



# Spotlight on Radiant Renewal in 13<sup>th</sup>-century Paris

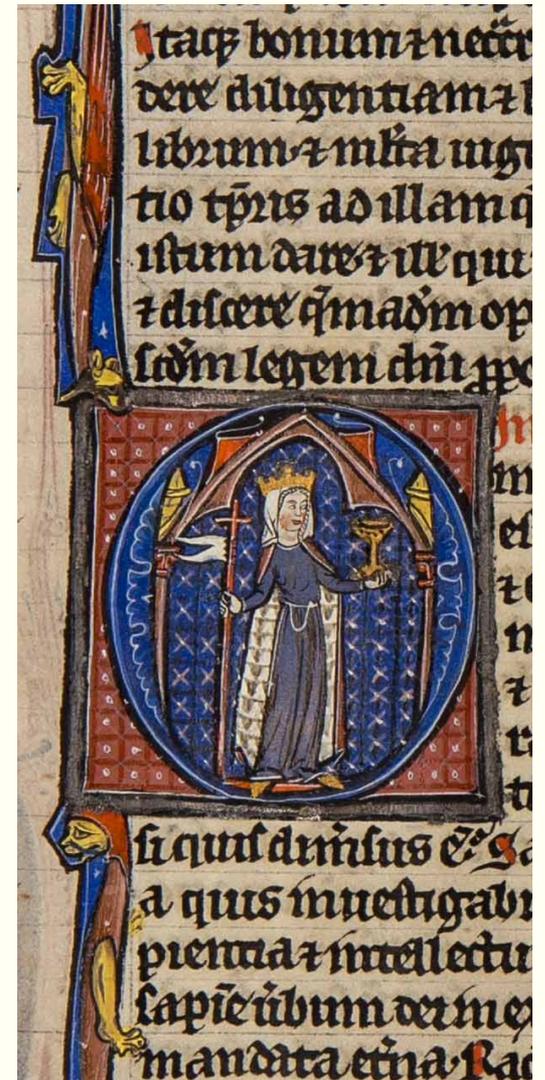
Part 1

## Testimonies of Change

DR. JÖRN GÜNTHER · RARE BOOKS AG

Manuscripts & Rare Books

Basel & Stalden



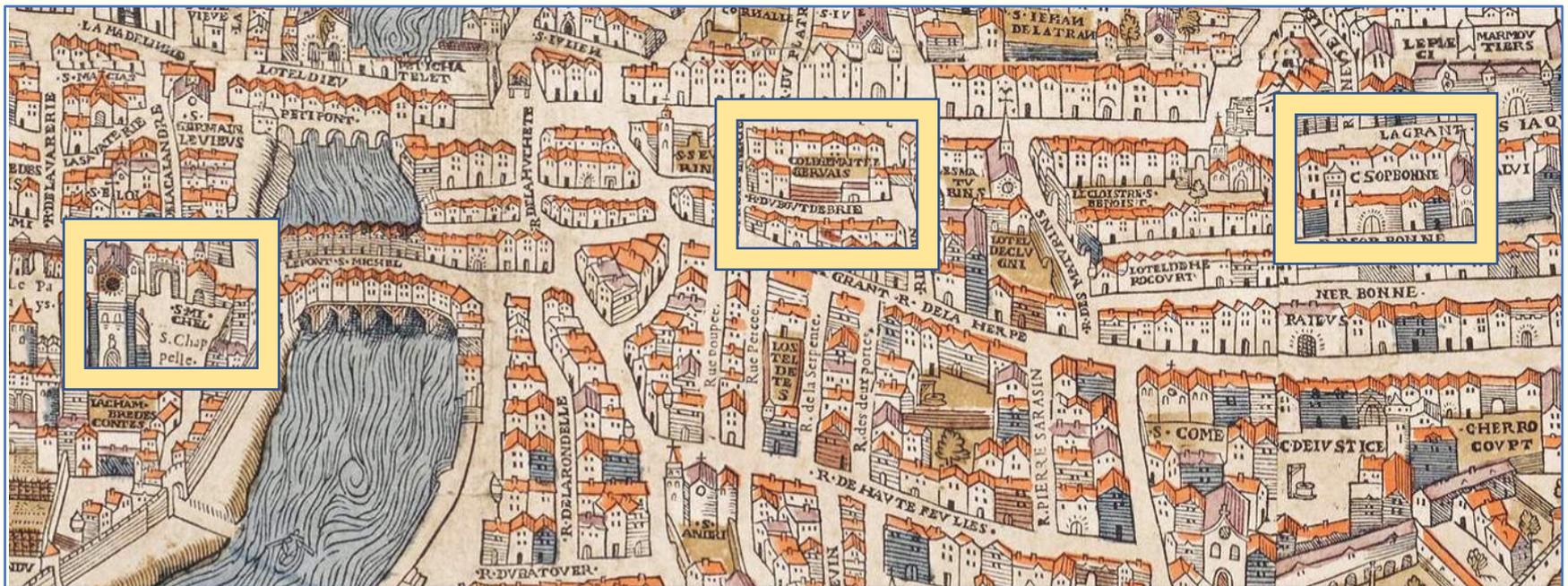


“Radiant Renewal”

