

KATARZYNA PŁONKA-BALUS

**THE CATALOGUE OF MEDIEVAL
ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS AND
MINIATURES IN THE PRINCES CZARTORYSKI
LIBRARY AND MUSEUM, PART 1: THE
NETHERLANDS (15TH-16TH CENTURIES)**
UNIVERSITAS, KRAKÓW 2010, 164 PP., 24
COLOURED PANELS WITH ILLUSTRATIONS,
64 BLACK AND WHITE ILLUSTRATIONS.

In the age of concise Internet catalogues and databases created as a part of short-term projects or grants and almost purposefully left as unfinished “open-works,” the book of Katarzyna Płonka-Balus presents itself as an accomplished result of a thoroughly thought-out and documented project. *The Catalogue of Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts and Miniatures in the Princes Czartoryski Library and Museum, Part 1: The Netherlands (15th-16th Centuries)* is the result of long-term research conducted by the author, who during the past ten years devoted a book and a series of articles to several manuscripts from the collection.¹ Indeed, the catalogue is another step towards a systematic description of the illuminated manuscripts at the Princes Czartoryski Library and Museum, the goal first announced by the 2001 exhibition “the Puławy Collection of Izabela Czartoryska’s Illuminated Manuscripts” co-organized by the author and Barbara Miodońska.²

The first overview of the Czartoryski collection by Maria Jarosławska-Gąsiorowska was published in the 1934 issue of the *Bulletin de la Société Française de Reproduction des Manuscrits à Peintures*.³ It played a crucial role in the dissemination of scholarly awareness of the collection internationally, but, as the research on European miniature painting progressed, its specific findings required verification. Płonka-Balus’s new catalogue provides

-
- 1 K. Płonka-Balus, *So-called Prayer book of Władysław IV Vasa. Metamorphosis of the Medieval Book of Hours 2945 II in the Czartoryski Library*, In: *Ars graeca-ars latina. Studies dedicated to professor Anna Różycka-Bryzek*, Kraków 2001, pp. 352-64; Eadem, *David im Gebet eine aus dem Gebetbuch Karls V herausgeschnittene Miniatur (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Vind. 1859) in der Czartoryski Bibliothek zu Krakau*, In: *Kunstchronik*, 2004, pp. 445-48; Eadem *Vita Christi [et] La Vengeance de Nostre Seigneur Jhesu Christ. Issues concerning the content of style and function of manuscript miniature 2919 in the Czartoryski Library*, Kraków 2004; Eadem, *Madonna and Child with an Angel. Miniature by the Master of the Dresden Prayer book in the Czartoryski Library*, In: *Artifex Doctus. Studies dedicated to professor Jerzy Gadomski for the seventieth anniversary of his birthday*, Kraków 2007, pp. 91-105.
 - 2 B.B. Miodońska, Katarzyna Płonka-Balus, *The Puławy Collection of Izabela Czartoryska’s Illuminated Manuscripts*, Kraków 2001.
 - 3 M. Jarosławska-Gąsiorowska, *Les principaux manuscrits à peintures de Musée des Princes Czartoryski à Cracovie*, In: *Bulletin de la Société Française de Reproduction des Manuscrits à Peintures*, xviii, Paris 1934.

this necessary update of our knowledge of the Netherlandish manuscripts in the Princes Czartoryski Library and Museum through a comprehensive review of the recent scholarship verifications of attributions, affiliations and dates of production of particular manuscripts, and suggests possible further inquiries.

The Princes Czartoryski collection of manuscripts, though it cannot be compared to the biggest European collections, is in some respects exceptional. Its beginnings are entangled with the origins of institutional collecting in Poland in the age of Romanticism. The first library was established by Adam Czartoryski in the Blue Palace in Warsaw (and catalogued ca. 1770), but the core of the collection together with the most valuable illuminated manuscripts was assembled by his wife, Izabela Flemming Czartoryska, the founder of the Temple of the Sybil (1801) and the Gothic House (1809) in Puławy – the two first museum establishments on Polish lands. Other illuminated manuscripts come from the Poryce collection of Tadeusz Czacki, purchased in 1818, and from subsequent acquisitions by Prince Władysław Czartoryski (1828–94). Today, the Czartoryski Library, along with the Działyński Library in Kórnik (now the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences, PAN), is one of only two extant former Polish aristocratic collections, gathered to form future national institutions. Thus, the collection together with the abundant archive documenting in detail its history and the present catalogue are at the centre of interest not only of art historians, but also of researchers in the history of collecting and museology.

