Discovering the nuances in the Book of Hours of the Virgin: a book of hours in the Toledo Museum of Art (1955.28)

Linda M. Meyer
The University of Toledo

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A Thesis

entitled

Discovering the Nuances in the *Book of Hours of the Virgin*: A Book of Hours in the Toledo Museum of Art (1955.28)

by

Linda M. Meyer

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Liberal Studies Degree

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The University of Toledo

August 2011
An Abstract of

Discovering the Nuances in the *Book of Hours of the Virgin:*
A Book of Hours in the Toledo Museum of Art (1955.28)

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Linda M. Meyer

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Examining the Book of Hours’ inception offers a foundation for understanding how this important illustrated manuscript came to be and how the imagery aided the communication of the religious tenets. Exploring an exceptional Book of Hours from the Toledo Museum of Art, titled the *Book of Hours of the Virgin* (1955.28), we will discover the nuances of the integral elements—the core sections and their opening illuminations, the illuminations’ stories, a translation of each section’s Latin incipit, as well as a look at the artistic elements that adorn the text. A discussion of the location and period related to the book follows, ending with a comparison of illuminations attributed to the Master of Morgan 85 that are similar in nature to those found in the *Book of Hours of the Virgin.*
For

Joe, Jen, Chris, and Sara,

Thank you for illuminating my path.
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Preface

“It is our stories that give a light to the future.”

Nikki Giovanni,
“In Praise of a Teacher”
*Quilting the Black-Eyed Pea*

A good book is one of the joys in life. From the time we are babies, books capture our attention using colorful visual imagery that tell a story and help us form ideas about the world around us. Visual imagery is a powerful story-telling tool, as is the written word. Yet imagine if we never learned how to read; then the imagery that surrounds us would become even more dear. This was the case in early medieval Europe, where much of the population was illiterate and relied on the spoken word and imagery to convey stories and ideas. By the late Medieval Period, several centuries later, literacy had increased dramatically, however the use of imagery to convey information continued. It was during this period that the most popular type of medieval book was created. Called the Book of Hours, this private devotional book of daily prayers often combined colorful imagery alongside the religious text to prompt the reader to recall specific prayers and biblical stories.

Examining the inception of a Book of Hours offers a foundation for understanding how this important illustrated manuscript came to be and how the imagery aided the communication of the religious tenets. Exploring an exceptional Book of Hours from the
Toledo Museum of Art, titled the *Book of Hours of the Virgin* (1955.28), we will discover the nuances of the integral elements—the core sections and their opening illuminations, the illuminations’ stories, a translation of each section’s Latin incipit, as well as a look at the artistic elements that adorn the text. A discussion of the location and period related to the book follows, ending with a comparison of illuminations attributed to the Master of Morgan 85 that are similar in nature to those found in the *Book of Hours of the Virgin*.

For clarity, the *Book of Hours of the Virgin* from this point on, with the exception of image labels and chapter headings, will be referred to as the Toledo *Book of Hours*; the term Book of Hours (without italics) will refer to this type of prayer book in general.
Chapter 1

The Inception of the Book of Hours

1.1 Reading Visual Imagery

Today, television, cinema, laptops, iPads, iPods, smart phones, Kindles, Nooks, magazines, books, and billboards are just a few of the visual media that shape and influence our ideas of the world. The challenge is to sift through the explosion of messages that assail us on a daily basis as the media attempts to do its job trying to influence the way we perceive our world. Attempting to communicate a message effectively is a challenge that began ages ago as different cultures came together. Their assorted languages may not have been easily understood at first, so the use of signs and symbols may have been an effective way to express an idea. Visual imagery is an incredible tool used to spread a variety of ideas and we see many historical examples of this, ranging from Egyptian hieroglyphics, to the symbol of the cross, the peace sign, and even the Nike “swoosh” logo. All of these symbols are visual representations that illustrate an idea, tell a story, or sell a product.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then imagine the impact of stories set in stone, paint, ivory, stained glass, marble, and tapestry. This was the case in medieval Europe, where almost every aspect of the medieval world centered on the church.
(Langley 30; Wieck, Time 27). During this period, the Christian church used visual imagery to spread its religious message; imagery was particularly important early in the period, when the majority of the European population was illiterate (Calkins 112). The stories heard in church were repeated within the architecture, carved columns, and later, in the stained glass of the building itself, reminding the populace of the didactic lessons heard in church, thus creating a visual narrative that would be easily understood. The worshippers could “read” the stories represented in art that they had learned in church (Calkins 112).

Books of the Middle Ages might also contain religious imagery, although early in the period, books were relatively rare, used mainly for ecclesiastical purposes by the clergy (Zuffi, European 86). Later in the period, toward the end of the thirteenth century, books were more common, and one type of book created specifically for the layperson came into being. Called the Book of Hours, it often combined visual imagery with the text to emphasize the Christian message to the reader. These visual representations of the biblical stories were colorful images called *illuminations* that allowed the owner to “read” the illuminations as well as the text. The illuminations were a reminder of the many religious stories, probably known by heart, and although the illuminations did not always correlate to the text, this may not have been important for in the end they still brought the focus back to religious tenets (de Hamel, 176).

### 1.2 The Text of the Book of Hours

During the medieval period, the Christian church stressed the importance of education, particularly reading and writing, offering schooling in “monasteries, convents,
and cathedrals,” the main centers of learning (Langley 41). To preserve knowledge, these religious institutions created *scriptoria*, places where books could be copied (Wittmann 27). Until the twelfth century, monasteries were the primary centers for bookmaking, and monks were the primary bookmakers, although not all monks spent their time copying books (Langley 38). Monks who worked in the scriptorium copied and preserved various religious texts; books from the past containing literature and the history of the natural world as well as treatises and science books were also copied (Calkins 201; Kleiner and Mamiya I: 425). If you could read, the Church libraries were a “storehouse of knowledge” that provided a wealth of information for scholarly pursuit (Calkins 232).

Two books, often copied and used regularly, were the texts used by the clergy for the Christian service: the Missal, providing appropriate texts for celebrating the Mass, and the Breviary, celebrating the Divine Office or daily devotions (Clark 2). The clergy and laity (laypeople) would meet several times each day for church; Mass was celebrated once and the Divine Office was celebrated several times over the course of a day (Clark 4). The eight prayers of the Divine Office were said at Matins (prior to dawn), Lauds (at dawn), Prime (around 6 a.m.), Terce (around 9 a.m.), Sext (at noon), None (around 3 p.m.), Vespers (at sunset), and Compline (evening) (Clark 2; de Hamel 170).

The Book of Hours was adapted from the daily prayers taken from the Missal and the Breviary, creating a book based on the prayers that the clergy recited in church, but intended for the layperson (Clark 2; Wieck, Henry 77). The Book of Hours was for private daily devotion, to be read at particular *hours* throughout the day, at home or church (Wieck, Time 28). This personalized, one of a kind, handmade book was created for laypeople who desired a closer connection to God, and offered the reader a new
opportunity for private contemplation of the doctrine in addition to the community experience in church (Clark 4). By the late Medieval Period, it had become the most copied text of its time (Clark 3; Wieck, Time 28).

The typical Book of Hours is composed of eight sections:

1) The Calendar
2) The four Gospel Lessons
3) The Hours of the Virgin
4) The Hours of the Cross and Hours of the Holy Spirit
5) The Prayers to the Virgin
6) The Penitential Psalms and Litany
7) The Office of the Dead
8) Suffrages (prayers to the Saints) (Wieck, Time 27-8)

Each section combined text and visual imagery to tell a story. The prayers listed above have a “rich pictorial tradition” and the illuminations offered a visual narrative that echoed the images and lessons seen and heard in church (Wieck, Time 27-8). In addition, this small, personal devotional book held a wealth of information regarding religion, culture, and art, as we will see in Chapter 2.

1.3 Devotion to the Virgin

_Horae_, Latin for “Hours,” sometimes refers to a complete Book of Hours, but originally referred to the essence of its content, called the “Hours of the Virgin” or to be more exact the “Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary” (Stein; Wieck, Time 27).
Originally, taken from the Breviary, these Hours date back to the late twelfth century (Clark 3). The Hours of the Virgin form the integral text for all Book of Hours (Clark 5).

Devotion to the Virgin Mary dates back to the fourth-century belief that Mary had the “power to intercede for individual souls at the time of judgment” (Clark 3). The Virgin was considered a “Second Eve” or “ideal woman” who could right the sins of the original Eve and devotion to her was reinforced in the fifth century when the Council of Ephesus confirmed her status as Theotokos (Bearer of God) (Benton 132; Clark 3). By the late eleventh century as devotion to the Virgin spread, “churches, cathedrals, religious orders, and brotherhoods” as well as statuary and paintings were created to honor her, and the Hours of the Virgin are yet another extension of this adoration (Benton 132; Wieck; Time 27).

There were many iconic interpretations of the Virgin, represented by various levels of artistry, from the simplest embellishment to the most lavish ornamentation, and both the peasant and nobleman could acquire a representation (Benton 132). Devotion to the Virgin had grown quite vigorously by the twelfth century, and people from all walks of life were involved in this devotion; the appreciation for the Little Office of the Virgin helped to make the Book of Hours popular (Calkins 137; Wieck, Time 27). By the fourteenth century, the move toward private devotion was directly related to the growing interest in the Book of Hours (Calkins 218).

1.4 Availability

At first, Books of Hours were for the privileged few, mostly clergy and nobles who could afford to commission them, for they were very expensive to create (Calkins
Embellished Books of Hours were crafted for those who appreciated the detailed nuances of workmanship and desired “elaborate works of art to dignify and embellish Christian rituals” (Putney, Medieval 11). Prior to the mid-fifteenth century and the invention of the printing press, books were entirely handmade; everything from the parchment, to the binding, to the ink and paints were prepared by hand (Clark 2). Making books was an arduous process—it could take a year for a scribe to copy a Bible—and the cost of a Book of Hours was directly related to the time spent creating and embellishing the book (Langley 40).

