

The Book World of Early Modern Europe

Essays in Honour of Andrew Pettegree

VOLUME 2

Edited by

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Locating Books of Hours in Eighteenth-Century Private Libraries: Auction Catalogues as Generators of Enlightenment Value(s)

Alicia C. Montoya

One of the most engaging recent debates in eighteenth-century French book history – and one that might, arguably, end up shaking the field as much as Robert Darnton's claims in the 1980s – has focused on an apparently run-of-the-mill work of devotional literature: the Valenciennes-based Jesuit schoolmaster Jacques Coret's *Ange conducteur dans la dévotion chrétienne*.¹ Originally published by Gérard Grison in Liège, probably in 1683, this little volume bears many similarities to the medieval book of hours, with its table of moveable feasts, prayers to various saints and the Virgin Mary, as well as a number of offices, including most importantly the office of the Virgin (in the Liège edition, the shorter *Office de l'Immaculée Conception*).² The volume initially enjoyed some success, in the context of Father Coret's vigorous championing of the cult of the Ange Gardien, but it only really took off, commercially speaking, starting in the 1740s, when the book was picked up by French publishers operating along the north-eastern Franche-Comté corridor running from Nancy to Dôle.³ Not only did the book go through literally hundreds of reprintings throughout the eighteenth century, it was also published in enormous print runs. From the date of its first publication, *L'Ange conducteur* enjoyed over 500 re-editions, while in a single decade, between 1779 and 1788,

1 The full title of the original Liège edition is *L'ange conducteur dans la dévotion chrétienne réduite en pratique en faveur des âmes dévotes, avec l'instruction des riches indulgences, dont jouissent les personnes congrégées dans la confrérie de l'Ange Gardien, érigée en la chapelle des religieuses de S. Ursule*. However, both title and content change – sometimes dramatically – from edition to edition.

2 For some arguments for and against the categorisation of the *Ange conducteur* as a book of hours, see Serge Tyvaert, *Le chant des Heures. Liturgie paroissiale et catéchèse dans le diocèse de Besançon du concile de Trente à l'époque contemporaine* (Paris: Cerf, 2019), pp. 267–268.

3 Although Coret obtained permission to publish the book in 1681, the original edition bears no date of publication. However, the calendars included in the earliest editions suggest 1683 as the most likely date of publication. The foundational study of Coret's bestseller is Michel Vernus, 'Un best-seller de la littérature religieuse: *L'Ange conducteur* (du XVII^e au XIX^e siècle)', in *Transmettre la foi: XVI^e–XX^e siècles* (Paris: C.T.H.S., 1984), vol. 1, pp. 231–243.

some 123,400 copies of the work were printed by French provincial presses.⁴ By the 1780s, Simon Burrows has calculated, there were 50,000 copies of the *Ange conducteur* in circulation in the Franche-Comté alone (population 800,000), possibly reaching as many as one in two of all (peasant) households.⁵ In short, such figures point to a publishing success similar, at least on a regional scale, to the success of *L'Ange's* forerunner, the book of hours, arguably the best-selling book in mid-thirteenth to mid-sixteenth-century western Europe.⁶

What are the implications for book history, and beyond that for intellectual history more broadly, of the enormous commercial impact of Jacques Coret's *Ange conducteur*? One key take-away is the importance of regional, often parish-based patronage networks in the making of religious best-sellers in this period. Books printed on commission for the local ecclesiastical authorities carried little financial risk and therefore provided the backbone of many a provincial publishing business. But surely the most significant finding of the body of scholarship on Coret's book is that its success was due not to the survival in libraries of the original seventeenth-century version, but to the ramped-up production of new, eighteenth-century editions. As Philippe Martin has shown, no two editions were alike, as publishers continuously adapted the text to local needs, as prayers were added or subtracted, and as the text was modernised to reflect religious fashion – for example, in the early nineteenth century, the latest revival of the cult of the Virgin Mary.⁷ *L'Ange conducteur* was clearly not perceived by its readers as a superannuated devotional volume, a relic from the past, despite its similarity to the medieval book of hours. From the 1680s to the 1840s, or during the very period that historiography has traditionally viewed against a backdrop of Enlightenment, political reform movements, religious modernisation and even secularisation, Coret's volume continued to speak to readers' needs and aspirations – enough so that it was deemed worthy of continuous updating and revision, right into the mid-nineteenth century. Is this an

4 That he cites as 1681, without further explanation. Philippe Martin, *Une religion des livres (1640–1850)* (Paris: Cerf, 2003), pp. 279, 300.

5 Simon Burrows, 'Forgotten bestsellers of pre-revolutionary France', *French history and civilisation*, 7 (2017), pp. 51–65, here p. 60.

6 Virginia Reinburg, 'Books of hours', in Andrew Pettegree, Paul Nelles and Philip Conner (eds.), *The sixteenth-century French religious book* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), pp. 69–70; Roger S. Wieck, 'Prayer for the people: The book of hours', in Roy Hammerling (ed.), *A history of prayer: The first to the fifteenth century* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), p. 390.

7 Martin's comparison of the 1759 Luxembourg and the 1829 Saint-Dié editions of the *Ange conducteur* are particularly instructive in this regard. Not only is the former longer than the latter, the 1829 edition practically eliminates the offices for specific saints, while greatly increasing the amount of text dedicated to prayers and offices for the Virgin. Martin, *Une religion des livres*, pp. 122–123.

example, then, of what might – in a possible oxymoron, from a French republican historiographical perspective – be described as an ‘Enlightenment book of hours’? And if so, how exactly did Enlightenment values – and which values, exactly – impinge on devotional volumes such as this one?