As a group, the illuminated manuscripts produced in the Southern and Northern Netherlands constitute the biggest and the most artistically coherent part of the Czartoryski collection. Hence the unsurprising choice of Katarzyna Płonka-Balus to start the series of publications devoted to the collection with a catalogue of this portion of the holdings.

The catalogue includes descriptions of sixteen manuscripts presented in chronological order. Eleven of them originated in Flanders (Southern Netherlands) and four in Holland and Guelders (Northern Netherlands). The entry on one codex, probably copied in Valenciennes and once comprising miniatures attributed to Simon Marmion, has been attached as an annex due to its marginal decoration added in the 16th century in France. All manuscripts are described with exceptional accuracy. Each catalogue entry not only contains the basic information related to their physical characteristics, state of preservation, provenance and decoration, but also – which is not a frequent feature in catalogues of illuminated manuscripts – it enumerates in great detail their text contents together with a full transcription of relevant rubrics and incipits. Miniatures, initials and other decorative elements of the page are described with a similar degree of accuracy. The author dedicated, however, slightly less attention to the codicology. Along with such detailed descriptions of pictorial and textual contents, one may wish the author had also analysed the composition of gatherings and included at least a brief account of it. Such information would have made it easier for the reader to understand the structure of those manuscripts, which were not preserved in their original and integral state (e.g. MS Czart. 3025 I, from which the leaves with illustrations were cut out, or MS Czart 2945 II whose whole sections of text are missing). Each catalogue entry is accompanied by a series of illustrations reproducing several leaves (or their details). It is the first such extensive publication of the manuscripts from the Czartoryskis' holdings.

The most interesting section of the catalogue are the *comments* that follow the descriptions. In the form of a short essay, the author explains here her opinions regarding the origin and date of individual manuscripts or the attributions of their decoration to particular artists or workshops, and makes a short review of the previous scholarship devoted to them. In these sections of the catalogue the author also presents her new hypotheses, observations and discoveries. A few of them deserve our attention.

A comparative analysis of the illumination of the *Book of Hours*, MS Czart. 3025 I, formerly attributed to the Master of Mary of Burgundy and currently linked to the circle of Ghent illuminators called the “Ghent Associates” and to the Master of the Berlin Prayer Book (Kupferstischkabinett, H 78 B 12), deserves the first mention. The author, who is currently working on a monograph devoted to this manuscript,⁴ identified with precision the participation of individual artists in the decoration of the codex. She also presented a number of very suggestive artistic and iconographic analogies that put the illuminations of this *Book of Hours* into a broader context of the Ghent painting of the 1480s. These are, among others, the juxtaposition of the nocturne “St. Julian the Hospitaller and his wife ferry Christ across the river in a boat” from St. Julian’s legend with the miniature of St. Amalberga in the *Book of Hours* from St. Peter’s Abbey in Ghent (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 223); and the comparison of “David in Prayer” with a corresponding illustration in the Rookloster Breviary (British Library, Additional 18863). An aspect of the codex that still requires explanation is the script. Its clearly southern (Italian or Spanish?) character brings to mind the manuscripts produced in the Netherlands for the members of the Spanish royal family, such as the Breviary of Isabella of Castile (British Library, Additional 18851), presented to the queen by her ambassador to the court of Maximilian I, Francisco de Rojas. The riddle of the Czartoryski *Book of Hours*, however, is not solved by the first owner’s nationality, who, as the author proves on the basis of the calendar and litany, came from the territory of the Empire.