Books were a relatively rare commodity until the twelfth century, when interest in classical studies increased and the first universities opened (Langley 40). The University of Paris was one of the first and largest universities and as people were educated, literacy increased, commerce in Western Europe grew, wealth was more widely distributed, and the demand increased for books (Calkins 220; Clark 54). As the demand for books increased, guilds of professional scribes formed, making it possible for more people to commission manuscripts, particularly Books of Hours (Calkins 220; Langley 40). As the Book of Hours became more affordable all classes could purchase a copy and it became one of the most popular books of the late Medieval and early Renaissance (de Hamel 13). This was often the first—if not only—book a family owned, reflecting the owner’s desire to understand “Christ’s humanity and Mary’s maternal compassion” (de Hamel 176; Putney, Medieval 53). It was also used to teach children how to read (de Hamel 176).

Paris had become a major center of book making by the thirteenth century and artists throughout northern Europe traveled to Paris to be a part of book production and reap some of the benefits bestowed by wealthy patrons (Clark 54). The new business of
book production allowed for the purchase of custom or ready-made books off the 
bookseller’s shelf, particularly Books of Hours (Clark 5). If a Book of Hours was custom-
made, the quality of the book depended on the purse, so some surviving Books of Hours 
are quite modest while others are highly decorated, including miniature paintings and 
gold leaf ornamentation (Benton 132).

1.5 Illumination

A custom-made Book of Hours would have text, handwritten in a delicate precise 
calligraphy, and might be adorned with scrollwork, vines, tendrils and leaves, or a variety 
of flora and fauna, or perhaps drolleries containing wry humor (Calkins 229). Some 
decorated initials might be inhabited, decorated with animal or human figures inside the 
curves and lines of the letter, or historiated, decorated with a scene representing a story 
(Clark 2). Decorated initials within the text might be simple or highly ornate, and 
sometimes were burnished in gold leaf, or *rubricated* (written in red ink) to denote the 
beginning of a special passage (Clark 2; Robb 18). The term “illumination” originated 
from the luminous light that arose from gold-leaf letters (de Hamel 11).

![Image of calligraphy, gold leaf initials, and decorative stops](image)

**Fig. 1.1 Example of calligraphy, gold leaf initials, and decorative stops**
*Book of Hours of the Virgin (1955.28)*
*Toledo Museum of Art*
The decorated initials are works of art themselves, adding to the beauty of the page, but the initials were just the beginning of the embellishment. Painted illustrations were interspersed between the prayers—they might color an entire page or just a fraction of it—and usually offered a structured scenario of the narrative within the prayers. Occasionally, the visual representations were not associated with the religious text whatsoever, but taken from other resources, as men searched for deeper spiritual meaning (Putney, Creatio 6). However, not all of the illustrated images were solemn; decorated margins that framed the text were adorned with botanical, natural, or architectural themes as well as imaginary creations that helped to make the didactic message more appealing. The term *illumination* became a generality and soon encompassed all the décor on the page, from the decorated margins to the multicolored paintings to the gold-leaf highlights (de Hamel 11).

Why did scribes take the time to illuminate Books of Hours? Light was associated with divinity and mysticism (Benton 186). “I am the Light….” a phrase from the Gospel of John, may be one of the motives that gave rise to illumination (Calkins 201). Abbot Suger, a twelfth century abbot who was instrumental in the reconstruction of the French church, Saint-Denis, expressed that the luminosity of gilded objects, precious stones, and colorful stained glass windows “being nobly bright…should brighten the minds so that [the beholder] may travel through the true lights to the True Light…” (Calkins 201). During this period in time, the “Word of God” was meant to be lavishly embellished (201). Thus, by illuminating Books of Hours, scribes honored God and perhaps transported the reader to another level of spirituality.
The illuminated stories helped to make a Book of Hours popular, for they delighted the beholder and assisted in concentrating the devotional focus (Wieck, Time 28). The illuminations are just one of the reasons why decorated Books of Hours survive today (Clark 5). Exploring how a Book of Hours came to be, allows us to understand the chronological and religious underpinnings of the book itself. Using the Toledo Book of Hours, we will discover the nuances that make this book a multifaceted treasure.
Chapter 2

The Book of Hours of the Virgin

2.1 The Jewel

To hold the Toledo Book of Hours in one’s hand is to hold an entire gallery of miniature paintings, a significant historic reference manual, a religious prayer book, a calligrapher’s workbook, and a compendium of artisans’ techniques all wrapped up in one tidy bundle. Full of rich colors and lustrous illuminations, the miniatures are exquisite examples of late fifteenth or early sixteenth century paintings that tell a variety of stories regarding religious, cultural, historic, and artistic trends particular to the period. Roger S. Wieck, in his book Time Sanctified, described his thoughts regarding a Book of Hours,

A Book of Hours is a “Notre Dame” that can be held in the hands....Like a cathedral that formed an important part of a community’s culture and heritage, a Book of Hours was a treasure handed down from parent to child, a part of family history (Wieck, Time 27).

The comparison of a manuscript and a cathedral is not new, for Victor Hugo was equally eloquent when he wrote in The Hunchback of Notre Dame “…architecture was the principal, the universal writing” (Hugo 202). He goes on to say that architecture was the
“chief register of humanity” until the manuscript, an “architectural book,” became a “property of the imagination, of poetry, of the people” (Hugo 200).

The Toledo Book of Hours is certainly not as large as a cathedral; measuring roughly 5 ¼” x 3 ½”, it fits comfortably in the hand. The book’s diminutive size disguises the imagination and ideas within, but is one of the many elements that add to the book’s beauty and charm.

The time and care taken to create this small book extends throughout, from the exterior binding to the detailed imagery and script within. The exterior of the book is red Moroccan leather, embossed with a simple gold line along the edges of the cover and along the four raised bands of the spine. The two sets of escutcheon pins positioned in a triangular pattern hold two dainty metal clasps that hold the book closed. Inside the book, the gold embossing is patterned along the interior edge (turn-in) of the front and back cover and the endpapers are covered in a light sky blue fabric, perhaps silk. It is worth mentioning that the current binding is not the original binding, having been replaced sometime during the eighteenth century but it was bound too tightly, leaving the book prone to damage should it be opened for display (“Documentary Information, 1955.28”).

One hundred and thirty parchment pages transport us to the early Renaissance, where we are privy to stories of the time. This book is composed of eight core sections ordered in a slightly different manner than noted in the previous chapter. The sections are:
1) The Calendar

2) Gospel Lessons

3) Prayers to the Virgin and Seven Prayers to Saint Gregory

4) Hours of the Virgin

5) Hours of the Holy Cross and Hours of the Holy Spirit

6) Penitential Psalms, Litany, and Prayers

7) Vigil of the Dead

8) Suffrages

Each section, written in Latin, uses a humanistic minuscule script, an easy to read type of lettering developed early in the fifteenth century (Bischoff Plate 22, 146). The artwork is comprised of fifteen full-page and thirty-four miniature illuminations with decorative borders, representing the religious ideology of the late Medieval and early Renaissance.

The pages that follow present an overview of each of the eight sections, the narrative that corresponds with the beginning illumination (with the exception of the Calendar), a translation of the *incipit* (the opening lines of the prayers), and notable artistic devices.

Let us open Toledo’s *Book of Hours* to discover the colorful stories within.
2.2 The Calendar

The Calendar, the first section of the Toledo Book of Hours, offers a treasure trove of information. The Calendar pages combine daily, monthly, and annual information related to religious as well as secular life. Each calendar also pinpoints important dates (“Picturing Prayer”).

Each page of this calendar contains four distinct sections that are easily identified using the July calendar page:

