

ASPECTS OF ART LECTURE

THE MASTER OF THE
BREVIARY OF JEAN SANS PEUR
AND THE LIMBOURGS

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WHEN casting about for a subject for this lecture it occurred to me that I might show my appreciation of your invitation to address you by choosing a problem that, though not concerned with a broad aspect of art, does pay respect to the strong insular tradition of scholarly keepers. The British Museum, a major cultivator of these keepers, preserves, furthermore, one of my principal objects—not by chance, of course, but because of the perspicacity of English collectors.

For a long time painting in France during the late Middle Ages was studied by two groups of scholars, each of whom was largely concerned with one kind of object. Though there have been a few conspicuous exceptions, historians of art, including connoisseurs, applied themselves to the problems presented by the few surviving panels, not to mention the sorry remains of mural painting. The existence of less than a dozen examples had its usual effect of liberating the historical imagination. Since the beginning of the century these scholars have given us numerous volumes on the 'primitifs français', one or two of them master-pieces of subtle stylistic analysis. The second group, composed of *chartistes* and palaeographers or codicologists, naturally turned to illuminated manuscripts. They have provided us with a partial framework of 'external evidence', but in order to give these facts about the context of illumination what can only be described as greater historical substance they have been obliged to act also as critics of style.

The division of surviving objects into two categories, each generally the province of a different group of specialists, has, like all specialization, been advantageous in several respects, but it has obscured what seems to me one fundamental aspect of the history of French painting at this time. Most of the major innovations in the book in the great period of about 1380 to

1420 were, I believe, introduced by artists who had not been trained primarily or exclusively in illumination.¹ On the other hand the book at this time offered them opportunities for varied subjects and modes that they would not have enjoyed as panel or mural painters, nor indeed as sculptors or goldsmiths. These observations apply *a fortiori* to the painters whom I propose to discuss today.

The Limbourgs are known as the authors of two famous Books of Hours made for Jean de Berry, the *Très Riches Heures* in Chantilly (Pls. Ib, XIIb, XIIIa, XIV) and the *Belles Heures* in the Cloisters of the Metropolitan Museum (Pls. IIIa, VIIIb). By common consent the miniatures in the *Très Riches Heures* were painted in the last few years of their career; we now know that the Duke and all three brothers died in 1416. Most historians date the *Belles Heures* in the period 1410–13, but I believe the book was illuminated in 1406–8.² What these masters did still earlier remains obscure or at least debatable, and thus the most famous painters of the early fifteenth century in the whole of Europe have scarcely yet acquired a proper career. The late Jean Porcher, to be sure, traced their origins to a group of manuscripts illuminated around 1400, but these seem to me much more closely related to the Boucicaut Master,³ and I believe we must look elsewhere for the sources of their art.

In this search, the chief illuminator of the Breviary of Jean sans Peur in the British Museum provides, it seems to me, valuable clues. He is scarcely unknown; he was, in fact, identified with Paul de Limbourg, apparently the guiding genius among the brothers, by Friedrich Winkler in 1911.⁴ Winkler accounted for the differences from the *Belles Heures* and the *Très Riches Heures* by placing the Breviary shortly after 1400, at the beginning of Paul's career. This attribution or this date, or both,

¹ I have given the evidence for this view in the *Art Bulletin*, xxxviii, 1956, p. 191 and in *French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry. The Late XIV Century and the Patronage of the Duke*, London, 1967, 2nd ed. 1969, *passim*, but summarized on p. 295.

² Some of my reasons for an early date are given in *ibid.*, p. 92, but I shall offer soon a comprehensive discussion of the problem.

³ J. Porcher, *Les Belles Heures de Jean de France, duc de Berry*, Paris, 1953, pp. 11–14; *idem*, *Medieval French Miniatures*, New York [1959], pp. 58, 62–4; Meiss, *ibid.*, pp. 251–3, and *French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry. The Boucicaut Master*, London, 1968, pp. 63 ff.

⁴ 'Ein neues Werk aus der Werkstatt Pauls von Limburg', *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, xxxiv, 1911, pp. 536–43. Winkler reaffirmed the attribution and dated the manuscript between 1404 and 1410 in *Kunstchronik*, viii, 1955, p. 11.

have won adherents for half a century.¹ In 1922, however, Paul Durrieu called attention to a relationship that eventually spelled trouble.² He pointed to the similarity of the *Martyrdom of St. Mark* in the Breviary with the same subject in the *Très Riches Heures*, both, he believed, painted by the Limbourg brothers (Pls. Ia, Ib). The miniature in the Breviary is, as we shall see, only by an assistant, but even the best work of the illuminator cannot, I believe, be ascribed to the authors of the miniatures in the *Belles Heures* and *Très Riches Heures*. Many forms common to the two paintings of St. Mark are characteristic of the Limbourgs and not of the Master of the Breviary of Jean sans Peur, as I have called him.³ For these reasons, and also because the subject was rarely represented, the miniature in the Breviary probably derives from the very composition created for the *Très Riches Heures*.

Relationships like this, and others to be discussed shortly, lead us to conclude that the Breviary was not painted at the beginning of the century but later, between about 1414 (when the *Très Riches Heures* would at least have been partly designed) and 1419, when Jean sans Peur was murdered. The manuscript bears his arms and those of his duchess, Margaret of Bavaria; they are held by a young woman in an attractive vignette below the miniature of the Ascension (Pl. VIIa). Perhaps the manuscript was written for a woman, that is, the Duchess.⁴ The use of the text is Roman, and the calendar is Roman too, though it has Franciscan elements and one reference to Paris.⁵ Publications

¹ See for example P. Wescher, 'Eine Modellzeichnung des Paul von Limburg', *Phoebus*, i, 1946, p. 34; E. Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character*, Cambridge, Mass., 1953, pp. 62, n. 6, 82, n. 3. B. Martens, *Meister Francke*, Hamburg, 1929, p. 194, dated the Breviary ca. 1400 and associated it with the painter of lat. 8886 in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris (in my view, the Luçon Master).

² *Les très Belles Heures de Notre-Dame du duc Jean de Berry*, Paris, 1922, p. 74. Whereas Durrieu believed the Limbourgs worked on the Breviary Hulin de Loo thought that it was only closely related ('Traces de Hubrecht van Eyck; Empreintes contemporaines en Suisse et Allemagne', *Annuaire des Musées Royaux de Belgique*, iv, 1943-4, pp. 20 f.).

³ The voluminous tubular folds, for instance, over the knees of the saint in the Breviary.

⁴ Perhaps the fact that the rubrics are not in the usual Latin but in French points to a woman (normally less well educated). Furthermore, Margaret appears once, and Agatha twice, in the Litany. It is noteworthy that on May 22, 1412, Jean sans Peur gave the Duchess 300 francs 'pour la façon d'un Bréviaire et autres livres qu'elle fait faire' (G. Doutrepont, *La littérature française à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne*, Bibl. du xv^e siècle, viii, Paris, 1909, pp. 200 f.).

⁵ The calendar and the use have been described as Franciscan (London,

of the British Museum long ago pointed out that soon after the completion of the manuscript it was divided into two volumes.¹ Certain portions, largely the summer section of the Proper of Saints, were detached and provided with a new Calendar and Psalter, both illuminated by a well-known Flemish artist, the Master of Guillebert de Metz. The same modest workshop illuminated a Book of Hours for Jean sans Peur, which is therefore far less splendid than his or his wife's Breviary.² After several centuries of separation the two parts of the Breviary have been reunited in the British Museum.

