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THREE ITALIAN ILLUMINATED CUTTINGS
in the Royal Library of Copenhagen: the Master B. F.,
Attavante and the Master of Montepulciano Gradual I

BY

ELEONORA MATTIA

A canonical quotation in essays on manuscript illumination is the celebrated passage in the eleventh canto of Dante's *Purgatorio*, in which he places it on the same level as painting and even of poetry, evincing a deep admiration for this art by which '*ridon le carte*' (the pages are smiling), becoming joyful because they are brightly coloured.

In our own time, large international exhibitions devoted to manuscript illumination have in recent decades achieved immense success, not only with the specialists and collectors to whom this kind of art was traditionally reserved, but also with the general public.¹

The Italian miniature has become the subject of new research and specific studies that have evidenced its importance in the context of artistic production. Long regarded as inferior to English, French and Flemish work, the Italian miniature has suffered from historical prejudice, according to which true Italian art is always and only monumental in scale; unlike northern art, it has been regarded as poorly adapted to the small format required of the images that decorate manuscripts. In reality, precious illuminated codices have emerged from many painters' workshops.² One interesting example is the cutting kept in the National

¹ *Painting and illumination in Early Renaissance Florence, 1300–1450*, held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1994 and arranged with paintings placed next to the miniatures. The two artistic expressions were presented in parallel, each with its own peculiarities to illustrate the work of famous painter-miniaturists. Large crowds and extensive media coverage were attracted by the recent magnificent exhibition, with a different approach from the earlier one, *Colour* at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge in 2016.

² Many painters who have also produced miniatures could be named: il Maestro del Codice di S. Giorgio, Lorenzo Monaco, Fra Angelico, Sano di Pietro, Michelino da Besozzo, Bonifazio Bembo, Marco Zoppo, Liberale da Verona, Marmitta da Parma, Amico Aspertini, Girolamo da Cremona; J. Jonathan Alexander: *Constraints on Pictorial Invention in Renaissance Illumination. The Role of Copying North and*



Fig. 1: Ghirlandaio's workshop, Initial N, *Nascita della Vergine*, Copenhagen SMK, Department of Prints and Drawings, inv. no. 1742.

Gallery of Denmark showing the *Birth of the Virgin* (1490–1495), attributed to the well-established workshop of Domenico Ghirlandaio in Florence, where the art of book illustration was practised together with that of painting (fig. 1).³ The miniature, probably by the painter's brother Davide (1452–1525), re-elaborates in the narrow space of the initial the scene of the *Birth of St John the Baptist* in the Tornabuoni Chapel in the

South of the Alps in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries. *Miniatura*, 1, 1988, pp. 123–135.

³ Francesca Pasut: Domenico, David e Benedetto di Tommaso di Corrado Bigordi detti del Ghirlandaio. Milvia Bollati (ed.) *Dizionario Biografico dei Miniatori Italiani*, Milan 2004, pp.198–200.

Florentine Church of Santa Maria Novella, one of Ghirlandaio's most famous frescoes.⁴

This typology of miniatures cut from the manuscripts to which they originally belonged, and thus collected as works of art in their own right, is a field of research that is very much in vogue, as is shown by the great number of recent specialist publications, including updated catalogues of public and private collections in Europe and America.⁵

A group of important Italian medieval and Renaissance cuttings is part of the illuminated fragments collection of the Royal Library in Copenhagen. These miniatures originally belonged to the choir books used for the sung liturgy in churches and monasteries.

Cut out around the borders of the initial letter or around the illuminated scene, or else single leaves, they testify to a particular type of collecting which for historical reasons developed after the rediscovery of medieval art by connoisseurs in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Between 1790 and 1825 there appeared on the art market, especially in England, manuscripts from Italian churches and monasteries that had been plundered during the Napoleonic occupation. They were often in the form of loose leaves or cuttings. The Italian collection of the Abbé Celotti was sold at an important auction in London, the first auction entirely devoted to miniature cuttings.⁶ The large size of the cuttings, and the relations established by the sixteenth-century Florentine historian Giorgio Vasari with monumental painting (in his biographies of Simone Martini and Giulio Clovio), caused miniatures to be regarded as small-format paintings. Their easy availability on the market favoured the creation of important collections of illuminated cuttings, arranged in accordance with the same criteria used for collections of paintings. This phenomenon continued until the 1950s, which in practice marked the end of the period of formation for these large collections. Existing pieces and those coming from private collections continued to circulate

⁴ Copenhagen, SMK, Department of Prints and Drawings, Initial N, inv. no. 1742; Chris Fischer: *Central Italian Drawings*, 2001, entry 4.

⁵ Roger S. Wieck: *Folia fugitiva: The Pursuit of the Illuminated Manuscript Leaf*. *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, 54, 1996, p. 233–254; Pia Palladino: *Treasures of a Lost Art: Italian Manuscript Painting of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, New Haven and London, 2003; Gaudens Freuler: *Italian Miniatures from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Centuries*, Cinisello Balsamo (Milan) 2013; Massimo Medica and Federica Toniolo (ed.): *Le Miniature della Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Pagine, ritagli, manoscritti*, Milan, 2016.

⁶ Anne-Marie Eze: *Abbé Luigi Celotti and the Sistine Chapel Manuscripts*. *Rivista di Storia della Miniatura*, 20, 2016, pp. 139–154.

on the market, but there was a progressive tendency for illuminated fragments to be incorporated in public libraries and museums. Today illuminated cuttings are dispersed all over the world, and scholars attempt to reconstruct, wherever possible, their original provenance and to link them to similar fragments. In some cases the mutilated codex survives, and it is possible to reconstruct the original arrangement, at least virtually, by re-inserting the cuttings.