In this chapter, I probe the possible existence of this hypothetical construct, the Enlightenment book of hours, by examining a large corpus of data on books that eighteenth-century individuals held in their libraries, and that were deemed valuable enough to be offered up for sale, typically after the owner’s death. To this end, I interrogate several possible definitions of ‘the Enlightenment book of hours’, from the most expansive definition – any book of hours found in an eighteenth-century library – to more restrictive approaches focusing on specific texts produced during the eighteenth century itself by eighteenth-century authors. For my source material, I draw on a database under construction, *MEDIATE* (Measuring Enlightenment: Disseminating Ideas, Authors, and Texts in Europe, 1665–1830), that currently (July 2021) holds structured data extracted from a corpus of 590 smaller to medium-size (1,000 lots or less) printed catalogues of private libraries mostly sold at auction in the Dutch Republic, British Isles, France and Italy between 1665 and 1830.⁸ Altogether, this corpus of library catalogues lists over half a million individual book items that were in circulation during this period, and that had supposedly belonged to individual, identifiable collectors or readers.⁹ Because of this, the database offers unprecedented possibilities not only to locate individual books of hours in individual libraries, but more importantly, to measure the presence in libraries of devotional books compared to other types of reading material, and the different kinds of values – both material and spiritual – that booksellers and buyers might have attached to these books.

Books of Hours in the *MEDIATE* Database: Quantitative Overviews

Let us start, then, by picking out the books of hours in the *MEDIATE* corpus, even while bearing in mind that multiple factors complicate surefire identification.

8 The public version is scheduled to be launched in 2022. When complete, this so-called Sandbox corpus will total 600 catalogues. The current tally includes five ‘bonus’ catalogues: three from Tournai, and one each from Boston and Batavia. For a fuller description of the database and some of the underlying principles in its construction, see my ‘Enlightenment? What Enlightenment? Reflections on half a million books (British, French and Dutch private libraries, 1665–1830)’, *Eighteenth-century studies*, 54 (2021), pp. 909–934.

9 The book items tally counts multi-year runs of periodicals or multi-volume works, such as Diderot and d’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie*, as a single title.

These include books of hours' fluctuating, composite content, depending on period, geographical context, authorship and other variables, and hence the lack of a commonly accepted standard for describing the genre.¹⁰ Additionally, auction catalogues' descriptions of book items are often frustratingly imprecise or incomplete, and lack detailed imprint information. Because historians using this source are unable to inspect the copies themselves to perform the kind of book-in-hand autopsies that are the gold standard of material bibliography, this makes it impossible to tell whether a given title contains some or most of the elements characteristic of the book of hours. Finally, while much scholarship on books of hours has focused on medieval, manuscript books of hours, their printed versions entail typology and attribution issues of their own, with arguable cases such as the Italian *libri da compagni* studied by Cristina Dondi, or even Jacques Coret's *Ange conducteur* itself, that has scholars divided as to its generic classification.¹¹

A first, deliberately expansive way of defining our object might therefore be any text, produced during any period, whose title as reported in the catalogues suggests that it may bear significant generic similarities to the book of hours. Using these parameters, I have identified 162 books of hours that are explicitly described as such ('getydenboek', 'livre d'heures', 'Hours of Prayer to the Virgin Mary') in the current *MEDIATE* corpus of 590 libraries sold at auction between 1665 and 1830. These include books such as 'Des Heures à l'Usage de Burgos en Espagnol. avec fig. (Maroq. rouge) Lyon. 1551' reported in the library of the Scottish physician and Member of Parliament Charles Oliphant, sold in London in 1720, or 'a book of hours, written very artfully on parchment, with capital gold initials and painted figures, in turtle binding' described in the

10 Roger Wieck's definition is nevertheless a good starting-point, albeit from a medievalist perspective: 'the typical Book of Hours consisted of a Calendar, Gospel Lessons, Hours of the Virgin, Hours of the Cross, Hours of the Holy Spirit, the two Marian prayers called the "Obsecro te" and the "O itemerata", the Penitential Psalms and Litany, the Office of the Dead, and a group of about a dozen Suffrages; any number of accessory prayers complemented these essential texts.' Wieck, 'Prayer for the people', p. 390.

11 Cristina Dondi, *Printed books of hours from fifteenth-century Italy: The texts, the books, and the survival of a long-standing genre* (Florence: Olschki, 2016). However, in the case of books simply described as the *Office de la Vierge*, I was more cautious, given the different status of specific seventeenth-century translations and works bearing that title. Tristan L'Hermite's 1646 *Office de la Sainte Vierge*, for example, despite the title, was a literary work of his own fashioning, that bore no resemblance to the book of hours other than the title. The same holds for Pierre Corneille's translation of the Office of the Virgin, that was not accompanied by the other elements traditionally making up the book of hours and I hence did not include in the count. In most cases, unfortunately, no author or translator is named, which required judgement calls based, for example, on additional contextual material.

library of the Middelburg postmaster Thomas van Rhee, sold in Middelburg in 1768.¹² These 162 clearly identifiable books of hours appear in a total of 86 individual libraries, or roughly one in seven libraries, 14.57% of the total.

In addition, a further 98 books are described in the catalogues as the Office of the Virgin, for example as 'Officia Beata Mariae Virginis', 'Office of the Virgin Mary', 'L'Office de la Vierge en latin', 'L'Office de la Vierge', and other variations.¹³ Although imprint information is often lacking, 78 of these Offices of the Virgin are further described as printed in Paris, and nine carry Antwerp as their place of publication. The latter indication suggests that these may be copies of the commercially extremely successful printed books of hours with which Christophe Plantin flooded the market in the second half of the sixteenth century.¹⁴ The other cities of publication named are, in decreasing frequency, Cologne, Lyon, Brussels, Rouen, Amsterdam, and – in alphabetical order – ten cities named only once: Frankfurt, Gouda, The Hague, London, Leuven, Metz, Rome, Saint-Omer, Strasbourg and Venice. A further seven of the items described as the Office of the Virgin are in manuscript form, and might therefore be surmised to be a complete book of hours, in keeping with the medieval tradition of designating the genre by reference only to its central element, the *Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis*. Finally, another 26 items are almost certainly also printed books of hours, published under various other titles and guises

