A REAPPRAISAL OF THE BEDFORD HOURS

JANET BACKHOUSE

Already well known to bibliophiles at the time of its purchase in February 1852, the Bedford Hours has ever since been justifiably regarded as one of the star attractions of the national collection. Some of its illustrations, especially the lively miniatures of Noah's Ark, have become famous through frequent reproduction in popular art and history books and on greetings cards. Individual pages are often included in more serious studies of late medieval illumination because this manuscript, together with the Duke of Bedford's Breviary in Paris, has given a name—the Bedford Master—to one of the leading book painters, otherwise anonymous, of the early fifteenth century. It therefore comes as something of a shock to find that only once, as long ago as 1794, has the Bedford Hours been the subject of a full-scale published description and that discussions devoted specifically to it are equally rare. The enormous range of the book's pictorial scheme, which includes thirty-eight large miniatures and almost 1,250 tiny marginal illustrations, each little more than an inch in diameter, is perhaps sufficiently daunting to account for this reticence. The present article will make no attempt to provide a detailed description of the miniatures, though an outline of their contents is included in the description of the manuscript's structure which is printed at the end. Its chief concern is to put forward a suggested explanation of the over-all design of the Bedford Hours and to look again at the traditional view that the manuscript was ordered by John of Lancaster, Duke of Bedford, as a gift to his bride Anne of Burgundy, sister of Duke Philip the Good, at the time of their marriage in 1423. That the Bedfords owned the book has never been in doubt, and a Latin inscription on folio 256 records that Anne gave it, with her husband's consent, to their young nephew King Henry VI of England, when he spent Christmas with them at Rouen in 1430.

The Bedford Hours presents a picture of expertly planned and professionally executed regularity. The body of the book falls into six unequal sections, each of which is devoted to a coherent portion of the text of a typical Book of Hours. Each of these sections is based on regular gatherings of eight leaves. Into this scheme are inserted three small groups of leaves carrying special material, mainly full-page miniatures not related to the devotional text of the Hours. These are individually discussed below and their relationship to the structure of the manuscript may be seen in the 'outline of the structure and contents of the Bedford Hours' at the end of this article. Below the text on the last written page of each of
the six main sections of the book except the first is a panel enclosing the arms, mottoes, and symbols of both the Duke and the Duchess (fig. 1). The first section is devoted to the calendar and no space suitable for such a panel is available, but an extra panel is introduced into section 2. Elsewhere in the book, however, possible spaces remain blank. It looks as though the sections of the Hours have been deliberately punctuated with panels containing arms. This is an abnormal position for the arms of a patron, which are commonly found in the margins of principal miniature pages. It is, however, a characteristic of many of the more lavish manuscripts from the Bedford Master studio that no provision was made for the inclusion of coats of arms, though the books were obviously so very costly that they must have been ordered for specific patrons. A notable exception is the Duke of Bedford’s own Breviary, where arms and supporters are woven into the marginal decoration on a number of the principal pages. It is impossible to tell, purely on the evidence of their physical appearance, whether or not the arms in the Bedford Hours were executed at the same time as the other decoration.

The body of the manuscript does contain one other clear indication of Bedford ownership. The marginal decoration on folio 138 (fig. 2) includes five scrolls, variously coloured red, blue, and white, on which are inscribed the mottoes of the Duke (‘a vous entier’) and of the Duchess (‘jen suis contente’). This page was perhaps selected because one of the central figures in its large miniature of the Last Supper is St. John the Evangelist, Bedford’s personal patron. The scrolls seem rather clumsily coloured and written, but there is no unquestionable indication that any part of the underlying marginal decoration has been erased to accommodate them. As with the arms, it is impossible to be quite certain at what point they were painted.

The Bedford Master studio was responsible for many fine Books of Hours. The particularly close relationship between the thirty-one major miniatures heralding divisions of the text in the Bedford Hours and those depicting similar subjects in two of the most magnificent of them, the Lamoignon Hours in Lisbon and Cod. 1855 in Vienna, has long been recognized. The Annunciation miniature in the Sobieski Hours at Windsor Castle belongs to the same group. In all four manuscripts these major miniatures are accompanied by sequences of marginal scenes showing the lesser incidents surrounding the main event, as on the Last Supper page (fig. 2), or further scenes from the life of the saint portrayed. The Vienna and Windsor manuscripts are further linked by the decorative schemes of their calendars, and the Vienna and Lisbon manuscripts by the incorporation of men, animals, and grotesques into the border decoration of their text pages. The text pages of the Windsor book are embellished more simply with flowers and foliage alone. It is the marginal decoration, both in the calendar and throughout the whole length of the text on pages not devoted to major miniatures, which sets the Bedford Hours most distinctly apart from the other three books. Its margins feature miniatures set in roundels, usually two to a page, following a careful and logical scheme which is in no way related to the contents of a Book of Hours.