Who was the impressive illuminator responsible for the large miniatures in the Breviary and indeed for most of the original illumination? He had an exceptional familiarity with both the *Très Riches Heures* and, as we shall see, other paintings by the Limbourgs. His style, furthermore, is remarkably distinctive, showing little relationship with any of the numerous workshops in Paris or the Netherlands. Of the few paintings by him that have come down to us one can be dated early in the century. At that time the Breviary Master painted one miniature in a manuscript of *L'aiguillon d'amour divin* made for Jean de Berry's daughter, Marie, and given to her in May 1406 by her Franciscan confessor (Pl. IIa).³ The illuminator I have called the Luçon Master and his assistants painted all the other miniatures in this manuscript, including the frontispiece representing Marie and

British Museum, G. F. Warner, *Illuminated Manuscripts in the British Museum*, London, iv, 1903, pls. 45, 46 and text; London, British Museum, E. G. Millar, *Souvenir de l'exposition de manuscrits français à peintures organisée à la Grenville Library, British Museum, en janvier-mars, 1932*, Paris, 1933, pp. 29 f.) but only two of the Franciscan feasts in the Calendar (19 July and 28 September) would not be expected in the Roman use, and neither is in gold. Several important Franciscan feasts that appear in the Calendar are missing in the Sanctoral (e.g. Stigmata and Translation of St. Anthony). The Calendar and use have also been described as Parisian (V. Leroquais, *Un livre d'heures de Jean sans Peur*, Paris, 1939, p. 71), and the manuscript has therefore been incorrectly identified as the Parisian Breviary the Duke had with him at his death. For a detailed study of the text I am indebted to Elizabeth H. Beatson.

¹ See Warner, loc. cit.; Millar, loc. cit.; J. A. Herbert, *Illuminated Manuscripts*, New York, 1911, pp. 270 f.; London, British Museum, *Schools of Illumination: Reproductions from Manuscripts in the British Museum*, London, vi, 1930, pp. 7 f.; *Illuminated Manuscripts in the Grenville Library* (D. H. Turner), London, 1967, p. 45 (the original manuscript dated ca. 1415 and ascribed to Paris).

² V. Leroquais, op. cit.

³ Meiss, *Late XIV Century*, pp. 201, 206, 276, 358 f., fig. 667.

a younger woman, probably a daughter, kneeling before the Madonna. The Madonna depends upon the same model, probably in the Berry collection, as the famous earlier Madonna in the Horae of the Duke of Berry now in Brussels.¹

The golden ivy around the miniature by the Breviary Master was painted by the Luçon workshop. When the Breviary Master took over, he painted not only the miniature but also the initial and the acanthus in it—an important innovation at this date.² He added, too, the curling vines in the border. Their rounded, flowing leaves are given an exceptional luminosity by punches in the gold and by rays that appear to issue from them. The painter tooled similar forms into the haloes and the gold background.

This transformation of the sheen of smooth burnished gold into a more lively, irregular sparkle is accompanied by a corresponding change in the painted areas. The spots and strokes of shade, for one thing, are spaced so widely on the lighter ground that they produce an effect of vibration. The painter, abandoning line, created forms in colour and light to a greater degree than any of his contemporaries except the Boucicaut Master when painting landscapes. The luminous hues of the Breviary are already visible in this early *Crucifixion*—uncommon and exquisite combinations, too, such as the reddish blue mantle of the Virgin and the pink mantle of John shaded in grey-blue over a mustard-yellow tunic shaded in orange-brown.

In all these respects the miniature is unique in its time. Its composition, however, resembles strikingly that of a small miniature in a *Bible moralisée*, fr. 166 in the Bibliothèque nationale (Pl. IIb). The miniatures in the first three gatherings of this Bible, the only ones in it painted in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, have for a long time been connected more or less closely with the Limbourgs. Scholars have not, however, agreed about their date or the relationship of the manuscript to a Bible which, according to documents, two of the Limbourg brothers, Paul and Jean, were illuminating in Paris in the period 1402–4.³ Apparently this mammoth enterprise was interrupted by the death of the patron, Philippe le Hardi, in 1404. The connection of fr. 166 with this documented Bible has often been

¹ Ibid., p. 206, where the earlier and different opinion of Jean Porcher is discussed. In *Medieval French Miniatures*, New York [1959], p. 62, Porcher ascribed this *Madonna* in fr. 926 to Paul de Limbourg.

² Meiss, *Late XIV Century*, p. 246.

³ P. Durrieu, 'Manuscrits de luxe exécutés pour des princes et des grands seigneurs français (notes et monographies)', *Le manuscrit*, ii, 1895, p. 115.

denied, but for no compelling reasons. Along with a few other historians I am inclined to accept the identification, though I recognize the complexity of the problem and I must postpone to another occasion a full discussion of it.¹ At this time I shall briefly present some additional evidence for the acceptance of the miniatures in fr. 166 as early works of the Limbourgs, in the first years of the century, and therefore very probably the paintings executed by Paul and Jean for Philippe le Hardi.

It should be said, first of all, that we possess an early nineteenth-century copy of a lost miniature by the Limbourgs. Little studied but a capital document, it illustrates Jean de Berry's charter of the Ste. Chapelle in 1405; the miniature represents the Duke investing a canon.² I cannot discuss here the style of the Limbourgs as it is revealed by this copy, but it accords with the fact that, as I have shown elsewhere, the iconography of the Duke points to 1405 rather than, as Porcher proposed, to a later copy of the charter.³ Here the acanthus appears, a year earlier than in the work of the Breviary Master. Thus Jean de Berry seems to have taken the youthful Limbourgs into his service very shortly after the death of his brother Philippe in 1404. Where excellent artists or works of art were at stake the Duke of Berry was, as I have remarked, what we call an ambulance chaser.

To return to fr. 166, it is important to recall that the specific model for both text and miniatures (fr. 167) belonged to Philippe le Hardi, who ordered the Bible from the Limbourgs.⁴ The *Crucifixion* in Marie de Berry's manuscript of 1406 presupposes, it seems to me, a style of the Limbourgs very much like that of the Bible (Pls. IIa, IIb). Seraphs, which replace lamenting angels at the sides of the cross in fr. 926 though not in the Bible, are favourite forms of the Limbourgs. The Virgin Mary, seated on the ground instead of swooning as in the Bible, shows a

¹ Most scholars ascribe the miniatures to the Limbourgs. Among those who nevertheless deny the connection with Philippe le Hardi's Bible are Durrieu, *ibid.*; idem, *Les Très Belles Heures de Notre-Dame du duc Jean de Berry*, Paris, 1922, pp. 73 f.; Porcher, *Les Belles Heures de Jean de France, duc de Berry*, Paris, 1953, pp. 22 f.; idem, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, *Les manuscrits à peintures en France du xiii^e siècle au xvi^e siècle*, Paris, 1955, pp. 91 f. The identification with Burgundy's Bible is accepted by A. de Laborde, *La Bible moralisée illustrée, conservée à Oxford, Paris et Londres . . .*, Paris, v, 1927, pp. 97 f., 102 ff.

² Meiss, 'A Lost Portrait of Jean de Berry by the Limbourgs', *Burlington Magazine*, cv, 1963, pp. 51 ff.; *Late XIV Century*, pp. 84, fig. 481.

³ *Belles Heures*, p. 7, n. 10.