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- 12 Oliphant: *Bibliotheca Oliphantana: A catalogue of the library of the late Learned DR. Oliphant, M.D. and Member of Parliament for Scotland* (London: Thomas Ballard, 1720). Van Rhee: 'Een Getyde Boek, zeer konstig op Pergament geschreeden, met capitaale vergulde Voorletters en geschilderde figuren, in schildp.' *Catalogus van zeer voortreffelyke, zinnelyk Gebondene en zuiver geconditioneerde Nederduitsche boeken alles nagelaten door den Wel-Ed. Gestr. Heer Thomas van Rhee. Oudste Kieser en Postmeester der Stad Middelburg* (Middelburg: Jeroen van de Sande, 1768), p. 39.
- 13 Classified under 'Libri theologici'. *Catalogus Insignium, ac in quavis Facultate, & lingua rarissimorum librorum D. Petri van Gelre, J.Cti, & coram suprema ac Provinciali Hollandiae curia (dum viveret) Advocati* (The Hague: Theodoor Duyrcant, 1668). *A Catalogue of all the Elegant and Rich Household Furniture, The Capital Library of well-chosen Books, Linen, China, Pictures, Prints and Drawings, about 400 Dozen of the choicest Wines, Consisting of fine Old Port, Claret, Burgundy, Champagne, Madeira, &c. in the highest State of Perfection, Curious Exotics, 25 fine Orange Trees, and other valuable Effects, of the late William Sheldon, Esq; dec. At his Seat, called Weston, near Long Compton, in the County of Warwick* (London: Christie and Ansell, 1781), pp. 10–11. *Catalogue de Livres De Pieté & d'Histoires, avec un Recüeil d'Operas, & plusieurs Musiques, dont le Catalogue suit; qui se vendront dans la Maison mortuaire de Madame Vanderlinde* (Lille: F.J. Jacqué, 1744), pp. 6, 9. *Catalogue des Livres De feu M. DAMBRE, Me. Chirurgien en cette Ville, dont la Vente se fera à la Bourse aux heures ordinaires le Mardi 3. Juillet 1753* (Lille: L. Danel, 1753), p. 6.
- 14 Karen Lee Bowen, *Christophe Plantin's books of hours: Illustration and production* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1997).

over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – on which I say more below.

While the absolute numbers may not at first sight appear particularly high, these 286 likely books of hours are reported in a total of 133 libraries, or almost a quarter (22.54%) of the libraries in the dataset. This metric actually puts the book of hours among the top 2% of titles, in terms of the number of library auction catalogues that reference a copy of it during the long eighteenth century. Put somewhat differently, books of hours are reported in the same number of eighteenth-century library auction catalogues as works by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Isaac Newton or Marcus Minucius Felix.¹⁵ Such rates would be impossible to achieve without widespread geographical distribution, in both Catholic and Protestant areas. Thus, confessional identity does not correlate entirely with ownership of a book of hours, as 146 books of hours are reported in French catalogues, 69 in British catalogues and 62 in Dutch catalogues. In the last two cases, furthermore, it bears noting that most books of hours are cited not in Catholic-owned collections, but in Anglican and Dutch Protestant ones, suggesting that their function may have not been a directly devotional one, or that their owners may have had other motives in acquiring them.

The books of hours' geographical spread is echoed by their temporal spread across the period covered by the *MEDIATE* database, with the earliest book of hours reported in a catalogue from 1665 – that of the library of the English Catholic diplomat-philosopher Kenelm Digby, sold in Paris – and the last one in the 1830 library catalogue of the Reading resident William Simonds Higgs, sold in London. Most lot descriptions do not cite a date of publication or production (in the case of manuscripts) for the books of hours, but Table 21.1 provides an overview of those that do provide one, 110 items or 38.46% of the total corpus of books of hours, set off against the temporal distribution of dated books in the database overall (in which 64% of all books bear a date of publication).

Similarly to the overall *MEDIATE* dataset, the largest proportion of books reported in the catalogues were printed between 1701 and 1750. The proportion of books of hours published after that date, however, is significantly lower than in the rest of the dataset, suggesting that the catalogues may reflect a decline in the production and consumption of devotional works following the

15 Or put yet again differently, 165 of the 7,700 authors who have currently been identified and matched to items in the *MEDIATE* dataset are reported in 133 libraries or more, putting them on a par with the book of hours. I use *VIAF* authors here for comparative purposes rather than *VIAF* Works, since data-cleaning of individual titles currently lags far behind data-cleaning at the author level.

TABLE 21.1 Date of publication of books of hours in MEDiate Sandbox dataset, 1665–1830

| Date | Number | % of books of hours | % of books in database published in these years |
|------------|--------|---------------------|---|
| up to 1500 | 10 | 9.09% | 0.23% |
| 1501–1550 | 21 | 19.09% | 1.94% |
| 1551–1600 | 8 | 7.27% | 5.74% |
| 1601–1650 | 17 | 15.45% | 14.66% |
| 1651–1700 | 20 | 18.18% | 26.09% |
| 1701–1750 | 31 | 28.18% | 27.83% |
| 1751–1800 | 2 | 1.81% | 19.8% |
| 1801–1830 | 1 | 0.91% | 3.89% |

late seventeenth-century high watermark of baroque piety noted by Philippe Martin, among others.¹⁶ Since auction catalogues in general reflect acquisitions from two or three decades previous to the collector's death, the 1701–1750 numbers presumably reveal fashions in the 1670s through 1730s. Conversely, because of the catalogues' inherent time lag, the French publishing revival of devotional works that marked the first decades of the nineteenth century most likely came too late to have an impact on the collections described in the catalogues.¹⁷

Yet despite the wide temporal and geographical distribution of books of hours, the modest absolute numbers involved might raise questions. Out of a total of over half a million book items currently recorded in the database, 286 possible books of hours is not a particularly impressive figure, a mere 0.05% of the total. By comparison, the dataset currently records 1,801 copies of the Psalms, and 1,930 of the New Testament. Turning to service books, it contains 340 items that have been identified as missals, and 310 breviaries. Of course, some books of hours may have disappeared from view in the bundles of unidentified books that appear so often in these catalogues. An estimated 4% to 5% of the books are labelled 'unspecified' because the lot descriptions – for example, a 'Bundle of Miscellanies and Waste' or 'un paquet de Livres de Dévotion' – are too vague to admit identification. Yet even supposing that some of these packets contained books of hours, these figures contrast sharply

¹⁶ Martin, *Une religion des livres*.