Fig. 2.2 *July from the Calendar Book of Hours of the Virgin (1955.28)*
Toledo Museum of Art

```plaintext
The Calendar, the first section of the Toledo Book of Hours, offers a treasure trove of information. The Calendar pages combine daily, monthly, and annual information related to religious as well as secular life. Each calendar also pinpoints important dates (“Picturing Prayer”).

Each page of this calendar contains four distinct sections that are easily identified using the July calendar page:

---

13
1) The Labors of the Month, the scene painted at the top of each page,

2) The Calendar Dates, the two columns directly below,

3) The signs of the Zodiac, directly below the Calendar, at the bottom of the page,

4) A decorative margin, bordering the Labors of the Month and Calendar Dates, on the outside edge of each page.

Exploring each section of the Calendar allows us to understand the information contained on this page.

The Labors of the Month

The detailed scenes of the Labors of the Month are short visual narratives depicting the seasonal activities, usually agricultural duties. The calendar page displayed above is from the month of Iulius (July) and illustrates the wheat harvest, when families worked together to bring in the wheat (Langley 12). The Labors of the Month follow a cyclic format, and use common themes often seen in other Books of Hours as well as some cathedrals’ stained glass windows and facades (Benton 255; Wieck, Time 51). Frequently, the artist embellished these scenes capturing the nature of the task as well as the surrounding landscape (Robb 289).

The Calendar Dates

Heading the first column of the Calendar is a red box with the gold letters “KL” an abbreviation of Kalens, Latin for calendar (Wieck, Henry 51). Directly to the right is the name of the month then, written in roman numerals, are the number of days in that month. Iulius habet dies
XXXI translates to “July has 31 days” (Wieck, Henry 51).

Beneath the heading of the month is the word *Luna* (moon) and an additional set of roman numerals, representing the “number of days in the…lunar months,” meaning the number of days between each new moon and the next (Cazelles and Rathofer 13). The lunar calendar and solar (annual or seasonal) calendar were important for determining feast days and saint days (Cazelles 13). It is important to remember that life revolved around the church where saints, feast days, and cycles of the sun and moon were more important than a particular numbered date.

One might presume the Arabic numbers listed at the beginning of certain entries are days of the month, but only the numbers “1” through “19” are used. These numbers represent Golden Numbers that correspond to a nineteen-year cycle that combined the lunar months with the twelve months of the solar calendar (Cazelles 13). To determine the date, for instance July 26, one would count twenty-six lines of text, beginning with the space under the word Luna, and continue into the second column (knowing that there are thirty-one days in July, one could count backwards as well) to land on the name “Anne ma. m’,” Anne, mother of Mary (Wieck, Time 155). The Feast of Saint Anne would be a recognized day, “a medieval manner of telling time,” instead of a numerical date attached to a month (Wieck, Time 45).

Even though the July Calendar page has thirty-one days, corresponding to a contemporary July calendar, it was not like today’s calendar because each day centered on an important connection to Christ and this was true for each of the months (Wieck, Time 45). The Book of Hours’ Calendar was a perpetual calendar used year to year, where the combination of Golden Numbers, lunar, and solar calendars aided in
calculating important feast days, especially Easter (“Picturing Prayer”). In the late medieval period, Easter, like today, was a movable holiday, one that did not fall on a set date, but was determined by the cycle of the moon. Thus, Easter falls “on the Sunday following the first full moon that falls on or after the vernal equinox” (Wieck, Henry 51).

The calendar also lists a repetitive set of letters: A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. Called Dominical letters, they were used to determine the Sundays and fixed feast days or holidays of the year (“Picturing Prayer”; Wieck, Time 157). January 1 always begins with the letter “A” and continues repeating the alphabetical sequence until the end of the year (Wieck, Henry 51). It is easy to follow this pattern on the July calendar page and see the alphabetical sequence. July’s final entry in the second column ends on a “B” and the first entry for August 1 would be “C”.

The names listed on the July calendar page represented feast days that honored a particular event or saint, or they might be reminders of the family’s history, such as birth or death dates (“Picturing Prayer”). Major feast days were specific days for celebration, where the townspeople took time to “attend special church services, banquets, and festivities,” while minor feast days were celebrated during the daily mass and honored an individual saint on their recognized calendar day (Langley 54; Putney, Medieval 34).

The color of the ink used for the Saints’ names and feast days was also an indicator of the specialness of the day. Today, a “red letter day” means a notable day, while in medieval times red ink denoted a major feast day or an extraordinary Saint’s day (“Picturing Prayer”). Blue ink was used as an alternate to red ink, and black or brown ink was used for the more common Saints’ days (Bischoff 17; de Hamel 174). Further distinguishing the Saints’ names are the abbreviations that follow their name, signifying
apostle (ap.), confessor (cf.), bishop (ep.), evangelist (evang.), martyr (m.), priest (pb.), pope (pp.), and virgin (v.) (Wieck, Time 153).

The Decorative Margin

The July calendar, like those of the other months, is embellished with a gold-leaf background filled with stylized, curled acanthus leaves, red-topped thistle, blue speedwell, white forget-me-not flowers, and strawberries (Valentine 35, 38). A snail, just above the strawberries, seems to be slowly working his way through the margin. During the late Medieval and early Renaissance eras, there was a renewed interest in nature and empirical observation, the margin offered the artist an opportunity to be creative and represent his interest in the natural world (Zuffi, European 20). Margins also acted as bookmarks to assist in finding specific sections (Stein).

The Signs of the Zodiac

The scene at the bottom of the page contains the Zodiac sign for July. Leo, the Lion, situated in an outcropping of rocks and trees, appears to have just pounced. Situated in the far distance is a building or group of buildings; each Zodiac scene in the Calendar repeats this architectural feature. Zodiac signs depict the “astrological ‘houses’ of the sun for the month in question” and date back to “classical antiquity” (Robb 290; Wieck, Time 45). It might be confusing to see the Zodiac represented in a Christian book, but at the time, it was believed that the astrological signs, “thought to be directed by God,” influenced one’s mental and physical bearing (Carr-Gomm 209). Various signs of the Zodiac were thought to influence various aspects of the human body; for instance, one’s
“stomach, heart, and back” were thought to be ruled by the sign of Leo, the Lion (Wieck, Painted 37).

The illustrated sections on the July calendar page are naturalistic and the objects cast shadows, creating a three-dimensional effect. The artist took great care to create a sense of realism and balance on this page, as well as between all of the facing pages in the calendar, creating a piece of artwork flowing without interruption.

After analyzing each component on the page, it is remarkable to see how much information is accessible to both readers and nonreaders. Each of the twelve pages of the calendar are presented in the same manner and contain analogous information appropriate to the designated month. The Labors of the Month, decorated margins, signs of the Zodiac, as well as the precise calligraphy, offer a visual feast, inviting one to linger. Yet, it is just a taste of the beauty to come.
2.3 The Gospel Lessons

Fig. 2.4 Gospel Lesson According to John, the Evangelist from the Gospel Lessons Book of Hours of the Virgin (1955.28) Toledo Museum of Art

The Gospel Lessons correspond to four major Christian feast days: Christmas (December 25), the Annunciation (March 25), Epiphany (January 6), and Ascension (a moveable feast day depending on Easter), written by the Evangelists John, Luke, Matthew, and Mark respectively (Wieck, Henry 77). This section in a Book of Hours was derived from the Missal and offered the layperson a chance to pray the “identical texts from the Church’s official liturgy” (77). Now the common layperson could read “the Word of God” (77). By the time this Book of Hours was created it was standard practice to include a “fifth Lesson,” the Passion of Christ from the Gospel of John (77). All five lessons are included and illuminated in the Toledo Book of Hours.
The full-page illustration on the verso (left) begins the Gospel Lessons, and depicts the story of John, the Evangelist, who must drink a chalice of poison “to prove his God was powerful enough to save him” (S. Fisher 144). Although John agrees, he asks that “two condemned prisoners drink from the cup first” (S. Fisher 144). As we see in this illumination, the prisoners perished, but John does not. As the story progresses, John miraculously brings the two who were poisoned back to life (S. Fisher 144).

There is also an artistic story displayed in the illuminations if we learn what to look for. John, the tallest figure in this scene, is the focal point of the story and the focal point of the illustration. His robe, illuminated in gold, immediately draws our eyes into the scene. His chalice, hair, and the halo that surround his head also glow with gold radiance. Gold leaf, used to capture the reflected light as well as our eye, helped to signify the divine.

Although the Gospel Lesson According to John, the Evangelist depicts a story that occurred approximately fifteen hundred years before, the architectural elements to the right as well as those in the distance have a contemporary sensibility and lend a feeling of realism to the scene. An artistic technique used by the ancient Romans and renewed in the fifteenth century—*atmospheric perspective*—created the illusion of distance by fading to a hazy blue as the landscape receded. Objects, like the city in the distance appear smaller as the distance increases, adding another realistic touch. Creating elements that were part of the owner’s everyday reality, gave a sense of authenticity to both the image and the story (Calkins 223).

On the recto (right), nestled among the lines of calligraphy, is a miniature illustration of a pastoral scene featuring John, the Evangelist, who is busy writing. The
bird to the right is an eagle used to symbolize not only John, the Evangelist, but also mysticism (S. Fisher 89). As Sally Fisher, in the *Square Halo* relates, the four animals used to represent the four evangelists were based on a vision John had of the Apocalypse where each animal surrounded “the throne of God” (S. Fisher 89). Each of the Evangelists had an “animal” symbol: “the eagle for John, the ox for Luke, the angel for Matthew, and the lion for Mark.” They are usually shown writing in a scriptorium, with the exception of John, who is portrayed sitting on the island of Patmos to which he had been banished (Wieck, Time 55).

The text, written in red, blue, and black ink, contains the Gospel Lesson according to John. The gold-framed margin surrounding the text contains ivory colored flowers and scrolling ivory acanthus leaves with golden, rope-like vines and tendrils on a blue background (Valentine 38). Modeled, the vegetation creates a feeling of depth; this spatial effect is strengthened by the illusion that the text box is covering some of the leaves in the margin creating the effect of a floating text box over a three dimensional background. The text begins with the Latin words:


*In principio erat uerbum & verbum erat apud deum & deus erat verbu.*

