

Spotlight on Collecting Medieval Manuscripts Pt. 2: Collecting in Context

DR. JÖRN GÜNTHER · RARE BOOKS AG

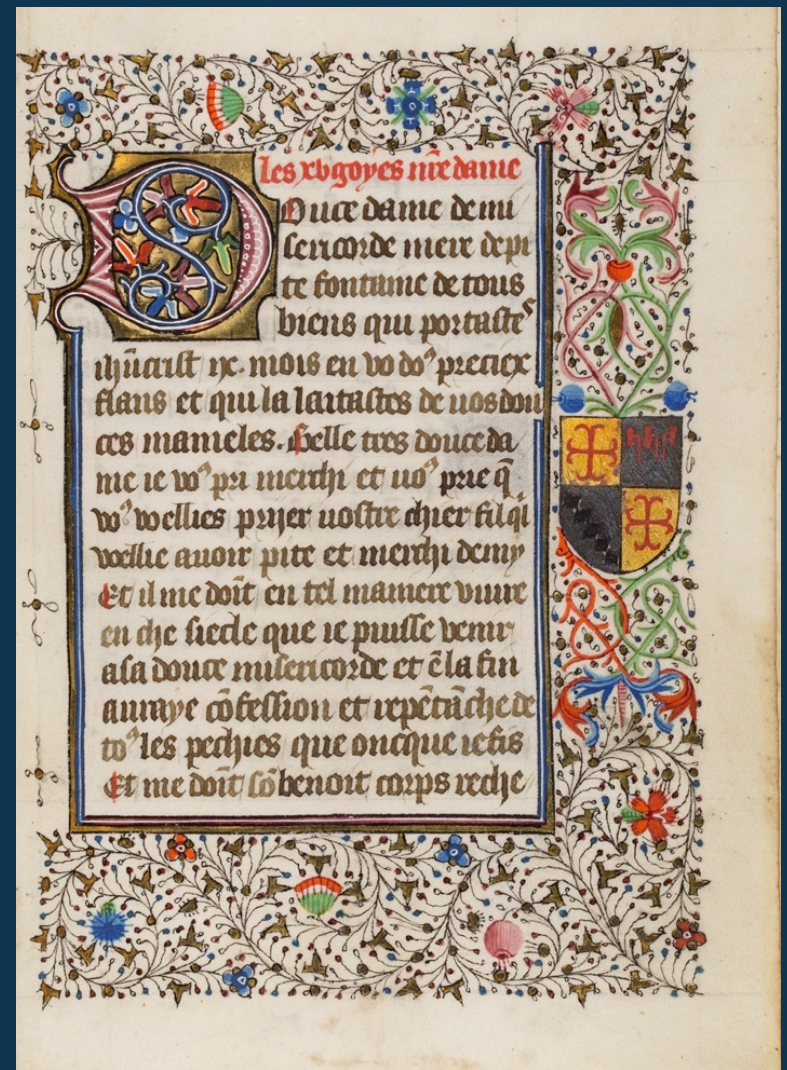
Manuscripts & Rare Books

Basel & Stalden



St. Aldegonde-Rabodengues Book of Hours, use of St. Omer, in Latin and French. Illuminated by one of the Masters of the Gold Scrolls. Flanders, St. Omer and/or Bruges?, c. 1430-40. 175 x 120 mm, 331 leaves. Manuscript on vellum, 8 (of 21?) full-page miniatures on inserted singletons. € 115'000,-

Two coats of arms (f. 83 and f. 204) identify Jean of St. Aldegonde and Marguerite Rabodengues as patrons.