Although they were listed by Gough in 1794 on the basis of the French ‘subtitles’ which appear at the foot of each page, the subjects of these tiny marginal miniatures have never
Fig. 1. The arms, mottoes, and symbols of the Duke and Duchess of Bedford. The roundel in the right-hand margin encloses a miniature of Christ cleansing the Temple, that at the foot of the page a miniature of Athaliah thrown out of the Temple by Joash. Add. MS. 18850, fol. 31
Fig. 2. The Last Supper (the institution of Holy Communion), with marginal scenes of related events. In the left-hand and lower margins are scrolls bearing the mottoes of the Duke and Duchess of Bedford. Add. MS. 18850, fol. 138
been examined in detail. Several hands were involved in their execution, some of them show distinct signs of haste, and none really reaches an artistic standard likely to attract the prolonged attention of students of the Bedford studio style. Because the marginal subjects on the main miniature pages relate to the central subject, it is sometimes erroneously assumed that the marginal roundels elsewhere in the book will relate to the adjacent text. In fact this is the case only in the calendar section and in section 6, where scenes appropriate to the individual saints invoked in the memorials and to the subjects of the special masses in honour of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin, and the Dead are depicted.

The calendar decoration has a strong classical flavour. Each month occupies the recto and verso of one leaf. The labour of the month and its zodiac sign are painted side by side within a rectangular panel in the lower margin of each recto. The framing lines which enclose these are apparently unfinished. In the right-hand margin of each recto is a roundel containing a figure or figures representing the derivation of the name of the month, and two further roundels on the verso of each leaf show events characteristic of or relating to it. The subjects of the roundels, but not the labours or the zodiac signs, are explained in blue and gold 'subtitles' at the bottom of each page. This is frequently essential. Our illustrations show a selection of typical subjects. February is named after Februa, mother of Mars, god of war, who conceived him by kissing and smelling a flower (fol. 2; fig. 3). A characteristic event of the month is a torchlight procession around the city walls (fol. 2v; fig. 4). In March everything bursts into leaf and flower, shown in a rare and...
delightful picture of a landscape (fol. 3v; fig. 5). In April Neptune, at the instigation of Venus, carried off Proserpine (fol. 4v; fig. 6). June inspires some play with the word ‘ioyn’. Hebe is ‘conjointe’ in marriage with Hercules (fol. 6v; fig. 7) and Romulus and Tatius are ‘joins par acort’ (fol. 6v; fig. 8). The previous month, May, is characterized by the marriage of Honour and Reverence, and by the government of the state by its elders and its defence by the young. It is tempting to remember the contemporary political anniversaries of these two months. The Treaty of Troyes, by which Henry V became Regent of France and his heirs were granted the right of succession to the French crown, was concluded on 21 May 1420 and Henry’s marriage to the French princess Catherine took place a few days later, on 2 June, at the church of St. John in Troyes. Bedford’s own marriage to Anne of Burgundy was solemnized in the same church on 13 May 1423.

The margins throughout the remainder of the body of the manuscript (i.e. sections 2–5) contain illustrations from the New Testament, accompanied by their Old Testament precursors or by some form of pictorial commentary. The Life of Christ, from the Annunciation to Zacharias of the birth of John the Baptist to the Ascension, is shown in sections 2 and 3. Acts and Epistles take up the greater part of section 4, and the remainder of section 4, together with almost the whole of section 5, is given to the Apocalypse. This may most simply be described as an elaborate and extended version of the very popular *Speculum humanae salvationis*, but a more exact classification would require extensive study. The Bedford Hours is not unique in including a pictorial cycle unrelated to the normal contents of a Book of Hours. Two more or less contemporary manuscripts from the studio of the Master of the Rohan Hours have similar embellishments. One, the Rohan Hours itself, includes a marginal cycle from the *Bible moralisée*, copied from a manuscript which can still be identified. The other, the Hours of Isabella Stuart, has illustrations from Deguilleville’s ‘Three Pilgrimages’ (of Jesus Christ, of the Life of Man, and of the Soul) and from the Apocalypse. The Hours of Louis de Laval, made about half a century later, is ornamented with marginal scenes from the Old Testament. The marginal illustrations of the Bedford Hours, like the calendar illustrations, are explained in ‘subtitles’ written in blue and gold. As we have seen, the principal miniature pages break the cycle by having marginal roundels related to their main subjects, and these pages are distinguished by having their ‘subtitles’ written in blue and crimson.

There are two other breaks in the marginal scheme. The first of these looks as if it may have originated in a simple mistake. The ninth gathering of section 4 (fol. 160–7) has illustrations which are nothing to do with the Epistles represented on either side of it (the Epistle to Philemon on fol. 159v and the Epistle to the Hebrews on fol. 168). Its roundels also appear to have been painted in spaces made by erasing, none too carefully, sections of the flower and foliage decoration which on these pages had been allowed to cover the entire marginal area. As a whole gathering is involved, it seems possible that someone carelessly picked up the wrong group of leaves on which to continue drafting the New Testament cycle. Only after the neglected pages had been finished without any miniatures (perhaps in the hope that the patron would not notice) was a set of alternative subjects supplied to fill the gap. The alternatives, which are painted by one of the lesser artists, are figures of the
Fig. 5. The coming of Spring.
Add. MS. 18850, fol. 3v (detail)

Fig. 6. The Rape of Proserpine.
Add. MS. 18850, fol. 4v (detail)

Fig. 7. The marriage of Hercules and Hebe.
Add. MS. 18850, fol. 6v (detail)

Fig. 8. Romulus and Tatius joined in friendship.
Add. MS. 18850, fol. 6v (detail)
twelve Apostles and twelve Prophets symbolizing the twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed. The two remaining leaves of the gathering show David (who "par la volente de dieu fust bon roy et devot et conquist le pais de israel") and Solomon on folio 166; Constantine and Justinian on folio 166v; Roboam (who "par sa folie en ieus et autres sotises" lost his kingdom) and Nicephorus (who "fust ieune et prince de petit gouvernement et perdit sa seigneurie") on folio 167; and Josia (who "restaura le royaulme de iherusalem et de iudee et fist garder la loy") and Charlemagne (who "pensant en dieu preposoit a guerroier lez sarrasins et mescreans") on folio 167v. These look like pointedly political references and it is interesting to note that all the good rulers also occur amongst the heroes and kings whom little Henry VI is urged by Lydgate to emulate, in the ballad which he addressed to him at the time of his coronation.

