

Book Reviews

MARGARET OF YORK, SIMON MARMION, AND THE VISIONS OF TONDAL: Papers Delivered at a Symposium Organized by the Department of Manuscripts of the J. Paul Getty Museum in collaboration with the Huntington Library and Art Collections June 21-24, 1990. Edited by Thomas Kren. 1992. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, California, \$49.95. ISBN 0-892-36-204-9

IN RECENT YEARS one of the finest collections of late medieval illuminated manuscripts has been built up by the Getty Museum. Getty money combined with the perspicience of scholars such as Thomas Kren and Myra Orth has enabled the acquisition of some stunning volumes, including the book which is the main subject of this study, purchased at Sotheby's in 1987. Exile to Malibu has its advantages; the Getty Museum has a vigorous research and publication programme. This collection of twenty symposium papers is produced to the usual high standards of American art publishing, and has no fewer than 257 illustrations. These are all in black and white; the only colour illustration is to be found on the cover. However, as Kren points out in the preface, this book should be used in conjunction with *The Visions of Tondal from the Library of Margaret of York*, an inexpensive guide to the manuscript published in 1990, which reproduces all the miniatures in colour and gives an abridged version of the text.

Manuscript 30 in the Getty Museum is a tract of forty-five leaves recounting what might now be called the near-death experience of the Irish knight Tondal (or Tnugdalus, as he is called in the original Latin), who is taken by his guardian angel on an admonitory tour of hell, purgatory and heaven. This twelfth-century text was circulated widely, being translated into languages as diverse as Belorussian and Provençal, but this French version is the only known illustrated manuscript. The reason for this unusually lavish treatment is revealed in the colophon, which states that it was written in Ghent in March 1474 (NS 1475) by David Aubert for the 'treshaulte tresexcellente et trespuissante princhesse Madame marguerite de yorch Par la grace de dieu Duchesse de bourgoigne'. The miniaturist is not named, but the rubricund oval facial types, the distinctive palette with its salmon, violet-blue and vivid green hues, and above all the atmospheric naturalism of the scenes all indicate that this book belongs to the group commonly assigned to the Valenciennes painter-illuminator Simon Marmion, whom the poet Jean Lemaire called the 'prince d'enluminure'. The essays in this volume fall naturally into three groups: the piety and patronage of Margaret of York; the tradition of eschatological literature and its illustration; and the *oeuvre* of Simon Marmion.

Any examination of the patronage of Margaret of York raises the question, familiar in other contexts, of what lies behind the public piety of princes. Is there any truth in the famous frontispiece to Nicolas Finet's *Benoit seront les miséricordieux*, which shows her performing the Seven Acts of Mercy? Certainly