The beginning of the Holy Gospel according to John. In the beginning was the Word, and the word was with God, and the word was God (“Latin English”).

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21
2.4 Prayers to the Virgin

and Seven Prayers to Saint Gregory

Fig. 2.5 Madonna and Child from the Prayers to the Virgin
Book of Hours of the Virgin (1955.28)
Toledo Museum of Art

The Prayers to the Virgin were prayers personally chosen by the owner (Wieck, Henry 87). The two prayers included in this book are from a set called the “Marian devotions” named the *Obsecro te* (I beseech you) and the *O intermerata* (O immaculate virgin) (Wieck, Henry 87). The first prayer is a reminder of the Virgin’s happiness and compassion as Mother of God while the second prayer reflects on the Virgin’s sorrow and her role as a personal intermediary (Wieck, Henry 87; Wieck, Time 95). The two prayers were the most commonly used in Books of Hours and allowed the reader to pray...
directly to the Virgin; they were usually followed by the Seven Prayers of Pope Gregory (Wieck, Henry 87), a short set of prayers addressed to Christ (Wieck, Time 107).

The Prayers to the Virgin are different from any other section in a Book of Hours for three reasons. First, as noted above, this was an area where owners could choose specific prayers (Wieck, Henry 87). Second, the Prayers to the Virgin did not have a fixed location—as other sections of the book did—but they often followed the Gospel Lessons as they do here (Wieck, Time 94). Third, there was an opportunity for the owner of the book to have his or her portrait painted within the miniature (Wieck, Time 94).

The **Madonna and Child** miniature that accompanies the *Obsecro te*, depicts a seated, blue-mantled Madonna who tenderly looks upon the Child in her lap, both of them nimbed. In the background, a small assembly watches the scene before them; perhaps the owner is included in this group. Seraphim, the red angels in the background, watch silently with the others, as the scene unfolds before them. Seraphim represent the Old Testament and are among the highest order of angels (S. Fisher 15).

The miniature, framed in gold, has a slight indentation in the upper right corner to accommodate the text. The text itself is bordered by an ornately decorated margin that is quite different from the Calendar’s margin seen previously. Although this margin has similarly colored and shaped acanthus leaves, it has an entirely different air about it. It has moved away from the natural setting seen in the Calendar margin and taken on a fanciful, mythological quality.

During the medieval period, a secular outlook accompanied the desire for devotion; grotesques, animals, and drolleries were inserted in the decorative margins surrounding sacred text (Calkins 229). This border contains several grotesques and
drolleries in a variety of shapes; particularly interesting are the two creatures in the lower margin that sport scaled, serpentine tails attached to human torsos. Two childlike figures in the right margin are putti or cherubs and their almost mirror like poses may indicate they are twins, perhaps representing the zodiac sign of Gemini. Architectural columns, diamond shaped jewels, and other painted designs round out the margin. The images appear solid and create shadows on a gold leaf background, but the shadows are different from those cast in the Calendar margin. Also note the position of the heads of the two putti in the right margin; they slightly overlap the frames of the text box and margin. This overlap along with the cast shadows help to create the feeling of depth on a two dimensional surface.

The direct conversational style of the two prayers may explain why an owner desired to have their portrait painted with the Virgin; it presented an opportunity to be close to the intermediary who was working on one’s behalf. As Books of Hours were passed down from one owner to the next, portraits might be repainted to reflect the new owner’s face (Wieck, Time 95). Another interesting aside is that the second prayer “ends by asking the Virgin to reveal the penitent reader’s day and hour of death” (Wieck, Henry 87). Following the Obsecro te and O intermerata are the Seven Prayers of Pope Gregory that were included with this section and could also be chosen by the owner.

The Obsecro te begins:

\textit{Ad beatissima virginem Mariam.}
\textit{Obsecro te domina sancta Maria mater dei pieta te plenissima summi regis filia mater gloriosissima}...

To the Blessed Virgin Mary
I beseech you, Mary, holy lady, mother of God, most full of piety, daughter of the greatest king, most glorious mother… (Wieck, Time 163)
2.5 Hours of the Virgin

The Hours of the Virgin, originally called the “Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary,” were the centerpiece in all Books of Hours and were what gave the book its name (Wieck, Time 60). This was usually the most generously illustrated section in a Book of Hours, depicting the life of Mary (Clark 18). It contained the daily devotional prayers, derived from the Divine Office that were to be said, or read, at particular points in the day (Clark 2). The eight Hours of the Virgin were Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline (de Hamel 170). These prayers rarely changed, except during
advent and there were variations particular to certain regions (Clark 3, 6). Roger Wieck continues his cathedral analogy as he elaborates on the significance of these prayers in a Book of Hours,

…the Hours of the Virgin would be its high altar, placed at the center of the choir and surmounted by an elaborately carved and painted altarpiece on top of which would be mounted, at a height close to the soaring vaults of the church, a radiant statue of the Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child (Wieck, Time 60).

The full-page illustration on the verso depicts the Annunciation and begins an arrangement of chronological episodes from the life of the Virgin (Wieck, Henry 92). The Annunciation (March 25), one of the major Christian feast days celebrated nine months before Jesus’ birth, tells the story of Mary and the announcement by the archangel, Gabriel, that she will be the Mother of God (S. Fisher 41; Wieck, Time 60). Here we see Gabriel whose stance gives the impression that he has just landed—interrupting Mary who has been reading—to announce the news that she will be the Mother of the Savior. Gabriel points to the Holy Spirit, symbolized by the dove, which radiates the light of heaven (S. Fisher 41).

The Virgin and Gabriel are framed by a richly decorated arcade with carved and trefoiled arches, and statuary. Behind them is a group of onlookers who kneel silently as they (and the carved figures) witness the scene before them. The entire illumination, framed between two columns in a window-like setting, placed the owner of the book as well as ourselves, outside the window as additional witnesses to this scene; we have now become part of the story, involved in the action. Such window-like frames are used repeatedly in the Toledo Book of Hours, to involve the reader in all of the full-page illuminations.
The tiled floor, drawn using linear perspective, draws our eye through the scene, back to one point, the golden aureole highlighting the Holy Spirit. The colors of the paint also draw our eye through the illumination; the Virgin’s blue mantle first captures our attention followed by the predominant gold used in the architecture, Gabriel’s cloak, and the *prie-dieu* (pedestal), and draws our eyes in a circular pattern from Mary to Gabriel to the *prie-dieu* holding the book. From here, the red cloth on the *prie-dieu* draws our eyes upwards continuing past the pink and blue dressed onlookers to the architecture that points to the Holy Spirit. As if this was not enough to impress the holiness of the scene, our eyes also follow a second diamond shaped pattern. As Gabriel stares at Mary, whose downcast eyes focus on the opened book, the leaves lead us up to Gabriel’s left arm that once again points to the Holy Spirit, while Mary’s blue mantle pulls our eyes down to trace this pattern repeatedly, keeping us involved in the action. The artist has created a visual narrative that keeps our eyes riveted to the unfolding scene.

Each prayer in this section begins with a full-page illustration followed by a miniature on the facing page. The miniature shown on the *recto* displays the devil entwined on the Tree of Knowledge, situated between Adam and Eve after they have taken a bite from the apple. It appears that an apple is in Eve’s right hand, and the acute sense of embarrassment shown by their body language, indicates that paradise has been lost. It is interesting to note that the artist placed architectural elements in Paradise, including a gate and fence, to refer to Adam and Eve’s imminent banishment. A smaller version of the window-like frame focuses our view on the story unfolding on the other side of the window. The size of the miniature, the marginal décor, and artistic elements follow a similar format as those mentioned in the Gospel Lessons. The illuminations in
this section do not necessarily illustrate the text but instead provide contemplation of the
Virgin’s life as one prays to God and the Virgin (Stein).

The *incipit*, the opening words of the prayers, written in blue ink at the top of the
page, act as a title for each set of prayers.

*Incipit officium diue & immaculate virginis Marie. Secundu usum Romane
curie.*

Here begins the rich…Office of the immaculate Virgin Mary according to the
Roman use (“Latin English;” De Hamel 178).

“According to the Roman use” means that these prayers followed the traditional format
of Rome (de Hamel 178). Following the *incipit* is the first prayer of Matins, illuminated
with a decorated initial “D” in gold, on a red background, to denote the beginning of the
prayer:

*Domine labia mea aperies.*
*Et os meum annunciabit laudem tuam.*

Lord, thou shalt open my lips (Wieck, Henry 92).
And my mouth shall show forth thy praise (de Hamel 170).
2.6 Hours of the Holy Cross and Hours of the Holy Spirit

The Hours of the Holy Cross and the Hours of the Holy Spirit were two distinct sections in a Book of Hours that follow one another to form an interconnected section so that the prayers would not be interrupted (Wieck, Time 89, 93). They follow almost the
same daily prayer format as the Hours of the Virgin, with the omission of Lauds, but the prayers are not as lengthy and have different hymns (Wieck, Henry 111). The prayers begin in exactly the same manner as the Hours of the Virgin:

Domine labia mea aperies.
Et os meum annunciabit laudem tuam.

Lord, thou shalt open my lips. (Wieck, Henry 92)  
And my mouth shall show forth thy praise. (de Hamel 170)

Although there were many hours from the Divine Office to choose from, these two hours were chosen most often and follow the Hours of the Virgin (Wieck, Time 89). Usually the Hours of the Holy Cross and the Hours of the Holy Spirit have one accompanying illumination, but the Toledo *Book of Hours* features both a full-page illustration and a corresponding miniature on the facing page for each set of prayers (Wieck, Time 90).

The Hours of the Holy Cross focus on the Passion, Christ’s suffering and death (Wieck, Henry 111). The full-page illumination for this prayer features *The Crucifixion*, where Christ, mortally wounded, is encircled by his mother Mary, saints, an apostle, guards, and two thieves (also crucified) outside the city of Jerusalem, shown in the background. The uplifted leg of the horse seems to be avoiding a small skull directly below. This skull is part of the narrative and represented three separate ideas. First, it was said to be Adam’s skull, representing original sin; second, it represented the place where the crucifixion took place, Golgotha, “place of the skull” (Zuffi, Gospel 292). And, third it is a *memento mori*, a symbol that expresses the fleetingness of time, a reminder that none of us will escape death and that the “empty vanity of power, wealth, and possessions” will not help in the end (Calkins 229; Kleiner and Mamiya II: 731).