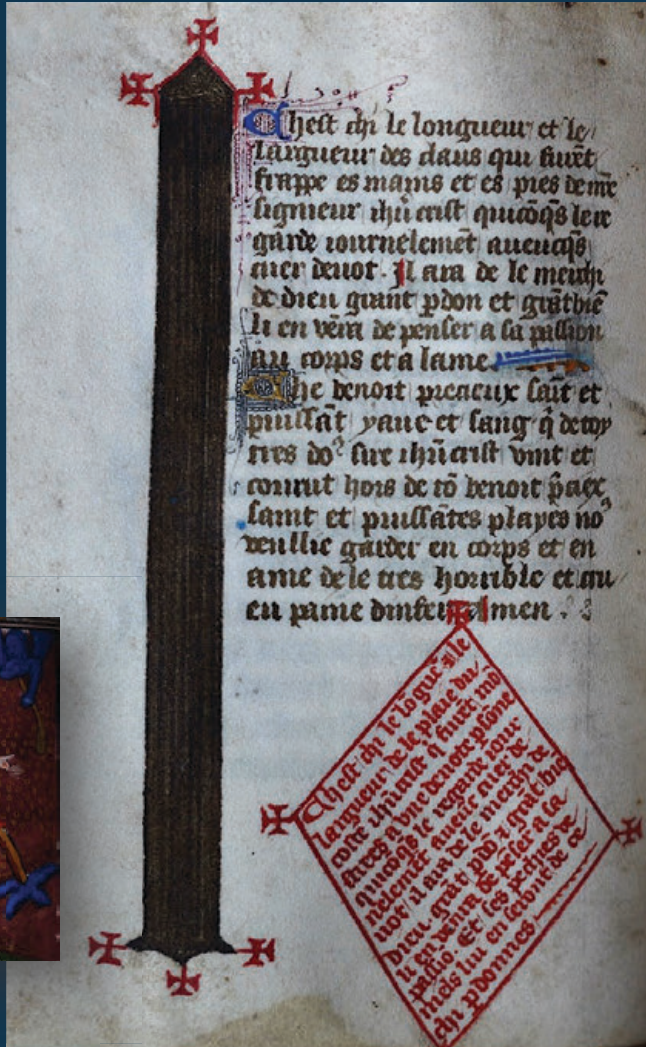


With originally more than 350 leaves and many prayers in French vernacular, this is an extraordinary manuscript. Both St. Aldegonde and Rabodengues-Renty were well known families in St. Omer and the nearby region. No longer complete, the book still is an important witness of local use and prayers, around 1430-1440.



Jhesus crist a matines fu vostre char
 vendue. Aprins esingé en la face
 et batue. Atierche par despit de
 rouge drap uestue. Despoullie a
 nudi et en la croiz pēdue. Anōne
 vostre char ens u coste ferue. A len
 re de uespres de la croiz despēdue
 Et a leure de cōplie ou sepulchre este
Jhesus quāt vostre char **U**due
 benoite et precieuse. Souffri pō
 moy en le croiz le mort tāt dole
 reule. Bien doit estre ma char pe
 chereulle honteuse. Quelle qert
 les soulas et neult estre lyseuse
Jhesus quāt ie regarde vostre
 char despēdue. De la croiz en bas

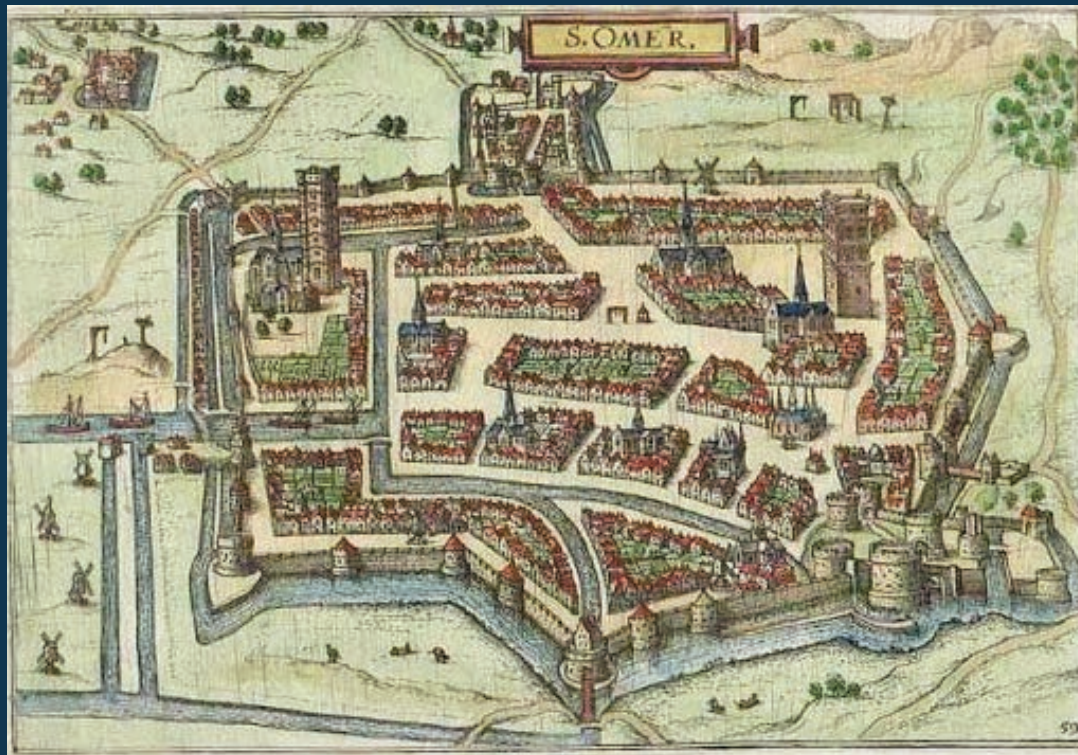
The St. Aldegonde-Rabodengues Hours are written
 in Latin with numerous prayers in French,
 uncommon for the early date of origin, c. 1430-40.