¹⁷ On this publishing revival and its antiquarian dimension, see again Martin, *Une religion des livres*, pp. 117–126.

with the massive numbers of copies produced in the eighteenth century, literally in the hundreds of thousands, of a work like Jacques Coret's *Ange conducteur*. This is a first indication that while auction catalogues did indeed deal in books that were deemed of value, retail value might not have mapped readily onto the spiritual values ascribed to a devotional work like a book of hours. Is this yet another illustration of the book history adage that there is an inverse relationship between the popularity of a title and its preservation, and should books of hours be counted amongst 'the legion of the lost' that are increasingly at the centre of book historians' concerns?¹⁸

Eighteenth-Century Books of Hours

Let us look more closely, then, at the presence of eighteenth-century books of hours like Coret's *Ange conducteur* in contemporary library sales catalogues. Printed books of hours, it is worth noting at the outset, distinguished themselves from their medieval precursors, first, by their frequently more modest aspect, for example lacking the rich illustrations that made many a manuscript book of hours an object to be sought after. Secondly, precisely because they were the object of massive print runs, and were reproduced in the thousands, printed books of hours lacked the commercial value of an individually crafted manuscript exemplar. In other words, these were in most cases not luxury commodities, and this status might have deterred booksellers in reporting them in the catalogues of private libraries put up for auction.

This last possibility does appear to be corroborated by the data. Of the 286 possible books of hours identified in the *MEDIATE* corpus, only 35 or 12.23% can be described, in strictly material terms, as eighteenth-century books due to their date of publication, 1701 or later. That number rises to 49 books, if we define the long eighteenth century, like the *MEDIATE* project does, as the period spanning the years 1665–1830. Within this category, a further distinction can be drawn between books that were printed in the eighteenth century, but may have been written much earlier, and books that were both printed in the eighteenth century and were the work of eighteenth-century authors.

Among these 49 books, three titles appear four or more times. The most frequently cited is the *Heures latines et françaises, imprimées par l'ordre de Monseigneur le Cardinal de Noailles*, originally published in 1701, as part of the

18 Andrew Pettegree, 'The legion of the lost. Recovering the lost books of early modern Europe', in Andrew Pettegree and Flavia Bruni (eds.), *Lost books: Reconstructing the print world of pre-industrial Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 1–27.

Archbishop of Paris's programme to standardise religious practice by publishing good editions of the liturgical books used in his diocese. Like other eighteenth-century books of hours, it contains most of the elements traditionally making up books of hours, such as the Office of the Virgin, penitential psalms, and other prayers and offices, but these are placed at the end of the volume, with the emphasis falling now on texts with a more catechismal purpose.¹⁹ Noailles's *Heures* are cited seven times, in editions from 1701, 1703, 1715, 1716, 1728, 1741 and 1742. Five of the copies figure in Parisian libraries, one in a library sold in Orléans, and only one in a non-French library catalogue, underlining once again the key role played by diocesan, local patronage in ensuring the commercial success of specific devotional works.

In a transnational, long-term perspective, however, the undisputed best-seller among these books of hours printed during the long eighteenth century is the work of a seventeenth-century German author, Jakob Merlo Horstius (or Merler), parish priest at the Cologne church of St. Maria im Pesch from 1623 to his death in 1644. Besides editions of the works of Church fathers like Saint Bernard, Merlo Horstius wrote what could be described as a modern-day book of hours, albeit again with a strong catechismal flavour, *Paradisus animae christianae*, originally published in Cologne by Johann Kinchius in 1630. While the content of this work varies from edition to edition, most editions include the Office of the Virgin, penitential psalms and other elements generic to the book of hours, although once again in a much later position than in the genre's medieval precursors – almost as an afterthought, after the author's own series of seven spiritual exercises. Translated into most European languages, and continuously reprinted into the twentieth century, the *Paradisus animae* quickly went on to achieve the status of a classic.²⁰ In the *MEDIATE* dataset, it is reported four times in editions published during the long eighteenth century, and a total of 22 times in all – in most cases, with no date of publication. The *Paradisus* appears in many guises, but most often in French translation, for example as 'Heures Chrésiennes, ou Paradis de l'ame, trad. du Latin d'Horstius, (par Fontaine). Paris, 1723, 2 vol. in-12. p. f.', in the catalogue of the library of the widow of *fermier général* and art collector Marin de La Haye (whose own library had been sold in 1754), Marie-Edmée de la Haye (née de Saint-Mars),

19 For a detailed study of the essential interrelatedness of books of hours and catechisms in one French diocese during the long eighteenth century, see Tyvaert, *Le chant des heures*.

20 Giel van Gemert, 'Merlo Horstius', in Remigius Bäumer and Leo Scheffczyk (eds.), *Marinenlexikon* (St. Ottilien: Eos Verlag, 1992), p. 425. See also, for a broader contextualisation, Alois Schrott, 'Das Gebetbuch in der Zeit der Katholischen Restauration', *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, 61 (1937), pp. 1–28.

sold in Paris in 1776.²¹ It is also the only nineteenth-century book of hours in the dataset, as it re-surfaces in the catalogue of drawing master Pierre-Hélène Souchay's library, sold in Lyon in 1806, as 'Paradis (le) de l'ame chrétienné; in-12, 2 vol. Paris, 1802, bas. écaïl. fil.'²²

Where and how, then, does Coret's *Ange conducteur* figure in this modest corpus? In the light of the enormous print runs and multiple re-editions of this title in eighteenth-century Franche-Comté, discussed above, the numbers are distinctly underwhelming. The title is cited but a mere four times in the library auction catalogues in the *MEDIATE* corpus. Two of these are French library catalogues, both of them female-owned: one describes the library that had belonged to one Marie-Antoinette de Beaumaretz, sold in Lille in 1752, and the second belonged to the provincial aristocrat Isabelle-Ernestine-Christine Guzelinghem, sold in Saint-Omer in 1775. A further library is English-owned, that of Jacobite agent George Kelly (London, 1737), while the remaining is a Dutch one, that of one Gerard Schaak (Amsterdam, 1748). Two of the mentions include a date or place of publication – 1716 (Schaak), and Bruxelles, 1736 (Kelly) – while the third occurrence, in a possible indication of the owner's poor eyesight, or of reading the volume by failing candlelight, notes that the book was printed 'en gros caractère [sic]' (Guzelinghem). This meagre imprint information, relating to just four copies among a dataset of over half a million books, in short, hardly suggests a European-wide, century-wide publishing success – to put it mildly.