The collection of illuminated fragments in the Royal Library of Copenhagen is not very large, though it was enriched by a notable group acquired in 1958 from the private Danish collector James J. Kaiser.⁷ The Italian miniatures and initials are mainly from the Lombard and Florentine area, and can be related to other known fragments coming from the same liturgical series.

Three large miniatures of considerable interest and quality constitute the specific subject of this article, which is part of a larger investigation of the cuttings collection of the Royal Library.⁸ All three miniatures are unpublished and are here presented in the form of catalogue entries, with an analysis of the surviving liturgical content, style and iconography.

As will be seen in the catalogue entries, for those miniatures without provenance or dating, an attribution is proposed; the miniature already acquired by the Library with the correct attribution and provenance is inserted into its appropriate historical and artistic context and is analysed in the light of the most updated bibliography. Each miniature possesses its own peculiarity that makes it interesting to study and each has required a different methodological approach.

In our day, appreciation of a contemporary work of art is often inseparable from the identity of the artist who created it. But as happens fairly frequently in the ambit of medieval and even Renaissance art,

⁷ The provenance of the miniatures varies, but with few exceptions most of them have entered the library in fairly recent times, in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1958 James J. Kaiser offered twenty six illuminated cuttings and single leaves to the Royal Library, fourteen of which were purchased. An inventory of these illuminations was made later and all bear the entry number 1977/47 and an additional number. They are also identified by their original number in the Kaiser collection. Kaiser's collection is mentioned in Erik Petersen: Liviana. *Fund og Forskning*, 44, 2005, pp. 35–40, note 85–86. I take this opportunity to thank the staff of the Manuscript Department and the paper conservators of the Department of Legal Deposit and Preservation for their kind support in my study.

⁸ Eleonora Mattia: Illuminated Manuscript Cuttings at the Royal Library. Leaves from the Papal Court in Rome and the Este Court in Ferrara. *Fund og Forskning*, 55, 2016, pp. 103–133.



Fig. 2: Attavante, Detail of fragment with Initial E, *The Holy Innocents*. The Royal Library, Manuscript Department, Illuminerede fragmenter, kps. 1, no. 13 (acc. 1977/47) r.

two of the miniatures considered here are by known Masters of whom a corpus has been reconstructed but who still lack a real name. This is the case of the Leonardesque Master B. F., who boasts a prestigious provenance from one of the most important and oldest collections of illuminated cuttings formed in England immediately after the Celotti sale; it will be interesting to glance at the collecting history as well as at the critical fortune.

Even rarer however are signed miniatures from the fourteenth century. Thanks to recent developments in the critical literature that have focused attention on some less investigated areas, thereby throwing light on individual illuminators with an extensive production, it has been possible to recognise in a fourteenth-century miniature an example by the so-called Master of Montepulciano Gradual I, a Pisan artist. The examination of this anonymous master, at the centre of many very recent studies, is concentrated especially on stylistic analysis.

In the study of illuminated cuttings, great importance is carried by the liturgy related to the image represented, though this is not always easy to identify. Sometimes the miniature departs radically from the customary iconography, revealing original figurative choices. This is the case with the subject of the problematic Florentine Renaissance miniature which we attribute to Attavante, and which is undoubtedly one of the most important in the Danish collection (fig. 2).

St Andrew by Master B. F.

An important illuminated fragment in the Royal Library of Copenhagen shows St Andrew inside an initial U (*nus ex duobus qui secuti sunt Dominum erat Andreas, frater Simonis Petri*) (One of the two who followed the Lord, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother), for the antiphon *ad vesperum* for the Saint's feast day on 31 November.⁹ The letter U is composed of fleshy leaves of a succulent and of two architectural volutes; it frames the Apostle, who bears the cross of his martyrdom in a lakeside landscape (fig. 3 a/b).

The miniature has been cut out of the 'Proper of the Saints' section of an Antiphonary, a liturgical book containing prayers to be sung at

⁹ The Royal Library, Manuscript Department, Illuminerede fragmenter, kps. 2, no. 6 (Kaisers samling no. 15) (acc. 1977/47, no. 9). The miniature is painted on parchment and measures 165 × 175 mm. The miniature is beautifully preserved, but the verso of the cutting has been ruined. Renato-Johannes Hesbert, *Corpus Antiphonalium Officii*, Rome 1963–1979, vol. I, no. 120.



Fig. 3 a/b: Master B. F., Initial U, *St Andrew*, Copenhagen, The Royal Library, Manuscript Department, Illuminerede fragmenter, kps. 2, nr. 6 (Kaisers samling nr. 15) (acc. 1977/47, nr. 9), r and v.



set times of the day and night and necessary for the Divine Office as the daily cycle of monastic devotion.

The stylistic typology of the initial and figure can easily be inserted into the extensive production of the Master B. F., a Lombard painter-miniaturist whose activity is documented from the last decade of the fifteenth century until the mid-sixteenth, and who takes his name from the initials B. F. that are found on some of his miniatures.¹⁰ A myriad of illuminated cuttings, removed from the liturgical books that form the corpus of this artist are dispersed in European and American collections.

The great numbers and availability of cuttings by the Master B. F., together with special circumstances relating to the history of taste and collecting, have ensured a considerable presence of his miniatures on the art market since the early nineteenth century.