The miniature on the facing page shows the Deposition, where Christ’s body is being removed from the cross by two followers, Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus (Clark 45). Mary stands to the left, her sadness expressed in her outstretched arms. There is a third man depicted here, who catches Christ’s body; his foot extends out of the miniature onto the frame, drawing our attention into the scene. Could this third person be the owner of the book? Or, is this John the Evangelist who wrote about the Deposition (Zuffi, Gospel, 306)?

The Hours of the Holy Spirit focused on the Pentecost, the fiftieth day after the resurrection, and signified the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, where they were given the ability to speak in all languages to spread the holy word (S. Fisher 83). The scene of The Pentecost, the most often used illustration for this set of Hours, is usually depicted in a church setting (Clark 47; Wieck, Time 92). Here we see the twelve apostles (Mathias has taken Judas’ place) in an architecturally ornate setting surrounding the Virgin while the “Dove of the Holy Spirit” floats directly above the scene (Zuffi, Gospel 361). A second image of the Holy Spirit, carved on the wall, in bas-relief, reiterates his presence.

In the Toledo Book of Hours, the full-page illuminations and miniatures we have seen are self-contained, and depict one part, one moment, in the narrative. However, in the Hours of the Holy Spirit, the subject of the miniature (recto) looks down upon the faces on the preceding page (verso). The miniature depicts God, the Salvator Mundi (Savior of the World); signified by the globus cruciger held in his left hand, surrounded by seraphs, he peers upon the apostles and the Virgin (Wieck, Time 97). Similar to The Annunciation, our gaze follows God’s gaze to the scene below, then is returned to the
miniature through the gaze of the apostles on the left who seem to be looking upward, directly at God. Even the image of the face carved in the pedestal of the left column looks upward. The coffered arch accents the golden aureole surrounding the Holy Spirit, and directs our gaze downward again, while enclosing the scene.

The similar margins that border the text in both sets of Hours unify this section of the book. The margins have a symbolic story to tell as well. Here we can see two pages of marginal décor side by side, each with a similar, natural style first seen in the Calendar. Botanical motifs were used quite frequently, particularly in Flemish manuscripts, and attention was given to detail to reproduce a distinctive representation (Zuffi, European 143). During the late Medieval and early Renaissance, artists often used empirical observation, incorporating it into their artwork; this artist must have studied well, for he has captured many natural nuances, such as the details of a flower’s petals or the intricacies of a dragonfly’s wings, so that we can easily identify them today (Zuffi, European 20). There are a wide range of flowers displayed on each page, including dianthus, strawflowers, speedwell, columbine, thistle, a small pansy or viola, and ranunculus that are interspersed with stylized acanthus leaves; a fly and frog (or toad) are thrown in for good measure! In The Medieval Flower Book, Celia Fisher writes that the stylized acanthus leaf was prevalent in medieval art but not in medieval gardens; having originated in warm climates, this design imitated classic Corinthian columns (C. Fisher 18). There is symbolism associated with each of these botanical representations; the acanthus leaf signifies resurrection (18); the speedwell, remembrance (52); and thistles, the torments of the body and spirit (116).
The margins described above are quite different from the decorated margins in the Gospel Lessons, Prayers to the Virgin, and Hours of the Virgin. This may indicate that more than one artist illuminated this book. As mentioned in the Calendar, the margin served not only as a text frame but also as an area where the artist could “explore his own imagination” (Wittmann 31).
2.7 Seven Penitential Psalms, Litany, and Prayers

Fig. 2.9 David and Bathsheba from the Seven Penitential Psalms
Book of Hours of the Virgin (1955.28)
Toledo Museum of Art

The Seven Penitential Psalms (6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129, and 142) are next in a Book of Hours; they were said to be written by King David to atone for his sins (Wieck, Henry 116). Because they number seven, they were associated with the Seven Deadly Sins (Wieck, Henry 116). As the owner of the Book of Hours read them, he or she was asking God for atonement for, or protection from, these deadly sins (de Hamel 174).
The text for the Psalms leads directly into the prayers of the Litany that also ask for help, but this time from a list of numerous saints who are placed in hierarchal order (Wieck, Henry 116). Saints were venerated for living exemplary lives by overcoming evil while maintaining their faith, becoming more powerful after death (Putney, Medieval 33, 34). The Litany is an “exceedingly ancient incantation” calling upon the saints to pray for the owner of the book; after each saint’s name is an abbreviation “or” for Ora pro nobis meaning “Pray for us” (de Hamel 174; Wieck, Time 101). Following the Litany are the Prayers, specific requests for protection against natural as well as human catastrophes such as plagues or wars (Wieck, Henry 116).

Typically, the Psalms have one miniature and this was usually of a youthful, gallant David before he sinned, but another accepted scene is shown in figure 2.9. This illumination of David and Bathsheba represents the beginning of David’s transgressions (Wieck, Henry 117). The full-page miniature from the Toledo Book of Hours portrays David who is richly dressed with “robes lined in royal ermine” looking upon a nude Bathsheba, a married woman, as she bathes in a fountain surrounded by gardens and architecture (Wieck, Time 99).

Now it might be difficult to guess the narrative in many of these illuminations unless we had heard the stories before, but it is important to remember that when this book was created these illuminated stories were heard in church, so the illumination is a visual reminder of a well-known story. As this story continues, David commits adultery with Bathsheba, and then sends her husband to the front lines of battle where he dies (Clark 32). David then marries Bathsheba and she bears him a son who dies within days of birth; David realizing his sins begs God for forgiveness (Clark 32).
The miniature on the *recto* shows a rarely depicted scene of David with Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah, who is receiving his orders for battle (Wieck, Henry 117).

This miniature introduces the first Psalm, which focuses on the subject of anger. The first Psalm begins:

*Sequuntur septem psalmi penitentiales a.*

*Ne reminiscaris. P’s.*

*Domine ne in furore tuo arguas me neq-- in ira tua corripias me.*

After, follow the seven penitential psalms (“a” is an abbreviation for antiphon)

Remember not, O Lord, our offenses (“P’s” is an abbreviation for psalm)

Lord, in thy wrath and anger do not accuse nor chastise me.

(“Latin English;” Wieck, Time 164)
2.8 Vigil (or Office) of the Dead

The Vigil of the Dead, more commonly known as the Office of the Dead, is the section of the Book of Hours, where the iconography in regard to the text, is at its most varied and most imaginative, for it deals with the medieval fixation with death and one’s own transience in this world. Scenes reflecting life and death were already prevalent in the church as a reminder of the afterlife and a fear of death was natural for the threat of war or a plague was constantly looming (de Hamel 175; Putney, Medieval 29). It is the second longest section of the book, behind the Hours of the Virgin and uses the exact text from the Breviary, exactly as the clergy would recite it, without abridgment, so that the

Fig. 2.10 Raising Lazarus from the Vigil of the Dead
Book of Hours of the Virgin (1955.28)
Toledo Museum of Art
reader might spend less time in Purgatory, a fiery place of purification one waited in before entering heaven (Clark 48; Wieck, Henry 120). This set of prayers was fundamental to the funeral service, so saying the prayers in private would help not only the souls of loved ones to spend less time in Purgatory and relieve some of their suffering, but they would also aid the reader’s soul, perhaps alleviating the stay entirely (Wieck, Henry 120). This section contains three prayers: Vespers, Matins, and Lauds.

Illuminations for the Vigil of the Dead could depict numerous scenarios such as monks who prayed over a draped coffin, or the tests faced by particular biblical figures; Job is the most frequently illustrated followed by Lazarus (Wieck, Time 124, 131-2). Alternatively, they might depict the deceased’s body in a cold wasteland or show an angel and devil fighting over the deceased’s soul (Wieck, Time 129). Sometimes a gravedigger would be shown reclaiming an already used piece of earth, and because caskets were recycled, the bones of the previous tenant might be unceremoniously strewn about! Medieval graves were not permanent, but rather short-term burial plots (Wieck, Time 129). Infrequently, Purgatory or Hell was depicted in a variety of forms to terrify one away from temptation and if that was not frightening enough, the figure of Death might be portrayed (Wieck, Time 126, 134).

This section rarely contains more than one miniature, but the Toledo Book of Hours has two illuminations (Wieck, Time 124). The full-page image on the verso is Raising Lazarus. As the story goes, Jesus had been away, but heard that his friend Lazarus had been sick; by the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus had been dead four days. He was brought back to life by Jesus, and bore witness to what he had seen in hell (Zuffi,
Gospel 216; Wieck, Time 132). This story indirectly refers to “mankind’s resurrection… and God’s merciful forgiveness” (Wieck, Time 132).

The colors used in this scene are prevalent throughout the pages of the Toledo Book of Hours with the exception of the red-orange boot resting on the tomb; this color has been used sparingly, only as an occasional accent. Here the red-orange boot seems to point to the opening of the crypt, a reminder of what has taken place. Our eyes are drawn to Lazarus, whose image is one of the lightest elements on the page. From here our gaze moves to the blue robed figure wearing the red boot, up the angle of the casket, bringing our eyes to Jesus (the only figure shown in toto, giving him prominence), then through the crowd, in a circular motion, back to Lazarus, up his left arm, and back to Jesus. This compositional motif of Raising Lazarus has been repeated in several other Books of Hours; the angle of the uplifted leg, as well as the angle and size of the tomb, and Jesus’ bearing distinctly match this illumination. The noticeable repetition in certain illuminations is not a coincidence and will be discussed in Chapter 3.4.

The second illumination is a miniature of Job and his friends and corresponds to the prayers in Matins. Job, the “model of patience,” patiently prayed for “mercy and understanding” to alleviate his plight, yet his name is never mentioned in the prayers (Wieck, Henry 120, 132). Rather, the first person singular is used, placing the reader in Job’s position (Wieck, Henry 120).

One of the more familiar psalms used in Matins is Psalm 22 (Psalm 23 in King James), “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want…” (Wieck, Henry 120). The first Psalm for the Vigil of the Dead is Psalm 114 (116) and begins:

*Sequuntur Vigilie mortuoru.*
*Ant. Placebo.*
Psalmus.
*Dilexi quonia exaudiet dn: vocem oratiois mee.*

After, follow the Vigil of the Dead. (This is the prayer’s title) (Ant. is an abbreviation of antiphon). I shall please…
Psalm.
I love the Lord and he will hear my prayers (“Latin English”).

It is possible to locate the words of Psalm 114 in the text; they start at the top of the page, directly after the word *Psalmus* (Psalm), written in red ink. It is easy to see the different ink colors used on this page. *Rubrica* (red) or *rubrics* are red symbols or words that denote a specific detail and direct the reader to offer the appropriate response (Bischoff 16; “Medieval Manuscripts”). In the Calendar, red ink denoted a special day, but in this text, it acted as a reminder to recite the appropriate *Psalmus*. Blue ink, like red, denoted a special passage, in this case, the title of the section, and black or brown ink was used for the general text.