⁴ Durrieu, 'Manuscrits de luxe . . .', *cit.*, pp. 114 ff.

remarkable resemblance with a corresponding figure by the Limbourgs in the *Belles Heures* of Jean de Berry, painted about 1406–8 (Pl. IIIa). The folds and flourishes of the Virgin's drapery in the miniature by the Breviary Master imply a familiarity with a figure by the Limbourgs visible already by 1406, and thus in the miniatures of the *Belles Heures* itself, or in drawings made for them, or in a lost work.

Though the Virgin and some other figures in the *Belles Heures Crucifixion* are more massive than any figures in the earlier manuscripts, Christ tends to preserve the early slender canon. This canon may be found still earlier, between 1390 and 1395, in a panel of the Crucifixion painted by Jean de Beaumetz and his workshop for Philippe le Hardi's Chartreuse de Champmol (Pl. IIIb).¹ Here the Virgin has the abnormally long, rhythmically important arms of the Virgin in the Bible. The tubular folds of the drapery as well as the fleshy faces are very similar. The Bible has no equally close relationship to any other painting of the period, and it seems entirely clear that the Limbourgs, or at least Paul and Jean who worked on Philippe's Bible, owed basic elements of their style to Burgundian monumental painting. Jean de Beaumetz died in 1396, and the Limbourgs may have learned his vocabulary from the early works, actually not extant, of his successor at Philippe's court, Jean Malouel. Malouel was, indeed, their uncle and, as we know from a document of 1400, their artistic mentor.² He had apprenticed Jean and Herman to a goldsmith in Paris before 1400, but the most gifted brother, Paul, who was not there, and Jean, who was, matured as illuminators by study of the leading painters in Paris and Dijon. It is symptomatic of the deep connections within this group of artists that the tooled arabesques in the background of the *Crucifixion* by Beaumetz reappear in the miniature by the Breviary Master.

The iconography of the *Flagellation* in the Bible discloses a fascinating aspect of the relationship between the Breviary Master and the Limbourgs, both early and late. During the scourging of Christ in the Bible his tunic lies on the floor (Pl. IVa). The tunic was not included in the *Belles Heures* but it reappeared

¹ For the connection of this panel, and a similar one recently acquired by the Louvre, with Beaumetz see C. Sterling, 'Œuvres retrouvées de Jean de Beaumetz, peintre de Philippe le Hardi', *Bulletin, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts*, iv, 1955, pp. 57–81.

² F. Gorissen, 'Jan Maelwael und die Brüder Limburg', *Gelre*, liv, 1954, p. 201.

much later in the *Très Riches Heures*.¹ Now the discarded tunic was introduced into the scene of the Flagellation for the first time, as far as I have been able to discover, in the *Brussels Hours* of the Duke of Berry (Pl. IVb). Only there, apparently, could the Limbourgs have seen it, and it is thus extremely interesting that the Duke, according to his inventory, gave the manuscript to the Duke of Burgundy after the completion of the inventory in the summer of 1402.² Though we have not known the precise date of this gift, the adoption of the iconography of the Flagellation in the Bible suggests that it was made very soon, later in 1402 or in 1403, and thus to Philippe le Hardi rather than to his successor, Jean sans Peur.

The Breviary Master took figures and compositions from the Limbourgs not only in his miniature of 1406 and in his *Martyrdom of St. Mark* but in many other paintings. He seems to have been familiar with all their work. Thus two of the miniatures they added to the *Très Belles Heures de Notre-Dame* are reflected in the Breviary. David in the miniature at the beginning of the Psalter is an almost exact replica of a man in prayer in the *Très Belles Heures de Notre-Dame*; the Breviary Master adapted the Lord and the angels to his circular rather than rectangular frame (Pls. V, VI). The quatrefoils of the borders, on the other hand, resemble the *Grandes Heures* or the *Brussels Hours*, which, as we shall see presently, the Breviary Master certainly knew.³ In almost every respect, however, the effect is very different from any of these models. Where else would one see God the Father rendered in brown-mauve on dull gold, enveloped by a gorgeous cloth of honour? Who else gave the mantle of the Virgin so delicate and luminous a violet? Unmistakable touches of the Breviary Master, moreover, are the punching of the gold units in the background and the shield of Goliath in the lower right quatrefoil. Even the small crown of David is finely tooled. A flower rises between the two columns of text, and in the margins below there are remarkable studies of three violets. A finch, a crane, a hoopoe, a parakeet, and a pheasant perch on the leaves or fly among them. In another manuscript by the painter we shall see a Madonna embracing a small Child similar to the one in the initial.⁴

¹ See *The 'Très Riches Heures' of Jean, Duke of Berry*, London, Paris, and New York, 1969, fol. 144.

² *Late XIV Century*, p. 198.

³ *Ibid.*, figs. 181, 220.

⁴ *Très Riches Heures*, 1969, no. 39 (fol. 44).

The *Itinerary* in the *Très Belles Heures de Notre-Dame*, known to us only through a lithograph of Bastard, provided the setting in the Breviary for the journey of Christ to heaven (Pls. VIIa, VIIb). The building and the landscape, though reversed, correspond in almost every detail. The composition of the illustration of the prayer for travel, which shows friars welcoming the Duke of Berry upon his arrival at the gate of a town, very probably prompted the novel iconography of the Ascension. It is not only the apostles with the Virgin who witness the miraculous event but a group of laymen also, who, like the friars in the *Itinerary*, emerge from a gate.

The Breviary contains many quotations from compositions of the Limbourgs in the *Belles Heures*, as Jean Porcher observed.¹ One example may suffice to illustrate the nature of the dependence and, more important, the degree of independence. Though the figures of the Breviary Master in the *Baptism* are arranged differently, they owe much to the miniature in the *Belles Heures*, or to a drawing by the Limbourgs for it (Pls. VIIIa, VIIIb). The awkward posture of the Baptist has its origins in the *Belles Heures*, and the Breviary Master has even preserved the unusual pool instead of the River Jordan. On the other hand the colours and the sumptuous textures are entirely different. The sparkle of the tooled gold, including the *situla*, is matched by the pointillism of the painted surface. The unusual blue of Christ's robe reappears in the lower sky, in the pond, where it is mixed with green, and in the shadows on the dull gilt robe of the Baptist. Even the water spilled on Christ has become a cool blue. Warm orange is reserved for the luminous wings of the angel and for God the Father, who as a supernatural figure has much less substance than the others. Even in this very small miniature the illuminator has rendered with skill and pleasure the transparency of Christ's loin-cloth. The colours and the lustrous textures of this miniature recall examples of the highly developed contemporary French technique of gold enamel.

When painting single figures the Breviary Master frequently followed Limbourg models quite closely. Thus the drapery that gives impressive stature to St. Philip, winding around the broad

¹ *Belles Heures*, p. 25 f. Porcher said that only the *Martyrdom of St. Mark* in the Breviary could be ascribed to the Limbourgs. *St. Martin* on fol. 435 of the Breviary comes from the *Belles Heures*, fol. 169, of which it is a truncated copy minus the second beggar and part of the horse. It does not fit into the narrower field. The *Skinning of Bartholomew* on fol. 379 is likewise taken from the *Belles Heures*, fol. 161.

body and cascading from a hand (Pl. IX), was inspired by such figures as Nebuchadnezzar, folio 40^v in the *Très Riches Heures*.¹ The remarkable breadth of John the Evangelist in the Breviary² as well as the pattern of drapery folds cannot really be matched in the paintings of the Limbourgs and they reflect, directly or indirectly, the figures of Claus Sluter.