“They appear to be the work of an Artist of great powers, who had studied in the school of Lionardo da Vinci,” is how the miniatures grouped around the ones signed B. F. were described at the time of the first great London auction of the Celotti cuttings in 1825.¹¹

Other miniatures by the anonymous Master were later sold by the organiser of that auction, W. Y. Ottley (1771–1836), a great collector and director of the prints and drawings department at the British Museum, who had assembled a vast collection of cuttings from Italian choir books. Following several changes of ownership, many miniatures by the Master B. F. ended up in two of the major English collections of the later nineteenth century, Northwick and Holford, which in their turn were dispersed in the 1920s.

The miniature in the Royal Library entered the collection, with the correct attribution, together with the rest of the Kaiser collection in 1958, with a provenance from the English dealer Maggs at an unspecified date. The label that accompanied it stated that it had earlier belonged to Robert Stayner Holford (1808–1892), a discerning collector, especially of paintings and precious codices, but also of illuminated

¹⁰ The most recent summary of the issues regarding this illuminator is in Jonathan G. Alexander: *The Painted Book in Renaissance Italy 1450–1600*, New Haven and London 2016, pp. 121–124; 140–141.

¹¹ William Y. Ottley: *A catalogue of a highly valuable and extremely curious collection of illuminated miniature paintings, of the greatest beauty, and of exquisite finishing, taken from the Choral Books of the Papal Chapel in the Vatican, during the French Revolution; and subsequently collected and brought to this Country by the Abate Celotti which will be sold by Auction by Mr. Christie at his great room*, London 26 May 1825, lots 12–27.

cuttings which, in accordance with the tastes of the time, he displayed alongside the paintings in his splendid collection. The twenty three miniatures by the Master B. F. owned by Holford were mounted and grouped into twelve frames when they were seen in 1927 by Robert Benson, who catalogued the collection.¹² According to his description, the *St Andrew* initial was framed together with an *Assumption of the Virgin*, a cutting with the *Incredulity of St Thomas* and a *St John the Baptist* in the letter I. The images do not appear among the plates of the catalogue and it is not known where the other cuttings are today.¹³ The description of the *St Andrew* accords perfectly with the miniature now in the Royal Library: "...Standing with his cross in the letter U by a lectern formed in the ledges of natural rock, on one of which is a book in crimson and gold binding. His dress is slate colour with a dark-green cloak shot with gold. In landscape a large lake fringed with pinnacled blue hills."

As Benson noted, the Holford cuttings came "...from a Benedictine book probably made for the Olivetans," since they showed Benedictine subjects and monks together with the symbol of the congregation with three mounds, the cross and the olive branch.¹⁴ Subsequent critics

¹² Robert Benson: *The Holford Collection, Dorchester House*, London 1927, I, pp. 35–38, nos. 63–74, pls. 59–68. The Danish miniature was no. 69, pp. 37–38. The collection was sold at auction after it had been inherited by Holford's son George. *Holford, Sir George, Collection, catalogue of the Magnificent series of illuminations on vellum forming part of the collections at Dorchester House*, Park Lane...Part I, London, Sotheby 12 July 1927, lots 29–40.

¹³ The *Assumption of the Virgin* could be identified with the miniature of that subject noted in the Krefeld (formerly von Rath) collection that came from the Beckerath collection in Berlin and whose present whereabouts is unknown. The cuttings are dispersed everywhere. At present the largest group of initials is in the British Museum, though many are in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin, in the Wallace Collection in London, in the Free Library of Philadelphia, in the Wildenstein Collection in Paris and in other major museums. An exhaustive list is in Marco Carminati: *Codici miniati del Maestro B. F. a Casorate Primo*, Pavia 1995, pp. 117–150 and for the miniature of the *Assumption*, p.122. An additional updating is in Alexander 2016, p. 327, note 74.

¹⁴ The Olivetans are monks who follow the Rule of St Benedict and are particularly devoted to prayer and liturgy; they are named after Monte Oliveto in the province of Siena where they were founded in 1313. Some of the Holford miniatures, signed B. F., are among the most significant in the corpus of this Master. Many came from Ottley and went onto the English art market in the 1950s and 1960s; a large group is now in the Birmingham City Museum donated by Alan de Maudit in 1962; Carminati 1995, pp. 119–120. Other miniatures in the Ottley sale that did not bear the signature B. F. were sold in lots and were generically described as saints or prophets; these remain to be identified, and may have included the *St Andrew*.

have linked this group to the many other miniatures attributable to the Master B. F. It has been proposed that they all came from a series of choir books, perhaps originally numbering twenty, in the Olivetan monastery of Santi Angelo e Niccolò at Villanova Sillaro in Lombardy, which were dispersed around 1799 after the suppression of the monastery and the dispersal of its liturgical accoutrements.¹⁵ The miniaturist's strongly characterised style does in fact have precise affinities with the few miniatures that still survive in the church of Villanova and with certain cuttings kept in the Diocesan Museum in Lodi. Stylistic considerations compel us to date the miniatures in the Villanova Sillaro series to around 1500–1510.¹⁶

In 1960 Paul Wescher, author of an initial reconstruction of the Master's corpus, interpreted the initials B. F. as "Binascus Fecit" and suggested an identification with Francesco Binasco, also known as Francesco da Lonate, a miniaturist, goldsmith and engraver who according to the sources worked for the Sforza of Milan, but whose works are unknown.¹⁷

Beyond the context of the Royal Library, the location of the St Andrew residing now in Copenhagen was unknown, and it is not mentioned in the specialised studies. The miniature of *St Andrew* now in Copenhagen is of notable pictorial quality. The imposing figure of the Saint is rendered with firm draftsmanship, the stiff folds of drapery appearing sculpted. The Apostle towers above the steps cut into the rock where the book is resting in a landscape of tall thin trees in full foliage with a distant lake surrounded by mountains. The conventional nature of the lake motif is compensated for by a descriptive sensibility and by an

¹⁵ Mirella Levi d'Ancona: *The Wildenstein collection of Illuminations: The Lombard School*, Florence 1970, pp. 100–103.