The second non-biblical sequence comes at the end of section 5, on folios 253v–255v, the Apocalypse subjects having run out on folio 253. The texts of the accompanying 'subtitles' were not printed by Gough and are therefore given here in full:

folio 253v: ‘Comment cayn occit abel son frere le quel estoit bon et iuste et faisoit a dieu bon et agreable sacrifice:
Comment abraham voult sacrificr ysaac son filz pour lamour de dieu mais lange le defendidist.’

folio 254: ‘Comment ipte sacrifia sa fille pour lamour de dieu sur lautel en la presence de plusieurs notables gens:
Comment ioab tua abner en traison en un hostel en la presence de toutes leurs gens et estoient tous ii conestables.’

folio 254v: ‘Comment ioab tua amassa par traison en le baisant et estoient tous deux grans officiers subgies a i roy:
Comment le roy de egypte occit iosic le bon roy de iherusalem en pleine bataillle a force de gens darmes.’

folio 255: ‘Comment les senateurs de romme occirent et mistrent a mort iulius cesar le quel estoit au conseil:
Comment tholome duc de iherico occit en traison symon machabee grant prestre des iuifs et seigneur de iherusalem en disnant.’

folio 255v: ‘Comment aristobole fist mourir anthoign son frere le que il avoit mande quille venit veoyr en sa maladie:
Comment david fist sollepnelement ensevelir abner qui estoit prince de la chevalerie de iherusalem.’

The repeated references to treason, to the presence of many witnesses, and to equality of rank between murderer and victim, together with the final reference to the raising of Abner’s body by David, suggest that these subjects were chosen with a very deliberate purpose—to remind the owner of the Bedford Hours of a recent real-life assassination. On 10 September 1419 John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, was struck down by the Dauphin’s men and in the Dauphin’s presence on the bridge at Montereau, to which he had gone in good faith to meet the prince. The full truth about the death of Duke John can never be known, but the Dauphin was held personally responsible by the Burgundians.
The immediate result of the assassination was a close realignment between Duke John's successor, Duke Philip the Good, and King Henry V of England, leading up to the Treaty of Troyes, which recognized the claim of Henry and his successors to the crown of France. In the negotiation of this treaty Philip played a leading part. Political capital was repeatedly made out of Duke John's death and Philip, who appeared at Henry's wedding to Princess Catherine shrouded in black from head to foot, apparently favoured black clothing for the rest of his life out of respect for the memory of his dead father. Soon after the conclusion of the treaty Philip and Henry together took Monterau from the Dauphin's forces and, on 24 June 1420, the body of the murdered Duke was ceremonially raised from its temporary resting place there and placed in a coffin for its transfer to the ducal mausoleum at Dijon. Six months later, when the courts were in residence at Paris for the Christmas celebrations, the absent Dauphin and his associates were formally prosecuted by Nicolas Rolin, afterwards Chancellor of Burgundy. The feeble-minded King Charles VI of France personally presided over the lit de justice, supported by Henry V and in the presence of Philip. The accused were found guilty and letters patent issued on the same day, 23 December, by the French king convicted them of treachery, incapable of holding any office or honour, thus providing additional support for Henry's claim to the French succession. So unusual is this particular sequence of subjects in the margins of the Bedford Hours that it is hard to postulate any explanation for it other than a direct reference to Monterau. If this is so, then it narrows down the period during which the manuscript could have been made by providing a terminus post quem probably of 24 June 1420 and certainly at the earliest of 10 September 1419.

We now turn to the three odd groups of leaves which are added to the well-organized basic structure of the manuscript. The first of these, which follows immediately after the calendar (fols. 13–18), contains four full-page miniatures and a full-page armorial 'tree'. The subjects are the story of Adam and Eve, with additional scenes from the story of Cain and Abel (fol. 14; fig. 9), the Building of Noah's Ark (fol. 15'), the Exit from the Ark and the Drunkenness of Noah (fol. 16'), and the Tower of Babel (fol. 17'; fig. 10). The armorial 'tree' appears on folio 15 and the remaining pages, folios 14', 16, 17, 18, and 18', are left blank. The only text is a series of single-line 'subtitles', written in blue, one below each of the four miniatures. At the first sight the subjects of these miniatures seem an odd choice for inclusion in a Book of Hours. They bear no obvious relationship to the text and, as the leaves on which they are painted are so clearly separate from the main text, it has been suggested that they might have been added as late as 1430, to enhance the Hours in the eyes of nine-year-old Henry VI. However, if the sequence of marginal illustrations is identified as being of the family of the Speculum Humanae Salvationis, a reason for their presence appears, for copies of this work begin with Old Testament illustrations representing the Fall of Man, from which the events chronicled in the New Testament redeemed him. These subjects are usually confined to the stories of Adam and Eve and of Noah. However, the Tower of Babel, commonly used as an Old Testament parallel for the gift of tongues at Pentecost, readily fits into the same pattern, especially as the Bedford Hours cycle includes the mission of the Apostles as well as the Life of Christ. It seems
Fig. 9. Scenes from the story of Adam and Eve and their children, Cain and Abel. Add. MS. 18850, fol. 14
Fig. 10. The Tower of Babel. Add. MS. 18850, fol. 17v
likely that the blank pages between the miniatures were intended for a decoratively written explanatory text, never supplied, and that the armorial ‘tree’ was an afterthought. Although this is now overpainted with the arms of Henry II of France and his wife, Catherine de Medicis, it originally showed the arms of the Bedfords, with their mottoes, hung from the branches of the Duchess’s symbolic yew tree against a ground on which the Duke’s symbolic golden roots are scattered. Patches of the original colours can easily be seen. Had the four Old Testament illustrations been added for the benefit of Henry VI, it would be logical to expect any accompanying armorial composition to show the royal arms of the book’s intended recipient at Christmas 1430.