In the largest miniature in the Breviary the chief illuminator copied the miniature of the Crucifixion by Jacquemart de Hesdin in the *Brussels Hours*, at that time in the possession of Jean sans Peur, by inheritance from his father (Pls. X, XI). The Breviary Master once again made a number of small compositional changes, adding the sponge and showing the arms of the thieves, which in the model had been rather ambiguously concealed by the cross-bars. The arched upper frame permitted a more elevated and detached Christ. His distinctiveness is increased by the long rays that issue from his head and by a very unusual cross, golden but still preserving the grain of wood. The Breviary Master has given the large shield the effect of metal glazed in red by skilfully spotting red and black on a silvery grey. It is indeed in the realm of colour that the illuminator discloses most fully his individuality and his imaginative gift. For the rather light colours of the Brussels *Crucifixion*—pale green, rose, yellow, and vermilion—he has substituted cool tones, using blues among the figures and grey in the landscape, all displayed in a diffused light. His desire for maximum luminosity is evident also in his transformation of Jacquemart's border. He gave the vertical stem patches of brightly burnished gold. The flowers and the greatly varied birds, though perhaps executed by an assistant, are freshly studied and seen in an unusual soft light.

Who was this painter or illuminator who had access to the books of Burgundy and Berry, and above all to the miniatures of the Limbourgs? He clearly had little connection with the large associations or workshops in Paris, and his paintings are conspicuous by their rarity. I have found his style, if not actually his hand, in one small and damaged miniature of the Annunciation in a Book of Hours in Vienna, made apparently in north-eastern France,³ and in two miniatures in a minute

¹ *Très Riches Heures*, pl. 36.

² Harley 2897, fol. 290.

³ Nationalbibliothek, Ser. nov. 2613, fol. 14; see *Late XIV Century*, p. 355, and E. Trenkler, 'Les principaux manuscrits à peintures de la Bibliothèque nationale de Vienne', *Bulletin de la Société française de reproductions de manuscrits à peintures*, Paris, xxi, 1938, pp. 27 f.

Book of Hours in Palermo, the rest of which was illuminated by the Boucicaut workshop.¹ Much more important are some miniatures in another Horae in the Walters Art Gallery. The book was illuminated by an interesting artist whom I have called the Master of Walters 219.² Near the end of the text he inserted four miniatures by the Breviary Master, pasting them into blank frames.³ These miniatures vary in quality; one of the best, the *Martyrdom of St. Denis and his Companions*, is very similar to the miniature of the same subject in the Breviary.⁴ The choice of colours for the *Baptist* reveals at once an exceptional artist (Pl. XIIa). The Saint, wearing a delicate violet mantle over his hair-skirt, stands in a pale green and buff landscape. The painter's fascination with the play of light on colour in an atmospheric space has led him to develop still further the technique of stippling we have observed in the Breviary.

How the Master of Walters 219 obtained the miniatures is a matter for speculation; he himself was probably active in Besançon, so that, as in the instance of the Vienna Book of Hours, we are drawn eastward. The assistant of the Boucicaut Master, however, who collaborated in the Palermo manuscript, presumably worked in Paris. In the illumination of the Breviary of Jean sans Peur our master had at least one assistant well trained in his own style and two associates who worked in quite different manners. One, the Egerton Master, was established in Paris.⁵ The other recalls a minor but interesting illuminator who produced Harley 2952 and part of Yates Thompson 37, and whom I have called the Master of the Madonnas of Humility.⁶ This master worked on occasion in Paris or Bourges. Thus the associates of the Breviary Master point to north-east France, perhaps Bourges, and above all Paris.

The Breviary Master is worthy of our attention especially

¹ Biblioteca nazionale, I. A. 15; see *Late XIV Century*, p. 355; *Boucicaut Master*, pp. 70, 114.

² 'The Exhibition of French Manuscripts of the XIII–XVI Centuries at the Bibliothèque nationale', *Art Bulletin*, xxxviii, 1956, p. 195 and *Late XIV Century*, p. 360.

³ The observation that the miniatures are inserted, made originally by L. M. J. Delaissé, was kindly communicated by Miss Dorothy Miner.

⁴ Harley 2897, fol. 421.

⁵ Among the miniatures painted by this workshop are folios 322^v, 327, 329, 337 in Add. 35311 and 159, 249, 252^v–258, 385 in Harley 2897. For the workshop see *Late XIV Century*, p. 357, and R. Schilling, 'The Master of Egerton 1070 (Hours of René d'Anjou)', *Scriptorium*, viii, 1954.

⁶ *Late XIV Century*, pp. 276 f., 327 ff.

because of some paintings that I now propose to add to his œuvre. In 1956 I ascribed to him numerous initials in the *Très Riches Heures*,¹ since then I have observed that he is the author also of all the best and most widely known borders. He painted nearly all the borders from the first one on folio 17 to folio 49^v,² and many thereafter. The quality of his colour is quite different from that of the authors of the miniatures. On folio 17 (Pl. XIIb) the combination of pale and deep blue, blue-green, orange-yellow, and mauve recalls the Breviary. When inserted in this pattern patches of red attain a joyous warmth and brightness. The gradations of value are especially subtle, creating soft textures rather than solid forms, and hence perfect for the evocation of leaves and flowers.

It may be objected immediately that this border is superior to those of the Breviary. That cannot be denied. The circumstances, however, were quite different. Paul de Limbourg, for one thing, surely supervised the work to some degree, and we shall observe that more often than not the borders match the miniatures in colour. There is, furthermore, a real difference between collaboration with a great painter for a unique patron, and less inspired work, including reliance on assistants, for a prince who had no special enthusiasm for the arts.³

Signs of the identity of artists may be found in the flashing spots of gold in the initials of the *Très Riches Heures* (Pl. XIIb). They are produced by a series of punches like those in the golden leaves of the border of the Breviary and around the painter's *Crucifixion* of 1406 (Pl. IIa). Some of the gold backgrounds of the initials glisten with countless fine punches (Pl. XIIIa). We should

¹ 'The Exhibition . . .', cit., p. 195. The statement here that the Egerton Master, also, painted a few initials now seems to me incorrect. These initials, for example, from 59^v through 67^v, 147^v, 150, are by a related but quite distinct hand.

² The occasional intervention of the painters of the miniatures is noted below. P. Durrieu, *Les Très Riches Heures de Jean de France, duc de Berry*, Paris, 1904, pp. 77 ff., had already noted that the initials on fols. 59, 60-5, 112, 119 were painted by illuminators who did not work on the miniatures. It is notable that these initials are more remote from the Limbourgs; they are either by an assistant of the Breviary Master or by the much less closely related illuminator mentioned in note 1 above. The latter also painted the borders around the text for March and April. The Breviary Master painted the borders of the other months.

³ Jean sans Peur did commission a superb manuscript by the Boucicaut Master, Bibl. nat., fr. 2810, which he gave, however, to his uncle, Jean de Berry. He or the Duchess commissioned the Breviary also, but Jean's Book of Hours, mentioned on p. 4, is mediocre.

also observe that the halo of St. John in the *Très Riches Heures* (Pl. XIIIb) is similarly tooled, precisely like many haloes in the Breviary and in the *Crucifixion* of 1406. The only tooled haloes in the *Très Riches Heures* appear on folios whose borders were painted by the Breviary Master, and he was therefore clearly responsible for them. On a few folios the initials and the borders were shared in various ways by the Breviary Master and the painters of the miniatures. Thus on the folio of the *Annunciation* the former painted the initials, the latter the borders (Pl. XIIIa).¹ Occasionally borders by both appear on the same folio.² Always the luminous colour of the Breviary Master is readily distinguishable from the more solid and Italianate forms of the Limbourgs.