¹⁶ Giordana Mariani Canova: *Miniature dell'Italia settentrionale nella Fondazione Giorgio Cini*, Vicenza 1978, pp. 59–63. A confirmation of the dating comes from the codex of Hugo de Balma, *De mystica theologica* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms Canon. Misc. 534), originally at the monastery of Santi Angelo e Nicolò, dated by the scribe 1500 and illuminated by the Master B.F in the same period. Other scholars believe that the production of the series extended over time or even began in 1536, when the monastery became an abbey and assumed a more important role. Teresa D'Urso and Pier Luigi Mulas (ed.): *La passion du prince pour les belles occupations de l'esprit: Enluminures italiennes dans la collection du duc d'Aumale*, Chantilly 2014, entry 23 (P. L. Mulas). For a summary of the question, see M. Medica and F. Toniolo (ed.) 2016, entry 181 (Cristina Quattrini)

¹⁷ Paul Wescher: Francesco Binasco, Miniaturmaler der Sforza. *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen*, 2, 1960, pp. 75–91.



Fig. 4: Master B. F., Initial M, *The Calling of Peter and Andrew*, London British Library (Additional MS 37955.b).

effective rendering of the landscape's depth. The element of water, with small boats on it, occurs often in paintings of the time and in the backgrounds of the Master B. F. However, in the iconography of *St Andrew* it recalls his activity as a fisherman together with his brother Peter, before they were both called to follow Christ; we find it in the fine miniature of the same subject in the British Library (Add. MS 37955.b), with which the Copenhagen cutting may be compared (fig. 4).¹⁸

¹⁸ Initial M. Lettered B and with provenance from the Celotti sale. Carminati 1995, p. 125, fig. p.159



Fig. 5: Master B. F., Initial N, *The Virgin with St. John the Baptist and Jesus as children*, Chantilly Musée Condé, no. DE 351 (Ancien numéro).

The melancholy sentiment which transpires from the colour that is drained by a blueish fog and the naturalism of the stratified rocks show that the artist was aware of the fifteenth-century Lombard painting and the Leonardesque style. The impact of Leonardo da Vinci, who around 1482 was called from Florence to Milan by Ludovico Sforza (1452–1508), seems to have made a great impression on Lombard miniaturists. Alexander has demonstrated that the central group of the London *Virgin of the Rocks*, at the time publicly visible at San Francesco Grande in Milan, was directly replicated by the Master B. F. in an initial with the Olivetan arms (Chantilly Musée Condé, no. DE 351) (fig. 5).¹⁹

As he suggests, it is also highly probable that the extensive mutilation of the Villanova choir books had a great deal to do with the recognition of the evident stylistic borrowings from an internationally admired painter such as Leonardo. The constant inspiration of contemporary painting, possibly also determined by the Master B. F.'s activity as a painter of small panels, is also discernible in one of his other cuttings, in the landscape elements derived from Dürer's engravings of the late

¹⁹ Initial N, *The Virgin with St. John the Baptist and Jesus as children*, Chantilly, Musée Condé, no. DE 351 (ancien numéro). Alexander 1988, pp. 125–26, 133, fig. 10.

fifteenth century.²⁰ The powerfully expressive attitude of the Copenhagen *St Andrew*, with the head inclined to one side, calls to mind the “movements of the soul” that Leonardo sought after, as the literature on the Master B. F. notes. The elongated eyes accentuate the sorrowful expression, assimilating the face of the Apostle to the physiognomies so recognisable in many of the artist’s figures, such as the *Prophet* in the cutting formerly in the Holford collection, or the *St Peter and St Paul* in London.²¹ Precisely because of the Leonardesque elements in the Master B. F., Carminati has cautiously proposed, in support of a possible identification with Francesco Binasco, that an anatomical drawing by Leonardo da Vinci annotated “il braccio di Franc.o mjnatore che mostra molte vene” (the arm of the miniaturist Francesco with many veins) may be a representation of Binasco’s arm.²² Besides the Villanova Sillaro series, the Master B. F. illuminated other codices from the 1490s onwards, as well as two choir books for the Olivetans of San Vittore in Corpo in Milan, which critics date to 1545.²³

Such a large production, extended over such a long period of time, suggests the assistance of a workshop, and the stylistic and qualitative differences in the miniature cuttings make chronology problematic. The subjects of the choir books often follow codified iconographies. In the cuttings attributed to the Master B. F. we sometimes find duplicates of the same subject with stylistic features repeated; it is possible that they belonged to different liturgical series, now dispersed.

As for the Copenhagen initial with *St Andrew*, which seems to be the only one with an individual image of the Apostle so far known, we may reasonably suppose that it came from an Antiphony at Villanova Sillaro. Its presence in the Holford collection together with cuttings of other saints and prophets, which for iconographic reasons undoubtedly belonged to the Olivetan series, and stylistic comparisons with the miniatures still in Lodi – especially the fleshy forms of the initials, confirm

²⁰ In the *Adoration of the Magi* with provenance from Ottley, later Holford and now in New York (Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 725). J. G. Alexander (ed.): *The Painted Pages: Italian Renaissance Book Illumination, 1450–1550*, London 1994, p. 220, entry 116 (William M. Voelkle).

²¹ Initial P (Birmingham, City Museum inv. no. 46.62); initial N (London, British Library Add. MS. 39636.16). Carminati 1995, p. 119 and 125, figs. p. 152 and 161.