Only the first of the four Old Testament illustrations is by an artist closely related in style to the Bedford Master himself. The other three miniatures are by an entirely different hand and are somewhat differently conceived, being very rigidly confined within their rectangular framework. Very similar to them is the miniature in the last of the manuscript’s three insertions (fols. 288–9; fig. 11). The subject-matter of this insertion is

Fig. 11. Clovis receiving the fleurs-de-lis. The marginal roundels on the opposite page enclose miniatures of Clovis riding out to fight the King of the Goths (right) and the ensuing battle (bottom). Add. MS. 18850, fols. 288v–289
narrative rather than devotional, telling, in an illustration accompanied by thirty lines of French verse, the story of the heavenly gift to Clovis of the device of the three fleurs-de-lis. This too has been thought an addition made for the benefit of Henry VI, especially as the theme of the miniature and poem was twice used by Lydgate when writing for the child king at the period of his English coronation in 1429. The story of Clovis was, however, much favoured by the Dukes of Burgundy, for his wife Clothilda, through whom he received the fleurs-de-lis, was a Burgundian princess. In the miniature Clothilda is clearly handing over to her husband the shield bearing his new device, and she is assisted by a male figure wearing a rather noticeable hat of green, white, and black, which are apparently identifiable as livery colours of the Burgundian dukes. A tiny shield over the gateway of the building in which the transaction is taking place is charged with the lion of Flanders. The arms on the surcoats of the two esquires attending Clovis have not been identified. The hints of Burgundian interest can be construed as references to the part played by Duke Philip the Good at the time of the Treaty of Troyes, when Burgundian support was of vital importance in securing the English king's right of succession to the throne of France. Henry V's marriage to Catherine of France did in effect mark the handing over to him of the fleurs-de-lis. But the same hints could equally well refer to the Bedford marriage, for his bride was, like Clothilda, a Burgundian princess, and their contract symbolized a new alliance, the Treaty of Amiens, in which Duke Philip pledged his support to Bedford, now custodian of the fleurs-de-lis as Regent of France in the name of his nephew, Henry V's infant son and heir. According to the accompanying verses, Clovis received the arms 'pour annoncer' his election as 'connestable', a title which could be made to apply either to Henry's position as Regent during the lifetime of Charles VI or to Bedford's after the deaths of both Henry and Charles.

The remaining insertion consists of a group of four leaves (fols. 256-9) placed immediately before section 6, which contains prayers to individual saints and special masses. No whole-page miniature is included in section 6, though one might be expected to preface these texts. This suggests that at least one special full-page composition relating directly to the owner or owners of the manuscript was envisaged for this position from the start. The inserted leaves carry the famous portraits of the Duke and Duchess of Bedford with their patron saints, together with the appropriate accompanying prayers.

Anne of Burgundy is shown kneeling before her patron and namesake, St. Anne, mother of the Virgin Mary (fols. 257v-258; fig. 12). The saint is accompanied by the Virgin and the Christ Child. The figure standing behind the Duchess's chair (on the framework of which is a tiny shield with the arms of Burgundy) may be intended for St. Joseph. In the margin on the left of the miniature are the three husbands of St. Anne, Joachim (father of the Virgin), Cleophas, and Salomae, and at the foot of the page are her other daughters, Mary Cleophae and Mary Salomae, with their husbands, Alpheus and Zebedee. Mary Cleophae's sons, James, Simon, Jude, and Joseph the Just, occupy roundels in the margins of folio 258, and Mary Salomae's sons, James and John, the roundels on folio 258v. All are identified by inscriptions, rather clumsily executed. Although the inclusion of the legendary members of St. Anne's family is quite in
accordance with contemporary piety (and a similar composition was later included in the Bedford Breviary\(^{27}\)), a stress on family relationships is peculiarly appropriate to Anne of Burgundy’s personal situation. The marriages of the sisters of Duke Philip the Good had been used in the furtherance of Burgundian policies from the time of their infancy.\(^{28}\) The eldest sister, Margaret, widow of the Dauphin Louis, who had died at the end of 1415, was indeed also married under the terms of the Treaty of Amiens, which had contracted Anne to Bedford. Her new husband was Arthur of Richemont, brother of Duke John VI of Brittany, the third member of the new alliance.\(^{29}\)

John of Lancaster appears not with his personal patron, St. John the Evangelist, but with St. George (fols. 256\(^v\)–257; fig. 13). St. George had been especially venerated by his late brother, King Henry V, and was patron of England and of the Order of the Garter.\(^{30}\) His appearance in this context is undoubtedly intended to underline Bedford’s status as England’s Regent in France. Tiny shields with the arms of England are placed in the
windows at the back of the composition and the saint is shown, most unusually, wearing
the ermine-lined sovereign’s Garter robe over full armour, and attended by a squire. The
’subtitles’ found almost everywhere else in the manuscript have unfortunately not been
supplied for these pages, and the subjects of the marginal roundels are ambiguous.