What are we to make, then, of this spectacular absence? Does it mean that *L'Ange conducteur* enjoyed only a strictly regional success, that was confined to the Franche-Comté region of France? Or should this absence be read, rather (or primarily), as confirmation of the inherent bias of auction catalogues toward costly books that, by virtue of having been preserved on library shelves, safe from grubby fingers, were in sufficiently pristine condition to attract buyers? As Andrew Pettegree reminds us, 'early printed books that survive in large numbers do so essentially because they were destined for libraries', and the attrition rates of ephemeral print material such as educational texts, newspapers and devotional books that did not make it into these repositories, was devastatingly high.²³ Printed library auction catalogues, precisely because they

21 Categorized under 'Liturgies'. *Catalogue des livres de la bibliothèque de feu Madame de La Haye* (Paris: Goué et Née de la Rochelle, 1776), p. 5.

22 Categorized under 'Théologie'. *Catalogue des livres de feu M.P.-H. Souchay, Ancien Directeur honoraire de l'Ecole de Dessin de Lyon, et Associé de l'Académie des Sciences et Arts de la même ville* (Lyon: Bergé et Ballanche, 1806), p. 5.

23 Pettegree, 'The legion of the lost', p. 9.

functioned as guides to these safe repositories, and often also as aspirational documents, might not be the best place to look for these ‘lost books’.

Yet despite the thinness of the evidence, printed library catalogues can in some cases still provide insight into how eighteenth-century readers might have engaged with a work like Coret’s *Ange conducteur*. Let us turn then to one of the catalogues that does hold this work, the small collection put together by Marie-Antoinette de Beaumaretz, and sold in Lille in 1752 after her death at the ripe age of 85. Beaumaretz’s is one of the smaller libraries in the *MEDIATE* corpus, and comprises a mere 235 books (including several manuscripts) and five sets of (bound) prints. The catalogue lists two books by Coret: besides *L’Ange conducteur*, also ‘L’Ange Gardien, par le R.P. Coret, avec fermoirs d’argent’ – the last detail suggesting that this was a book that had been particularly prized by its owner. There are further a number of other religious titles, including works by Thomas à Kempis, Luis de Granada and what appears to be a French translation of Merlo Horstius, described in the catalogue as ‘Paradis des ames chretiennes’. However, this is no purely devotional library. A large proportion of the books are works of history and travel accounts, as well as a good selection of *belles-lettres* – including the slightly *risqué* novels of Catherine de Villedieu, and works by the scandal-mongering journalist Anne-Marguerite Dunoyer. There is even one work by Voltaire, his *Histoire de Charles XII*. This is, hence, an eclectic collection, that does not fit neatly into inherited narratives about eighteenth-century ‘devotional’ or ‘secular’ reading. Rather, Beaumaretz’s collection suggests that devotional and Enlightenment books might in some cases have gone hand in hand, unproblematically sharing shelf space in an individual’s library. In this sense, by looking beyond the content of Coret’s book, one might even posit that *L’Ange conducteur* was transformed into an ‘Enlightenment book of hours’ by its very participation in a network created with other books within this collector’s library. As Bruno Latour has posited, objects too may have forms of agency, ‘as full-blown actors’ capable of creating the structures through which society exercises (ideological) power.²⁴ In other words, books may reflect values put in them by their creators, projected onto them by their readers, or ascribed to them by booksellers (retail value), but they may also create new values of their own, unexpectedly bringing together domains that historiography has too often viewed as separate.

24 Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the social: An introduction to actor-network-theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 72.

Antiquarian and Collectors' Interests

Despite the suggestive case of Marie-Antoinette de Beaumaretz's library, the fact that there are so few copies of Coret's *Ange conducteur* in the catalogue corpus raises the crucial question of what kinds of books of hours *do* figure in these libraries, and what their owners were doing with them. One possible clue is provided by the geographical distribution of these books, in both Catholic and Protestant areas. As noted above, 146 books of hours are reported in French catalogues, 69 in British catalogues and 62 in Dutch ones. In the last two cases, most books of hours occur not in Catholic-owned collections, but in Anglican and Dutch Protestant ones. This may be an indication that these volumes were not actually being used as works of devotion for personal use, but might have acquired a new status, as bibliophile collectors' items, with confessional allegiances sometimes contradicting outright the content of these books. Thus it has been noted about one of the eighteenth century's best-known manuscript collectors, Francis Douce, that 'despite his extensive collection of printed and manuscript Books of Hours of the Virgin, Douce had no more patience with the re-emerging Marian piety, the devotional aspect of medieval religion, than with formal liturgical or theological manifestations of religion.'²⁵ Bibliophile motivations in acquiring books of hours are further suggested by the dates of publication (Table 21.1), for there is a disproportionate number of older books, when compared to the overall temporal distribution of items in the database. Most significantly, the number of incunabula and manuscripts among books of hours is much higher than in the database as a whole. While only 0.23% of the books in the database date from before 1500, this is the case for fully 7.21% of the books of hours. Books of hours reported in these libraries are, in general, older than the other books reported in library catalogues.

Further strengthening the hypothesis that an important motive in acquiring books of hours may have been their antiquarian value, is the sparse imprint information that is mentioned in the catalogues. Although printer-publisher names are rarely cited, one name does stand out: Simon Vostre, who is named six times in the catalogues as the publisher of books of hours being offered for sale (editions of 1496, 1498, 1512, 1518, 1520 and *sine anno*). These are of course all references to the series of sumptuously illustrated books of hours Vostre published in the late fifteenth century for the printer-engraver Philippe Pigouchet (active 1488–1518), in highly valued luxury editions printed on vellum.