Abbreviations were quite common in Books of Hours and were used in many texts of the period (Bischoff 150, 154). The fifth line down contains the letters “dns,” an abbreviation for “dominus” (“the lord of”) (Saetveit). Another form of abbreviation called “abbreviation strokes,” were small marks that designated the deletion of syllables (Bischoff 156). Abbreviated words and abbreviation strokes are similar to today’s text messaging where one drops vowels and syllables then uses a few consonants to refer to the original word. The abbreviations seen throughout the Toledo *Book of Hours* represent either words or a system of reminders of what is about to come next. For example, “*Ant.*” seen in line two of the text is short for *antiphon*, a sung response. The word that follows “*Ant.*,” “*Placebo*” (“I shall please you”) is the first word that begins this specific antiphon (Wieck, Time 166).
Suffrages, also called Memorials, are short prayers that ask for help or intercession and usually conclude a Book of Hours (Wieck, Henry 130). These prayers are quite similar to the Litany and are placed in hierarchal order, beginning with the “Three Persons of the Trinity…, the Archangel Michael, followed by John the Baptist (our future intercessor at the Last Judgment)” (Wieck, Henry 130). Next are Apostles, martyrs, and confessors, followed by the saints, male first, then female (Wieck, Henry 130).
The number of suffrages depended on one’s purse, and although they were not always illuminated, when they were they portray a memorable moment (Wieck, Time 111). Once again Roger Wieck compares this section of a Book of Hours to a cathedral, “...the Suffrages would be its stained glass” (Wieck, Time 111).

Abbot Suger wrote that the natural light that shone through the stained glass was “a mystery, for it glowed without fire” and was a “source of divine light” (Calkins 173). The full-page illuminations we have found in the Toledo Book of Hours, similar to those found in many Books of Hours, are directly related to the artistic and story-telling elements in many of the arts of this period, particularly stained glass. By the fifteenth century the figures displayed in stained glass appeared to be three-dimensional and had a feeling of space and perspective quite similar to the illuminations in a Book of Hours (Calkins 173). Even the colors used in the illuminations mimic the colors of the glass that were named after precious gems, “ruby red, emerald green and sapphire blue” or the lovely bleu de ciel or “heavenly blue” (Langley 35).

The Suffrages begin with an invocation to The Holy Trinity. The full-page illumination illustrates the Holy Spirit looking upon God the Father who is holding Christ’s body so that we may see each of his raw wounds. The window frame premise continues in this illustration, but eerily, God is looking directly into our eyes and we are no longer bystanders; we are involved in the scene. The golden crowned God is seated on a throne, with seraphim filling the background. Is this heaven?

The invocation begins,

De Sanctissima a trinitate.
Sancta trinitas unus deus miserere nobis. An’
Te inuocamus te adoramus te laudamus te glorificamus o beata trinitas.vs.
From the Most Blessed Trinity,
Holy Trinity is one God, have mercy on us. (Antiphon)
I called upon you, we adore Thee, we praise Thee, we glorify Thee, O Blessed
Trinity. (Verse) (“Latin English”).

Following the invocation to the Holy Trinity is a
suffrage to the archangel Michael, one of the “most popular”
angels for his ability to lead the armies against Satan (Wieck,
Time 111). He is followed by John the Baptist, John the
Evangelist, the apostles, Peter and Paul, Saint James, Saint
Sebastian, Saint Lawrence, Saint Nicholas, Saint Anthony,
Saint Anne, Saint Mary Magdalene, Saint Catherine, Saint
Barbara, Saint Margaret, and Saint Apollonia. The Toledo
Book of Hours has a corresponding illustration for each
suffrage. Gregory T. Clark, in his book The Spitz Master, A
Parisian Book of Hours, mentions that the gender of the owner may be deduced by the
number of saints of the same gender listed in the Suffrages; in this case, the male saints
outnumber the female (Clark 13).

Although our religious narrative ends at this point, there are more stories ahead.
Learning about the inception and the elements within a Book of Hours established a
foundation for understanding some of the religious, cultural, historic, and artistic nuances
within the Toledo Book of Hours. However, there is much more to explore within this
beautiful book.
CHAPTER 3

Pursuing the Origin—Period, Place, and Illuminator—
of the Book of Hours of the Virgin

3.1 Period and Place

Trying to discover the origin—the artist’s identity, and where and when the Toledo Book of Hours was created—offers additional avenues to explore. The Book of Hours, a late medieval creation, continued to be made well into the sixteenth century. If a Book of Hours happened to be created during the transitional period between the Medieval and Renaissance eras, to which should it be attributed?

Historians offer several viewpoints regarding the date that ends the Medieval Period and begins the Renaissance. Some historians believe the Medieval Period ends in 1453 coinciding with the end of the Hundred Year War between France and England while others believe it occurs after the fall of Constantinople. Others point to the capabilities of the printing press, as the tool that ended the Medieval Ages (de Hamel 9). Another line of thought is that there is no definitive date (Zuffi, European 14). While all of these ideas may hold an element of truth, they hinder rather than help the attribution process.

Robert Calkins, in his book Monuments of Medieval Art, thought Jean Fouquet’s “Italian motifs,” brought to France around 1450, were a deciding factor that ended the
medieval era in France (Calkins 135). Jean Fouquet did play an important role by bringing the artistic ideals of the Italian Renaissance to France after returning from Italy in the 1440s (Walther 474). Fouquet (1420-1481), a French illuminator, part of the royal court for both King Charles VII then Louis XII, visited Florence, Naples, and Rome and incorporated a clearer perspective, classical architectural elements, and humanist ideals, into his paintings after he returned (Zuffi, European 278). This offers the clue needed for attribution.

How do we classify the period for the Toledo Book of Hours? By looking for the humanist ideas in the artistic elements of the illuminations, we can begin to identify characteristics that depict a transition into the Renaissance. The margins surrounding the text provide examples of abstract décor, the drolleries and grotesques on one page, followed by borders and landscapes that portray the real world. The Renaissance strove to make images directly accessible, relatable to the viewer’s experience, as shown in the contemporary (for the period) architecture (Calkins 137). Using empirical logic, artists attempted to understand and accurately portray the world around them and this is demonstrated using perspective and anatomical proportion in each of the illuminations. This effort extended not only to a realistic depiction of the human body, but also to the space and elements surrounding it; the perspective of the classical architecture, the buildings in the distance, and the landscapes all were an attempt to recreate natural order and harmony. The humanistic script of the text represented a return to the classical ideal and order, offering another distinct flavor of the Renaissance.

Noting the characteristics within the Toledo Book of Hours does not point to a definitive date, but it does allow us to see how the characteristics of the Renaissance are
present, allowing us to attribute the book to this period. There are other means to deduce a specific time frame, for example the Calendar, Litany, and Suffrages present clues to saints “who were not canonized until the fifteenth century” (de Hamel 184). By doing a little detective work, it is possible to discern specific dates that identify when the book was written after. For instance, Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, was canonized in 1446; his name will not be listed as a saint in the Calendar, Litany, or Suffrages prior to 1446. The feast day of Saint Nicholas is September 10, and is listed in the September Calendar so we can determine that the Toledo Book of Hours was written after 1445. Saint Bernardinus of Sienna was not recognized as a saint until 1450; he is listed in the Calendar on May 20, although here his name is spelled “Bernardini.” Finally, Saint Vincent Ferrer was canonized in 1455; his name is noted in the Calendar on April 5, leading to the conclusion that this book was created after 1455 (de Hamel 184).

The humanistic script used in this book can isolate the date, but not precisely, as humanistic script had a revival beginning in the fifteenth century (Bischoff 146). Also, if one has knowledge of classical architecture, it is possible to scrutinize the architectural elements, such as buildings and bridges, to help pinpoint not only the date but also the location.

Determining the place the book was to be used is a bit more challenging, but can be attempted by combining elements found in the Calendar, Litany, Hours of the Virgin, and the Office of the Dead (Clark 6; de Hamel 178). The “Use” in the Hours of the Virgin, can sometimes identify the town where a Book of Hours was to be “used,” but not where it was created (Plummer, Use 149). In the Toledo Book of Hours, “According to the Roman use” was mentioned in the incipit of the Hours of the Virgin, but this was
written in many French and Flemish books, and all Italian Books of Hours, thus hiding their origins (de Hamel 178; Plummer, Use 149). Perhaps there was a need or hope for a “universal text” that could be used anywhere (Plummer, Use 149). Further confusing the matter was the fact that bookshops made and stocked various Books of Hours for travelers who wanted to bring a certain “use” home, making it very difficult to tell where a Book of Hours was originally made (de Hamel 184).

Christopher de Hamel, in his book *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts*, offered a suggestion to further identify the location where the book was to be used. By locating the lines following the *antiphon* (response) and *capitulum* (short chapter) in the offices of Prime and Nones one might be able to find additional clues. In the Toledo *Book of Hours*, the *antiphon* and *capitulum* in both Prime and Nones, in the Hours of the Virgin, agree with the “Use of Rome.”

It is interesting to note that the names of the saints may also be helpful in pinpointing the “Use” of a Book of Hours, the place it was to be used, for different saints were worshiped in different locales where each had their own customs (Clark 6; de Hamel 178). The Saints listed in the Calendar are somewhat helpful in determining a location, but these are often vague, for there are a wide variety of feasts from a variety of local and regional areas (Plummer, Use 150).

After searching for and ruling out numerous saints in the Calendar associated with Paris, Rouen, and Ghent, there was a match for Saint Martin (November 11) an important local saint commemorated in Tours, indicating that this book may have ties to Tours, but his name is written in blue, not red ink although this may not matter (de Hamel 184). The local feast of Saint Basil (Bruges) is celebrated on June 14, and the Toledo *Book of Hours*
has Saint Basilidis noted in red for June 12, two days earlier (Plummer, Use 150). Is it the same saint? If so, this is one of the “most specific” feasts days and points to a “Use,” of Bruges (Plummer, Use 150). If Saint Donatian is listed on October 14, this is another indicator that the book was to be used in Bruges; he is listed, in red, but on August 7; while the red ink indicates his importance, the August date is an indication that this book may not have been designated for Bruges after all (de Hamel 185). Finally, two saints honored in Rheims are listed, in brown ink, noting a common feast day; Saint Gervasius on June 19, although his name is spelled “Gervasii,” and Saint Martialis (July 3) listed on July 1 (Wieck, Painted 26).