In the Middle Ages and Renaissance flowers were commonly enjoyed not only for their beauty but as symbols of the glory of God.³ The flowers below St. John, immediately recognizable as violets and a columbine, often have specific connotations. Violets signify humility and the columbine refers to Christ.⁴ Possibly, too, the columbine accompanies St. John because its botanical name, *aquilegia*, was derived from *aquila*.⁵ The fly nearby has numerous religious meanings,⁶ but it also belongs to that group of small, nimble, and exquisite creatures that fly across, or alight upon, the folios of late medieval books. Dragonflies and butterflies flitted in the borders of French manuscripts from the time of Jean Pucelle, most of whose books were assembled in the library of the Duke of Berry. Exceptionally beautiful specimens of insects and birds were painted by Jacquemart de Hesdin about 1390 in the Duke of Berry's Bible now in the Vatican.⁷

In the *Très Riches Heures* the fly contributes an accent of dark-brown and near black that is important to the colour of the border; the brown eagle and the dark boat, which frame the saint, have a similar significance in the miniature above. Since the borders by the Breviary Master are colouristically related to the miniatures, and since he normally worked first, painting

¹ The same division occurs on fol. 38^v and again on fol. 195, except that in the latter the initial is the work only of an assistant of the Breviary Master.

² Folios 18 and 26^v. See below.

³ See R. Koch, 'Flower Symbolism in the Portinari Altar', *Art Bulletin*, xvi, 1964, pp. 70-7; L. Behling, *Die Pflanze in der mittelalterlichen Tafelmalerei*, Weimar, 1957.

⁴ Koch, op. cit., p. 77; Behling, op. cit., p. 52; R. Fritz, 'Die symbolische Bedeutung der Akelei', *Wallraf-Richartz Jahrbuch*, xiv, 1952, pp. 99-110.

⁵ Koch, op. cit., p. 74, n. 31.

⁶ Panofsky, *Netherlandish Painting*, 1953, p. 488, n. 5.

⁷ *Late XIV Century*, fig. 178.

the initials and borders and often tooling the gold, he must have collaborated closely with the Limbourgs from the beginning.

The hoopoe on the folio of St. Mark (Pl. *Ib*), as well as other birds in the margins of the *Très Riches Heures*, we have already seen in the Breviary, though there they are somewhat less delicately painted (Pls. V, X). The violets below St. Mark, unlike the flowers below St. John, have their own leaves, intermingled, however, with small pink or red leaves that introduce spots of variegated colour. The violets belong to a tradition of flower-portraits that was inaugurated in France by Jean Pucelle. The Limbourgs certainly knew the iris in his *Bréviaire de Belleville*,¹ a manuscript which belonged to the Duke of Berry, and they may have had it in mind when planning and partly executing a potted iris on folio 26^v of the *Très Riches Heures*. The Breviary Master likewise did not complete either his initial or his border on the same folio. Usually the two styles match very well, but on the folio of the Annunciation (26) the two heads in the initials by the Breviary Master conform less successfully with the angels and acanthus painted by the Limbourgs (Pl. XIIIa).

In the middle and latter sections of the manuscript most of the initials and borders from the time of Jean de Berry were painted by an assistant and an associate of the Breviary Master, but Jean Colombe completed many of the folios. The Breviary Master himself, however, worked again towards the end of the book. His initial on folio 173^v is closely related in colour to the deep blue and red tones of the *Entry into Jerusalem* above it, but even here his forms, bathed in light, remain immediately distinguishable from the more Italianate forms of the miniature.

These last thirty folios of the manuscript contain its most beautiful border, around the scene of the Feeding of the Multitude (Pl. XIV). The border has indeed always been praised as one of the major achievements of the Limbourgs and as the greatest work of its kind in the first half of the fifteenth century. Its subject is not new. The snail was one of the most popular denizens of the margins of Gothic manuscripts. Early, from about 1290 to 1325, it was usually engaged in mock combat with a knight or some other equally surprising adversary.² In the border of folio 38^v of the *Très Riches Heures* the Limbourgs,

¹ *Late XIV Century*, fig. 344.

² L. M. C. Randall, 'The Snail in Gothic Marginal Warfare', *Speculum*, xxxvii, 1962, pp. 358-67; idem, *Images in the Margins of Gothic Manuscripts*, Berkeley, 1966, p. 214.

satirizing chivalry, painted a knight, safely ensconced in a tower, hurling a lance at a snail. The thought of the Middle Ages invested this engaging little mollusc with a variety of meanings. On occasion it signified resurrection (especially on tombs), or cowardice, or false courage.¹ In the *Bréviaire de Belleville*, a manuscript by the Pucelle workshop in the Berry collection, the snail glides along a wild pea, *lathyrus maritimus* (Pl. XIIIb),² like the snails on field larkspur (*delphinium consolida*) in the *Très Riches Heures*. Whether the larkspurs and the snails are symbolically connected with the religious meaning of the Feeding of the Multitude is quite unclear.³

From another point of view, however, I venture to suggest very tentatively a conscious or unconscious relationship between the five thousand seated in expectation of a meal and the snails, well known as voracious feeders. One or two of the nine little creatures seem to be eating larkspur leaves. Ironically, the snail had itself become a highly prized delicacy for the table.⁴ No doubt the Duke of Berry, a gourmet, enjoyed eating them, and we know that he liked looking at their shells. Three of them, two simulated in mother of pearl or another material, were described in the inventory of his collections in 1413.⁵ The Breviary Master rendered the sheen of their shells, as had the Limbourgs, in powdered gold shaded in tan and brown, and he described better than his collaborators the ever-changing, amorphous flesh of these rather mysterious little gastropods.

¹ Idem, 'The Snail . . .', cit., pp. 361 f.; J. Baltrusaitis, *Le moyen âge fantastique*, Paris, 1955, p. 57.

² On this folio, Bibl. nat., lat. 10483, 24^v, the Pucelle workshop painted also a single columbine that resembles the columbine on fol. 17 of the *Très Riches Heures* that we discussed above (Pl. XIIb).

Snails appeared in the borders of other manuscripts illuminated in the Limbourg circle, such as the beautiful *Horae* in the collection of Count A. Seilern, London.

³ If the snail signified redemption as well as resurrection it might be related to the Feeding, which was regarded as the first image of the Eucharist. For the supposed power of the larkspur to heal ailing eyes see Behling, op. cit., p. 52. The larkspur in the border of the *Très Riches Heures*, an annual flower, is often incorrectly identified as columbine (for which see Pl. XIIb).

⁴ Randall, op. cit., p. 360, especially a fifteenth-century poem addressed to a snail resting on a grape leaf:

Nous te mettrons dans un beau plat
Au puyvre et aux oignons . . .

For the voracity of the snail see, for example, J. F. Champfleury, *Histoire de la caricature du moyen âge*, Paris, 1875, p. 41.

⁵ J. Guiffrey, *Inventaires de Jean duc de Berry (1401-1416)*, Paris, i, 1894, p. 149, no. 531, p. 152, no. 557, p. 201, no. 777.