²² For the drawing by Leonardo Windsor Castle no. 19027, Carminati 1995, p. 110, fig. 16.

²³ Carl B. Strelke: *Leaves of Gold, Manuscript Illumination from Philadelphia Collections*, Philadelphia 2001, entry 62, p. 181 note 4.



Figs. 6 a/b: Attavante, Fragment with Initial E, *The Holy Innocents*, The Royal Library, Manuscript Department, *Illuminere-de fragmenter*, kps. 1, no. 13 (acc. 1977/47, no. 7) r. and v.

this hypothesis. A dating to the first decade of the sixteenth century, as proposed for the Villanova series, would also seem to be convincing for the fine fragment currently sitting in the Royal Danish Library.

The Holy Innocents by Attavante

One of the most interesting fragments of the Royal Library shows inside a large initial *E(x)* five nude putti, with hands joined in prayer, standing like little statues on the altar of a church (fig. 6 a/b).²⁴

They are the *Holy Innocents*, as is clear from the inscription in golden capital letters: *OMNES SANCTI INOCENTES ORATE PRO NOBIS*, which is the invocation to them in the Litany of the Saints.

The initial with the figures and the smaller decorated letters *E X O/RE/IN* (*fantium*) (*out of the mouths of babes*) are the opening of the *Introit* for the *Feast of the Holy Innocents*, celebrated on 28 December. The fragment probably belonged originally to a Gradual, a liturgical book containing the parts of the Mass to be sung by a choir.²⁵ On the retro of the fragment the liturgy continues with Psalm 8: 2, *D (ominus no(ster) quam admirabile* (*O Lord, our Master, how the majesty of thy name fills all the earth*).

The illustration refers to the children who were killed and thus became martyrs during the slaughter ordered by King Herod and described in Matthew's 2: 1–16. The Magi came from the East to adore in Bethlehem the infant Jesus, the new King of the Jews, but before doing so they spoke to Herod in Jerusalem. Fearing a rival, Herod ordered the slaughter of all children in Bethlehem aged two or under.

The scene shown in the initial has a particular layout and is constructed with the complex sense of depth that persistently characterises fifteenth-century Florentine painting. The body of the letter becomes

²⁴ The Royal Library, Manuscript Department, Illuminerede fragmenter, kps. 1, no. 13 (acc. 1977/47, no. 7). Parchment fragment, tempera and gold leaf, 295 × 336 mm, only the miniature 220 × 160. Gothic bookhand in dark brown ink. Squared notation in dark brown ink, on four-line, 37 mm high staves ruled in red ink. A 36 mm strip taken from a different coral has been glued on the original leaf on the higher border. Previously, the fragment was probably framed and the lower border of the leaf had a fold of 22 mm. The cutting bears also the same number that it had in the Kaiser Collection, i.e. no. 13 and on the passepartout the initial is erroneously identified as O. On the back of the fragment in the lower border the number 900 is written in pencil. The miniature is beautifully preserved except for the gold, which is slightly rubbed in parts of the decoration, and some loss of colour in the infants' bodies.

²⁵ René-Jean Hesbert, *Antiphonale Missarum Sextuplex*, Bruxelles-Paris 1935, no. 15, pp. 20–21.

the oculus of a window that gradually introduces us into the interior of a church, where the fulcrum of the image is the very white nude figures of the children, who appear rather large in relation to the altar on which they stand.

The minute lineaments of the putti, the delicate shading that softly emphasises the rounded infantine forms, and the very luminous painting with light and almost liquid brushwork, compel us to attribute the miniature to the Florentine master with the complicated name of Vante di Gabriello di Vante Attavanti, generally known as Attavante (1452–c.1525). An extremely active exponent of Florentine art in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, also thanks to a workshop he directed with entrepreneurial flair, he is the most celebrated miniaturist in the old historiography. His considerable production of highly ornate bibles, breviaries, missals and codices of classical authors reflects the sophisticated taste and literary culture of his patrons, who included leading families and European sovereigns, and helped in large part to give Florentine manuscript illumination a dominant international role. From 1485 onwards he set up a large part of the library of Lorenzo de Medici in Florence. Giorgio Vasari mentions him in the *Vite*, and the esteem Attavante enjoyed among his contemporaries is demonstrated by his participation with other artists in the 1503 commission for the location of Michelangelo's *David*.²⁶ Already in 1471 he is recorded in Florence in the workshop of the miniaturist Francesco d'Antonio del Chierico. The magnificent scenes of Italian Renaissance life represented by Attavante show a continued miniature-painting dialogue and a relation with the classicising style of Domenico Ghirlandaio and his workshop; it is likely that this is where he was trained. Perhaps he was following graphic models by Ghirlandaio, when he took part, as a young man, together with other Florentine miniaturists in the collective project for the *Bible* of Federico da Montefeltro between 1474 and 1476 (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. lat. 1–2).²⁷

²⁶ Johann W. Gaye: *Carteggio inedito d'artisti*, 2, Florence 1839–1840, p. 45. Annarosa Garzelli: *Miniatura fiorentina del Rinascimento 1444–1525. Un primo censimento*, Florence 1985; Diego Galizzi: Vante di Gabriello di Vante Attavanti *detto* Attavante. Milvia Bolati (ed.) 2004, pp. 975–978.