Thus far, we have the Toledo Book of Hours attributed to the Renaissance, created sometime after 1455, and the Saints listed above are an indicator that the book may have been for use in Tours, Bruges, or Rheims. When all is said and done, it is the rare book that contains the exact information about where it was written (de Hamel 188). If we can identify the artist, then the possibilities for dating the book will be narrowed.

3.2 The Illuminating Artist

In the fifteenth century, painters rarely signed books (Zuffi, European 56). Occasionally an artist would represent himself within a miniature but this does not usually offer enough information to decipher his identity (Calkins 265). Trying to ascertain the artist who created a specific Book of Hours may be possible if one is patient enough to sort through a myriad of clues.

Early on, illuminators were regarded as artisans, skilled craftsmen, who were paid an hourly or daily wage because they knew the technical aspects of their trade; this may be the reason why many remain anonymous (Zuffi, European 56). The upgrade from
artisan to artist came about during the Renaissance when Humanists began to regard artists’ creativity as an integral aspect of the liberal arts; respect for their imaginative concepts that decorated their work helped to bring artists’ identities to the fore (Zuffi, European 56). In the late fifteenth century, the German painter and printmaker Albrecht Dürer was one of the first artists to be recognized by name (Zuffi, European 56).

Today, if an artist’s name is known, it is credited, but if it is unknown, art historians have found ways to offer the artist an identity. Artists may be named after the patron who commissioned the Book of Hours; for instance, the Boucicaut Master was the artist who worked for the Maréchal de Boucicaut (de Hamel 191). If there are enough indicators an unknown artist might be named for the particular region he worked in; thus, it is possible to see invented names such as the Master of Tours or the Tours Master (Calkins 265). Occasionally an art historian will give an artist an invented name; this was the case for the Master of Morgan 85, named after Manuscript 85 in The Pierpont Morgan Library collection (Wieck, Post 253).

Artists began as apprentices in a workshop headed by a master artist who worked with a “substantial number of assistants” who trained in the master’s style (Zuffi, European 62). A workshop’s mainstay were “model books,” books of layouts, faces (sometimes of workers in the workshop), figures, fabric drapery, flora and fauna, as well as “heraldic emblems,” that were used to train the artists, using them as templates for illuminations (Zuffi, European 62). Apprentice artists would copy the art from the model books and occasionally, to add interest, would copy the images in reverse (de Hamel 192). For the most part, model books followed traditional artistic formulas, but a characteristic “workshop style” often developed, thus aiding in the identification process.
It was their distinguishing marks or styles, which eventually set artists apart, making them easier to identify (Zuffi, European 56). As the style of one artist or workshop became apparent, it was possible to identify them, thus creating a form of signature.

3.3 Illuminating Comparisons

The illuminated scenes that accompanied a specific section in a Book of Hours had certain thematic parameters that most artists followed. For example, the Hours of the Holy Virgin traditionally began with an illumination of the Annunciation and featured the archangel Gabriel and the Virgin. Recognizing thematic content in an illumination is straightforward, yet searching for schematic similarities can be more challenging; however, when looking at numerous manuscripts within a set period of time, it is possible to see illuminations that have both thematic and schematic content in common. This was the case with three illuminations from the Toledo Book of Hours where the similarities to the illuminations found in other Books of Hours, seem to be more than coincidental.

Comparing three illuminations, The Annunciation, The Holy Trinity, and David and Bathsheba, in close proximity with those from two other Books of Hours makes it possible to see repetition of schematic layouts, figural elements, color palette, and marginal décor. If the artist’s identity is known for one of the Books of Hours in the comparison, then this will offer a clue to pursue regarding the unidentified artist who illuminated the Toledo Book of Hours.
Fig. 3.1 The Annunciation from the Hours of the Virgin
Book of Hours of the Virgin (1955.28)
Toledo Museum of Art

Fig. 3.2 Annunciation
ff. 26v-27r, 1500-1525
Used by permission of the Rare Book Department, Free Library of Philadelphia
The illuminations of *The Annunciation* on the previous page offer an example of the same scene, with slight variations, taken from two separate Books of Hours (de Hamel 192). The illumination in Figure 3.2 is from a Book of Hours made for the Chivernay family in Brittany early in the sixteenth century, attributed to an artist now known as the Master of Morgan 85 (“Lewis E 214”).

By placing these two illuminations (Fig. 3.1 and 3.2) in close proximity, it is possible to see many stylistic similarities. Most noticeable is that the subjects and *prê-dieu* are arranged in a similar fashion, but in reverse. The *prê-dieu* situated between the Virgin and Gabriel is similar in color and drapery and the pillow and chemise that cradles the opened book, although not exact, are very much alike. The folds in the drapery that clothe the Virgin and Gabriel are similar, particularly the folds in Mary’s cloak and the way it drapes around her outside arm. Even the tiled floor is similar in color and perspective.

There are differences as well; the second illumination, Figure 3.2, does not fill the space in the same manner and feels somewhat cramped, not as spacious as the first illumination. The hand that painted the scene does not seem as refined and the faces of the Virgin and Gabriel, while pleasant, have a different character. The gold cloth of Gabriel’s robe as well as the cloth that covers the *prê-dieu* has a square spiral pattern. The architectural elements are fewer and not as well defined and the witnesses and landscape are minimal and simple. The color palette seems muted, although this could be attributed to the photographed image. The artist did not create a smoothly flowing visual narrative on this page, for the eye begins with Mary and follows the crook of Gabriel’s arm to the Holy Spirit, then out of the scene; furthermore the vanishing point seems to be
somewhere off the right corner of the illumination. The addition of an armorial device, blazoned on a four edge ordinary, or across azure (gold across blue), with four eight point suns in gules (red) one in each quadrant, further disrupt the visual current (Gold and Shead).

The second illumination, attributed to the Master of Morgan 85, gives us the name of an artist to investigate. Are the similarities enough to attribute the first illumination to the same artist? Not at this point, but continuing the comparison may lead to other indications. The next comparison taken from the same book, the Chivernay Book of Hours, features an image of the *Holy Trinity*; here, the images are not in reverse, but their components are strikingly similar in the way they fill the page.
Fig. 3.3 The Holy Trinity from the Suffrages
Book of Hours of the Virgin (1955.28)
Toledo Museum of Art

Fig. 3.4 Holy Trinity
ff. 134v-135r, 1500-1525
Used by permission of the Rare Book Department, Free Library of Philadelphia
Once again, we see spatial congruity from the page of one book to the other. The background and foreground are similar in nature and color even the style and lines of the chair are in agreement. It would be an interesting experiment to place an outline of one illumination over the other to see how close the lines in each illumination match up. The architectural elements are very similar, but decorated in a different manner. The color palette contains the same colors, olive, pink, and grey tiles, gold and blue robes, and orange-red seraphim.

In the second illumination (Fig. 3.4), the Holy Spirit and Christ are positioned vertically in the center of the page, drawing the eye directly upward, while the diagonal arrangement of Christ in the first illumination draws the eyes in a circular pattern through the painting. Although the placement of the seraphim is similar, they are fewer in number. Another difference is in the manner the gold leaf highlights were applied to reflect the light from the Trinity who radiate a heavenly glow. The second illumination uses random gold highlights particularly on the eyelids of the seraphim; the first illumination uses gold leaf touches that act as though they came from a defined light source, the Trinity. The inclusion of a text box at the bottom of the second illumination disrupts the flow of the space and makes the scene feel a bit compressed.

There is no doubt that these four illuminations are similar, although both illuminations taken from the Toledo Book of Hours have a more refined, elegant bearing. This leads to the conclusion that these scenes came from the same model book. However, are they by the same artist?
When comparing manuscripts of the same period, visual similarities often begin to arise. Some similarities can be quite startling, and this was the case with the final comparison; the two illuminations of David and Bathsheba (Fig. 3.5 and 3.6) have many, very distinct similarities. In the Toledo Book of Hours, the full-page illumination of David and Bathsheba (Fig. 3.5) featured in the Seven Penitential Psalms portrays a thematic element used in other Books of Hours, but in these two illuminations, there is far more than thematic similarity.

The layout of each illumination fills the page in the same manner and uses comparable proportions. The angles of the architectural elements are similar as is the hexagonal shape of the bath, but the perspective in the second illustration (Fig. 3.6) is cleaner, perhaps more advanced. The second illumination offers more detail in the
architectural elements, particularly the parapet King David leans upon; the first illumination depicted fleur-de-lis in the architecture, the second shows several motifs, including an ornate equestrian scene. The shape, placement, and size of the gardens in the background are alike. The color palette is the same, as seen in the opaque colors of the figures, drapery, and architecture and the transparent colors of the landscape elements.

Even the font has similar ornamentation, down to the lion’s head spout.

The colors of King David’s robes, as well as his body language, correspond from one painting to the next, although his crown is different. Bathsheba has the same deportment, except that the fingers of her uplifted right hand interrupt the stream of water that flows from the fountain. Even her navel is created in the same manner in each illumination. It is interesting to note that in the second illumination, the faces of both David and Bathsheba are quite similar, although more refined and somewhat older. While the proportions are not anatomically precise in either illumination, there is an honesty to the way they are positioned and the way they occupy the space. The addition of the two women beside the fountain gives the impression that Bathsheba is attended and indeed guiltless, although King David appears closer in proximity and feels a bit more threatening.

All of the illuminations used to compare those in the Toledo Book of Hours, date to the first quarter of the sixteenth century, and are attributed to the Master of Morgan 85. After comparing the illuminations, it is possible to detect similarities and differences in the details and see schematic designs that are remarkably connected. However, the question still arises, are these painted by the same artist?
