Chapter 3 Prayer, Seduction, and Agency in a Thirteenth-Century Psalter

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Essays in Medieval Studies, Volume 30, 2014, pp. 37-54 (Article)

Published by West Virginia University Press
DOI: 10.1353/ems.2014.0008

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A prominent opening in a psalter of circa 1290 from the region of Amiens juxtaposes two kneeling figures (Bibliothèque nationale, MS lat. 10435, fol. 137r; Figure 1). In the margin to the right of the Trinity initial opening Psalm 109, a woman kneels in prayer on a vine tendril next to a minuscule shield bearing the arms of the seigneur or lord of Clary (argent a fess azure [silver with a blue horizontal bar]) in dark blue and now-tarnished metallic silver pigments. The kneeling figure’s conspicuous marginal placement, her devotional posture, and her heraldic identifier align her firmly with the characteristic owner portrait type. In contrast, a courtly couple echoes and inverts the kneeling woman’s devotional gestures in the area beneath the text known as the bas-de-page. In this marginal composition, a man kneels to profess his romantic devotion before a standing woman, whom an inscription identifies as “me demisele ditre” [my lady d’Ytres]. She, in turn, readies a dart of love to strike at her kneeling suitor. The juxtaposition of these two compositions on the psalter’s Trinity page exemplifies themes of gender, agency, and devotion that run throughout the illuminated book. The Trinity page contrasts two types of portraits, which embody two types of female behavior. Furthermore, between the Clary woman and the unidentified man, the composition of the page also contrasts two types of kneeling; the genuflecting figures’ identical blue-gray garments underscore this parallel. Here, as throughout the manuscript, erotic kneeling is emphatically masculine, and the juxtaposition on the Trinity page calls into question the gendered valences of devotional genuflection. The courtly vignettes of men wooing women, which appear on a total of forty folios, pose an interpretive challenge to the reader, who must parse distinctions between religious and carnal love and, by extension, between feminine and masculine devotion. Portraiture, meanwhile, forms the medium for this visual meditation on the gesture of kneeling. The juxtaposition of portrait types in this psalter establishes courtship.
Figure 1. Psalter. Bibliothèque nationale, MS lat. 10435, fol. 137r.
and seduction as a metaphor for devotion such that they position the reader as performing elements of both in tandem.

The psalter in which these illuminations appear is sometimes called the “Amiens Psalter” or the “Psalter of Marote de Hamel,” but I call it the “Clary Psalter” for reasons that I will explain in this article. The Clary Psalter is distinctive among personal prayer books of the late thirteenth century in a number of ways. First, it is one of a small group of fully illustrated psalters to survive from the thirteenth century. In these psalters, each of the 150 psalms, including the twenty-two sections of Psalm 118, and each of the canticles opens with a historiated initial that draws its content from the text that follows.\(^2\) Initials in the Clary Psalter are accompanied by marginal legends in a Picard dialect of French, which were written in red ink after the completion of the illumination but as part of the psalter’s original decorative program.\(^3\) The psalter also contains an unprecedented variety of portraits beyond the typical devotee type: inscriptions throughout the book identical to the psalm legends identify women and men engaged in romantic or other courtly behaviors as portraits of specific, contemporary people. The psalter’s use of inscriptions to indicate portraiture is just as surprising as the often erotic or parodic content of the illuminations. The fifty inscriptions in the manuscript’s margins name at least forty-eight different people, often by family name or toponym, but sometimes also by Christian name. The Clary Psalter is the only devotional manuscript I know from the period around 1300 to identify portrait subjects by inscription.\(^4\) Significantly, inscriptions identify only participants in courtly compositions and not devotional owner portraits, although heraldry may be attached to figures in both categories. In addition to the illustrations of psalms, the illuminations contain a remarkable amount of heraldry; like the names inscribed in the margins, much of the heraldry corresponds to contemporary northern French noble families.