The description of the Prayer Book in Middle Dutch, MS Czart. 2949 I, is also noteworthy. This manuscript, whose decoration the author convincingly attributes to the Master of the Book of Hours of Margriet Uutenham, was until recently associated with Haarlem.⁵ New research linked the Master of Margriet Uutenham with a group of artists active at the Augustinian convent of Bethany in Arnhem in 1470-1480.⁶ The author’s analysis of the manuscript’s liturgical content confirms its Arnhem use and, more importantly, provides additional evidence linking the Master of Margriet Uutenham with the convent of “Bethany”.

One of the most interesting manuscripts in the Czartoryski collection, and by far the best known to the author is undoubtedly the *Vita Christi [et] la vengeance de Ihesu Christ Nostre Seigneur* (MS Czart. 2919 V). It is the oldest copy in a group of three very close manuscripts, produced between 1478 and ca. 1480/85 in Ghent for the members of the Burgundian court, Guillaume de Ternay (the Cracow copy), Louis de Gruuthuse (Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. fr. 181), and a still anonymous aristocrat, probably from the circle of Margaret of York (British Library, Royal 16 G. iii).⁷ The London copy was signed by the prominent Ghent scribe and editor David Aubert. The similarity of script, layout, articulation of text and decoration of borders in the other two codices also seems to indicate broadly the involvement of Aubert’s workshop. Thomas Kren and Scot McKendrick attributed the illuminations of all three manuscripts to the Master of the Flemish Boethius, named by them after the

4 K. Plonka-Balus, *Legacy of the Master of Margriet Uutenham. Ghent Associates and illuminations* MS. Czart. 3025 I (working titl.)

5 B. Miodońska, K. Plonka-Balus, op. cit., *catalogue no. 23*.

6 *Genie ohne Namen: der Meister des Bartholomäus-Altars*, ed. Rainer Budde and Roland Krischel, Köln 2001, *catalogue no. 7-12*.

7 This manuscript was probably included in the English Royal Collection during the reign of Edward IV, however it does not belong to the group of codices commissioned or purchased by the king in Bruges ca. 1479-83. It might have come into the royal hands as a gift from Margaret of York, Edward IV’s sister and the wife of Charles the Bold of Burgundy, cf. Joanna Frńska, *catalogue no. 152*, In: S. McKendrick, J. Lowden, K. Doyle, with J. Frńska and D. Jackson, *Royal Manuscripts: The Genius of Illumination*, London pp. 420-21.

Dutch copy of *De Consolatione philosophiae* (Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. Neerl. 1).⁸ However, Plonka-Balus's comparative research, the result of which is summarized in the present catalogue entry, lead her to question this attribution and to identify a distinct artist, the Master of Guillaume'a de Ternay, as their author. Whether we choose to agree with that opinion or not, this attribution points out a striking formal diversity of illuminations attributed to the Master of the Flemish Boethius, which is visible even within a single manuscript associated with this artist. For example, a comparison of miniatures decorating the London copy of the *Vita Christi* shows at least two different methods of painting the complexion. The skin of the people depicted in the frontispiece miniature (fol. 8) is fair, almost pale grey; while the faces of the figures in the *Interrogation of Christ* (fol. 141), are clearly darker and fleshy. The latter feature is definitely closer to a visibly stronger modelling of faces in the miniature illustrating the coronation of Baldwin in another cycle of illustrations attributed to the Ghent artist (*Livre d'Eracles*, London, British Library, Royal 15. E and fol. 259), and to a treatment of flesh tones in the illuminations of the Cracow manuscript. Without denying the indisputable differences within the corpus of works attributed to the Master of the Flemish Boethius, it is necessary to stress that a number of recurring features make those illuminations fairly close. These are first of all: a common physiognomy of thin figures with melancholic expressions on their faces, almost devoid of emotions, as well as several recurrent motives and iconographic schemes, such as the image of a scribe working on his codex in the miniatures opening all three copies of the *Vita Christi*. The observations of Katarzyna Plonka-Balus provoke a series of questions related to the authorship of the miniatures attributed to the Master of Boethius: are they the work of one, larger workshop? Or were they perhaps made by a group of two or three independent artists using a very similar stylistic idiom? And if so, what was the character of the cooperation between them and other contemporary workshops in Ghent and Bruges like? The revision of the largely unstudied *oeuvre* of the Master of the Flemish Boethius seems overdue.