The use of an emulsion of gold for the shells is a genial means of relating the border to the more formal mode of the miniature, with its rays and haloes, its dense colours and solid forms, and its comparatively stylized grasses. The border, to be sure, has other mediating aspects. The stems of the plants are gathered at the snails, and the sprays have been arranged to create a kind of filigree on the page. To maintain a semblance of a frame the seedpods lie parallel to the page, and acute foreshortening of the flowers is avoided. Beyond this, however, each spray is unique, and the soft petals fall freely and unpredictably in the space.

These larkspurs are not, as we have seen, the earliest portraits of flowers. During the fourteenth century studies of still-life in Italy as well as the North gradually approximated more closely what the painter saw before him from a fixed point of view under a given condition of light. The impressive, anonymous painter of the Carrara herbal *ca.* 1400 was the first illustrator of this text, according to Otto Pächt, who painted his plants from life.¹ Michelino, working later in Lombardy, filled the borders and many backgrounds of his Book of Hours now in the Morgan Library, New York, with delicate, freshly observed flowers (Pl. XV). The luminous larkspurs of the *Très Riches Heures* are the most remarkable consequences of this absorbing interest in nature and still-life. The great Flemish panel painters from Jan van Eyck to Hugo van der Goes refined further the portraiture of flowers, but within the book the larkspurs remained unrivalled until the appearance of the impressive specialist in still-life in the late fifteenth century, the Master of Mary of Burgundy.² His flowers, however, appear to be specimens on display; the larkspurs are seen more informally, as wild flowers.

The Limbourgs have always been admired for their borders, and above all for this one. Now they, or perhaps the Duke of Berry, must rather be praised for the choice of the best living master of this art. His special gift was clearly recognized; he was invited to paint borders but no miniatures. In several respects he was a unique figure in the illumination of his time.

¹ 'Early Italian Nature Studies and the Early Calendar Landscape', *Warburg Journal*, xiii, 1950, pp. 30 f.

² O. Pächt, *The Master of Mary of Burgundy*, London [1948], pp. 29 f., 52, n. 19. This illuminator was preceded by the painter of the Hours of Catherine of Cleves (J. Plummer, *The Hours of Catherine of Cleves*, New York [n.d.]), but plants and flowers were not the forte of his still-life.

His association with the Limbourgs began as early as 1406, he knew their work intimately, yet he maintained quite a different style. Could he have been one of the three brothers themselves? Documents associate two or three of them periodically from 1400 on, but it does not necessarily follow that all three worked in almost inextricable styles. If any one of the trio is to be detached, Herman is the most likely candidate.

You remember that only Paul and Jean were employed from 1402 to 1404 by Philippe le Hardi for his Bible. On the other hand we hear that in 1400 only Jean and Herman had been in the shop of a goldsmith in Paris and had left him to return home because of an epidemic.¹ We do not know why Herman failed to join his brothers in 1402 for work on the Bible. Probably, like them, he was back in Paris and he might have returned to the goldsmith, Albert de Bolure. In any event the fact of his early apprenticeship to a goldsmith and the possibility that he might have continued for a time in this craft are suggestive in relation to the Breviary Master. This master's colours and lustrous textures, unique among paintings of the period, resemble contemporary translucent enamels (Pl. XVIa). We have seen also that he was unrivalled among illuminators or painters for the beauty of his tooled gold. In the art, as it was called, of *opus punctorium* he approximated goldsmiths themselves (Pl. XVIb).² To activate the light he did not even fail to tool one face of the tiny sickle moon in a small miniature.³

The Breviary Master sought vibration and shimmer in his painted as well as his metallic surfaces. There, too, he employed, as we saw even in his early miniature of 1406, the technique of stippling. Stippling, very restrained in the borders of the *Très Riches Heures* to maintain a harmony with the smooth surface of the adjacent miniatures, reached its highest development in Walters 219 (Pl. XIIa). This remarkable pointillism had its roots in fourteenth-century painting, particularly in the work of the *Boqueteaux* group, illuminators with Netherlandish taste and perhaps, like their associate Jean Bondol, of Flemish origin.⁴ The very advanced pointillism in the paintings of the Breviary

¹ A. de Champeaux and P. Gauchery, *Les travaux d'art exécutés pour Jean de France, duc de Berry, avec une étude biographique sur les artistes employés par ce prince*, Paris, 1894, p. 139.

² See E. Steingraber, 'Nachträge und Marginalien zur französisch-niederländischen Goldschmiedekunst des frühen 15. Jahrhunderts', *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums*, 1969, pp. 29-39.

³ Add. 35311, fol. 348^v.

⁴ *Late XIV Century*, figs. 382-386.

Master was probably influenced by the *opus punctorium* of the goldsmiths (Pl. XVI*b*), though in metal the stippling usually created the lights and in his painting the darks. Goldsmiths transferred the technique, furthermore, from metals to enamels. The earliest extant example, a small medallion of the Ara Coeli in the Walters Gallery, datable about 1425, is in style somewhat related to the Limbourgs (Pl. XVII). It has even been very tentatively connected with the youngest of the brothers, Arnold, who inherited part of the property of his three famous brothers upon their death in 1416, and who became a goldsmith's apprentice in Nijmegen in 1417.¹

All these relationships, interesting in themselves, add some substance to the hypothesis of the identity of the Breviary Master and Herman, but there are serious objections to it. Most important, there is nothing in the style of the Breviary Master in the *Belles Heures*, except the tooling of the gold on six folios.² True, the inventory does not ascribe this manuscript to the Limbourgs, and the references to all three brothers as illuminators in the entourage of Jean de Berry multiply only after 1411, after the *Belles Heures* was, in my opinion, completed. I believe, to be sure, that three styles can be distinguished in the manuscript, but one of them is weak³ and does not reappear in the *Très Riches Heures*. A second, though less important, objection to the hypothesis is that some borders in the *Très Riches Heures* of the period of Jean de Berry were painted by another, less impressive illuminator, whose presence diminishes the significance of the commission to the Breviary Master.

If the Breviary Master was Herman, the Breviary would necessarily have been painted before his death in 1416, but there are no insuperable obstacles to this date, which would be three years before the death of Jean sans Peur. *Valets de chambre* of one prince occasionally worked for another, and in 1413 Jean de Berry and Jean sans Peur exchanged important manuscripts.⁴

¹ P. Verdier, 'A Medallion of the *Ara Coeli* and the Netherlandish Enamels of the Fifteenth Century', *Walters Journal*, xxiv, 1961, pp. 9 ff.; Meiss, 'French and Italian Variations on an Early Fifteenth-Century Theme: St. Jerome and His Study', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, lxii, 1963, p. 151.

² Folios 2, 4, 5, 10, 12, 13.

³ Most clearly on folios 131^v, 132, 135^v, 136.

