# THE THREE LIVING AND THE THREE DEAD IN THE *HORAE* OF GALIOT DE GENOUILLAC (RYLANDS LATIN MS 38)

STEPHEN GORDON

The Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead was one of the most influential poetic and pictorial traditions of the later Middle Ages. Its moralistic message—repent, for wealth and power count for nothing in the end—ensured that it could be utilized in a wide variety of media and contexts. Appropriately, Three Living and Three Dead illuminations were often included in books of hours (*horae*) as devotional aids. Although not as prevalent as representations of the funeral or the deathbed, they were usually employed as frontispieces to the prayer cycles in the Office for the Dead. This article analyzes the exquisite yet curiously

SOURCE: NOTES IN THE HISTORY OF ART. WINTER 2018. © 2018 BY BARD GRADUATE CENTER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. 0737-4453/2018/3702-0004 $10.00

understudied version of the motif found in Latin MS 38 from the John Rylands Library, Manchester (fols. 94v–95r). It will first be seen how some of the miniatures produced for the *horae*—commissioned for the grand master of the French artillery, Jacques "Galiot" Ricard de Genouillac (1465–1546)—may have derived from the workshop of the Parisian illuminator Etienne Colaud (including fols. 94v–95r). Following an examination of the formal composition of the Three Living and Three Dead scene, it will be argued that the clear temporal and geographical demarcation between the living and the dead allowed for the rotting, skeletal figures to better function as a moral mirror for the aristocratic reader.

*Horae* production reached its zenith in France in the later Middle Ages.[1] The desire to imitate the devotional practices of the clergy covered a wide socioeconomic spectrum, from lowly merchants to wealthy aristocrats. The ability to recite efficacious monastic liturgies and perform intercessory prayer was vital for the salvation of the soul. Since it was impossible for secular readers to fully incorporate the monastic prayer cycle into their daily routines, *horae* instead offered a selection of "smaller" cycles designed for lay consumption. Latin MS 38 is typical of the high-status illuminated *horae* produced for noble and aristocratic clientele at the turn of the sixteenth century. Despite the historical resonance of the manuscript's patron, Galiot de Genouillac, whose family armorials are identifiable in the architectural borders (fig. 1), remarkably little scholarship has been conducted on the provenance of this manuscript, much less the illuminations contained within.[2] Prior to its inclusion in the exhibition *Magic, Witches and Devils in the Early Modern World* held at the Rylands Library in 2016, Latin MS 38 enjoyed only marginal attention.[3] When mention has been made of it in the secondary literature, the discussions have been altogether brief. David Diringer suggests in passing that the illuminator was a follower "of the school of [Jean] Fouquet" and that the manuscript perhaps was produced in Southern France. By contrast, Frank Taylor attributes its production to the "school of Rouen."[4] Named for the style that emerged

Fig. 1. Attributed to Etienne Colaud, Galiot de Genouillac (fol. 5v), Rylands Latin MS 38, 1515–25. Vellum; 10 ¼ × 6 ½ in. (25.9 × 16.5 cm). The John Rylands Library, University of Manchester. Copyright of the University of Manchester.

under the influence of Georges d'Amboise, archbishop of Rouen (1460–1510), fervent bibliophile and one of the first French patrons of the Italian Renaissance, this school included one of Paris's most celebrated illuminator-printers, Jean Pichore (active ca. 1501–20), for whom d'Amboise was an important and long-standing patron.[5] Latin MS 38 displays many of the visual hallmarks of the Pichore style. However, as will be discussed shortly, it appears that the manuscript also fell under the aegis of Etienne Colaud (active 1512–41) who, indeed, was directly influenced by Pichore.[6]

A career soldier, Galiot de Genouillac is best known for his role as grand master of the French artillery (to which he was appointed in 1512) and for helping to organize the famous meeting between King Henry VIII of England and King Francis I of France at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520. Notably, he was also appointed captain of the royal archers (1496), forester of Grésigne (1504), seneschal of Quercy (1517), governor of the royal forests of Angoumois (1518), and the grand equerry of France (1525). Galiot, indeed, remained a central figure at the French court for over forty years.[7] Etienne Colaud had numerous aristocratic patrons; he had worked on a gospel book for Francis I (National Library of Russia, Lat. Q.v.I,204., ca.1525) and an *horae* for François de Dinteville, bishop of Auxerre (British Library, Add. MS 18854, ca. 1525), among others. Galiot undoubtedly used his connections to engage Colaud's workshop to design certain sections of Latin MS 38, including the Three Living and Three Dead diptych. Stylistic cues support this supposition. As noted by Marie-Blanche Cousseau, Colaud was greatly influenced by (and often collaborated with) the workshop of Jean Pichore. Elements common to the work of both include elaborate tabernacle frames adorned with putti, armorials, and tassels; radially dappled trees; heavily contoured clothing and drapery; and a distinctive ink-and-color wash to create landscape and foliage.[8] Details of execution specific to Colaud include gold highlights in the figures' hair and pink-washed cheeks. Many of these elements are easily discernible in Latin MS 38 (see figs. 1–3). In light of Pichore's

and Colaud's main years of activity, a composition date of around 1515–25 can tentatively be established.