²⁷ Filippo Todini: *Una collezione di miniature italiane. Dal Duecento al Cinquecento*, Milan 1994, II, pp. 5–10, 74–75. As for many illuminator, but also painters, the period of training and the first works – at a time when the style is not completely characterised – are the most difficult to recognise if they are not documented or dated. A recent proposal has been made to identify Attavante's youthful phase with

The intervention of Attavante in the choir books and other liturgical and devotional books, both for private individuals and lesser church institutions inside and outside Florence, continued without interruption throughout his career. The sobriety or richness of the decoration depended much on the economic circumstances of the patron. In the miniature in the Royal Library in Copenhagen, the extensive use of costly pigments such as lapis lazuli, and the use of gold for the decorated letters next to the initial, suggest a rich patron able to afford a luxurious liturgical book for an important religious complex.

The choir books illuminated by Attavante have shared dispersals and dismemberings with other precious liturgical books. A certain number of single leaves and miniatures are kept in the more important libraries and museums all over the world. As for the fragments without provenance or context, their precise dating is problematic; this obviously applies to the fragment from the Royal Library considered here.²⁸ The borders of leaves that frame the Danish initial and the thin flower stems with golden asterisks on the edge of the fragment can be paralleled in

a miniaturist known as the Master of the Hamilton Xenophon (active in Florence 1470–1480), so called from a manuscript of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (Berlino Kupferstichkabinett MS. 78 C24, Hamilton 686) the frontispiece of which he illuminated. A. Di Lorenzo (ed.): *Deux collectionneurs à la découverte de l'Italie. Peintures et sculptures du musée Jacquemart-André*, Milan 2002, pp. 96–97 (Everett Fahy); Alexander 2016, pp. 19–25, note 92.

²⁸ Three important single leaves, probably detached from a Gradual, are kept in the Vatican Library Ross. 1192, fol. 22–24. Among these the miniature showing the *Discovery of the True Cross* bears an inscription with the name of Ghirlandaio and the date 1473. However, the scene is typical of the style of Attavante who must have worked from a drawing made by Domenico Ghirlandaio. The other two miniatures with *St Andrew* and *St Lucas* are also by Attavante. G. Morello and S. Maddalo (ed.): *Liturgia in figura. Codici liturgici rinascimentali della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana*, Rome 1995, entries 47, 48. It is likely that the inscription was added at the end of the seventeenth century and scholars believe that the miniatures should be dated nearer to 1500 than to 1473 for stylistic reasons. Di Lorenzo (ed.) 2002, pp. 96–97, note 5 (Everett Fahy). Alexander 2016, p. 290, note 77. We may observe that the letters decorated with gold alternating with blue in the *incipit* of the Danish fragment, as well as the pen decoration in the text, follow the same typology as in the Vatican cuttings. I have not studied these miniatures first-hand and the lack of data concerning the stave heights does not make it possible to establish a possible relationship with *The Holy Innocents*. Silvia Maddalo, Eva Ponzi, Michela Torquati: *Catalogo dei codici miniati della Biblioteca Vaticana. I Manoscritti Rossiani*, 2, Ross. 416–1195, Vatican City 2014. Another cutting by Attavante with the *Adoration of the Child*, originally part of a Gradual, is examined and dated to around 1515–20 by G. Freuler 2013, p. 856, entry 101.

the repertory of Attavante's choir books from the time of his earliest known works; such motifs are repeated several times by the miniaturist in the course of his career, as for example in the Gradual of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence, dated 1505 (Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Corali 4) or in the Gradual for the cathedral of the same city (1508–1511) (Florence, Archivio Opera di S. M. del Fiore, inv. S n. 14). The scene shown in the Copenhagen fragment has a character of ornate preciousness, with the gold that gleams as a dominant note on the red of the altar frontal with its pomegranate motifs, and on the blue of the altarpiece between the piers on the altar. On a reduced scale it recalls the splendour of the tabernacle frontispieces of the *Breviary* made in 1492 for King Matthias Corvinus (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. lat. 112).²⁹ The miniature would thus seem to distance itself from the more youthful works of Attavante and to find affinities, as we shall see, with the artist's mature production.

In this connection we may note that among the surviving single leaves and cuttings from choir books the large miniature with the *Presentation in the Temple* (Venice, Fondazione Giorgio Cini inv. 22143), recently ascribed to the final phase of Attavante's career (1510–1520), illustrates the *Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary*, which is celebrated on 2 February, and comes from a Gradual (fig. 7).³⁰ The typology of the lineation and notation and the stave heights coincide with those of the Danish miniature for the *Feast of the Holy Innocents*, and there are also stylistic affinities. Both feasts fall in the same liturgical period and we may suppose that the miniatures come from the same choir book. The proposal is advanced with all due caution, also because the floral decoration on the border of the miniature in the Royal Library has no parallel in the Cini cutting, as it is now. In any case, both miniatures reflect in their composition ideas extensively illustrated by Attavante.

The scene of the Copenhagen miniature, concentrated on the central altar in a space characterised by two lateral windows with rhomboid panes, re-proposes the architectural setting of the Cini miniature, albeit without the Renaissance monumentality that characterises the latter. The altar frontal with its precious light cloth differs from the more customary marble reliefs with classical antique citations that, as in the Cini miniature, we find on many of Attavante's altars. We may perhaps link it to the liturgical colour required for the vestments and altar cloths on

²⁹ Morello and Maddalo (ed.) 1995, pp. 236–241, entry 55 (Antonio Rorro).

³⁰ Medica and Toniolo (ed.) 2016, entry 49 (Ada Labriola).

