the Friars Minor of Cambridge. May the soul, etc.</p>
<p>Titulus ecclesie fratrum heremitarum ordinis Sancti Augustini Cantebriggie. Anima, etc.</p>	<p>The title of the Church of the Hermits of the Order of Saint Augustine of Cambridge. May the soul, etc.</p>
<p>Titulus ecclesie fratrum ordinis beate Marie de Monte Carmeli Cantebriggie. Anima, etc.</p>	<p>The title of the Church of the Friars of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel of Cambridge. May the soul, etc.</p>
<p>Titulus ecclesie beate Marie et Sancti Iacobi apostoli de Waledene. Anima, etc.</p>	<p>The title of the Church of the Blessed Mary and Saint James the Apostle of [Saffron] Walden. May the soul, etc.</p>

Titulus ecclesie beati Iohannis Baptiste de Stoke. Anima domini Iohannis de Hothom episcopi Eliensis et anima Ricardi monachi et acoliti eiusdem, et anime omnium fidelium defunctorum, per misericordiam dei requiescant in pace. Nostri defuncti sint vobis in prece iuncti.	The title of the Church of the Blessed John the Baptist of Stoke [by Clare]. ²³⁰ May the soul of Lord John Hotham, Bishop of Ely, and the soul of Richard, monk and acolyte of the same, and the souls of all faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. May our deceased be joined with you in prayer.
Titulus ecclesie fratrum heremitarum ordinis Sancti Augustini Clare. Anima, etc.	The title of the Church of the Hermits of the Order of Saint Augustine of Clare. May the soul, etc.
Titulus ecclesie beate Marie de Ixeworthe. Anima, etc.	The title of the Church of the Blessed Mary of Ixworth. May the soul, etc.
Titulus fratrum ordinis predicatorum Thefordie. Anima, etc.	The title of the Friars of the Dominican Order of Thetford. May the soul, etc.
Titulus ecclesie Sancti Sepulcri de Theforde. Anima, etc.	The title of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher of Thetford. May the soul, etc.
Titulus ecclesie Sancte Marie Monachorum de Thefforde. Anima, etc	The title of the Church of Saint Mary of the Monks of Thetford. May the soul, etc.
Titulus ecclesie beate Marie de Westderham. Anima, etc.	The title of the Church of the Blessed Mary of West Dereham [Abbey, Norfolk]. May the soul, etc.

230 Stoke by Clare, Suffolk, an Alien Priory, made denizen by Richard II in 1395.

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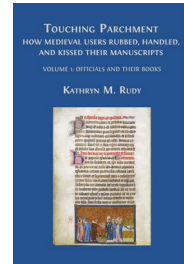
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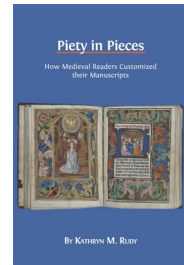


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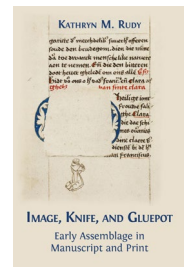


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