As noted above, books created in workshops were cooperative efforts created by many hands. By using the main subjects from the model book, but placing new elements around the main figures, it is possible to give the illumination a new look. The scenes that originated from a workshop’s model book might show up in several different Books of Hours; this would explain the schematic similarity from one illumination to the next. Although the model books were the lifeblood of a workshop, perhaps some of the model pages were shared, willingly or unwillingly (de Hamel 195). There is conjecture that occasionally artists who were moving stole pages or entire model books. There is an instance noted in Robert Calkins’ book *Monuments of Medieval Art*, of a patron, the Duc de Berry, who thought so highly of one of his illuminator’s talents that he obtained a royal pardon for the illuminator after he had murdered another artist for the theft of artistic designs (Calkins 214).

It is possible that more than one artist worked on the Toledo *Book of Hours*. Although it may be difficult to discern how many artists illuminated the book it is possible to see slight differences in the styles between the pages. The natural margins followed by fanciful settings seem to represent not only two separate motifs, but also two different artists; the quality of the facial features, hands, and structural elements are similar but not consistent, particularly between full-page illuminations and miniatures, but this could be due to their size.

It was not unusual to have manuscript pages commissioned or subcontracted to a variety of different artists, then bound to form one complete book, further confusing the matter (de Hamel 191). It is easier to accept the considerable differences in the quality of the workmanship in the illumination comparison, if we apply the premise of numerous
hands. This would explain the variety of workmanship, the different ways of using space, and the differing quality of faces, hands, and drapery; we may assume each artist had his own specialty or wanted to create his own signature style. There is also the possibility that the quality of the workmanship was based on the size of the commission or a different stage in the artist’s development.

The images in David and Bathsheba are remarkably similar, leading to the supposition that these two illuminations were by the hand of the same artist. Conceivably the artist had chosen to update his images at a later stage in his career. Because friends and associates were used as models, it is also possible that he painted the same two models—David and Bathsheba—at a later date, thus illustrating not only more mature features, but also the refinement of his style.

3.4 The Master of Morgan 85 and Associates

What do we know about the Master of Morgan 85, besides that he was active during the years circa 1490 to circa 1525? Art historian, John Plummer, coined the name “Master of Morgan 85” based on a Book of Hours (MS M. 0085) in The Pierpont Morgan Library collection that contains the David and Bathsheba shown in Figure 3.6 (Wieck, Post 253; Plummer, Last 92). Plummer notes that the Master of Morgan 85 had stylistic traits, such as “radial stippling of distant trees and the nebulous, scalloped-edged clouds” plus a unique manner of representing the foreground greenery, placing a light green wash over ink (Plummer, Last 92). Another art historian, Roger Wieck, along with Plummer, concur that the Master of Morgan 85 worked in Tours, Paris, and Rouen, and
collaborated with at least two other well-known artists, Jean Poyer and Jean Bourdichon (Plummer, Last 92; Wieck, Post 249).

Jean Poyer, also known as Jean Poyet, (ca. 1465-1503), was master of a workshop in Tours during the time the Toledo Book of Hours was created. Poyer’s “mastery of perspective, subtle use of color and light, and convincing representation of the human figure” represented a shift from late Medieval to an early Renaissance style (“Jean Poyer”). Poyer, who had traveled to Italy, incorporated new ideas into his illuminations and they reflect an Italian influence (“Jean Poyer”). Although he painted illuminations himself, he also hired other illuminators adept at imitating his style to assist him; the assistant illuminators would paint a page or an entire book, with Poyer only adding touches to the illumination; this makes it especially challenging to identify the master from the assistant (“Jean Poyer”).

After Poyer’s death in 1503, his workshop closed and many of his assistants left for Paris. One of his assistant artists, now known as the Master of Morgan 85, used Poyer’s models, and was quite productive, but he did not possess the same abilities as Poyer (“Jean Poyer”). In the essay, “Post Poyet,” art historian, Roger Wieck writes that the Master of Morgan 85 copied pages from Poyer’s Briçonnet Hours and replicated them in at least three of his own books (249). Raising Lazarus (Fig. 2.10), in the Toledo Book of Hours, copies Jean Poyer’s illumination from the Briçonnet Hours (Haarlem, Teylers Museum, Ms.78, Fol. 83), duplicating the angle of Lazarus’ body and tomb, the booted man assisting him, and the position and posture of Jesus, the only differences are in the background. When comparing the manuscripts and the artists’ styles trying to discern a date, Poyer’s death in 1503 should also be considered.
Jean Bourdichon (c.1457-1521), a contemporary of Poyer, was considered his “artistic peer,” and worked “in a similar style in the same town, at the same time, and often for the same patrons” (Wieck, Post 248; Walther 472). Bourdichon was fortunate and skilled enough to be the “official painter to the king…under four successive rulers (Kings Louis XI, Charles VIII, Louis XII, and Francis I)” (Wieck, Post 248). The artists’ styles were so similar that the Grandes Heures d’Anne de Bretagne (1503-1508), first attributed to Poyer (Poyet) is now attributed to Bourdichon (Walther 409, 472).

Bourdichon was quite adept at rendering perspective accurately and he had a distinctive style for marginal décor featuring flora and fauna. His illuminations feature over 337 different botanical designs, as well as snails, frogs, and insects (Walther 409, 410). His illuminations also show both late Medieval and early Renaissance characteristics (Walther 410).

The Master of Morgan 85 collaborated with Bourdichon while in Tours (Wieck, Post 251). The Pierpont Morgan Library has two manuscripts, MS. M 291(c. 1490) and MS. M 292 (c. 1500), that identify the artists as Jean Bourdichon and the Master of Morgan 85, making it possible to see examples of each of their styles. The former manuscript also has an illumination of Raising Lazarus (Fol. 070r) that has similar schematic content, down to the angle of Lazarus’ body and sarcophagus, as well as comparable artistic elements noted in the previous chapter and Chapter 2.8 (Vigil of the Dead); again, the background elements are different. It is attributed solely to the Master of Morgan 85. The Morgan Library’s illumination of Raising Lazarus (Fol. 070r) also copies the illumination done by Jean Poyer (Plummer, Last 85).
Interestingly, a third artist, the Parisian Jean Pichore, master of a large workshop that produced illuminations as well as prints, worked with the Master of Morgan 85 when he was in Paris (Wieck, Post 249; Wieck Painted, 24). This fact does not appear relevant until we uncover the most important piece of information regarding the artist’s identity. The British Library’s site for Jean Pichore, states that the Master of Morgan 85, known in Europe as the Flavius Josephus Master, was considered the “chief associate” in Pichore’s workshop, but is now identified as Jean Pichore himself (Hofmann). Roger Wieck adds, “There is some reason to associate the anonymous appellation of the artist [the Master of Morgan 85] with the known person, Jean Pichore” (Wieck, NYPL 2011). Furthermore, Caroline Zöhl, in her book, Jean Pichore: Buchmaler, Graphiker, und Verleger in Paris um 1500, believes that Jean Pichore and the Master of Morgan 85 are not independent characters that can be separated from one another (Zöhl 60).

Is the Master of Morgan 85 truly Jean Pichore? This is a question for art historians to debate. What is apparent in the comparison is that the illuminations appear to be from the same model book and there is no doubt that the figural elements, landscapes, and palette of the Toledo Book of Hours are comparable to the illuminations attributed to the Master of Morgan 85. If this is indeed the case, then the date the Toledo Book of Hours was created can be narrowed to the dates he was active circa 1490-1520 (Wieck, Post 249). If the second illumination (Fig. 21) of David and Bathsheba (c. 1510-1520) is an indicator of his mature style, could the Toledo Book of Hours be representative of his earlier style, further narrowing the dates?

The pages within a Book of Hours offered the artist a chance to explore his creative boundaries within the limits of the page. If the Books of Hours was a
collaborative effort, then the finished product was an amalgamation of many hands but the question still begs to be asked, whose hands? Could the Toledo Book of Hours be a collaborative effort between the Master of Morgan 85 and Jean Poyer or Jean Bourdichon? Quite possibly, for all of the artists were actively working in Tours during this period and the Master of Morgan 85 had previously worked together with both men (Plummer, Last 86).

Many works of art have been identified by characteristics belonging to a particular artist, workshop, or region. As Robert Calkins states,

Only when artisans signed and dated their productions do we have a sure indication of identity and time, but the attribution of other, similar works to these artists or to their milieus must depend on careful stylistic analysis (265).

By creating the visual comparison, it is possible to see that the Master of Morgan 85 may have painted the imagery in the Toledo Book of Hours, but while this is quite feasible, it is not definite at this time.
3.5 Coda

Victor Hugo’s 1831 classic, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, offered a glimpse of Paris during the late fifteenth century. The story, a study in contradictions and connections, is similar to those found in a Book of Hours, where each of the elements played an important role in the telling of the story. The calligraphy, the prayers written in Latin, the ornamented margins, the calendar, the illuminations and their stories, along with the search for the artist’s identity, add to the multilayered story of a Book of Hours, where each individual element, when combined, forms something far larger than the sum of its parts.

The Toledo *Book of Hours* was created during an era when Columbus had sailed to the New World, Leonardo da Vinci had finished *The Last Supper*, and Michelangelo had sculpted his Vatican *Pietà*. The Renaissance favored exploration, observation, and beauty, and the Toledo *Book of Hours* is a work of art that represents these attributes. Exploring and observing the beauty of the illuminations and text within the Toledo *Book*
of Hours, while discovering the nuances of each section, allows us to appreciate the book as a work of art, but also allows us to realize how this diminutive devotional book, offered spiritual comfort and was for a time, so favored by the people. Roger Wieck ends his comparison, “Like a cathedral it was expensive to produce, but was a source of pride and pleasure, as well as a means of obtaining salvation” (Wieck, Time 27).

The Toledo Museum of Art’s Book of Hours of the Virgin is very fresh, with little wear and tear, and no marks of original ownership, leaving one to wonder who owned the book and how often it was used. This tiny gem—designed over five hundred years ago—offers us an opportunity to intimately explore various aspects of the religious, cultural, historical, and artistic developments of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. It also offers sensory delights, from the touch of the smooth leather binding, to the sound of the crisp pages—their edges shimmering with gold as they are turned—and the imagined taste and fragrance of the mouthwatering fruits and flowers in the margin, creating a feast for the senses and the soul.
References


Appendix A

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