25 Kristian Jensen, *Revolution and the antiquarian book: Reshaping the past, 1780–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 178.

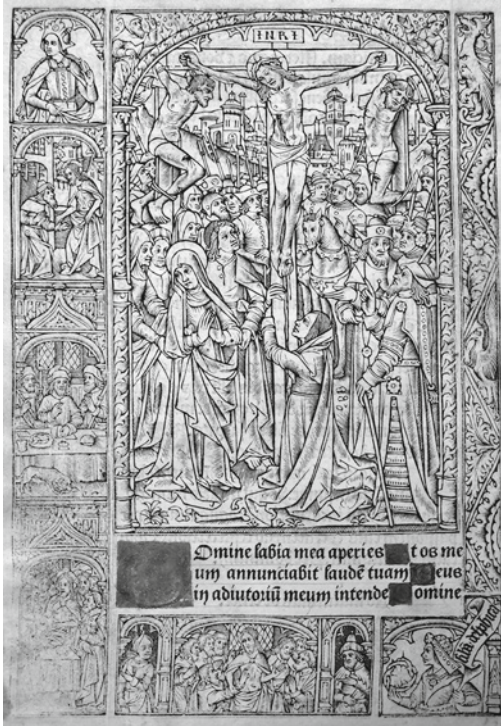


FIGURE 21.1
Horae secundum usum Romanae Curiae (Paris: Philippe Pigouchet, for Simon Vostre, 1496)
 RARE BOOKS SOUTH EAST (RB)
 EXI 5942.247.12, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Further supporting the hypothesis of bibliophile acquisition, a disproportionate number of these books of hours are in manuscript form. Fully 86 of the 286 books of hours, 30.07% or almost a third, are manuscript versions or hybrid manuscript-print versions.²⁶ By comparison, only a paltry 0.22% of the total number of books in the *MEDIATE* dataset are manuscripts. Significantly, these manuscripts are recorded not in the earliest libraries in the corpus, but in the later ones, with 70 dating from the second half of the eighteenth century or later. This is surely meaningful, since as Kristian Jensen, David McKitterick and others have shown, the second half of the eighteenth century witnessed the development of new bibliophile notions of rarity, and new monetary valuations

²⁶ Such as the 'Heures de Nostre Dame, translätées en francoys et mises en rihme, par Pierre Gregoire, dict Vaudemont, herault d'armes de Prince Mons. le Duc de Lorraine, printed on paper, with TWENTY-FIVE LARGE and SMALL PAINTINGS, together with the Initials, painted and illuminated Paris, et ce vendent chez Jehan Petit, (1488). At the end of this volume are a manuscript collection of Private Prayers, in verse, highly illuminated' reported in the catalogue of William Simonds Higgs, sold in London in 1830. *Catalogue of the very choice and valuable library of the late William Simonds Higgs, Esq. F.A.S.* (London: Sotheby and son, 1830), p. 31.

TABLE 21.2 Catalogues that list five or more books of hours

| Collector | Profession | Year | Place | Books (total) |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|------|-----------|---------------|
| Thomas Britton | charcoal merchant | 1694 | London | 6 (1,738) |
| Philippe Hecquet | physician | 1737 | Paris | 5 (759) |
| Monsieur Bauduin | Catholic priest | 1740 | Lille | 5 (413) |
| Gerard Schaak | [unknown] | 1748 | Amsterdam | 7 (1,439) |
| Guislain Dambre | surgeon | 1753 | Lille | 9 (896) |
| Jan Arnold van Orsoy | merchant, poet | 1754 | Amsterdam | 15 (862) |
| Léonard de Coninck | Catholic priest | 1761 | Tournai | 6 (1,001) |
| Adrien Douson | [unknown] | 1771 | Lille | 6 (860) |
| Louise-Elisabeth de Conti | [aristocrat] | 1775 | Paris | 7 (1,824) |
| Marie-Edmée de la Haye | widow of <i>fermier général</i> | 1776 | Paris | 6 (790) |
| William Sheldon | [aristocrat] | 1781 | London | 5 (995) |
| Jean-Baptiste de Gevigney | librarian, book thief | 1795 | Paris | 6 (718) |
| Mrs Walcott | [unknown] | 1800 | Dublin | 5 (177) |
| Jacob Arnout Clignett | magistrate | 1828 | The Hague | 5 (607) |
| Craven Ord | antiquarian | 1829 | London | 6 (766) |

accorded to specific kinds of older books, including the newly delineated category of incunabula. In other words, to all appearances these manuscript books of hours in late eighteenth-century catalogues were not legacy books that had been inherited by collectors from a previous generation of owners, but these were books that may have been purposely acquired for their antiquity or for their visual and material features. A closer examination of the fifteen collections that contain sizeable numbers of books of hours, defined here as five or more (Table 21.2), may shed light on collectors' motives.

Among these fifteen collectors whose libraries reported five or more books of hours, there are (unsurprisingly) two Catholic priests. There are also, similarly to the owners of Coret's *Ange conducteur*, a disproportionate number of women: three, or 21.43% of the total, significantly more than the 7.28% of women owners in the database as a whole. Among owners of books of hours overall, the proportion of women is 12.78%, still notably higher than the proportion of female library owners in the database as a whole. While the numbers may be too small to warrant far-reaching conclusions, they do appear in keeping with widespread evidence from the late Middle Ages through to the sixteenth century testifying to women's overrepresentation as readers of books

of hours.²⁷ Women were also actively involved in the production of books of hours, right up until the eighteenth century, when books like the sumptuously illustrated *Beatae Mariae Virginis Officium* (Venice: Giovanni Battista Pasquali, 1740), described as one of the jewels of eighteenth-century publishing, was engraved by Angela Baroni.²⁸ For later periods, there is a growing body of evidence on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century women's particular engagement with the medieval past, as readers, philologists, and even book restorers.²⁹ Might this gendered engagement with the book of hours genre have extended, equally, into the emergence of specific collecting traditions among women bibliophiles during the course of the eighteenth century, that is to say, during the very period in which the concept of the 'rare book' was being invented?³⁰