she did not clothe the naked or visit prisoners in person, but Wim Blockmans, in an overview of her personal life, shows that in addition to the political manifestations of piety such as offerings to shrines, Margaret showed a keen interest in charitable works. The childless Duchess seems to have had a *penchant* for the care of orphans. No less marked was her involvement in the reform of religious orders, in particular the Colettine and Observant movements in the Franciscan Order. Both Blockmans and Nigel Morgan, who surveys the texts of devotion and religious instruction associated with Margaret of York, stress that the tribulations of her married life gave a particular impetus to her piety. Morgan, in an important essay which enables the modern reader to get beyond such titles as *La somme le roi* and *L'abbaye du Saint Esprit*, reminds us that Margaret was a daughter of the markedly devout Cicely Neville, and suggests that it was under her mother's influence that her choice of reading matter was originally determined. Some of the items in her library, such as the works of Jean Gerson and Peter of Luxemburg, would, however, have been unknown to English laity of that period. Morgan's listing of the devotional texts is incorporated in the useful appendix, which provides a catalogue of Margaret's library. One volume included among those owned by her should perhaps more properly be listed as one of those she presented as a gift. The beautiful but mutilated Sarum Breviary, Ms. H. 13 in St. John's College, Cambridge, contains pen-trials in what seems to be an English sixteenth-century hand, suggesting that it might have been made for an English person or religious institution, like the fragment of a Gradual (BL Arundel Ms. 71, f. 9) given by Margaret to the Observant house at Greenwich, founded in 1482. Strangely enough, it is nowhere noted that a leaf from the Psalter of this Breviary survives, albeit somewhat singed, as BL Cotton Ms. Tiberius A ii, f. 1. A shorter and less satisfactory analysis of the contents of Margaret's library is provided by Pierre Cockshaw. More fruitful is Jeffrey Chipps Smith's examination of the iconography of the duchess, as presented in books associated with her, and the way in which it contrasts with the depiction of her Burgundian predecessors. One of the images discussed is the unique engraving in the Huntington Library of William Caxton presenting his printed translation of Raoul Lefèvre's *Recueil des histoires de Troie*. An interesting feature of this engraving, noted in a footnote, is that Caxton is in fact giving two books; this is clearly a way of symbolizing the multiplication of copies by means of printing. The Huntington *Recuyell* is used by Martin Lowry as the starting-point for a series of reflections on the interactions between court and market, and between printing and manuscript production. Three particular manuscripts in Margaret's collection are the subjects of studies by Suzanne Lewis, Walter Cahn, and Albert Derolez. Lewis amply demonstrates that her Apocalypse (Pierpont Morgan Ms. M. 484) is, despite the long tradition of Apocalypse illustration, as novel in its imagery as *The Visions of Tondal*. Cahn shows how her guide to the stational churches of Rome (Yale University, Beinecke Ms. 639) fits into a tradition of vicarious pilgrimage. Derolez's codicological skills are directed to an analysis of the one humanist text to pass through Margaret's hands: a Ferrarese copy of Justinus's epitome of Pompeius Trogus, which she acquired for presentation to her step-daughter's husband Maximilian of Austria.

The central section of this volume is devoted to *Les visions du chevalier Tondal* itself. Peter Dinzelbacher, the author of *Vision and Visionsliteratur im Mittelalter*, sets the text within its literary context in a crisply-written essay. A

stimulating account of the way in which translator and artist read – and mis-read – the text in front of them is provided by Roger Wieck. This is followed by Dagmar Eichberger's view of late medieval illustrations of hell, which enables a better appreciation of Marmion's mastery in concentrating on the landscapes of hell rather than the minutiae of its torments. Closely linked with this essay is one by Thomas Kren on late fifteenth-century interpretations of another eschatological text, *The Vision of Lazarus*. Although Getty Ms. 30 is alone among manuscript versions of *The Visions of Tondal* in being illustrated, several of the printed editions were enlivened by woodcuts; these are the subject of a study by Nigel F. Palmer.

It is the third section, devoted to the artistic personality of Simon Marmion, that contains the most unresolved questions. Consequently it is here that some of the most exciting contributions are to be found. Marmion is one of those artists, like Robert Campin, whose surviving *oeuvre* rests on a slender documentary basis, even though the details of their careers are well known from records. Indeed, there is no contemporary document which assigns to Marmion the key work of his *oeuvre*, the Saint Bertin altarpiece. The attribution is an intelligent guess made by Michiels in 1866, on the basis of a statement in a late history of the abbey that the altarpiece was made in Valenciennes. Winkler and others established a corpus of manuscripts which they attributed to Simon Marmion, but the coherence of this grouping was challenged in 1969 by Antoine de Schryver, who proposed that some were the work of a Ghent-based artist, the Louthe Master. De Schryver now holds a less sceptical attitude towards the Marmion question, and cautiously talks of 'artists of a common artistic training', of whom Simon would be the foremost. Other contributors have less difficulty in accepting the re-integration of the group. Perhaps the most exciting development is Sandra Hindman's identification of two leaves formerly in the Lehman Collection as *membra disjecta* from a breviary that Marmion is recorded as having completed for Charles the Bold in 1470. Another carefully argued article is that by Gregory T. Clark, who shows that the stylistic chronology and local affinities of ten books of hours traditionally associated with Marmion accord with the career of an artist born and initially trained in Amiens before moving to Valenciennes in the diocese of Cambrai. Marmion's links with Hainaut are reinforced by Anne-Marie Legare in her study of the Master of Antoine Rolin, who seems to have been based in Mons. Much confusion in the past has been caused by failure to recognize that miniatures by an artist working in one centre could be inserted in books produced elsewhere. Bodo Brinkmann, who addresses this problem, adduces instances where borders and the scenes they surround are the products of different centres, a practice which has been noted earlier in the century. Brinkmann makes a neat comparison with the way in which a car is assembled, using components from different suppliers. Finally, studies by Rainald Grosshans and Maryan W. Ainsworth of Marmion's techniques as a panel-painter, in particular by the examination of under-drawing as revealed by infra-red reflectography, serve to confirm that panel-paintings and miniatures have a common author.

