Manuscript - Book of Hours of Margaret of Foix, Use of Paris

Object: Manuscript

Place of origin: France (made)  
Rennes? (made)

Date: 1471-1476 (made)

Materials and Techniques: Ink, pigments and gold on parchment. Leather binding over wooden boards.

Credit Line: Bequeathed by George Salting in 1910

Museum number: MSL/1910/2385 (Salting 1222)

Gallery location: National Art Library

Descriptive line
Manuscript, Book of Hours (the 'Margaret de Foix Hours'), France (Rennes?), ca. 1471-1476.

Physical description
Foliation: parchment. i-v (original 15th-century parchment, ff.ii-v ruled for text) + 228 ff.

Number of lines: 15 lines.

Language: Latin and French.

Script: lettre bâtarde.

Textual content:
ff. 1r-6v: Calendar, full, in French, of conventional Parisian aspect. Major feasts in burnished gold.
ff. 22r-27r: Prayer to the Virgin.
ff. 27v-32v: Prayer to the Virgin.
ff. 33r-98r: Hours of the Virgin, Use of Paris, with rubrics in Latin.
ff. 99r-124r: Penitential Psalms with litany followed by petitions.
ff. 125r-134r: Hours of the Cross.
ff. 135r-143r: Hours of the Holy Spirit.
ff. 200r-222r: Suffrages.
ff. 223r-225v: Prayers added on a separate gathering.
ff. 227v: Prayer added in a late 15th- or early 16th-century hand.

Decoration: 12 miniatures in the calendar representing the occupation associated with each month, i.e. harvesting in July and slaughtering pigs in December (ff. 1r, 2r, 3r, 4r, 5r, 6r, 7r, 8r, 9r, 10r, 11r, 12r). Each is also accompanied by an illumination of the corresponding zodiacal signs.

12 full page miniatures with one scene from the Old Testament (Moses on f. 135v) and the rest from the New Testament (e.g. birth of the Virgin, Flight to Egypt, Pentecost, Passion, Last Judgment etc. - ff. 33r, 47r, 60v, 68r, 73v, 78v, 84r, 92r, 99r, 125r, 135r, 144r). Most are composite images but some are unified compositions comprising several incidents to form a narrative (ff. 60v, 73v, 84r, 99v, 125r). 23 half-page miniatures representing the Apostles, Virgin, Holy Trinity or Saints (ff. 13v, 15r, 17r, 20r, 22r, 27v, 200r, 201r, 202r, 203r, 204r, 206r, 208r, 209r, 210v, 211v, 213r, 214v, 215v, 216v, 217v, 219v, 221r). 2 small miniatures are integrated into the text (ff. 21v, 222r).

The manuscript also comprises foliated border ornaments, line endings and letter-shape initials.

Binding: ca. 1470s, France. Calf over wooden boards bevelled from the outside, blind-stamped with nine tools (four-petal rosette within a circle and a cross, dragon’s head, heart surmounted by an open three-pointed crown, 2-legged and crouched dragon, standing rabbit, running 4-legged dragon, fleur-de-lys between two stars, sitting hare, running dogs). Spine of eight compartments, each with the stamp of a diamond-shaped tool at the centre. Sewn on seven double thongs of white leather, attached to the boards with channels and plugs.

Dimensions
Height: 185 mm, Width: 120 mm, Height: 82 mm Text block - Calendar, Width: 48 mm Text block - Calendar, Height: 80 mm Text block, Width: 45-48 mm Text block

Museum number
MSL/1910/2385 (Salting 1222)
Object history note

(1) Illuminated and perhaps written in Brittany (Rennes?) between 1471 and 1477 for François II, duke of Brittany (b. 1435) and his second wife, Margaret de Foix (d. 15 May 1487). Erased arms of the Brittany and Foix appear on ff. 21v, 47r and 222r).

(2) Given by Hippolyte d'Argenté, President of Enquêtes of the Parlement of Rennes from 1602, to Claude Dumolinet (1620-1687), librarian of the abbey of St Geneviève, Paris, from 1675 as recorded in two inscriptions on ff. 228r and f.i recto.

(3) Collection Freric Spitzer, lot 3015 of the 1893 sale.

(4) Collection of George Salting (1836-1909), bequeathed to the V&A in 1910 (no. 1022).

URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1458900/book-of-hours-of-margaret-manuscript/