⁴ See for instance Colart de Laon, painter and *valet de chambre* of Charles VI from 1391 to 1411, who also served as *valet de chambre* of Louis d'Orléans, and worked for the dukes of Burgundy (P. Durrieu, 'La peinture en France, le règne de Charles VI', in A. Michel, *Histoire de l'art*, Paris, iii, pt. I, 1907,

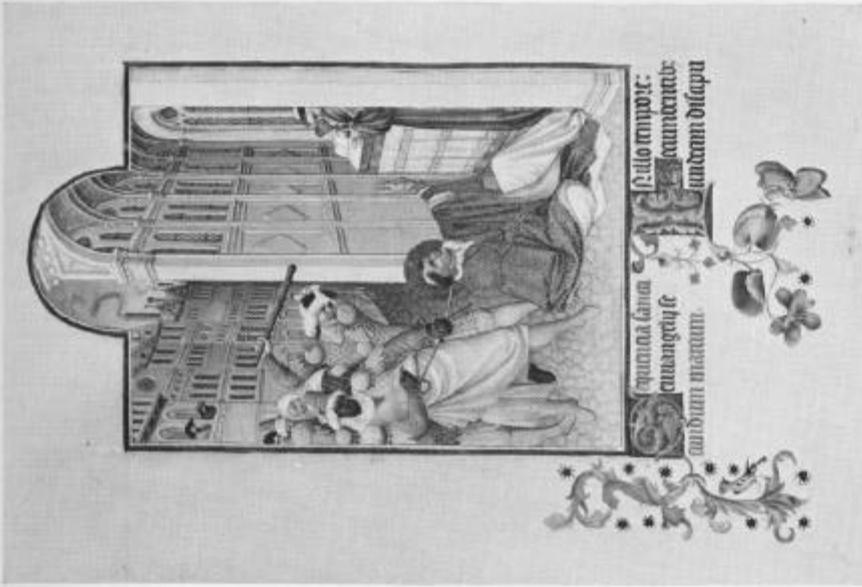
A more precise assessment of the entire hypothesis, here advanced in the most tentative form, can be made only in the context of a comprehensive study of the paintings of the Limbourgs, on which I am now engaged.

Whoever the Breviary Master was, he brought to its culmination in his time one method of depicting form and colour affected by atmosphere and light. His taste, shaped by *orfèvrerie*, seems somewhat related also to such Netherlandish paintings as the *Somme le roi* of 1415 in Brussels or the triptych, probably Mosan, now in the Boymans Museum, Rotterdam.¹ It is worth noting that in the triptych the haloes show similar tooling, to obtain the same effects of luminosity. At a time when the major painters of cosmopolitan France were learning pantomime and geometrical composition from the Italians, the Breviary Master, like later Dutch artists such as Geertgen and the Virgo Master, remained steadfastly 'Netherlandish'. For his figures and his compositions he was normally quite content to depend, as we have seen, on the Limbourgs, and occasionally on Jacquemart de Hesdin.

It seems clear that the milieu from which the Flemish panel painters emerged included the Breviary Master. Like them he observed highlights, as the brooch of his *Baptist* shows (Pl. XIIa), but he did not exploit them consistently. Though he failed to understand the Boucicaut Master's epoch-making perception of the principle of diminished colour on distant objects, he rendered far more effectively than that master the effect of atmosphere on forms and figures nearby. He widened the range of value, but he preserved his pattern of colour from obfuscation by deep shadow. The step to Jan van Eyck was very great, but the work of the painter we have considered may make it a little more understandable.

p. 145). For the exchange of manuscripts by Berry and Jean sans Peur see *Late XIV Century*, p. 49.

¹ For the *Somme le roi*, Brussels ms. 11044, see Panofsky, *op. cit.*, ii, figs. 140, 141, and for the Rotterdam triptych, *ibid.*, fig. 107.



b. The Limbours and the Breviary Master, *Martyrdom of St. Mark*, Chantilly, Musée Condé, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 19^r.

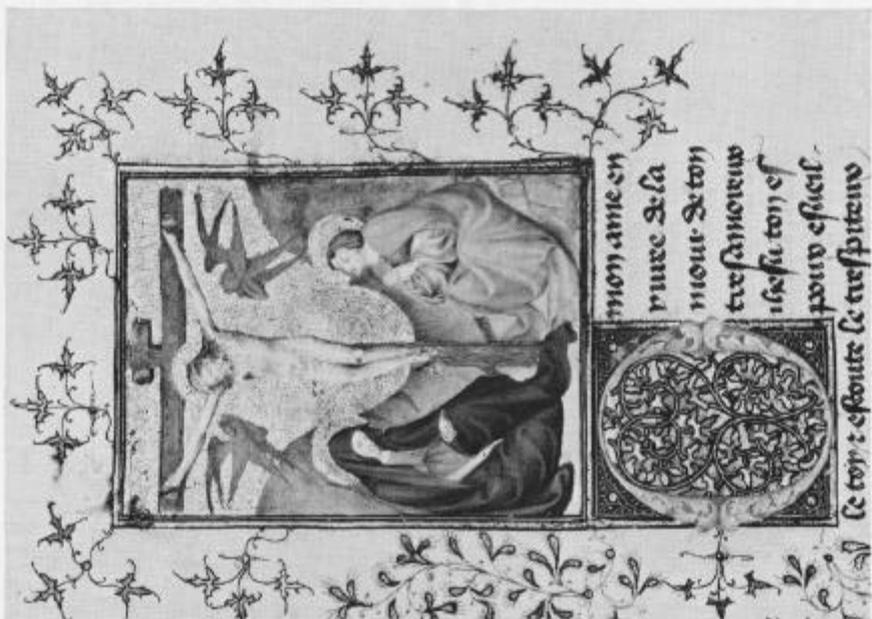


a. Workshop of the Master of the Breviary of Jean sans Peur, c. 1415, *Martyrdom of St. Mark*, British Museum, Harley 2897, fol. 282^v.

PLATE II



b. Paul de Limbourg, 1402-4, *Crucifixion*. Bibliothèque nationale, fr. 166, fol. 17.



a. Breviary Master, 1405-6, *Crucifixion*. Bibliothèque nationale, fr. 926, fol. 52.

PLATE III

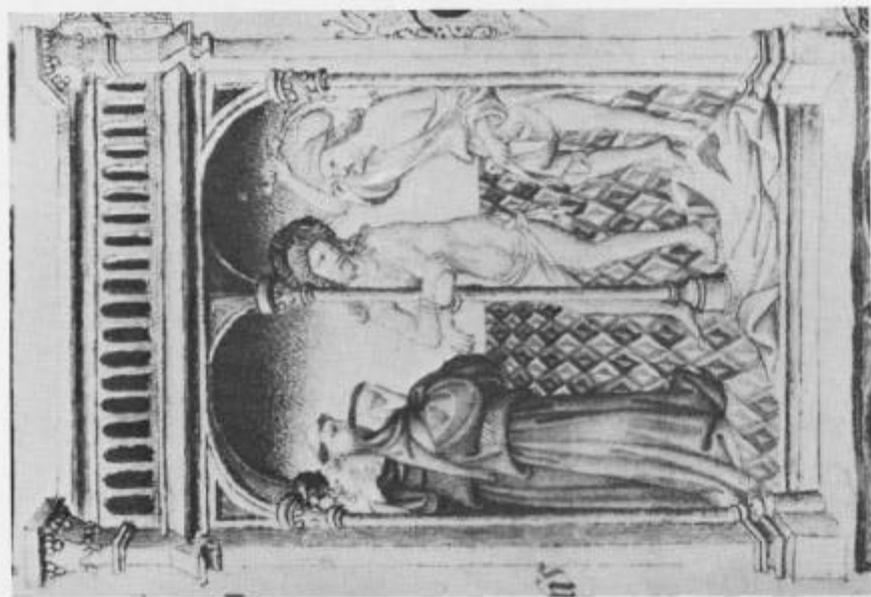


a. The Limbourg, c. 1406-8, *Crucifixion*. New York, The Cloisters, *Belles Heures*, fol. 142.