Just as remarkably, two of these female-owned collections were not particularly large ones. Marie-Edmée de La Haye's library numbered 790 book items, while the as yet unidentified Irishwoman Mrs Walcott's catalogue listed but 177 items. Most of Mrs Walcott's books were modern history and travel books, as well as popular novels and other literary works. Other than a few volumes of sermons, devotional works were entirely absent. Yet her library catalogue listed, among various finely illustrated volumes and a few manuscripts, five richly illustrated, manuscript books of hours. The most sumptuous of these was described at great length, with the Dublin bookseller James Vallance even providing provenance details when remarking that this exemplar had been acquired from the collection of 'the Celebrated Mr. Bernard of

27 See among many others Virginia Reinburg, "For the use of women": Women and books of hours', *Early modern women: An interdisciplinary journal*, 4 (2009), pp. 235–240; Margo Stroumsa-Uzan, 'Psalters for Men, Books of Hours for Women: Arras as a Case Study', in Elisheva Baumgarten and Judah D. Galinsky (eds.), *Jews and Christians in Thirteenth-Century France* (Cham: Springer, 2015), pp. 31–47.

28 Carol E. Selby, 'A small masterpiece from the eighteenth century publishing world', *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts*, 43 (1964), pp. 60–63.

29 Sonja Drimmer, 'A medieval psalter "perfected": Eighteenth-century conservationism and an early (female) restorer of rare books and manuscripts', *British Library Journal* (2013), pp. 1–38; Timothy Graham, 'Female agency in Anglo-Saxon studies: The "nuns of Tavistock" and Elizabeth Elstob', in Helene Scheck, Christine E. Kozikowski and Stacy Klein (eds.), *New Readings on Women and Early Medieval English Literature and Culture: Cross-Disciplinary Studies in Honour of Helen Damico* (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2019), pp. 229–260; Alicia C. Montoya, *Medievalist Enlightenment: From Charles Perrault to Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2017), pp. 79–80, 137–140.

30 David McKitterick's magisterial overview of the topic says nothing about specifically female bibliophile traditions, nor about particular collecting traditions around the book of hours. David McKitterick, *The invention of rare books: Private interest and public memory, 1600–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

London' – possibly the London physician and well-known collector Francis Bernard, whose library had been sold at auction a century earlier, in 1698:

The Office of the Virgin, Penitential Psalms, Collection of Prayers, Office of the Dead, Kalendar and Perpetual Almanack. This inestimable Manuscript contains One Hundred Ninety-two leaves of the finest Vellum, Seven Inches Three Quarters, by Five Inches, written in the Roman Character, most of them bordered in an exquisite manner with various historical subjects-Animals, Birds, Insects, Flowers, Buildings, &c. and enrich'd with Seventy-one incomparable designs done from the principal passages of the Old and New Testament, and a Frontispiece the Portrait in Large of Cosmo de Medicis, and on the opposite page the arms of the Family (which appear in several other parts) for whom this incomparable Manuscript was executed. It was begun in the year 1410, and as appears by the Title, was accomplished in 26 Years. Notwithstanding the early period in which this Artist lived every composition is in the elegant Taste of the Prince of the Italian school; nothing Gothic, but the chastest design and most brilliant colouring; and as fresh and beautiful as the time it came from his pencil: we will not hesitate to pronounce it one of the finest and most perfect Manuscript ever executed. This beautiful work was purchased from the Collection of the Celebrated Mr. Bernard of London, for £320.³¹

The price mentioned in the lot description, £320 paid at a 1698 sale, was of course meant to set a lower bar for prospective buyers at this sale a century later, but is also a useful indication of the monetary value that might be attached to

31 *A Catalogue of the books and manuscripts, of the late Mrs. Walcott* (Dublin: James Vallance, 1800), p. 9. I have been unable to locate this manuscript in the catalogue drawn up for the sale in 1698 – although the catalogue preface notes the existence of a second, now missing manuscript catalogue. I have equally been unable to locate this book of hours among the 127 manuscripts listed two years earlier as having belonged to Francis Bernard in the union catalogue of British manuscripts produced at Oxford University, most likely by Edward Bernard and Arthur Charlett – unless it was part of the *Sammelband* described as number 19, 'Galfradi Anglici Nova Poetria / Tractatus Rhetoris / Joannis Lenonicensis Somnale Dilucidarium Pharaones / Epithalamicum Beatae Virginis Carmen. Membran.' If so, this would be the only devotional work among Bernard's collection of manuscripts, and something of an oddity in an extensive collection – close to 10,000 books – that was otherwise not marked by a particular interest in devotional works. *A catalogue of the library of the late learned Francis Bernard* (London: Aylmers, Kettilby, et al., 1698). [Edward Bernard and Arthur Charlett], *Catalogi librorum manuscriptorum Angliae et Hiberniae in unum collecti* (Oxford: Theatro Sheldoniano, 1697), vol. 2, p. 89.

this type of manuscript book of hours. It was certainly not among the highest prices paid at a library auction. Twelve years later, at the benchmark-setting sale of the library of the Duke of Roxburghe, an incunabula first edition of Boccaccio's *Decamerone* fetched £2,260. By comparison, the most expensive modern edition listed in the 1799 *London Catalogue of Books* was Lavater's three-volume *Essays on physiognomy*, priced at £27 (which Mrs Walcott also owned). Manuscript books of hours belonged to an intermediate category of collectibles: not the most expensive of all, but still capable of fetching respectable sums, like the £685 15s paid in 1814 for the visually stunning Bedford Hours, now at the British Library.³² This mid-range pricing for luxury books might have been another factor rendering books of hours especially attractive to female buyers.