Measuring 10 ¼ × 6 ½ in. (25.9 × 16.5 cm) and 137 folios in length, the manuscript itself accords to the usual structure of a late medieval *horae*, consisting of a Calendar (fols. 2r–4v), Gospel Lessons (6r–10r), the Hours of the Virgin, Hours of the Cross, Hours of the Holy Ghost, and the Hours of the Conception of the Virgin (17v–78v), the seven Penitential Psalms and Litany of the Saints (79v–94r), an Office for the Dead (94v–126r), and, finally, a series of memorial prayers to the saints (126v–137r).[9] The main intercessory prayers to Mary—"Obsecro Te," "O Intermerata," and "Stabat Mater" (10v–17r)—immediately precede the Hours of the Virgin. As was normal practice for a noble patron, Galiot seems to have tasked the designers of the *horae* to include a selection of saints that was most relevant to his sociocultural situation. The owner portrait on fol. 5v depicts Galiot in an idealized mode of prayer, kneeling submissively before the figure of James, patron saint of horsemen and soldiers, identified by the scallop shell in his pilgrim's hat (see fig. 1).[10] Saints Michael (fol. 127r; patron of soldiers), Sebastian (fol. 129v; protection against plague and sudden death), Hubert (fol. 132v; patron of metalworkers, hunters, and foresters), Catherine (fol. 135r; protection against fire and sickness), and Barbara (fol. 135v; patron of artillerymen; protection against fire) are among the holy men and women invoked in the *memoriae* (fig. 2). Hubert's inclusion would have been especially pertinent for a forester and keeper of the royal stables. Tasked with overseeing the development of an emergent ballistics technology, the artillery cannon, Galiot, unsurprisingly, also sought to invoke the help of "military" saints who could guarantee protection against disaster in battle.[11]

Dying in a state of sin was one of the fundamental fears of the medieval Christian community and an especial concern for soldiers. The main purpose of the Office for the Dead (comprising the hours of Vespers, Matins, and Lauds) was to provide suffrage to the dead and ease their purgatorial torments. As well as reciting the office on the evening

Fig. 2. Clockwise from top left: Attributed to Etienne Colaud, Saint Michael (fol. 127r), Saint Hubert (fol. 132v), Saint Catherine (fol. 135r), and Saint Barbara (fol. 135v), Rylands Latin MS 38. Copyright of the University of Manchester.

(Vespers) and morning (Matins, Lauds) before a funeral, readers were also encouraged to meditate on the cycle on a daily basis as a reminder of their own mortality. Images used to preface the office in high-status *horae* often drew on the *memento mori* artistic traditions, usually in the form of funeral scenes, but personifications of death and the Three Living and Three Dead motif were also regularly employed. The Office

of the Dead frontispiece from Latin MS 38 is a particularly striking example of a Three Living and Three Dead diptych (fig. 3).

Although difficult to discern on the digitized image, slight discoloration on the edges of fols. 94v–95r suggests repeated, if not concerted, handling.[12] The verso depicts three noblemen on horseback in a lush autumnal forest, looking back in fear at the dead on the recto, who pursue them across the page. The irony of the situation—the hunters have now become the hunted—is obvious. Appropriately for an office frontispiece, the Three Dead are situated in a graveyard surrounded by a charnel house, where, in a pointed reference to the temporal and spiritual dissonance that exists between the two scenes, the trees in the background are bare but seem to be on the verge of blooming. A symbolic juxtaposition is thus being made between the waning of physical life (the autumnal setting of 94v) and the potential for spiritual rebirth in the next (the early spring setting of 95r). In the border of a tomb toward the bottom of the page, the illuminator has included the first line of Psalm 130 ("De profundis clamavi ad te"), one of the seven Penitential Prayers traditionally said for the dead in Purgatory and sometimes recited at the graveside. The ground of both the graveyard and forest has been painted using brown and green wash with outlines of vegetation in ink—a hallmark of the Pichore-Colaud style (see also fig. 2). If the standing crosses in Three Dead illustrations symbolize the schism of death, the border between this world and the next (seen here at the inner edge of fol. 95r),[13] then the graveyard setting substantiates the idea that the corpses are no mere abstractions, but future representations of the men in the verso. The use of the cross as a demarcation line between the realms of the living and the dead is much more noticeable in church paintings, such as those found in the Church of Saint Victor and Saint Couronne, Ennezat, France (ca. 1420s), although this is not to say that such designs were uncommon in *horae*.[14]

In the context of Latin MS 38, the very structure of the page layout—the division between the tabernacle frames, the "void" between the verso and recto—acts as a more apparent temporal and narrative bridge. The

Fig. 3. Attributed to Etienne Colaud, the Three Living and the Three Dead (fols. 94v–95r), Rylands Latin MS 38. Copyright of the University of Manchester.