The marginal miniatures surrounding the main miniature were identified by Gough, followed by the editors of the Palaeographical Society, as illustrations of the martyrdoms
of saints Sigismund (cast down a well), Eric (clubbed to death as he rode home from
church), Andrew (crucified), Simon (sawn asunder), and John the Evangelist (boiled in
oil). It is tempting to accept these identities and to connect the five saints with five leading
members of the Order of the Garter. The first is the namesake of the Emperor Sigismund,
who was installed during his visit to England in 1416, when he presented the relic of the
heart of St. George to the Order. He was thereafter popularly regarded as an important
ally of England and was represented in Garter robes in the second ‘sotelte’ at Henry VI’s

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Fig. 13. John of Lancaster, Duke of Bedford, kneeling before St. George. Alternative explanations
for the marginal scenes are given on pp. 61–62. Add. MS. 18850, fols. 256v–257

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English coronation banquet in 1429. The second is the namesake of the Scandinavian King Eric, husband of Princess Philippa of England, one of the sisters of Henry V and of Bedford. Eric was elected to the Order as early as 1408, though his final installation seems to have been delayed until 1424. St. Andrew was patron of Burgundy and especially honoured by Duke Philip the Good, who was later to dedicate to him the Order of the Golden Fleece. At the time of Bedford’s marriage to his sister, Philip’s position in regard to the Order of the Garter was ambiguous. After an election held on 25 April 1422, while Henry V was still alive, he had been invited to accept membership. His answer was not, however, immediately given, and he continued to prevaricate until the spring of 1424 when, after a demand from the chapter at Windsor, he finally declined the honour, partly on the grounds that he could not honourably be bound by the chivalrous code of the Order in circumstances which had by then arisen. St. Simon could be the namesake of Sir Simon Felbrigge, once standard bearer to Richard II and senior non-royal knight of the Garter at the time of Bedford’s marriage. St. John the Evangelist is the namesake of Bedford himself and also of King John of Portugal, whose first wife had been another English Philippa, the daughter of John of Gaunt. This interpretation, because of the inclusion of Philip of Burgundy, would imply a date for the miniature between his election to the Order in April 1422 and his rejection of it in 1424, a period which includes the date of the Bedfords’ wedding in May 1423. In the main miniature St. George is deliberately gesturing with his right hand towards the knot which secures the Garter robe over his breast, and this could be taken as symbolic of the strong ties binding the knights of the Garter one to another, implying their support for Bedford in his role as Regent of France.

This explanation, though undoubtedly very attractive, is probably more than somewhat far-fetched. It is much more likely that the marginal roundels on these pages relate to the story of St. George, as those on the Duchess’s pages relate to St. Anne. St. George suffered a long-drawn-out martyrdom during which many tortures were inflicted upon him, and five of the seven marginal miniatures can readily be equated with incidents in his story. These are torture by wheel and final decapitation, seen on the right-hand page, and crucifixion with the addition of torches to sear the flesh, sawing asunder, and immersion in a vat of boiling lead as the lower three subjects on the miniature page. The two topmost roundels on the miniature page have, however, defied identification within the context of the legend of St. George, though a connection with the other subjects is implied by the costume of the victim and also by the inclusion amongst the decoration outside the frame of the left-hand roundel of the bust of a bearded figure wearing a fur-trimmed hat, whose counterpart appears within almost all the other roundels on this opening.

The two portrait pages alone in the manuscript have coats of arms displayed in the traditional position in the margin below the miniature. The Duke’s is flanked by his supporters, the eagle and the yale, and spaces between the marginal roundels are filled with his golden root badge, which he seems to have adopted upon becoming Regent of France and which had earlier been a rebus of Edward of Woodstock, the Black Prince.
The margin around Anne's portrait is filled out with her symbolic branches of yew, usually employed as a sign of mourning and perhaps adopted by her as a personal reference to grief for her father's death at Montereau.

The Bedford Hours has traditionally been regarded as a gift ordered by Bedford for presentation to his bride upon the occasion of their marriage. The fact that he was certainly the patron responsible for the unfinished Breviary in Paris has been used to identify him as already a major client of the studio which bears his name. The Breviary was not, however, begun until 1424, a year after the marriage and two years after Bedford's establishment as Regent resident in France. Its association with him cannot be used to imply that he must also have ordered the Hours, which is certainly the earlier of the two. The fact that the John Somerset inscription (fol. 256) records that it was Anne who presented the book to little Henry VI in 1430, but that her husband had given his consent to the gift, has also been used to imply that the manuscript was the property of the Duchess but that it had originated with her husband. However, Eleanor Spencer has drawn attention to the very relevant fact that all Bedford's personal liturgical books, including the Breviary, follow the use of Sarum, whereas the Hours is of the use of Paris. Indeed, it includes no specifically English references at all beyond a handful of undistinguished entries for English saints in its martyrological calendar. From this she concluded that the manuscript might have been made a considerable time before the Bedford marriage, as a projected gift to Anne (or even to one of her other sisters) from her brother or her mother, and that all the signs of Bedford ownership could quite well be additions made to reflect Anne's new position after her wedding.