Drawings and a prayer on the length of the nails used in the Crucifixion and on the size of the wound that pierced Christ's side.

Especially the prayers in French make this 'bulky' book preserved in its original binding quite interesting.

St. Aldegonde-Rabodengues Book of Hours, use of St. Omer, c. 1430-40. 175 x 120 mm, 331 leaves.



St. Omer or Omaars is on the border of French Flanders and Artois where, in the 7th century, people settled around the Abbey of St. Bertin – founded by Bertinus of Artois and supported by bishop Audomar (Odemaar or Omaar).

Severely hit by the plague, St. Omer slowly recovered prosperity in the late 14th century when it was integrated into the Burgundian territories (1384). St. Omer is less than 40 km north of Azincourt where thousands of French lost their lives in 1415.

(Below) Ruins of St. Bertin Abbey, once famous for its treasures and manuscripts.

(At right) St. Omer and his servant, *Life of Saint Omer*.
Bibliothèque municipale of Saint-Omer, ms. 698, 11th century



(At right) St. Audomar and King Dagobert.

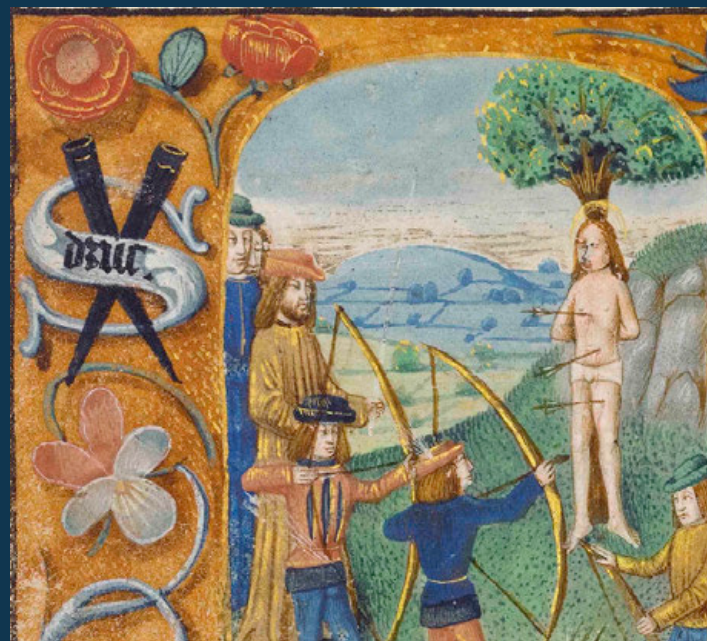
(Below) What began as a small chapel in the 7th century grew into one of the most important cathedrals of this northern region. Undoubtedly the patrons of our Book of Hours prayed here in Our Lady's Church.





Serainchamps Book of Hours, use of Ghent and Liège, manuscript on vellum in Latin and Dutch, illuminated by the Masters of Adolph of Cleves. Flanders, Ghent, c. 1480. 105 x 80 mm, 210 leaves, 10 full-page miniatures and 17 large illuminated initials. € 115'000,-

The Book of Hours made for Pierre Serainchamps (1456-?) is identified by his coat of arms. The initials *P* and *J* joined in a love-knot supposedly refer to the names of husband and wife, likely named Pierre and Jeanne. The name Serainchamps is variously spelled, for example Serinchamps (Ciney) or Strainchamps (Fauvillers, Belgian Ardennes), part of the Prince-Bishopric of Liège.