The psalter has a long history of scholarly attention, which has typically focused on either its psalm illustrations or its courtly portraits. Elizabeth Peterson addressed the corpus of fully illustrated French psalters in her dissertation, a detailed study of the eight extant thirteenth-century exemplars. Peterson clarified the manuscripts’ relationships to one another and their makers’ use of common models. She also demonstrated that the legends accompanying each initial in the Clary Psalter (which she calls the “Amiens Psalter”) and other exemplars were added after the illumination, and were not instructions for illuminators, as was previously believed.\(^5\) The portrait inscriptions, meanwhile, have proved a strong means of localizing the manuscript in the absence of a calendar or other liturgical texts. The toponyms in many of the portrait inscriptions correlate with extant settlements, revealing a strong regional tie to the modern départements of Somme and Pas-de-Calais, specifically the area around Péronne, in the Somme valley east of Amiens.\(^6\) Furthermore, certain of the individuals named, such as Jean de Lens (fol. 61r) and Gillon de Bouchavesnes (fol. 78r), are attested in the historical record,
Figure 2. Psalter. Bibliothèque nationale, MS lat. 10435, fol. 61v.
suggesting that the persons cited in the inscriptions were likely not only real but known to the manuscript’s anticipated early reader.\(^7\)

Despite their clear regionalization, however, the abundance of names in the psalter does not immediately clarify the question of the book’s ownership. Among the fifty inscriptions, only three family names are repeated. Two inscriptions name “marote de hamel” (fols. 45r and 61v; see Figures 2 and 6 in this article); “agnes de monteigni” [Montegny] is named in one inscription, while a second identifies “me dame de mon[tegni]” [my lady of Montegny] (fols. 46v and 146v); finally, two men of the same family, identified as “pierre de sainte ragon” and “phelipe de sainte ragon” [Sainte-Radegonde], appear paired with marginal hybrids (fols. 92r, 111r). The psalter’s copious heraldry provides better evidence to address the question of ownership. The sheer amount and variety of heraldic decoration in the line endings and margins of the psalter is equally as remarkable as the named portraits in the margins. Emblazoned shields stud the painted line endings on nearly 90 percent of the psalter’s pages (333 pages out of 372), with an average of just under four blazons on each page. Over three hundred distinct blazons are represented in the manuscript. The majority appear only once or twice, but a significant few are depicted repeatedly. One coat of arms in particular constitutes over one-third of all the heraldry in the manuscript, appearing in line endings and in association with marginal portrait figures. These arms, argent a fess azure, are recorded in the late fourteenth-century Gelre roll of arms as those of the “seigneur de Clary” of Picardy.\(^8\) The Clary arms appear on line endings and adorn the clothing of figures in courtly and devotional modes alike. While none of the inscriptions include the name “Clary,” the seigneurie of Clary (also written Clari or Cléry) belonged at the end of the thirteenth century to a Berthaud de Hamel, who adopted the Clary arms during his tenure.\(^9\) François Avril proposed Berthaud as the original owner of the manuscript, a possibility I discuss below.\(^10\) Marote de Hamel appears with the Clary arms in both of her named pictures, but most emphatically in the second, where she wears a heraldic surcoat decorated with blocks of metallic silver and blue (fol. 61v; Figure 2). On these grounds, Jean Wirth asserted that Marote, perhaps a daughter or a sister of Berthaud, was the intended owner of the psalter, which he called the “Psalter of Marote de Hamel.”\(^11\) In my view, there are still many questions to be answered about the psalter’s owner or owners and about the individuals and families depicted within. I therefore prefer to refer to the book as the “Clary Psalter.” Naming it thus does not exclude the possibility of Marote’s ownership, but it ties the reference to a descriptive feature of the book—its emphasis on the Clary arms—rather than a proposed individual owner.

Whether or not Marote de Hamel was the owner of this manuscript, the presence of the Clary arms in both the courtly and the devotional compositions raises the question of the relationship between the two categories. The Clary arms designate the female devotee on the Trinity page, as discussed above. A survey of the other devotee figures in the manuscript demonstrates an emphasis on female
figures, perhaps reinforcing Wirth’s identification of Marote as the owner. In addition to the Trinity-page devotee, contemporary figures in devotional postures also appear in several of the small initials following the illuminator’s departure from the model that guided the content of initials and their legends up to Psalm 121 (fol. 155r). These figures represent a mixture of figure types: predominantly laywomen but also men, kings, religious men and women, and one Jew. Although they share some characteristics of owner portraiture, such as prayerful postures and contemporary costume, these images operate primarily as illustrations of their associated texts, albeit on a less sophisticated interpretive level than the illustrations to Psalms 1–121. Nevertheless, the semiotic potential of the devotee form charges these images with significance: because they share the essential iconographic markers of owner portraits, they are similarly open to the reader’s self-identification. Some, like the kneeling Jew at the opening of the Canticle of Moses (Audite celi, fol. 182r), resist self-identification, but many more invite it, like the woman in prayer before the swaddled Christ child (fol. 173r). As such, the kneeling figures in the final thirty-five initials of the Clary Psalter supplement the Trinity-page owner portrait, providing a reader with further figures for possible emulation and self-identification.

In echoing the forms of the Trinity-page portrait, the supplicant figures in these later initials destabilize its portrait status, even as they reinforce its function. The function of an owner portrait depends on the ability of its viewer to self-identify with the depicted figure. In blending elements of owner portraiture into the psalm initials, the devotees of the later initials reveal the essentially tenuous categorization of the owner portrait. The illuminator deliberately plays with the portrait potential of the generic devotee type in the initial to Psalm 143 (fol. 169v). This martial psalm, strongly associated in the illustrated psalter corpus with David and Goliath, is here illustrated with a kneeling knight in a purple surcoat over a chain-mail shirt and coif. Rather than David, however, this knight is identified by the Clary arms on the small shield sitting in front of him. The Clary knight’s prayers are answered by God, whose face appears in the sky to the right. A viewer aware of the interpretive tradition of this psalm might recognize this initial as a play on the typical iconography of David; regardless of the viewer’s iconographic sophistication, however, the insertion of the Clary arms into the initial establishes a relationship between the praying figure and this anticipated reader, allowing her or him to project a specific identity—perhaps her or his own—onto the painted figure. In a catalog entry on the book, François Avril proposed that this figure was a portrait of the manuscript’s owner, suggesting that “l’expression galante [des enluminures] paraît peu compatible avec une destination féminine” [the amorous tone of the illuminations seems less compatible with a female recipient]. Yet the prominence of female devotees throughout the initials as well as on the Trinity page suggests otherwise and argues against a consideration of a male owner exclusive of a female co-owner. Nevertheless, Avril’s interpretation illustrates the elasticity of the owner portrait category and the provision of a range
of potential self-identifications within the Clary Psalter illuminations. Regardless of the specific effectiveness of the Trinity-page owner portrait, it exemplifies the invitation to the reader, reiterated throughout the last section of the psalter, to see herself or himself in the pious figures of its illuminations.

The function and the status of the manuscript’s other portraits are less clear, despite their greater prominence. While a variety of devotee figures dominate in the manuscript’s final thirty-five initials, imagery throughout the psalter is weighted much more heavily toward erotic devotions than religious ones (Figure 3). Courting couples, which predominate among the vignettes, appear on an average of just under three compositions in each gathering of twelve folios. The psalter demonstrates a wide iconographic repertoire of romance imagery that incorporates and expands on the iconography typical of luxury goods such as mirror cases, combs, and caskets, items that were widely associated with courtship and marriage and that were often decorated with corresponding imagery. In the psalter, successful courtships result in intimate encounters, with lovers kissing and embracing (fols. 44r, 78r, 108r, 139r; Figure 4); the margins also feature spurned and misguided lovers, such as the woman crying alone while two lovers embrace beside her (fol. 139r), or the two Sainte-Radegonde men, who address their petitions to monstrous hybrids (fols. 92r and 111r). All but a few of these vignettes include legends identifying one (but rarely both) of the figures depicted. For example, “mo[n] seigneur

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*Figure 3. Distribution of courtly and devotional portraits in the Clary Psalter, by quire.*
Iehan de lens” [my lord Jean de Lens] plays chess with an unidentified woman (fol. 61r), while “me dame de seraucourt” [my lady of Seraucourt] cries at the sight of “mo[n] seigneur sim[on] de folloel” [my lord Simon de Folloel] and his unnamed lover (fol. 139r). These identificatory legends also appear in marginal vignettes without an explicit erotic overtone, such as the two on a page of Psalm 23. Here a naked, crouching woman on the upper border is labeled “dama dame maroie le bele” [lady Maroie the beautiful], while in the margin below a woman dancing to the music of a hybrid piper is identified as “me dame de moruel” [Morval] (fol. 24r). But the most common type of courtly portrait scene in the Clary Psalter is that showing courtship between two noble subjects, one of whom is often identified by name. The first courting couple appears in the margin above Psalm 17 (fol. 17v). While page trimming has removed the upper part of the figures, the man’s kneeling form before the standing woman and the inscription “me demisele de longeual” [Longueval] are clearly legible.

Not only is imagery of courtship more pervasive than that of lay devotion; it is also more prominent. Lovers appear on almost all of the manuscript’s major openings as well as in the expanded bas-de-page that sometimes precedes new sections of the text. The four pages surrounding the opening of Psalm 38, for instance, display a series of seductions that exemplify those appearing throughout the manuscript (fol. 44v; Figure 5). The initial in the center of this page shows God creating the moon and the sun in the upper register and David, holding a closed book, pointing to his mouth. The bas-de-page, meanwhile, shows a seated man and woman holding a flower chaplet over a minuscule Clary shield. To their left, a man kneels, professing his devotion to a woman who stands in the left margin as if preparing to launch a dart of love at him; an inscription of her name is lost owing to page trimming, leaving only “[demi]sele.” Two further pairs of lovers occupy the facing bas-de-page: at the left a standing woman in a red dress seems much affected by the petition of her kneeling lover, who wears a gray hooded garment, while a seated woman at the right, wearing gray-blue, aims a dart of love at her kneeling male companion, in red (fol. 45r; Figure 6). A Clary shield sits to the left of the standing woman; silver overpainting has obscured the other shield, to the left of the seated woman. The inscription, “marote de hamel,” sits between the two couples, but it is unclear whether it refers to one or both of the women depicted. The recto side of the opening page, meanwhile, appears to show a narrative of seduction: a man kneels before a woman at the left, who places a chaplet on his head, and at the right the two share an amorous embrace (fol. 44r, Figure 4).

The prominence and pervasiveness of the courtship imagery challenge the reader to reconcile it with the devotional content of the book. Michael Camille approached the psalter’s erotic imagery in an essay published after his death, in which he interpreted the marginal lovers as a quasi-subversive pictorial gloss on the biblical content of the psalter and its initials. Women, Camille argued, appear throughout the psalter in emphatically dominant roles. Not only do they receive
Figure 4. Psalter. Bibliothèque nationale, MS lat. 10435, fol. 44r.
Figure 5. Psalter. Bibliothèque nationale, MS lat. 10435, fol. 44v.
Figure 6. Psalter. Bibliothèque nationale, MS lat. 10435, fol. 45r.
the devotions of kneeling lovers, but women also frequently wield weapons of love, whether darts or flowers. These weapons recall the literary trope of love as a wound received through the eye, as cited, for example, in the *Roman de la rose*: “Et trait a moi par tel devise / Que parmi l’ueil m’a ou cuer mise” [And he loosed his arrow at me in such a way and with such force that the point entered my eye and penetrated my heart].18 In the poem, however, it is the God of Love who shoots the lover in his eye. The imagery of armed ladies has more in common with representations of the defense of the Castle of Love, a popular motif across visual media in the later Middle Ages.19 On an ivory mirror case from the early fourteenth century, besieged women use roses as weapons to slow attacking knights’ advances and to transform threatening aggressors into pliant lovers (Figure 7). This aspect of defense, however, is absent in the Clary Psalter. Rather than antagonists, male lovers in the psalter are vassals; their kneeling reads in the register of feudal loyalty as submission before a higher power. In Camille’s interpretation, the series of liege ladies, or *dominae*, in the margins stand in contrast to the Christian *Dominus*, who appears prominently in the initials and to whom the psalms are addressed. The women in the margins “‘play’ God,” and the men who kneel before them worship false idols.20 Under this interpretation, the juxtaposition of vignettes on the Trinity page provides a blunt illustration of proper and improper female behavior (between the two women) and correct and incorrect prayer (between the two kneeling figures).

A closer look at the seduction scenes, however, shows that the gendered power dynamics are not as straightforward as they might appear. Rather than a strict relationship of dominance and submission, each exchange depicts a power play between parties exercising their desires through different avenues of agency. In the examples around Psalm 38, as throughout the book, the most common composition type shows a male lover on his knees petitioning a standing woman, who either resists him (as on fol. 45r, left; Figure 6) or, more commonly, acquiesces (as on fol. 44r; Figure 4). The consummation of a seduction may also be depicted, either explicitly, as with the embracing couple, or metaphorically, as with the couple holding the chaplet over the Clary arms (fol. 44v; Figure 5). This imagery of love-making reflects the stock iconography of love and courtship employed widely in contemporary narrative and decorative contexts in the later Middle Ages. Another fourteenth-century mirror case in the Walters Art Museum echoes the illuminations of lovers throughout the margins of the Clary Psalter in its composition of a kneeling man petitioning a standing woman, who crowns him with a chaplet to demonstrate her acceptance of his suit (Figure 8). Despite the apparent submission of the male suitors on ivory mirror cases such as this, perception of the power dynamic changes with consideration of the objects’ contexts of reception. Ivory-cased mirrors were common courtship gifts from men to women, and these objects shaped perceptions and experiences of romantic love for the elite subjects who used them. Susan L. Smith has argued that the dominant imagery of courtship on ivory mirror cases and
similar objects constructs female agency within an erotic, heterosexual exchange and frames the female gaze as neither passive nor active but responsive to male desire. Smith’s argument is grounded in the mirrors’ roles as courting gifts, which she asserts provided the dominant conceptual context for their reception.21

The imagery of courtship and the heraldic emphasis in the illuminations of the Clary Psalter suggest that it, like many contemporary illuminated devotional manuscripts, might likewise have been received in the context of marriage and the construction of a new dynastic identity.22 Upon closer inspection, however, the internal evidence for a marriage context is unclear. Camille interpreted the jousting knights on the Beatus page as indicative of a new marriage alliance between the Clary house and another local family (fol. 1r).23 A Clary knight appears on the right, with his shield and his horse’s barding bearing a dark blue fess on a now-tarnished metallic silver field; the opposing rider’s barding and shield display three red mallets on a gold field (or three mallets gules), arms that a roll of 1297 attributes to a “Simon de Maille.”24 In addition to its depiction on the psalter’s opening page, this heraldry appears a further eighteen times in line endings throughout the manuscript.25 The family name is also attached to one of the manuscript’s marginal lovers: “gillote de mailli,” who appears receptive to the petitions of her kneeling male suitor (fol. 147r). The heraldry of the knight on the Beatus page identifies him as a member of a cadet branch of the Mailly family. The arms of the family’s main branch, or three mallets sable [gold with three black mallets], also appears twice in the manuscript, bringing the total appearances of Mailly arms to twenty-one (fols. 44r and 134v; Figure 4).26 However, Camille noted that he could discover no external evidence
for a union between the Mailly and Clary houses, and the placement of Mailly heraldry in the manuscript is not in itself conclusive.

Despite the Mailly presence on the Beatus page, many other local elite families are better represented throughout the manuscript. Whereas the differenced Mailly arms appear only nineteen times throughout the manuscript, the arms of the Longueval family (bendy of six vair and gules [six diagonal bands of ermine and red]) appear 109 times on eighty-three pages, second only in prevalence to the Clary arms. The Longueval arms also make a prominent appearance in the margins, impaled in the first position with the Clary arms on a shield standing between two lovers on the opening page of Psalm 68 (fol. 78r). Another pair of lovers beside them, identified as “me dame de maricor” [my lady of Maricourt] and “seigne[ur] gill[o]n de bouchauesnes” [Lord Gillon of Bouchavesnes] in their inscriptions, kiss on a bench draped with the Clary arms. Furthermore, as noted above, an inscription names one of the earliest marginal lovers as “me demisele de lo[n]geual” (fol. 17r). While not as pervasive as the Longueval arms, the arms of the Montegny family also make significant appearances in the Clary Psalter. Montegny blazonry (or an escutcheon gules [gold with a red escutcheon]) appears twenty-eight times in line endings in addition to adorning the garments of two women dancing on the opening page of Psalm 97 (fol. 117r), where their juxtaposition with the creation of Eve in the initial above is less than flattering. Inscriptions identify two further women in courtship compositions as “agnes de monteigni” (fol. 46v) and “me dame de mo[n]tegni” (fol. 146v). However, I have so far been able to find no connection between the Clary-de Hamel family and either the Longueval or Montegny families, nor any of the numerous other families identified by name or by blazon within the Clary Psalter.

While it is possible that a Clary-Mailly marriage prompted the creation of the book, the lack of external evidence and the ambiguity of the evidence within the book’s illuminations should caution against relying too heavily on this hypothesis. It may be that the copious and diverse heraldry illuminating the Clary Psalter’s pages reflected aspirational rather than veritable family connections; perhaps it was not made for a woman about to be a bride but to introduce younger readers of either gender to future anticipations and expectations regarding courtship, class, and religious and familial duty. Regardless of the specific context, the repeated representations of courting couples throughout the psalter work in a quasi-didactic fashion to codify parameters for gendered exchanges. As in the ivory reliefs, it is universally men who kneel to petition their affections, signaling male desire as the driving force in these erotic exchanges. Thus, in the context of seduction, the ostensibly submissive gesture of kneeling becomes a marker of agency. The signs of female dominance, meanwhile, become rather ambiguous. While women may wield weapons of love in the marginal vignettes, these weapons do not grant their users the agency of choice, as they are raised only against men who are already professing their devotions. Instead, these attributes express the passive capacity
of women to inspire love within men. Despite their active stances, women in the Clary Psalter participate in seduction primarily as responsive objects of male desire. A rare example of role reversal, on the opening page of Psalm 52, reinforces the pervasiveness of this rule (fol. 61v; Figure 2). In the seduction scene in the left margin, it is the man, not the woman, who wields the dart of love. The woman wears a Clary surcoat and is further identified by an inscription that, despite some loss due to page trimming, is still legible as “[ma]rote de hamel.” Despite her partner’s appropriation of a female weapon of love, Marote is not paying suit; indeed, while she appears to speak to the man standing above her, her receptiveness toward his advances is unclear. Nevertheless, this composition suggests that even if she suffers its wounds, a woman does not kneel for love.

Examination of the Clary Psalter seduction scenes reveals a fraught dynamic of exchange between the genders, with the polyvalent gesture of kneeling at its center. The shifting significance of kneeling reflects the complexity of attributing agency within love, exemplified in Andreas Capellanus’s etymology of the term in his twelfth-century treatise on the subject: “Dicitur autem amor ab amo verbo, quod significat capere vel capi. Nam qui amat captus est cupidinis vinculis aliumque desiderat suo capere hamo.” [Amor is derived from the verb amo, meaning catch or be caught, for the lover is caught in bonds of desire and longs to catch another on his hook.] According to Andreas, the lover is simultaneously the angler and the fish; the gesture of kneeling, similarly, reflects the lover’s powerlessness while also asserting his desire. This reassessment of carnal devotion within the Clary Psalter shows it to be an apt parallel for the religious devotion its reader was expected to undertake.

On the Trinity page, the gesture of the kneeling lover below reveals the prayerful kneeling of the owner figure above to be simultaneously submissive and active. In reproducing the gestures repeated by kneeling lovers throughout the book, the Clary devotee asserts the agency of her desires not for carnal love but for spiritual love and forgiveness. While women in the Clary Psalter may not kneel to declare an earthly love, they can petition for their own salvation. By the same token, however, the actions of the Clary woman, like those of the Demoiselle d’Ytres below, are prescribed within a codified social performance. The gestures of prayer above are just as scripted as the gestures of seduction and acquiescence below. The problem of agency in love turns out to apply to devotion as well. Whether one is caught in the bonds of sin or striving for salvation is all a matter of perspective.

The portraits in the Clary Psalter present just as tricky a problem. Rather than clarifying identity, the profusion of inscriptions and heraldry often obscures it. It has already been noted that Marote de Hamel, who may have owned the psalter, features twice in the marginal legends, once in oblique proximity to a Clary shield and once emphatically clothed in the heraldry; yet the owner portrait on the Trinity page, while it includes a Clary shield, lacks an identificatory legend. Furthermore, the Clary arms appear in conjunction with a range of other figures whose
identification with Marote or any other potential owner is dubious. As noted above, Clary textile is draped over the bench on which the Dame de Maricourt and Gillon de Bouchavesnes kiss (fol. 78r). A Clary shield also stands between two further pairs of male suitors and their named lady loves, “me demisile de biaumes” [my lady of Beaumès] and “me dame de mon[tegni]” (fols. 46r and 146v). In the marginal vignettes especially, it would seem that Clary heraldry does not necessarily function to identify the associated figures. Rather than denoting identity, heraldry in the Clary Psalter asserts the elite social status of its owner and reader, associating her or him with the concepts of courtly love without actually implicating her or him in their practices. The disjuncture between heraldic and textual identifiers likewise weakens the power of the inscriptions to assert identity. Although the names inscribed are those of actual people, there is nothing to suggest that their deployment throughout the manuscript corresponds to any historical romantic attachments. If the names do identify figures, then, it is in the figures’ capacity of acting generally in the manner of a social elite rather than as a party in a specific assignation. One figure thus might have multiple identities, none of which correspond with its specifically depicted actions. Likewise, the portrait figures throughout the psalter present the reader with a number of possibilities for self-identification; whether it is with the reveling marginal lovers or the pious women and men who grant their devotion instead to God, the promise of portraiture presents a seductive possibility. This seduction, however, is in the service of the reader’s ultimate salvation. The reader who assents to the portraits’ allure and attempts a navigation of the psalter’s varied portrait forms perforce engages with the spiritual challenge of agency within devotion presented in the unusual illuminations of this deluxe manuscript prayer book.

Notes


10 *L’Art au temps des rois maudits*, p. 301.


12 Up to this point, the iconography and especially the Old French legends match very closely those of a slightly earlier psalter produced in a different region, Cambridge, University Library MS EE.IV.24. Peterson, “Historiated Psalm Initials,” pp. 29, 38–39.


14 *L’Art au temps des rois maudits*, p. 301.


16 Michael Camille interpreted the first word of the inscription, carefully crossed out but not erased, as “a witty slur suggesting her status as one of the damned.” Camille, “Bodies, Names and Gender,” p. 382.


23 Camille, “Bodies, Names and Gender,” p. 384. This page is also illustrated in Wirth, *Les marges à drôleries*, fig. 1.7.

24 Paul Adam-Even, “Rôle d’armes de l’ost de Flandre (Juin 1297),” *Archivum Heraldicum* 73 (1959), 5, no. 62. Jean Wirth read these as the de Hamel arms, “trois molettes d’éperons de sable à cinq pointes” [three five-pointed black stars]. However, the arms are clearly gold and red; Wirth must have been consulting a black-and-white image of the page. Wirth, *Les marges à drôleries*, p. 339.

25 Fols. 13r, 34v, 44v, 45v, 48v, 62v, 80r, 84r, 101v, 116v, 117v, 119r, 119v, 137r (later overpainted with metallic silver), 157r, 172r, and 177r.


29 The arms of Bouchavesnes, *or a cross engrailed gules* [gold with a red engrailed cross], appear on fols. 52r, 89r, and 92v. Adam-Even, “Rôle d’armes de l’ost de Flandre,” p. 6, no. 179.


31 Andreas Capellanus, *De Amore*, 1.3.1–2; and P. G. Walsh, ed. and trans., *Andreas Capellanus on Love* (London, 1982), pp. 36–37.