

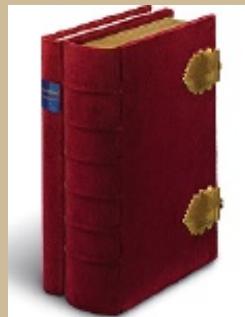
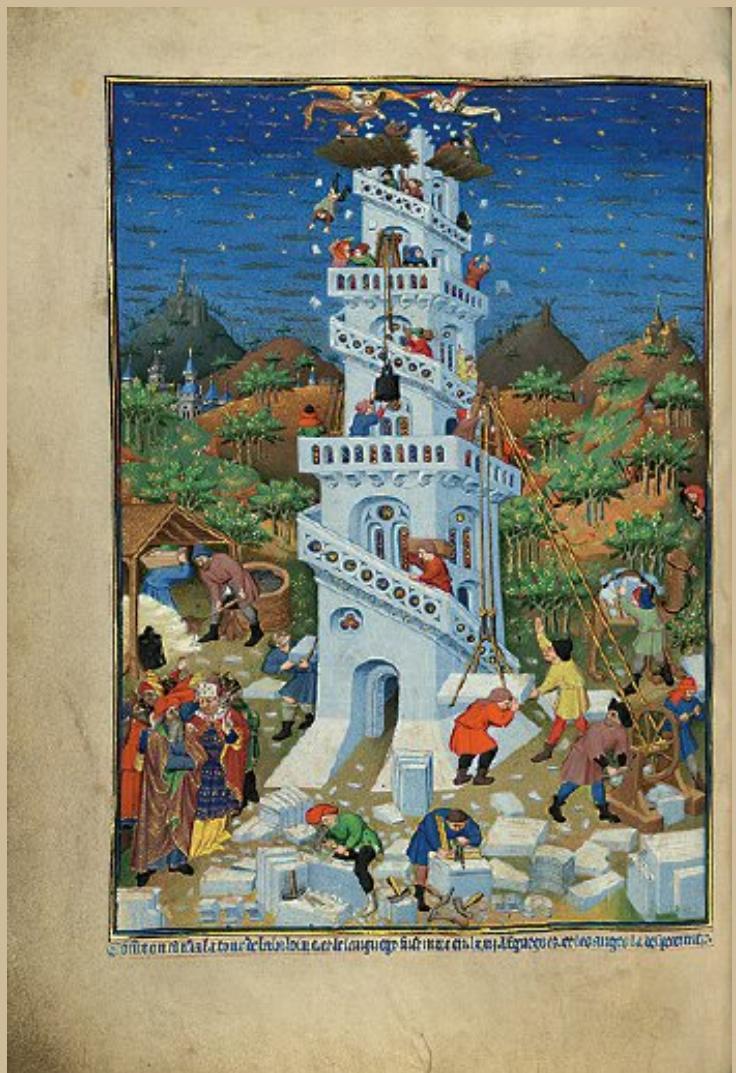
# Bedford Hours

London, British Library, Add. Ms. 1885

The Bedford Hours represent an invaluable example of aristocratic bibliophilia in the history of illumination. One of the richest Book of Hours ever to have left an illuminator's workshop—every page is illustrated—it became famous all over the world. The book contains an overwhelming abundance of biblical scenes, decorated with 1250 elaborate medallions, 38 large-format miniatures, finely executed in gold leaf, brush gold and frequently also with silver.

Miniatures from the Bedford Hours, such as the Ark of Noah or the Creation, are among the most frequently represented examples of the creativity which marked the first decades of the 15th century. The same period also gave birth to such wonderful works as the Master of Game of Gaston Pheobus and the Belles Heures of the Duke of Berry. It was the pinnacle of Gothic illumination, with new ideas of Flemish realism already visible on the horizon.

Although the artist of the Bedford Hours was among the leading and most prolific painters of his day, his identity has sadly remained a mystery. His nickname goes back to the Duke of England who has long been thought to have commissioned the work: John of Lancaster (1389-1435), Duke of Bedford and younger brother of the English king Henry V. The illuminator of the this Book of Hours thus entered art history under the title of Bedford Master, a name synonymous with high quality painting and luxurious opulence in books.



The Bedford Hours were made at a time when France and England had been waging war for some decades, and it was the Duke of Bedford who then, in alliance with Burgundy, successfully fought the cause of the English leading to the accession to the French Crown. It was this man who conquered half of France and eventually stopped the troops of Joan of Arc. He also married Anne of Burgundy, daughter of Duke John the Fearless, thus gaining access to the art-loving Burgundian aristocracy, and ordered numerous luxuriously illustrated manuscripts himself. He died in 1435 in Rouen. Anne must have received the Bedford Hours as a precious wedding gift from her Brother Philip who had inherited it from his father John the Fearless, the initial patron of the book.

Limited edition of 980 copies in the original format (18.4 x 26.3 cm, 578 pages) published by Faksimile Verlag Luzern in 2007. Commentary by Eberhard König. Binding in red velvet binding with gilded clasps.

sFr 18,400

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