



# Spotlight on a Parisian Treasure

Illumination from Royal Paris

DR. JÖRN GÜNTHER • RARE BOOKS AG

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# The De Croix Hours

on view

at

Frieze Masters London

Stand E3

Regent's Park

5-8 October 2017





The *De Croix Hours* is a stunning masterpiece, illuminated by three of the best masters of their time: the Master of the *Munich Golden Legend*, the Dunois Master, and the Master of the Harvard Hannibal. The latter was a collaborator of the Parisian Boucicaut Master.

France, Paris, c. 1430-1435. 215 x 150 mm. 262 leaves. 69 large miniatures.

**Entry into Jerusalem** (f. 187v), illuminated by the Master of the Harvard Hannibal. Christ approaching Jerusalem on a donkey, is hailed by many figures. Some throw down branches, another spreads a cloak.





The quality and abundance of the miniatures are baffling. The manuscript is in nearly flawless condition. Frequent references to the royal *fleurs-de-lys* in (as many as six) miniatures suggest a special occasion for the commission of these fine Hours.

St. Martin in rich garments and with a headdress of golden feathers shares his cloak, lined with ermine with a beggar (f. 243) by the Dunois Master.





St. John writing on Patmos, opening the Gospel Sequence in the De Croix Hours (ff. 13v-14),  
by the Master of the Munich Golden Legend.

215 x 150 mm, 262 leaves, 69 full-page miniatures with full borders across openings.

France, Paris, c. 1430-35.





St. John on Patmos (f. 14, detail)

The evangelist writes his name on the text scroll while an angel touches his shoulder and points to heaven. The devil tries to steal the inkpot.



St. John the Evangelist (f. 236), by the Master of the Munich Golden Legend.

This talented painter may have trained with the Bedford Master, while the Dunois Master, the second illuminator in these Hours, was his successor. Both are possibly identifiable as father and son Haincelin and Jehan Haincelin, originally of Hagenau in the Alsace.





All Saints adoring God in heaven (f. 95)  
by the Master of the Harvard Hannibal.

At the centre, as most prominent  
mediators, SS. John the Baptist and John  
the Evangelist, who may have been the  
patron saints of the commissioner.





St. Mark in his study with an open book (f. 16v)  
by the Master of the *Munich Golden Legend*.

More books and writing equipment are on a table, lit by a lantern. His lion holds a scroll with the evangelist's name "*secundum marcum ...*". French *fleurs-de-lys* abundantly decorate the cross beams.





St. Firmin (f. 242) by the Dunois Master.

The holy bishop holds a book and crozier and stands before a cloth emblazoned with the French *fleurs-de-lys*.





St. Anne teaching the Virgin how to read (f. 252, detail) by the Dunois Master.  
The chair behind the young Virgin is again decorated with *fleurs-de-lys*.



