



The Tres Riches Heures of Jean, Duke of Berry

Jean Longon, Raymond Cazelles

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One of the miracles of art history.

"The book is a work of astonishing beauty. Its yellowing vellum pages of handwritten text are exquisitely decorated with illuminated capitals and tiny brightly colored miniatures of religious subjects and scenes from 15th-century life. It is universally recognized as one of the two or three finest illuminated medieval manuscripts in existence. 'Incomparable' is how John Plummer, curator of medieval and renaissance manuscripts at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, describes it."—*The New York Times*

Cited as "one of the miracles of art history" by Kenneth Clark, *The Très Riches Heures* is the most luxurious and most famous of such books and marks the zenith of manuscript illumination in late medieval Europe. Commissioned by the influential patron, Jean de Berry, in the early years of the fifteenth century, this masterpiece was executed by the three Limbourg brothers, the greatest miniaturists of the time. The manuscript opens with a calendar illuminating scenes of daily life during the twelve months and is followed by the prayers of offices celebrated at different times of the day. These texts are often accompanied by miniatures, in which the artists' imaginative and decorative genius are fully revealed. The personal approach of the Limbourgs to nature, human activity, and beauty represents the transition from medieval attitudes to those of the Renaissance. Their elegant images, in fact, were to influence the course of painting in France and all of Northern Europe; but, as Millard Meiss comments, 'no painter could match the smooth perfection of their surface, their limpid color and complex simplicity. Their art could capture the delicate transitory beauty of a newly opened flower.' This edition reproduces each of the miniatures in *The Très Riches Heures* to scale and in full color, elegantly capturing both the subtle color and minute detail of these historic images.

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