inspired  
by

*Royal Patronage,  
Artists,  
and  
Scholarship*





Compelling innovation in book production in 13<sup>th</sup>-century Paris was brought about by royal patronage, scholarship, and artists bringing in new ideas and concepts.

Four exemplary book types in their brilliant designs are presented in two spotlights. Here in part 1: theological and legal glossed texts, in part 2 (soon to follow): the Psalter-Hours, and the one-volume Bible.

Three major Parisian locations, all within walking distance of each other, are symbolic to this emerging innovation: the 'rayonnante' Sainte-Chapelle in the Royal Palace (1248), commissioned by King Louis IX and his mother Blanche of Castile. The Rue Erembourg de Brie (Boutebrie), where talented *libraires* and illuminators lived and worked, and the Collège de Sorbonne, where Masters and students eagerly shared knowledge. All of this contributed to and resulted in creations that are still highly inspirational today.





Blanche of Castile and her son, King Louis IX of France, the scribe and the illuminator in the Bible of Saint Louis (c. 1227-1234, a masterpiece of the Pierpont Morgan Library and Museum in New York, Ms. M. 240, f. 8).

During the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Blanche of Castile (d. 1252), queen mother and twice regent of France, often resided in Paris where she oversaw the education of her children.

Her dedication as a mother and educator is recorded in various works of art, especially in the manuscripts of the *Bible Moralisée* (moralized Bible), a new genre with hundreds of images.

It was through her extensive patronage of art that Blanche had a lasting effect. Both she and her son, King Louis IX (1214-1270) were patrons of the royal chapel, Ste-Chapelle.

This famous royal chapel, where the *fleur-de-lys* is omnipresent, was consecrated in 1248. Blanche's patronage of manuscripts is known to have been extensive and refined. She specially sought out innovative works with a didactic function.

**Presented here in Part 1 are:**

1.1. Petrus Lombardus, *Glossatura magna in psalmos* or Glossed Psalter, illuminated by the 'Almagest' workshop.

Paris, c. 1200.

280 x 202 mm, 204 leaves, 20 large illuminated initials.



1.2 Petrus Lombardus, *Glossatura magna in psalmos*, illuminated in the workshop of the *Vie de Saint Denis*.

Paris, c. 1230-1250.

442 x 315 mm, 213 leaves, 9 large historiated initials, 51 pages with golden frame borders, illuminated initials throughout.

2. Gregory IX, *Decretales*, ed. by Raymond of Penyafort with the Gloss of Bernard of Parma – Gregory X, *Constitutiones novissimae* with the Gloss of Johannes Garsias Hispanus + 7 further texts. Illuminated by Maître Honoré and workshop.

Paris, not before 1281.

440 x 270 mm, 284 leaves, 5 miniatures, 11 large (3 of which illuminated) and numerous illuminated initials throughout.



**Part 2 (coming soon):**

3. *Dyson-Perrins Psalter-Hours*, illuminated in the workshop of the *Bible Moralisée*. Paris, c. 1250-1260.

152 x 105 mm, 230 leaves, 10 historiated initials, 24 calendar illustrations.

4.1 *Biblia Latina*, illuminated in the workshop of the *Bible Moralisée*.

Paris, c. 1220-1230.

292 x 197 mm, 385 leaves, 81 historiated and 59 large decorated initials.

4.2 *Biblia Latina*, illuminated by the Masters of the Royal Psalter Group.

Paris 1260-1270.

343 x 245 mm, 457 leaves, 79 historiated and 83 large decorated initials.





omni... hanc... hunc... huius...

reple... hanc... hunc... huius...

AV 9

M 42

Exemplum...

Exemplum...

1.1. Petrus Lombardus, Glossatura magna in psalmos or Glossed Psalter, illuminated by the 'Almagest' workshop. France, Paris, c. 1200. 280 x 202 mm, 204 leaves, 20 fine initials (2 of which historiated).