(At left) Pierre Serainchamps (1456-?) kneeling before St. Peter, with a text-scroll reading: *Sancte Petre orate pro nobis*. The coat of arms: *D'argent à la bande de gueules chargée de trois quartefeuilles d'or*.

(Above) The letter S around two penne crossed, with the motto "druc"- which has not yet been explained satisfactorily.



The Serainchamps manuscript is a charming, small format Book of Hours (105 x 80 mm) illuminated by the Masters of Adolph of Cleves in Ghent, c. 1480. The 10 full-page miniatures and 17 large illuminated initials make this quite an attractive manuscript. The Masters are named after their work for Duke Adolph of Cleves (d. 1493, Baltimore, WAG, W 439), Knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece.



(At right) *P* & *J* bound in a love-knot. We know of a Jeanne de la Marck 'dit de Serinchamps' (before 1500), but whether she was Pierre's wife is unconfirmed. The powerful De la Marck became Lords of Serinchamps, near Luxembourg. In matching borders across openings, the Masters of Adolph of Cleves integrated both the verso and recto sides of openings. Combinations of interlaced acanthus with flowers, fruits, and butterflies are scattered over painted grounds.



Serainchamps castle – largely a 19th-century reconstruction.



Book of Hours, use of Utrecht, in the Dutch translation of Geert Grote. Illuminated in the circle of the Masters of the Zwolle Bible. Northern Netherlands, Zwolle, c. 1470-1480. 148 x 100 mm. 189 leaves. Manuscript on vellum, 6 (of 7) full-page inserted miniatures and 6 large initials with full borders. Original medieval binding. € 95'000,-

This manuscript, gleaming with gold, was made by the Zwolle Brothers of the Common Life, followers of the *Devotio Moderna* movement who earned their living by copying books.



Written in the vernacular and with unpolished miniatures, the Books of Hours made by this workshop emanate the sphere of the *Devotio Moderna*, whose followers shared a communal life in poverty, adhering to the example of Christ. The illuminators, the Masters of the Zwolle Bible, are named after their work in a well-known six-volume Bible.



Large Psalter-leaf with three scenes from the Life of David from a *Psalterium triplex*, illuminated by the Zwolle Masters. Northern Netherlands, Zwolle, 1474. Leaf: 534 x 355 mm, 3 historiated initials *D*, tempera, ink, and gold on vellum. € 85'000,-

The leaf belongs to the six-volume so-called 'Zwolle Bible', written by Jacobus van Enckhuysen in the Zwolle Fraterhouse and was made for Herman Droem, dean of the Chapter of St. Mary in Utrecht. After the Reformation, when the Bible was exhibited at St. Mary's, visitors excised leaves and miniatures. Some, like the present, have been rediscovered.



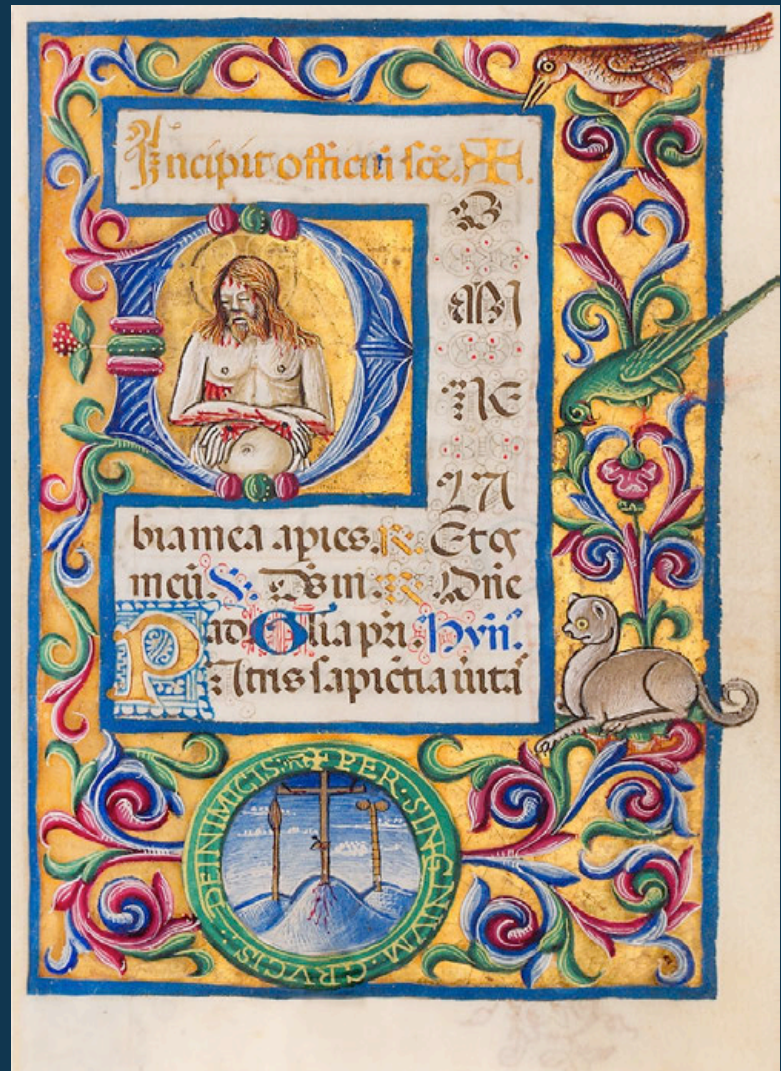
Several manuscripts from the Chapter of St. Mary have been preserved. The church was one of the finest and richest in Utrecht, yet fell to ruins and was demolished in the 19th century.