The so-called Book of Hours of Władysław IV Vasa (MS czart. 2945 II) is yet another manuscript requiring further research. In its present state, the prayerbook is completely depleted of its once abundant decoration. Fortunately, a portion of miniatures excised from the manuscript before its arrival to Poland, sometime in the 17th century, has been identified in two European collections, the British Library in London and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. The illuminations have been attributed to the workshop of Simon Marmion (ca. 1425-1489), an illuminator active in Amiens and Valenciennes, and dated to the late 1460s.⁹ The author notes that the manuscript's calendar was probably adjusted for the patron from the surroundings of Amiens, the city in which the illuminator began his long career. The extant miniatures allow for at least a partial reconstruction of the iconographic program of the book. The nine images, now in the British Library, include: the *Presentation of Jesus at the Temple*, the *Flight into Egypt*, *The Raising of Lazarus*, *David in Prayer* and four leaves with the portraits of the Evangelists (Additional 71117), all seven formerly in the collection of Thomas Harris (1908-1964), and *the Martyrdom of Saint Stephen* (Additional 79764), purchased individually in

8 T. Kren, s. McKendrick, *Illuminating the Renaissance: The Triumph of Flemish Manuscript Painting in Europe*, Los Angeles 2003, p. 309.

9 Cf. T. Kren, *Some Newly Discovered Miniatures by Simon Marmion and his Workshop*, In: *The British Library Journal*, xxii, 1996, p. 193-220; and S. McKendrick, op. cit, catalogue no. 9.

2004. The remaining four miniatures, now in the Rijksmuseum, depict: the *Annunciation to the Shepherds*, the *Adoration of the Magi*, the *Crucifixion* and the *Martyrdom of Saint Apollonia* (nos. 70.44, 70.45v, 70.46r, 61.100v). A detailed description of the manuscript content, included in the catalogue entry, suggests that it originally comprised at least 15 illustrations.¹⁰ This number should be complemented with four miniatures portraying the Evangelists illustrating the Gospel excerpts that were usually inserted either between the calendar and the prayers to the Virgin or directly preceded the text of the *Hours*. Although in the present manuscript the texts of the Gospels were cut out completely, we may assume that they preceded the *Hours of the Virgin* (between ff.44 and 45). It is difficult to estimate the number of miniatures originally illustrating the suffrages. Only two of them have survived to this day: Saint Stephen and Saint Apollonia. Probably due to a mistake of a modern bookbinder, the prayers to the Saints were divided into two groups (fol. 133-140 and 232-248), both of which show now some missing parts of the text. Relatively recent acquisitions of the miniatures excised from the manuscript by the British Library (1992 and 2004) give some hope of finding its further missing illuminations in unpublished private collections, and, perhaps, of at least a digital reunification of the book.

What definitively requires further research is the post-medieval provenance of the so-called *Vasa Hours*, the matter the author may have deliberately reserved for a detailed discussion in a forthcoming catalogue of the French manuscripts in the Czartoryski collection. In her article devoted to this issue, Katarzyna Płonka-Balus accurately identified the knotted decoration added in the margins of the manuscript, probably in the 1520s in France, as a variation of the *cordelière*.¹¹ A single knot of the *cordelière* has been adopted as an emblem of the *Dames de la Cordelière*, an order for noble widows, founded in 1498 by Anne of Brittany (d. 1514). In ca. 1516, in memory of Anne, Francis I had a double knot of the *cordelière* added to the shells of St. Jacob (also depicted in the margins of the Cracow manuscript) traditionally decorating the collar of the royal Order of Saint Michael. Similar borders, though of a better artistic quality, decorate the codices produced for Anne of Brittany and her daughter Claude of France (e.g. Pierre Le Baud, *Chronicles of the Kings, Dukes and Princes of Brittany*, British Library, Harley 4371). Between the interlaces of the *cordelière*, the Cracow manuscript has depicted a pair of initials: “I” “M” (“MM” shown in mirrored image, or “MW”). Until recently those letters were mistakenly identified as the sheaf badge and the monogram “WW” of Władysław IV Vasa, king of Poland. However, these are doubtless the initials of a 16th century owner of the manuscript, for whom a new decoration was introduced. As suggested by Katarzyna Płonka-Balus, a good candidate would be Jeanne de Montal, a widow from 1510, whose manor – *chateau de Montal*, rebuilt in 1510-1534 – is decorated with similar decorative motives. This hypothesis requires, however, further archival research.