Fig. 7: Attavante, Fragment with Miniature, *Presentation in the Temple*, Venice Fondazione Cini, inv. no. 22143.



the Feast of the Holy Innocents, i.e. red.³¹ Similarly sumptuous cloths and hangings are found depicted in the liturgical manuscripts produced by Attavante in his final years, such as the ornately decorated *Preparatio ad Missam Pontificalem*, dated 1520 (New York Morgan Library MS H.6).³²

The image of the *Innocents* is permeated by a solemn and severe tone. The bodies of the holy infants rotate lightly, almost forming a circle, and they show repetition in the simplified modelling, in the poses and in the gestures, none of which display much variation (fig. 2). This is confirmed by the expressive and schematic uniformity of the rounded faces, as in the works of the artist's late career. The very pale tonality of the complexions is also typical of his last phases, linked especially to the patronage of Leo X (pope from 1513 to 1521), son of Lorenzo de' Medici; it seems likely that the miniaturist spent some time in Rome, though we have no documentation for this.³³ Softly plump putti such

³¹ Gaetano Moroni: *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica da S. Pietro sino ai nostri giorni*, Rome 1859, p. 260.

³² Alexander (ed.) 1994, entry 4 (William M. Voelkle). The manuscript is probably one of Attavante's last works and it was left in the sacristy of the Sistine Chapel after the pope's death, while his private library is now kept for the most part in the Laurentian Library in Florence. The frontispiece shows Leo X seated in front of a cloth of honour, behind which the walls are hung with a precious patterned fabric.

³³ Alexander 2016, p. 338, note 95.

as we find in the Danish fragment appear as angels together with the arms and devices of Leo X in the border fragments (Cambridge University Library, MS Add. 4165 (15b–c)), coming from one or more missals dispersed from the Sistine Chapel (fig. 8).³⁴ We may therefore propose for the miniature of the *Innocents* in the Royal Danish Library a dating after 1510, consonant with the Cini *Presentation in the Temple*.

Iconographically, as art historians have pointed out, Attavante in his exceptionally long and productive career could be repetitive in his use of standardised motifs. Sometimes, however the artist deals surprisingly with more complex and rare subjects, such as in the individual leaves from a liturgical text dateable to around 1500, with the *Dream of St Romuald* and the *Exequies of St Benedict* in the Wildenstein collection, which deal with the subject of the soul after death.³⁵

And in connection with the Cini *Presentation in the Temple* the art historian Pietro Toesca comments: "...it has novelty of concept because it proposes to exalt the Infant Christ and therefore ignores the customary iconographic schemes."³⁶

The iconography of the miniature in the Royal Library in Copenhagen is also unusual and does not seem to have parallels in Florentine pictorial production. In the paintings and miniatures of the period, the theme of the Holy Innocents is usually dealt with in a scene of the *Massacre in Bethlehem*, with soldiers tearing the children from the arms of the desperate mothers. A well known example is the painting of the *Adoration of the Magi* (1486–1489), by Domenico Ghirlandaio, where this scene appears in the background; among the other saints in the foreground are two small kneeling Innocents.³⁷ Ghirlandaio's iconographic choice reflects the specific destination of this painting for the Church annexed to the Ospedale degli Innocenti, the Florentine foundlings'

³⁴ These fragments came from one or more of the three missals illuminated by the workshop of Attavante for Leone X, kept in the Sistine Chapel and described in its inventory, mutilated after the Napoleonic invasion in 1798; Paul Binski and Stella Panayotova (ed.): *The Cambridge illuminations. Ten Centuries of Book Production in the Medieval West*, London 2005, entry 64 (S. Panayotova); Pia Palladino: *Treasure of a Lost Art, Italian Manuscript Painting of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, New York 2003, entry 84.

³⁵ Yves Brayer: *La collection Wildenstein*. Paris [s.a.], entries 16, 17; Garzelli 1985, I, p. 230.

³⁶ Pietro Toesca: *Monumenti e studi per la storia della miniatura italiana. La collezione di Ulrico Hoepli*, Milan 1930, pp. 138–139, entry 143.

³⁷ The scene of the *Slaughter of the Innocents* was painted by Bartolomeo di Giovanni (active from c.1487 to 1501), a collaborator of Ghirlandaio's. Jean K. Cadogan: *Domenico Ghirlandaio*, New Haven and London, 2000, pp. 259–61.

Fig. 8: Attavante, *Borders cuttings with angels*, Cambridge University Library, MS Add. 4165 (15a) and (15b)



hospital. The Gradual 162 (*1st Sunday of Advent to Palm Sunday*) of this church also contained a Massacre in the miniature related to *The Feast of the Innocents*. The scene was illuminated (1493–1495) by another great Florentine master, Gherardo di Giovanni del Fora.³⁸ Regarding the iconographic tradition of the Innocents, we might add that the cult of the little martyrs, widespread in fifteenth-century Florence, was linked to the education and charitable care of orphans.³⁹ In Florence there was a lay Confraternity of the Innocents, for which the painter Cosimo Rosselli painted a panel showing the little martyrs in swaddling bands adoring the *Madonna and Child* (c.1475).⁴⁰

³⁸ Luciano Bellosi (ed.): *Il Museo dello Spedale degli Innocenti di Firenze*, Florence 1977, figs. 53–59, entry 39 (Bellosi); in the Gradual, the decorated initial of the Introit E (x Ore) is at fol. 32 v., entry 210 (Grazia Vailati Shoenburg-Waldenburg).

³⁹ For this subject, see Philip Gavitt: *Charity and Children in Renaissance Florence, The Ospedale Degli Innocenti, 1410–1536*, Ann Arbor 1999, pp. 187–283.