use of frames and borders to stress the distance and paradoxical relationship between the living and the dead has long been a feature of the Three Living and Three Dead motif, especially in manuscript contexts. For example, in the version of the legend found in the De Lisle Psalter (British Library, Arundel MS 83, fol. 127r, ca. 1340), the dead mirror the stances of the living, highlighting the uncanny connection between them, with the inner edge of the pictorial frame acting as an ontological boundary between the two worlds.[15] Macabre images were often conceptualized as a type of moral mirror through which meditating readers could reflect on their sins, the precariousness of life, and the implacable nature of death.[16] The substitution of the three noblemen for the reader places the void ("death") in the space between the percipient and Latin MS 38 itself. Indeed, the graveyard setting of fol. 95r is an intentional disruption of the expected visual narrative—the meeting in the *forest*—forcing the reader to become an active participant in the drama. The messages concerning the transience of worldly power, the need to pray for the dead, and the importance of reflecting on one's own sins (using Psalm 130 as a mnemonic) were exhorted to Galiot through a direct, personal engagement with the skeletal figures in the graveyard. The mnemonic cues and points of engagement embedded within these pages—constraints that needed to be overcome to generate the "correct" moralized reading performance—encourage the reader to recall the reproachful messages of the Three Dead and acknowledge the dangers of dying unshriven. Dying "badly" was a pressing concern for a man-at-arms. Prayers to the appropriate saints and ruminations on one's own spiritual failings (prompted by Psalm 130) ensured that the Three Dead on fol. 95r—a portent of Galiot's future physical and metaphysical state—remained at a safe and manageable distance.

Rylands Latin MS 38 is a pristine example of the type of *horae* produced for high-status clients at the beginning of the French Renaissance. The inclusion of such an imposing and emotionally resonant Three Living and Three Dead diptych is entirely logical given its pa-

tron's precarious spiritual situation. The sins accumulated over a lifetime of service to the crown needed an appropriate devotional outlet. These were the pages that most occupied Galiot's (and later readers') attention, expertly designed so that the dead appear to be advancing on the figures in fol. 94v while also threatening to confront the percipient, the sinner, directly. As a seasoned soldier and veteran of the battlefield, Galiot was certainly no stranger to death.

## NOTES

I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

1. Virginia Reinburg, *French Books of Hours: Making an Archive of Prayer, c.1400–1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
2. The provenance of Latin MS 38 is obscure. The earliest extant mention of the manuscript is found in the 1873 Perkins library catalogue. On Thursday, June 5, 1873, it was sold for £215 to Bernard Quaritch, the agent of Lord Lindsay, collator of the Bibliotheca Lindesiana, which subsequently formed the bulk of the Rylands collection. *The Perkins Library: A Catalogue of the Very Valuable and Important Library Formed by the Late Henry Perkins* (London: Collingridge, 1873), 68.
3. Jennifer Spinks, Sasha Handley, and Stephen Gordon, "Curating Magic at the John Rylands Library: The 2016 Exhibition *Magic, Witches and Devils in the Early Modern World*," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 92 (2016): 105–14.
4. David Diringer, *The Illuminated Book: Its History and Production* (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), 213; M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Latin Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library at Manchester*, vol. 1, with introduction and additional notes by Frank Taylor (Munich: Kraus-Thomson, 1980), 20*.
5. Caroline Zöhl, *Jean Pichore: Buchmaler, Graphiker und Verleger in Paris um 1500* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 15.
6. Marie-Blanche Cousseau, *Étienne Colaud et l'enluminure parisienne sous le règne de François Ier* (Tours: Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, 2016).
7. François de Vaux de Foletier, *Galiot de Genouillac: Maitre de l'artillerie de France (1465–1546)* (Paris: Picard, 1925).

8. Zöhl, *Jean Pichore*, 59; John Plummer, *The Last Flowering: French Painting in Manuscripts, 1420–1530* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 91.
9. James, *Descriptive Catalogue*, 96.
10. The lack of a beard in the patron portrait does not invalidate the theory that the *horae* was commissioned around 1515–25. See Jean Clouet's drawing of a clean-shaven Galiot, dated around 1515, in the British Museum (accession no. 1910,0212.83). Galiot's only legitimate son and heir, François (ca. 1518–44), was a child at this time, ruling him out as the potential owner or patron.
11. Reinburg, *French Books of Hours*, 82.
12. For an overview of how wear analysis can be used to determine reading practices, see Kathryn M. Rudy, "Dirty Books: Quantifying Patterns of Use in Medieval Manuscripts Using a Densitometer," *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 2 (2010), doi: 10.5092/jhna.2010.2.1.1.
13. Elina Gertsman, "The Gap of Death: Passive Violence in the Encounter between the Three Dead and Three Living," in *Beholding Violence in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Allie Terry-Fritsch and Erin Felicia Labbie (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 85–104.
14. Ibid., 90.
15. Susanna Greer Fein, "Life and Death, Reader and Page: Mirrors of Mortality in English Manuscripts," *Mosaic* 35 (2002): 69–94.
16. Ibid., 73.