The important influence of the university on books has long been recognized.

In Paris, the Collège de Sorbonne was founded in 1257 by Robert de Sorbon (1201–1274), a peasant's son from the Ardennes who became a Master of Theology, Canon of Notre Dame, and Confessor-Chaplain of King Louis IX.

Many books reached the Sorbonne via donors and bequests – in the early years these were often northern associates of Robert of Sorbon. By 1290 the Sorbonne possessed by far the largest and richest collection of any medieval institution – its influence extended beyond France's borders, attracting visiting scholars and students from all over Europe.

The book collection was constantly renewed and reshaped by the Masters to meet their developing needs. Voids were filled and new books served as catalysts to further inquiry.



hanc librum... huius monasterii...



Important bequests to the Sorbonne were made by several physicians from (among other places) Douai, Abbeville, and Amiens, who gave “Bibles, originals and other glossed books” to the university. Most important was the large library of Richard de Fournival, poet, physician, and chancellor of Amiens (d. c. 1260). These northern arrivals were highly influential.

Their content ranged from the Trivium (grammar, dialectic, rhetoric) and Quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astrology) to metaphysics, philosophy, poetry, medicine, civil and canon law, to the scriptures and theological writings of the fathers and doctors of the Church.



1.1 Petrus Lombardus, *Glossed Psalter*, illuminated by the 'Almagest' workshop in Paris, c. 1200. 280 x 200 mm, 204 leaves.



One-volume pocket Bible written in Paris, illuminated in the Mathurin workshop, c. 1250, 630 leaves, 140 x 85 mm.

sold

More and more often, new books were made by professionals in urban workshops. The growing demand contributed to the renewal in production. The emergence of the university and the mendicant orders created the need for single-volume Bibles, which were small and easy to use and carry while travelling. Scholars needed books copied on leaves with wide margins in order to add commentaries and notes. At the same time, the lay nobility developed a taste for a new private, devotional book, which brought the arrival of the Psalter-Hours, with poems and prayers to recite throughout the day. These new book genres required the rethinking of layouts, demanding special planning and supervision.

1.1 Petrus Lombardus, *Glossed Psalter*, illuminated by the 'Almagest' workshop, in a new, professionally designed lay-out. Paris, c. 1200. 280 x 202 mm, 204 leaves, 20 fine initials.

As law, theology, and various professions took form in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, each with their own curriculum and text books, each genre developed its particular vocabulary and special, related abbreviations.

Books were given on loan to the Masters and to the *libraires* (= those involved in book production). Unbound and divided in sections, these would be assigned to several scribes to be copied at the same time (the '*pecia*' system).

The new emphasis on speed rather than quality required a corrector to check the results. Such a professional would then add '*corr*' to different sections and small notes that are often still visible in large, scholarly books. The overall work was thus broken up and delegated to specialists.





1.1 Petrus Lombardus, *Glossed Psalter*, illuminated by the 'Almagest' workshop, in a new, professionally designed lay-out. Paris, c. 1200. 280 x 202 mm, 204 leaves, 20 fine initials.



The finest study books, such as this Psalter with glosses, references, and other comments, were professionally planned and produced. This beautifully executed, new design made Parisian books highly desirable objects. Some of the finest products soon found their way elsewhere, both north and south: this Psalter commentary went to St. Lambert in Liège.



Parisian scholarly books with glosses, wide margins, and fine illumination could be used for study but were also impressive, diplomatic gifts.

1.2 Petrus Lombardus, *Glossatura magna in psalms*, illuminated in the workshop of the *Vie de Saint Denis*. Paris, c. 1230-1250. 442 x 315 mm, 213 leaves, 9 large historiated initials, 51 pages with golden frame borders.



The present imposing, very large Psalter commentary migrated to Spain soon after it was made. Presumably the golden frames with *fleur-de-lys* were added somewhat later.

1.2 Petrus Lombardus, *Glossatura magna in psalmos*, illuminated in the workshop of the *Vie de Saint Denis*. Paris, c. 1230-1250. 442 x 315 mm, 213 leaves, 9 large historiated initials, 51 pages with golden frame borders. Medieval binding.











*Decretales* by Gregory IX, and other texts:  
A serious book with enchanting decoration by  
the best workshop in Paris.

For this manuscript see also the Spotlight on a  
legal Masterpiece: [Have Mercy!](#)



2. Gregory IX, *Decretales*, and other texts.



# Spotlight on Radiant Renewal in 13<sup>th</sup>-century Paris

Part I

(Part 2 coming soon!)



JG

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