However, although the choice of Paris use does suggest the Duchess rather than the Duke and can indeed be taken to support the idea that the book was not ordered by Bedford himself, the unusual accumulation of political references and reflections seems much more likely to have been aimed at the Duke, Regent of France and ally of Burgundy, than at the Duchess. It is surely possible that the Hours was a joint gift and that the most likely donor is Philip the Good, brother of the bride. In most de luxe Books of Hours offering comparable evidence of ownership, it is quite clear whether the manuscript was actually the property of husband or of wife. In the Bedford Hours all such evidence is joint; elaborate portraits of both partners dressed in garments made of matching fabric, all arms and devices in pairs, and even both mottoes incorporated into the margins on folio 138.

We do not know what the time scale for the production of a manuscript decorated in so lavish a manner was expected to be. It is certain that many different hands participated in the production of the Bedford Hours. Not only the thirty-eight large miniatures but also the marginal roundels, and even the purely decorative marginal work, can clearly be assigned to a variety of painters. Eleanor Spencer suggested that the book could have been begun well before the date of the Bedford marriage and that the four large Old Testament miniatures, together with the illustration of the legend of Clovis and the fleurs-de-lis, were probably additions made at the time of the gift to Henry VI in 1430. This would imply that the manuscript as we now see it was executed over a fairly long period,
ending in 1430 but beginning at some time unspecified before 1423. The making of the Bedford Breviary, apparently begun in 1424, was still far from complete when Bedford died eleven years later, providing a convenient parallel.

There are, however, both internal and external reasons for supposing that the Bedford Hours was ordered and completed within a fairly short period. In the first place, the inclusion of marginal subjects apparently intended as a reference to the assassination of John the Fearless at Montereau (fols. 253v–255v) suggests that the decoration of the manuscript was begun not earlier than the end of 1419 and probably later than midsummer 1420 (see above). Then, in spite of the fact that they are clearly additions to the basic structure of the book, all three groups of inserted leaves are apparently part of a perfectly logical over-all scheme of illustration—the Old Testament miniatures linked to the marginal cycle, the miniatures of the Bedfords providing the full-page subjects to be expected at the beginning of section 6, and the miniature of the Clovis legend tied by its style to three of the Old Testament subjects and by its political content to political ideas found elsewhere in the book. Furthermore, there are a number of small indications that the manuscript was finished off in something of a hurry, probably to meet a deadline, with lack of attention to some final details. The wedding of Bedford and Anne, projected in October 1422 and solemnized in May 1423, would certainly have been a suitable occasion to inspire such a gift and to provide a deadline, but whether the Bedford Master’s team could have produced the Hours in the space of six months is something at which we can only guess.

The timetable can, however, be extended backwards towards the terminus post quem of 1419–20 without entirely detaching the design and content of the manuscript from the Bedford marriage, for a marriage alliance between England and Burgundy had long been projected. A marriage between one of Henry V’s bachelor brothers (either John, Duke of Bedford, or Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester) and one of Duke Philip’s sisters was amongst proposals discussed immediately after Montereau in October 1419, during preliminaries for the Anglo-Burgundian treaty which preceded the Treaty of Troyes. An immediate and concrete renewal of this proposal became urgently desirable in October 1422, to give extra substance to Bedford’s ties with his most important ally. Henry V had died on 31 August, leaving Bedford Regent of France, with the proviso that the regency should first be offered to Duke Philip, as his support was vital to the English cause. Predictably Philip, who can hardly have been anxious to become an agent of the English crown, refused. Less than eight weeks after Henry’s death, Charles VI also died. This meant that, under the terms of the Treaty of Troyes, the crowns of both kingdoms devolved upon a child still less than one year old. Bedford himself was not only Regent in a divided and largely hostile country, which now had a powerful potential rallying point in the person of the young French claimant to the throne, Charles VII. He was also himself heir presumptive to his baby nephew’s dual kingdom, in an age when the mortality rate was such that only the youngest of the five sons of the late King of France was still alive. The next in line of succession, his younger brother Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester, had just entirely forfeited Philip’s goodwill by his entanglement with Jacqueline of Hainault.
The marriage contract between Bedford and Anne of Burgundy was signed on 12 December 1422. On 13 April 1423 the Treaty of Amiens—allying the new Regent with the Dukes of Burgundy and Brittany—was concluded, four days later Bedford and Anne were married by proxy in the chapel of the castle at Montbard, and on 13 May the formal ceremony took place at Troyes. In spite of its political and practical origins, the alliance commemorated in one of the most elaborate and costly manuscripts of the period proved to be an extremely happy one by the standards of any age. The Regent and his wife, though childless, were noted for their devotion to each other, ended only by Anne’s death in November 1432.57

AN OUTLINE OF THE STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS OF THE BEDFORD HOURS, ADD. MS. 18850

Section 1: folios 1–12. One gathering of 12 leaves. The calendar, with appropriate illustrations.