These books of hours, then, were exceptional collector's items, as evidenced not only by their price and description, but also by their presence in collections that were otherwise not particularly religious in character. More than other kinds of rare books, manuscript books of hours were valued above all for their visual appearance, with volumes not infrequently being mutilated as their choicest illustrations were cut out of them.³³ It is hence not altogether unsurprising that several of the other individuals whose library catalogues listed five or more books of hours were well-known collectors. These included Craven Ord, Fellow of both the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries of London, who sold off a first part of his library in 1829. Another collector was Jean-Baptiste Guillaume, abbé de Gevigney, *garde des titres et généalogies* in the French royal library, erudite falsifier, book thief and possible art dealer. Besides six books of hours, his library auction catalogue listed no fewer than 48 incunabula.³⁴ But once again, it was the material aspect of the books of hours that particularly seemed to attract collectors, as evidenced by cataloguers'

32 Information on auction and retail prices comes from Jensen, *Revolution and the antiquarian book*, pp. 129–130.

33 On the eighteenth-century market for manuscript illumination, see Sandra Hindman, Michael Camille, Nina Rowe and Rowan Watson (eds.), *Manuscript illumination in the modern age: recovery and reconstruction* (Evanston, IL: Mary and Leigh Block Gallery, 2001); and A.N.L. Munby, *Connoisseurs and medieval miniatures 1750–1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972). Cf. also Jensen, *Revolution and the antiquarian book*, pp. 55, 178–179 and, for a slightly later period, Edward Morris, 'Early nineteenth-century Liverpool collectors of late medieval illuminated manuscripts', in Marios Costambeys, Andrew Hamer and Martin Heale (eds.), *The making of the Middle Ages: Liverpool essays* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), pp. 158–187.

34 Jules Gauthier, 'Un précurseur de Libri. Étude sur le généalogiste Jean-Baptiste-Guillaume de Gevigney, sa vie, son œuvre, ses aventures et ses méfaits', *Mémoires de la Société d'émulation du Doubs*, 7^e série, vol. 6 (1901), pp. 220–262; Patrick Michel, 'L'abbé de Gevigney

detailed descriptions of the illustrations and visual decorations adorning these volumes, and wordy catalogue title-pages that typically showcased the antiquarian value of the books to be auctioned. As early as 1694, the catalogue of Thomas Britton's library drew attention to the 'Extraordinary Collection of Manuscripts in Latin and English' that it held, while in 1828, the leading bookseller-auctioneer Robert Harding Evans described Ord's library as including 'A most extraordinary Collection of Antient Manuscripts relating to English History and Topography'.³⁵

So another answer to the question of where – if anywhere – to locate the 'Enlightenment book of hours' might be: in bibliophile libraries. For these bibliophile collectors were no longer engaging with these books as practical instruments of daily devotion, but as material objects that had acquired new, specific retail values. If the Dublin bookseller James Vallance took such care to mention that Mrs Walcott's 'inestimable Manuscript' book of hours had been previously acquired for £320, then it was surely because this price mattered, and was perceived as a defining feature of the book of hours in a new, commercial context. The book trade played a central role in creating the polite, urban culture of the eighteenth century, allowing new publics access to 'the pleasures of the imagination' and a chance to participate in a culture of sociability that, as much as any specific ideas or works, shaped the Enlightenment movement.³⁶ Ideologically, as Kristian Jensen has argued, the development and expansion of the antiquarian book trade in this period was underwritten by a discourse on historical progress that culminated in the Enlightenment itself. Buying and selling manuscript book of hours, in this sense, paradoxically became a means for individuals to divest themselves of the superstitious religiosity associated with the medieval past, and to display proudly their own modernity, by transforming the most prominent symbols of that past into objects bearing new meanings.

(1729–1808): collectionneur d'exception ou marchand d'art?', *Les Cahiers d'Histoire de l'Art*, 10 (2012), pp. 113–123.

35 *The library of Mr. Tho. Britton, Smallcoal-man. Being a curious Collection of Books in Divinity, History, Physick and Chimistry, in all Volumes. Also an Extraordinary Collection of Manuscripts in Latin and English* (London: John Bullord, 1694). *Catalogue of the curious and valuable Library of Craven Ord Esq. including A most extraordinary Collection of Antient Manuscripts relating to English History and Topography* (London: R.H. Evans, 1829).

36 John Brewer, *The pleasures of the imagination: English culture in the eighteenth century* (London: Routledge, 1997).

Conclusion

I set out at the beginning of this essay to locate the ‘Enlightenment book of hours’ in a corpus of eighteenth-century library auction catalogues by searching in them for modern, best-selling books of hours such as Jacques Coret’s *Ange conducteur*. Instead of printed books, however, I found medieval manuscripts. Perhaps counter-intuitively, it emerged that the ‘Enlightenment book of hours’ was not to be found primarily in books such as Coret’s, despite their multiple re-editions and continuous adaptation throughout the eighteenth century. Rather, it was the medieval and early printed books of hours collected by a new class of eighteenth-century bibliophiles that spoke most strongly of Enlightenment modernity.

Concurrently, library auction catalogues emerged as key sites where values were created, but those values were commercial as much as intellectual or spiritual. What was most valued in these catalogues were books of hours in manuscript form, unique exemplars, or fine illustrated editions: luxury commodities, offering unique views onto a distant, alien past. By contrast, eighteenth-century editions of books of hours such as Coret’s *Ange conducteur*, that are known to have circulated in the hundreds of thousands in some regions of eighteenth-century Europe, are almost completely absent. This is a sobering lesson on auction catalogues and what they tell us about the circulation of books in the eighteenth century. They reveal much about the Enlightenment and its values, but in a curiously refracted form, creating a hall of mirrors that reflects collectors’ aspirations and self-conscious narratives of modernity, while obscuring other values – everyday devotional practices, religious experience – that may yet have structured lives more profoundly.

Acknowledgments

This project has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 682022. The database on which the present article draws is the work of Alicia C. Montoya, Helwi Blom, Evelien Chayes, Anna de Wilde, Micha Hulsbosch, Rindert Jagersma, Juliette Reboul and Joanna Rozendaal.