Zwolle, in the eastern part of the Netherlands, was part of the Hanseatic league and a prosperous merchant town. Like in many other Dutch cities, the Brothers of the Common Life founded schools and were involved in book production. Many of their houses are now monuments.





Mountnorris Book of Hours, use of Rome. Illuminated manuscript. North-eastern Italy, Veneto (?), c. 1475-1500. 140 x 95 mm, 182 leaves, vellum. With 12 historiated initials and border decoration including medallions. € 85'000,-



Painted in beautifully saturated colours and liquid gold, this Italian Book of Hours features an artist with a feeling for humour rather than sombre devotion.

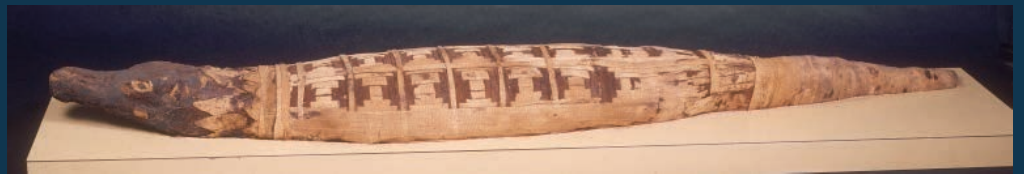


The style presents a fusion of Venetian and Lombardic elements found in late 15th-century book art. The fauna in the borders recall those in books produced for the court of Ferrara.



Mountnorris Book of Hours, use of Rome, in Latin. Northeastern Italy, Veneto (?), c. 1475-1500. 140 x 95 mm. 182 leaves. Illuminated manuscript on vellum.

Named after Arthur Annesley (1744-1816), first Earl of Mountnorris and Viscount of Valentia, Ireland. His library was sold in 1817. He also collected archeologica during his travels to the Far East. A mummified crocodile from his collection is on view in the World Museum Liverpool.



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1. *Book of Hours*, use of St. Omer, made for Jean de St. Aldegonde and Marguerite de Rabodengues-Renty, by the Masters of the Gold Scrolls. Flanders, St. Omer or Bruges, c. 1430-40. € 115'000,-



2. *Book of Hours*, use of Ghent and Liège, made for Pierre Serainchamps, by the Masters of Adolph of Cleves. Flanders, Ghent, ca. 1480. € 115'000,-




3. *Book of Hours*, use of Utrecht, in Dutch. Illuminated manuscript, circle of the Masters of the Zwolle Bible. Netherlands, Zwolle, c. 1470-80. € 95'000,-

4. Large Psalter-leaf with three scenes from the Life of David from a *Psalterium triplex*, illuminated by the Zwolle Masters. Northern Netherlands, Zwolle, 1474. € 85'000,-



5. *Mountnorris Book of Hours*, use of Rome. Northern Italy, Veneto or Venice (?), c. 1475-1500. € 85'000,-



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