Insertion A: folios 13–18. 2 + 1 + 1 + 2 leaves. Large miniatures at folios 14 (Adam and Eve), 15 (Building the Ark), 16 (the Exit from the Ark), and 17 (the Tower of Babel). Bedford armorial tree, full-page, at folio 15. Last leaf blank.

Section 2: folios 19–31. One gathering of 8 plus 4 + 1 leaves. Extracts from the Four Gospels, followed by ‘Obsecro te’ and ‘O intemerata’. Large miniatures at folios 19 (St. John), 20 (St. Luke), 22 (St. Matthew), and 24 (St. Mark). Historiated initials at folios 25 and 28, beginning the two prayers. Marginal roundels from the Life of Christ (from the Annunciation to Zacharias to the cleansing of the Temple). Bedford arms at folios 23 and 31. Verso of last leaf blank.

Section 3: folios 32–95. Eight gatherings of 8 leaves. The Hours of the Virgin. Large miniatures at folios 32 (Annunciation), 54 (Visitation), 65 (Nativity), 70 (Annunciation to the Shepherds), 75 (Adoration of the Magi), 79 (Presentation), 83 (Flight into Egypt), and 89 (Death of the Virgin). Historiated initial at folio 32, introducing the opening lines of the Hours, which are written in gold. Marginal roundels from the Life of Christ (from Christ preaching from the water to the Ascension). Bedford arms at folio 94. Last leaf blank.

Section 4: folios 96–207. Fourteen gatherings of 8 leaves. Subsidiary devotions—the Penitential Psalms etc., Hours of the Trinity, of the Dead, of All Saints, of the Holy Spirit, of the Holy Sacrament, of the Cross, and of the Blessed Virgin) assigned to each of the seven days of the week, the Office of the Dead, the Fifteen Joys, and the Seven Requests. Large miniatures at folios 96 (David and Bathsheba), 113 (Holy Trinity as Creator), 120 (Funeral), 126 (All Saints), 132 (Pentecost), 138 (Last Supper), 144 (Crucifixion), 150 (Virgin of Mercy), 157 (Last Judgement), 190 (Virgin and Child), and 204 (Holy Trinity as Redeemer). Marginal roundels from Acts and Epistles and (from fol. 170) from the Apocalypse, with a hiatus showing the Apostles’ Creed etc. at folios 160–161. Bedford arms at folio 207. Bedford mottoes in the margins of folio 138.

Section 5: folios 208–55. Six gatherings of 8 leaves. The Hours of the Passion. Large miniatures at folios 208 (Agony in the Garden), 221 (Betrayal), 227 (Christ before Pilate), 230 (Scourging), 65
235 (Carrying the Cross), 240 (Crucifixion), 245\(v\) (Deposition), and 249\(v\) (Entombment). Marginal roundels from the Apocalypse followed by (fols. 253\(v\)–255\(v\)) the 'Montereau' subjects. Bedford arms at folio 255\(v\).

**Insertion B**: folios 256–9. One gathering of 4 leaves. Ducal personal prayers. Large miniatures at folios 256\(v\) (Bedford before St. George) and 257\(v\) (the Duchess before St. Anne). Marginal roundels related to miniatures. Bedford arms in borders to main miniatures. Recto of first leaf blank, with added inscription by John Somerset, 1430. Last leaf blank.

Section 6: folios 260–87. Three gatherings of 8 and one of 4 leaves. Memorials of saints and special masses. No large miniatures. Marginal roundels related to the adjacent text. Bedford arms at folio 287\(v\).

**Insertion C**: folios 288–9. One gathering of 1 + 1 leaves. The story of Clovis and the fleurs-de-lis. Large miniature at folio 288\(v\) (the presentation of the fleurs-de-lis to Clovis by Clothilda). Marginal roundels from the story of Clovis. No arms. Recto of folio 288 blank.

1 For the previous history of the manuscript see A. N. L. Munby, *Connoisseurs and Medieval Miniatures* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 1–13. The Bedford Hours was the first item in one of the most important single purchases of illuminated books ever made by the Department of Manuscripts. The seven other volumes acquired at the same time included the Breviary of Queen Isabella (Add. MS. 18851), the Hours of Joanna the Mad (Add. MS. 18852), and a Book of Hours designed for Francis I (Add. MS. 18853).


6 See V. Leroquais, op. cit., pls. liv–lxv.

7 The Lamoignon Hours, now in the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon and reported to have been seriously damaged by flood there in 1967, is described at length in Sotheby's sale-catalogue, 21 June 1937, lot 1, with plates of the Visitation (in colour), the Annunciation to the Shepherds, the Adoration of the Magi, and David and Bathsheba. See also E. G. Millar, *Souvenir de l’exposition des manuscrits français à peintures organisée à la Grenville Library, British Museum* (Paris, 1933), no. 39 (with a plate of the Mass and the Sacraments), and Millard Meiss, *The De Lévis Hours and the Bedford Workshop* (New Haven, 1972), pp. 12 ff. (with pls. 18, the Annunciation; 33, the Flight into Egypt; 43, a funeral; and 44, Pentecost). The manuscript bears the added arms of Isabelle of Brittany as wife of Guy de Montmorency, 1430–42. The arms on the funeral miniature are, however, those of her mother Jeanne, daughter of Charles VI of France and wife from 1397 of Duke John VI of Brittany. Jeanne died in 1433. It is impossible to tell from a reproduction whether these arms too are added—as an act of piety by her daughter—or whether they could be a reference to the earlier/original owner.