As mentioned above, the catalogue of the medieval illuminated manuscripts in the Princes Czartoryski Library and Museum is interesting not only for art historians, but also for historians of collecting. The “provenance and history” section in each catalogue entry de-

10 T. Kren also presented a hypothetical reconstruction of the iconographic program of the Book of Hours, at that time unaware of the Cracow manuscript, and he suggested that eight miniatures were missing; op.cit., p. 218.

11 K. Płonka-Balus, *So-called Prayer Book of Władysław IV Vasa*, op.cit.

scribes in detail the story of individual codices together with a transcription of all provenance notes and inscriptions. Well-documented acquisitions of Czartoryski manuscripts not only show the manner in which these books found their way to Poland, but also describe the circumstances in which they left the Netherlands, especially in the tumultuous Napoleonic Period, setting them in a much broader European context (cf. especially a group of manuscripts purchased in Brussels by general Michał Sokolnicki for Princess Izabela in 1810-1811, MS Czart. 2943 II, 2946 I, 3091 I, 2919 V, 2947, 3024 I). Valuable information provided in the catalogue on early imports is particularly interesting to historians of the book and culture in Poland. A rare example of a manuscript that might have come to Poland as early as the 16th century, is a Book of Hours, now MS Czart. 3022 I, which once formed a single volume with a Psalter (MS Czart. 3023 I). It includes an inscription with the name of Samuel Zborowski (d. 1603). Another one is a cut out medallion with an image of Christ (now MNK XV Rr. 1983) and the coat of arms of the voivode of Cracow Stanisław Tęczyński (1514-1560/61) on the verso. An early Polish provenance is also confirmed for the *Book of Hours*, MS Czart. 3093, that belonged to Krzysztof Ryłski (sejm commissioner in 1670) or perhaps, to Krzysztof Benjamin Ryłski.

Two manuscripts that inspired national legends appeal to yet another research interest. These are the *Book of Hours*, MS Czart. 3025 I, traditionally linked to Jan Kazimierz Vasa and the so-called *Book of Hours of Władysław IV Vasa* (MS Czart. 2945 II). Both manuscripts were placed by Izabela Czartoryska in the Temple of the Sybil, a unique site of national memory created by the Princess.

Two Romantic era catalogues of the Puławy Collection, the core of the future Czartoryski Library and Museum, were written by Princess Izabela Czartoryska, the *Poczet pamiątek zachowanych w Domu Gotyckim w Puławach* (the *Gallery of the memorabilia preserved in the Gothic House in Puławy*), published in Warsaw in 1828, and an unpublished manuscript catalogue of the Gothic House in Puławy (MS Czart. 2917 vol. I-III). A critical edition of both catalogues together with the also extant "General Sokolnicki's correspondence with Princess General Czartoryska" (MS Czart. 3301) in an annex could provide a valuable supplement to the systematic catalogue of the Czartoryski collection of manuscripts initiated by this publication.

In place of conclusion, I would like to present, as a side note, a couple of comments, which are not related to the content of the text itself, but to its translation into English. Translations of museum and library collection catalogues into foreign languages are crucial tools of promotion of Polish institutions and the best means of dissemination of knowledge about their holdings to wider international audience. In the case of the Princes Czartoryski collection of manuscripts, the translation of its catalogue is particularly valuable due to the vast international interest it attracts. However, each translation requires a strict observance of linguistic correctness. The English translation of *The Catalogue of Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts and Miniatures in the Princes Czartoryski Library and Museum* would definitely benefit from a professional proofreading by a native English editor (e.g. a correction of Polish word order in some sentences would improve the stylistic coherence of the text). More importantly, the translation of some commonly used terms in art history and other historical disciplines would also require some verification. For instance, the term "inicjal filigranowy" was translated, not always consistently, as "calligraphic initial" or "calligraphic initial with filigree," while there is a far more precise and frequently used English term, "pen-flourished initial" or "penwork initial".¹² Also the term "historiated initial" which is

12 Cf. M.P. Brown, *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts: A Guide to Technical Terms*, Los Angeles, London 1994, pp. 97, 98.

quite consistently used in English codicological terminology, was replaced in the catalogue with “figural initial.”