Margaret of York's tomb in Mechelen has been destroyed, and the remains of her palace there are in a deplorable state of repair, but her books serve as a fitting monument to her piety and patronage. This collection of essays is of a quality equal to its subject.

NICHOLAS ROGERS

VEGETIUS: EPITOME OF MILITARY SCIENCE. Translated with notes and introduction by N. P. Milner. Translated Texts for Historians Volume 16. 1993. Liverpool University Press, PO Box 147, Liverpool, L69 3BX, £8.50
ISBN 0-85323-228-8

This is a straightforward, readable translation of the original late fourth or early fifth century Latin text of which Richard III, like many of his contemporaries, owned a vernacular version. The middle English text was edited by Geoffrey Lester in 1988 and reviewed in *The Ricardian*, vol. 8, no. 108 (1990), p. 371, and Richard's own manuscript was discussed in the same journal vol. 7, no. 99 (1987), pp. 541-52.

The present book has several virtues. Not the least of these is that it is much cheaper than the edition of Lester, but more importantly it enables one to read the clear, simple text on its own merit, without the interference of the quaintness of the middle English translation. That way Vegetius' message' can be taken, as it were, more seriously – I myself found the book's interest and centuries-long popularity more understandable. To give an example (book 3, ch. 6):

First, he [the commander] should have itineraries of all regions in which war is being waged written out in the fullest detail, so that he may learn the distances between places by the number of miles and the quality of roads, and examine short-cuts, by-ways, mountains and rivers, accurately described. Indeed, the more conscientious generals reportedly had itineraries of the provinces in which the emergency occurred not just annotated but illustrated as well, so that they should choose their route when setting out by visual aspect as well as by mental calculation.

It byhoveth that every duke or ledere of batailes have redilich and feithfulliche ywrite in bookes the iorneyes, of myles the lengthe and the brede, and the periles of the weyes, the bypathes and the tornynge wayes, the hilles and the ryveres that ben in the contrees or londes thourgh the whiche he thinketh to passe; in so moche that not onliche hit neded to have these thinges ywrite, bot it nedid for more sikernessee that he hadde the perelles and the profites of all the weyes in whiche the oost schulde wende portreyed or peinted in a book, that he myghte see with his eyghe where the perelles were, as olde dukes dede som tyme.

Our appreciation of the first quote probably comes close to medieval readers' attitude to the text they knew. On the other hand we may find the oddities of fifteenth century English entertaining and prefer them.

A decided advantage of the present edition – and one of its purposes – is the fact that people who do not read Latin can now compare Vegetius' text to his medieval adaptors' and find out for themselves what translators liked, misunderstood, rejected or inserted.

Milner has included a full introduction on the work's history, author, origin and date. There are numerous, helpful, informative footnotes on literary and technical aspects of the original treatise. It has to be emphasised again that this is the *classical* text, not the medieval one, but for Ricardians the book makes a

welcome complement to the edition of the middle English text and can also be profitably consulted on its own:

LIVIA VISSER-FUCHS

Notes on Contributors

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Daniel Williams, The hastily drawn up will of William Catesby Esquire, 25 August 1485, *Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions*, vol. 51 (1975-6), p. 48.

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