9 See Eleanor P. Spencer, *The Sobieski Hours* (London, Roxburghe Club, 1977), with plates of all the principal pages. This manuscript was made for a lady named Margaret, and the inclusion of sundry references to Brittany suggests that she may have been Margaret of Burgundy, sister of the Duchess of Bedford, who married Arthur of Richemont, brother of Duke John VI of Brittany, in 1423 under the terms of the same treaty as Anne's own marriage to Bedford.

10 I am indebted to Sir Robin Mackworth-Young for confirmation of this point.


12 These miniatures have for many years had a wide circulation as British Museum/British Library postcards.

13 The most likely source for many of these scenes is Ovid's *Fasti*.


18 The Apostles' Creed sequence, which may be traced back to the iconography of Jean Pucelle's *Belleville Breviary* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MSS. lat. 10843-4) is also used by the Bedford studio to decorate the calendars in the Vienna and Sobieski Hours.


22 How the manuscript came into the hands of the French royal family in the sixteenth century has not been explained.

23 B. Rowe, op. cit., provides many of the details which are used in the following passage.

24 H. MacCracken, op. cit., vol. ii (1934), pp. 625-6 (verse 4 of the 'Ballade to King Henry VI upon his coronation') and pp. 691-4 ('A mumming at Windsor').

25 B. Rowe, op. cit., p. 57.

26 As Regent, Bedford took over certain functions hitherto the prerogative of the king; for an example see E. Williams, op. cit., p. 80.


29 Arthur of Richemont's adherence to the Anglo-Burgundian alliance was short-lived. He entered the service of Charles VII as his constable in March 1425. See M. Vale, op. cit., pp. 35 ff.


31 B. Rowe, op. cit., pp. 61-5 proposes to identify the St. George figure as a portrait of Henry V.

32 Only three other pages in the manuscript lack 'subtitles'. These are the pages of the portrait of the Duchess (fol. 25v), the Annunciation (fol. 32), and the Death of the Virgin (fol. 89v).


37 G. Beltz, op. cit., pp. xiii, liv, lx, and lxii.

38 Ibid., pp. lxi-lxii.

39 Ibid., pp. 369-74.
The Order of the Garter was, from the time of its foundation in or about 1348, closely linked with the war in France. The founder members included the Black Prince and several of his companions in arms from the Battle of Crécy. A knot is in fact one of the symbols of the Order, and alternates with roses encircled by garters to make up the Garter collar, see R. Marks and A. Payne, British Heraldry (London, 1978), p. 122, items 72 and 238. An interesting attempt to provide symbolic meanings for all aspects of the Garter robes and badges is the treatise by the Cluniac monk, ‘Frater Mondanus Belvalleti’, written in 1463 (MS. Harley 5415, printed as Catechismus ordinis equitum periscelidis ... autore R. Dom. F. Mondono Belvaleti ... studio Fr. Philiippi Prosquieri (Cologne, 1631). The seriousness with which the chivalrous fellowship of the Order was regarded is reflected, not only in Philip of Burgundy’s reasons for declining to accept election, but also in such contemporary incidents as the formal absolution of the Order from any association with the treachery of Henry Lord Scrope (G. Beltz, op. cit., pp. lv–lvi) and the return of his Garter by the Prince of Orange, Louis de Chalons, in 1432, before he transferred his allegiance to Charles VII (R. Vaughan, Philip the Good, p. 66).

The complicated subject of the narrative sources and pictorial cycles relating to the Legend of St. George and available at the beginning of the fifteenth century has recently been discussed by C. M. Kauffmann, ‘The Altarpiece of St. George from Valencia’, Victoria and Albert Museum Yearbook, ii (1970), pp. 65–100. Two English treatments of the story, approximately contemporary with the Bedford Hours and not discussed by Kauffmann, are the cycle once in the windows of the church of St. George at Stamford, commissioned by William Bruges, first Garter King of Arms, who died in 1449 (see W. Rees-Jones, op. cit., passim; the subjects were copied in 1641 by Sir William Dugdale in his ‘Book of Monuments’, at present Loan MS. 38 in the British Library, to which references are given below) and the poem written by Lydgate for the Armourers of London (H. MacCracken, op. cit., vol. i, 1911, pp. 145–54, cited below by verse number).

The lack of frames for the panels containing the labour of the months and the zodiac signs on the calendar pages has already been mentioned. So too have the blank leaves between the Old Testament miniatures (amongst fols. 13–18). On at least five pages clumsy textual corrections have been made apparently after the decoration had been supplied. In three cases an area of marginal decoration is erased in order that a line of text could be added (fols. 54, 64v, and 204), on folio 130 the final line of text is in a different ink and very heavily abbreviated to fit the space available, and on folio 183v the last line has been erased and rewritten. On fol. 21v the text remains incomplete, the need for adjustment perhaps unnoticed. In each case it looks as though the scribe had been
instructed not to run over on to a fresh page if only a single line of any specific portion of the text remained to be written, but that decoration was following so hard upon the writing of the text that corrections and adjustments were not keeping pace with it. Further clumsy corrections appear within the text on a number of pages. On fol. 134 the erasure was so heavy that a vellum patch had to be applied to conceal the damage.


54 Ibid., p. 417.


57 For the history of the marriage see E. Carleton Williams, My Lord of Bedford (London, 1963).
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