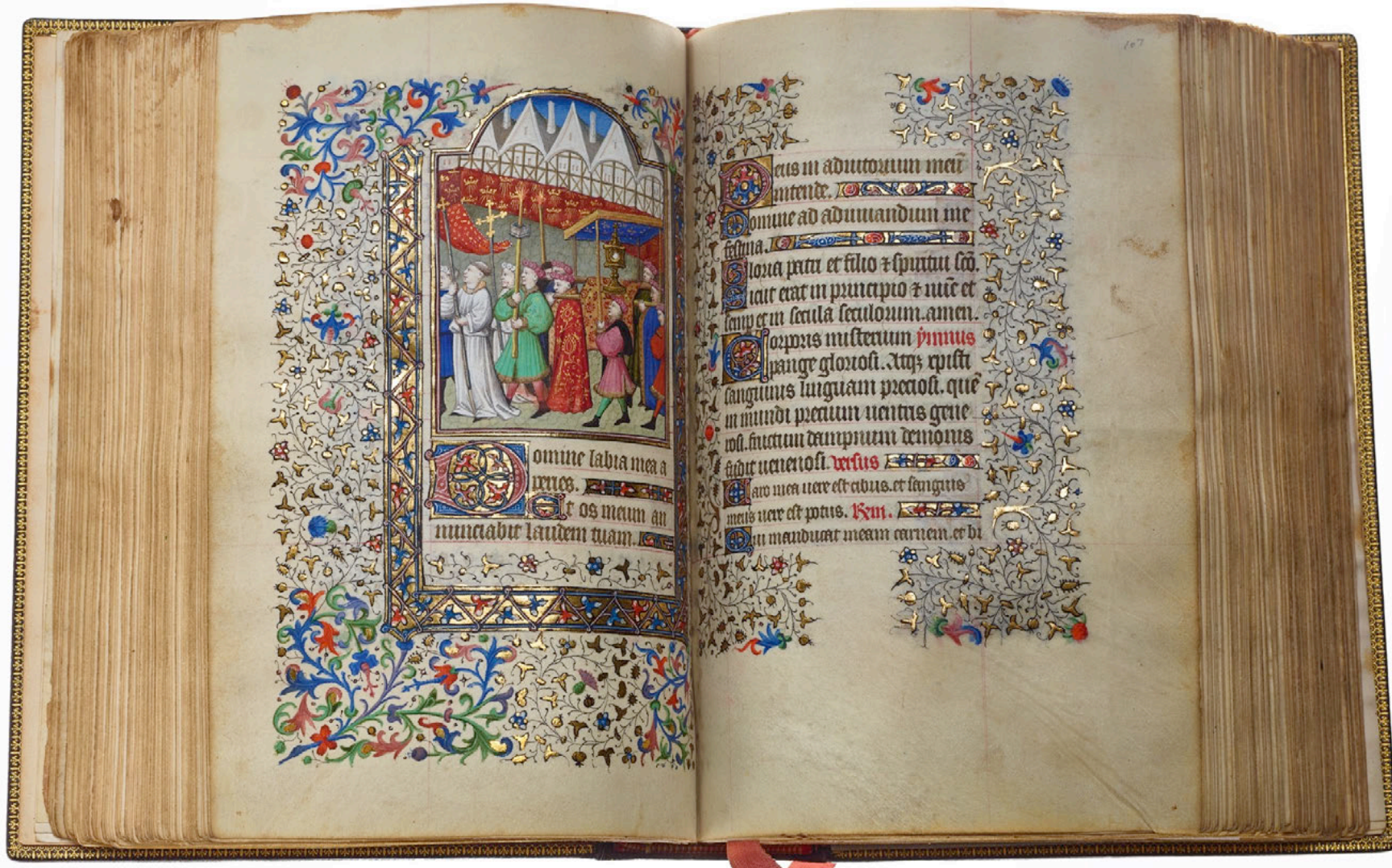


St. Mary Magdalene holding an ointment jar (f. 254, detail)  
by the Master of the *Munich Golden Legend*.  
The central cross beam of the vault is decorated with *fleurs-de-lys*.



St. Opportuna, Benedictine abbess (f. 256, detail) by the Master of the *Munich Golden Legend*.  
The glass window is decorated with a crest showing the arms of the Kings of France: three *fleurs-de lys*.





*Corpus Christi* procession (f. 106v) by the Dunois Master.

The monstrance is shown below a baldachin decorated with *fleurs-de-lis*.  
The street or town square is fenced off by a red tapestry, adorned with golden crowns.





Processions were ordered as thanksgiving for victories or peace treaties. The crowns adorning the tapestry in front of the houses and *fleurs-de-lys* on the canopy above the monstrance will have been depicted on purpose and may even refer to a specific occasion.

f. 106v ( detail)





This manuscript was handed down in and is named after the De Croix family.

One of the hypotheses formulated about the commission of this splendid book is that it was made for Jean de Croix (1410-92), bailiff of Lille, who since 1430 bore the name and coat of arms of the old noble family De Croix – after his grandmother Isabelle, dame de Croix.

The manuscript may have been created to mark the celebration of the Treaty of Arras (1435), which ended the devastating civil war in France and recognized Charles VII in his title as King of France. Because the lord of Croix exercised his power in the region of Lille/Arras, he likely participated in the glorious celebration of the royalty, so prominently present in this manuscript.





However, with all worldly, royal details in this Book of Hours, no-one is more celebrated than  
 the most royal of all: the Virgin crowned in heaven (f. 258)  
 by the Master of the Munich Golden Legend.





**Coronation of the Virgin** (f. 258) by the Master of the *Munich Golden Legend*.  
Virgin and Child standing on the crescent moon between the symbols of the evangelists.  
Two cherubim hold a crown over her head, all within a blaze of golden light.





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