Yet the use of the term “Middle Netherlandish” as a translation for the Polish expression “język średnio-niderlandzki” raises far stronger objections. In English, the adjective “Netherlandish” means “coming from the Netherlands” (e.g. Netherlandish art), while the language spoken by the inhabitants of the region comprising both the Northern and Southern Netherlands is “Dutch” or alternatively “Netherlandic”.¹³ Thus in the case of the 16th-century manuscripts described in the catalogue, the correct term defining their language would be Middle Dutch (“Middelnerlands” in Dutch).¹⁴ Furthermore, the translator introduced a somewhat unclear distinction between “Dutch (Middle Netherlandish)” with reference to manuscripts copied in the Northern Netherlands and “Middle Netherlandish” with reference to the manuscripts produced in the Southern Netherlands. The differences in dialects between those two parts of the Netherlands existed in the 16th century and remain to this day. In order to make them clear, the dialect in which the texts of individual manuscripts were written could have been presented in brackets (e.g. Flemish, Limburish, Frisian, etc.).

A few inaccuracies related to terminology and language do not diminish the scholarly value of Katarzyna Płonka-Balus’s work, which shall undoubtedly become one of the fundamental bibliographic references for scholars interested in both the Princes Czartoryski collection and book painting in the late-medieval Netherlands.

Joanna Frońska

13 Cf. “Dutch language” in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (<http://www.Britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/409930/Dutch-language>) and C.B. van Haeringen, *Netherlandic language research. Men and works in the study of Dutch*, 2nd edition, Leiden 1960 (the first edition is available on the website of the Digitale bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse letteren, <http://www.dbnl.org/titels/titel.php?id=haer001neth01>).

14 This term is frequently used in international nomenclature and was adopted for the purpose of databases for both manuscripts and printed texts. The list of languages and their respective codes has been developed by the Library of Congress, Network Development and MARC Standards Office and is usually applied by English and French institutions, http://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/English_list.php.

From the 16th to the 19th century, illuminated manuscripts were collected by the great printer-publisher Christophe Plantin and his Moretus successors and descendants. Ranging in date from the 9th to the mid-16th centuries, the manuscripts in the Museum Plantin-Moretus come from all over Europe, chiefly the Southern Netherlands and France with a significant representation of 15th-century Dutch illumination. More surprisingly, about a quarter of the collection comes from England: manuscripts of the 10th to 15th centuries that left the country with Catholic refugees. In the execution of Medieval illuminated manuscripts of the 12th and 13th centuries, the pen played a more important part than the brush. While the pen was almost exclusively employed in outlining both foliage and figures, the use of the brush was generally limited to filling up and shadowing the forms defined by the pen. Tr s Riches Heures du Duc de Berry April - Limbourg Brothers, 1412-1416. The patterns of the 13th century illumination were borrowed from the stained-glass art. The black outlines played the role of the lead lines which in stained-glass works kept the forms and colours distinct. The images in the illuminated manuscripts provided crucial aids to understanding a text's narrative, as well as the very precepts of their religion. Early Irish religious texts such as the Book of Durrow, the Book of Armagh, or  most famous of them all  the Book of Kells include whole pages of non-figurative designs, sometimes hiding letters or words.  In the mid-14th century, a female illuminator, who has been potentially identified as Jeanne de Montbaston, depicted herself next to her husband along the bottom of the Roman de La Rose.  and left unfinished upon the patron's death in the early 15th century, is the ultimate example of a book that was probably worth close to its weight in gold.