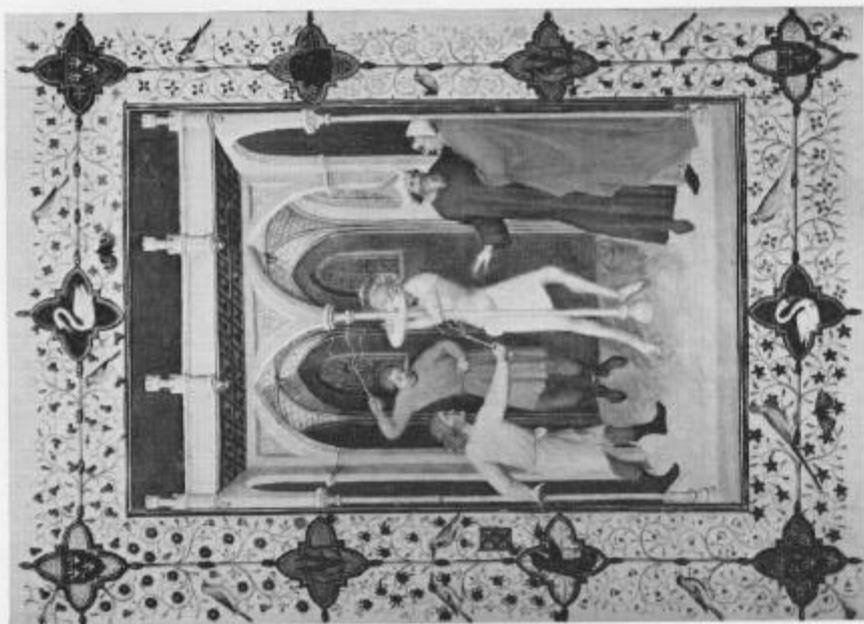


b. Jean de Beaumetz, c. 1390-5, *Crucifixion*. Cleveland, Museum of Art.

PLATE IV



a. Paul and Jean de Limbourg, 1402-4, *Flagellation*.
Bibliothèque nationale, fr. 166, fol. 12.



b. Jacquemart de Hesdin, c. 1400, *Flagellation*. Brussels,
Bibliothèque Royale, 11060-1, p. 182.



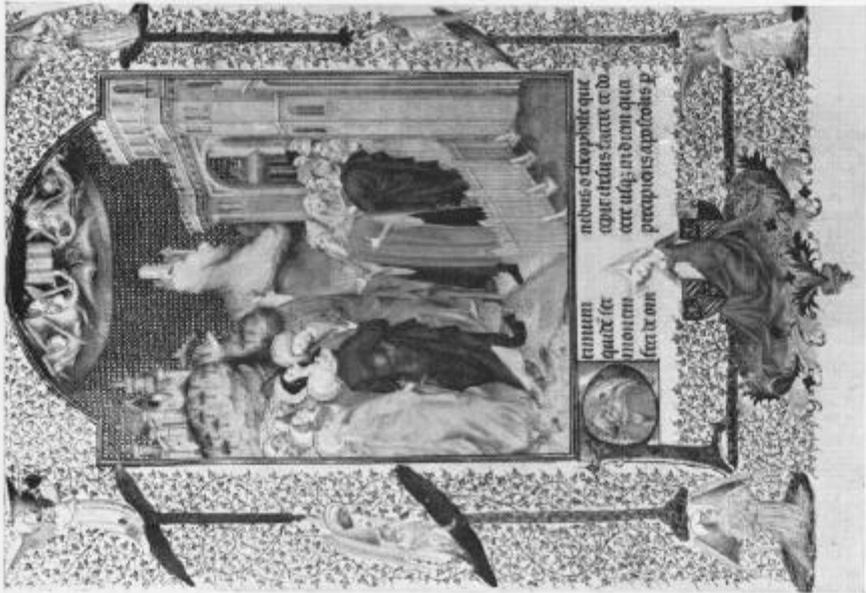
Breviary Master, *David, Scribe, and the Lord*. British Museum, Add. 35311, fol. 8.



Paul de Limbourg, *Blessed in prayer*. Bibliothèque nationale, nouv. acq. lat. 3093, fol. 240.



b. The Limbours, *Jean de Berry at a City-gate*. Copy by Bastard.



a. Breviary Master, *Ascension*. British Museum, Harley 2897, fol. 188v.



a. Breviary Master, *Baptism*. British Museum, Add. 35311, fol. 216.



b. Paul de Limbourg, c. 1406-8, *Baptism*. New York, The Cloisters, *Belles Heures*, fol. 211^v.

PLATE IX



Breviary Master, *St. Philip*. British Museum,
Harley 2897, fol. 285.



Breviary Master, *Crucifixion*. British Museum, Add. 35311, fol. 333^v.

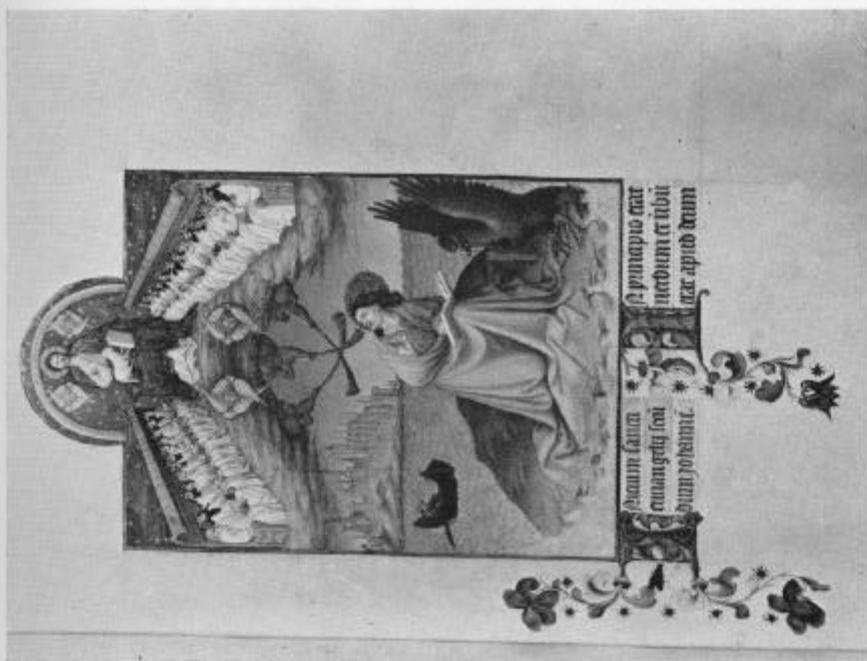
190.



Jacquemart de Hesdin, c. 1400, *Crucifixion*. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 11060-1, p. 190.



a. Breviary Master, *John the Baptist*. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, 219, fol. 249^r.



b. The Limbours and the Breuiary Master, *St. John*, Chantilly, Musée Condé, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 17.

PLATE XIII



a. The Limbourgs and the Breviary Master, Initials and border. Chantilly, Musée Condé, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 26.



b. Pucelle Workshop, Snail on vine. Bibliothèque nationale, lat. 10483, fol. 24^v.



The Limbourgs and the Breviary Master, *Feeding of the Multitude*. Chantilly, Musée Condé, *Très Riches Heures*, fol. 168^r.



Michelino da Besozzo, *Resurrection*. New York, Morgan Library, MS. 944, fol. 26^v.

PLATE XVI



a. Parisian enamel, c. 1410-20, *Madonna*. London, Victoria and Albert Museum.



b. Paris, c. 1400, Shutters of Triptych. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.



Netherlandish, c. 1425, *Madonna in the Sun*. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery.