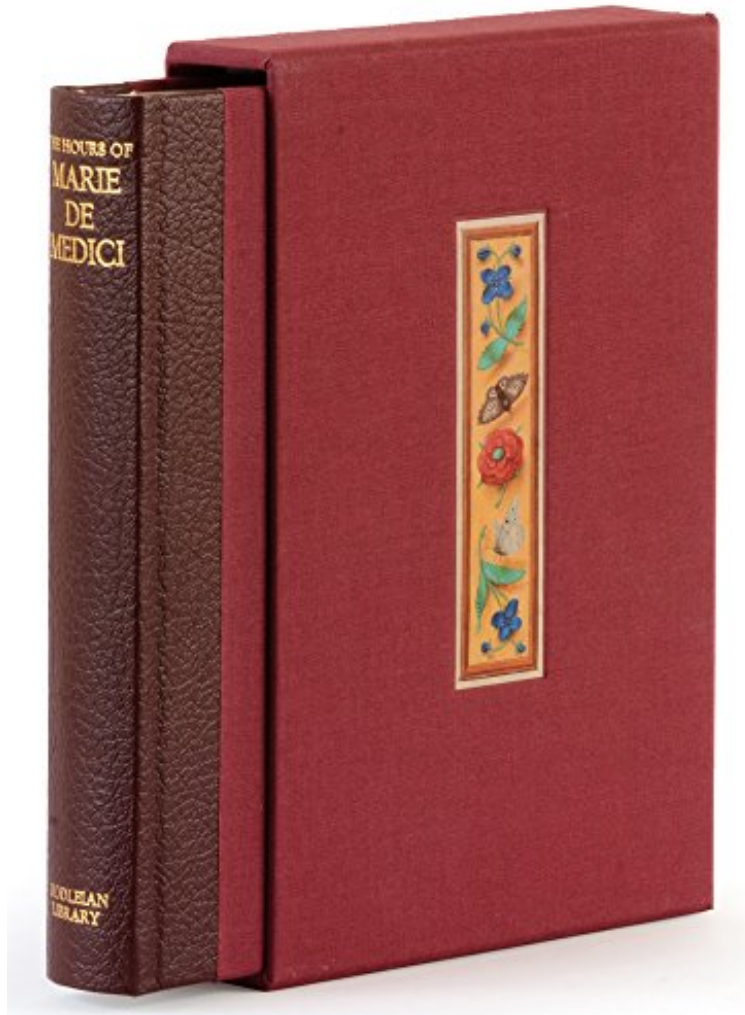


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The Hours of Marie de' Medici: A Facsimile

Eberhard König

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1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Truly a beautiful book. Excellent print quality.By MSThis is a wonderful, unique lovely book. Every page is a masterpiece, with beautiful paintings showing interesting details about the everyday life and beliefs of people during that time period. The borders depict natural themes (flowers, fruits, insects, birds) with amazing, vibrant colors. It would seem that all the artists involved were exceptional. All the illuminations are highlighted with golden ink, which shows the true beauty of the manuscript. The paper in which this book is printed is of excellent quality, and looks like an original manuscript. A truly beautiful book. Highly recommended for those who appreciate books of hours and illuminated manuscripts.

At the turn of the fifteenth century, private devotionals became a speciality of the renowned Ghent-Bruges illuminators. Wealthy patrons who commissioned work from these artists often spared no expense in the presentation of their personal prayer books, or 'books of hours', from detailed decoration to luxurious bindings and embroidery. This enchanting illuminated manuscript was painted by the Master of the David Scenes in the Grimani Breviary (known as the David Master), one of the renowned Flemish illuminators in the sixteenth century. Every page of the manuscript is exquisitely decorated. Fine architectural interiors, gorgeous landscapes and detailed city scenes, each one depicting a narrative, form the subjects of three full-size illuminations and forty-two full-page miniatures. There are floral borders on a gold ground or historiated borders in the Flemish and Italian style on every page. It is one of the finest examples of medieval illumination in a personal prayer book and the most copiously illustrated work of the David Master to survive. The manuscript owes its name to the French Queen, Marie de' Medici, widow of King Henri IV. For a time she went into exile in Brussels, where she is thought to have acquired the manuscript before moving again to Cologne. An inscription in English states that she left the book of hours in this city, and it is here that an English manuscript collector, Francis Douce, may have acquired the book and eventually donated it to the Bodleian Library. Together with a scholarly introduction that gives an overview of Flemish illumination and examines each of the illustrations in detail, this full-colour facsimile limited edition, bound in linen, faithfully reproduces all 176 pages of the original manuscript. It is beautifully presented in a slipcase with a photographic reproduction of the original, delicately embroidered velvet binding.

About the Author Eberhard König is Professor of Art History at the Freie Universität, Berlin.