⁴⁰ Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Gemäldegalerie. Anna Padoa Rizzo: Cosimo Rosselli e la tavola per la Compagnia dei SS. Innocenti, *Antichità Viva*, 6, 1991, pp. 12–16. A closer iconographic relationship with Attavante's *Innocents* can be seen in two panels again by Rosselli depicting the young saints holding their hands in prayer and with their tender bodies, naked and wounded. Edith Gabrielli: *Cosimo Rosselli, Catalogo Ragionato*, Turin 2007.

In the cutting now in Copenhagen, Attavante avoids the sanguinary image of the massacre (which is only alluded to by the wounds on the children's throats) and provides a more conceptual interpretation of the subject, exalting the sanctity of the martyred bodies. In particular, the association of the *Innocenti* with the altar would seem to contain a deep spiritual significance, probably related to the specific requirements of the patron. We might observe that a cultural climate more severely devout and pietistic, aroused by the apocalyptic preaching of Savonarola, lasted for a long time in Florence and influenced figurative art, even after the friar's death in 1498 and in fact well into the following century.

In any case the miniature in Copenhagen presents a rare iconography, the origin of which we will try to investigate. The image would seem to have had a precedent in Rome, in the thirteenth-century mosaic at the base of the apsidal hemi-dome in the basilica of San Paolo fuori le Mura, where the relics of the Holy Innocents were kept. There, five young *Innocents* dressed in white garments, well identified by an inscription, are shown beneath an altar on which are placed symbols of the Crucifixion.⁴¹ It is also attested, as Yves Christe has shown, that the Innocents are generally found associated with the image of an altar next to or beneath which they are gathered in medieval iconographies of the Apocalypse and the Last Judgement, such as the frescoes at Saint-Hilaire in Poitiers in France, or in Italy in the crypt at Anagni.⁴²

Christe clarifies that the very theme of the *Apocalypse* is closely connected with the liturgy of the *Feast of the Innocents*. In the Divine Office, the antiphon is taken from *Apocalypse* 6: 9–11 "...*vidi sub altare animas interfectorum propter verbum Dei*" (I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God), concerning the vision of the martyrs beneath the altar at the opening of the fifth seal, which is the origin of this particular iconography.⁴³ This scene, alone or in combination

⁴¹ As is well known, the present mosaic is a 19th-century remake of the medieval one and it includes parts that survived the demolition and restructuring of the basilica; it is extremely reliable from an iconographic point of view; Maria Andaloro and Serena Romano: *L'Immagine nell'Abside. Arte e iconografia a Roma da Costantino a Cola di Rienzo*, Rome 2000, p. 67, note 91.

⁴² Yves Christe: *L'Autel des Innocentes*. Nicholas Bock (ed.): *Kunst und Liturgie im Mittelalter*, Munich 2000, pp. 91–100, p. 92.

⁴³ Hesbert: *Corpus Antiphonalium Officii*, Rome 1963–1979, I, no. 22b, p. 52; III, no. 5427. Inspired by the verses from the Apocalypse 14: 1–5, is the image of a 14th-century illumination in the Gradual, Florence Biblioteca Laurenziana Cod. Coral 2, fol. 19, for the monastery of Santa Maria degli Angeli for the *Introit* of the *Feast for the Innocents, E(x Ore)*. The illuminator Silvestro dei Gherarducci represents a group of joyful children

with the *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb*, Apocalypse 14: 1–5, inspired by the scriptural reading for the Mass of the *Feast of the Innocents*, is present for example in the *Last Judgements* shown in the Moralized Bibles of the earlier thirteenth century. The association of the martyrs (of all the martyred saints and not just the Innocents) with the altar is here transformed into an image, but as Yves Christe notes, the accommodation of text to figure presents some incoherent features, and there are variants in the placing of the martyrs. In relation to the image in the Danish fragment, we may note that in the *Last Judgement* scene in the famous *New York-Toledo Moralized Bible* (c.1230), the martyrs are shown nude and are seated beneath an altar. (Toledo Cathedral fol. 166).⁴⁴

Attavante, possibly at the behest of a demanding patron, seems in some way to take account of these iconographic precedents, and also of the *Oratio (collect)* for the Mass of the *Innocents* “...*Innocentes Martyres non loquendo, sed moriendo confessi sunt*” (the innocent martyrs confessed not by speaking but by dying): the children killed in the massacre, innocent because they are still incapable of speaking or of sinning, although not baptised achieved sanctity through martyrdom. In the fragment now residing in Denmark the five *Innocents* on the altar already wear the halo of the saints and contemplate the Divine light as symbolised by the golden rays that descend from above onto the precious lapis lazuli blue of the altarpiece.

Joseph and his Brothers by the Master of Montepulciano Gradual I

Sometimes the older sources mention the names of artists they consider to be important, but whose works remained unknown to us today. In other cases the great connoisseurs of the past and recent scholars have reconstructed distinct corpuses of works of artists who still remain anonymous. This is especially true of the earlier periods and also to Italian illuminations as well as paintings made in the thirteenth and fourteenth century. Though studies or archive documents have sometimes subsequently revealed the original names of certain artists, others have been given names after their most important work, the “name

in a circle, dressed in pure white tunics in adoration of the Lamb on the mountain of Sion; Laurence B. Kanter and Barbara Drake Boehm (ed.): *Painting Illumination in Early Renaissance Florence, 1300–1450*, New York 1995, entry 16 a–j. (Gaudens Freuler).

⁴⁴ *Toledo-New York Moralized Bible* (Toledo Cathedral Treasury and New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M. 240. Christe 2000, p. 98, fig. 4.

piece.”⁴⁵ This is also the case of a painter, the Master of Montepulciano Gradual I that has interested many scholars in recent years and to which we can attribute an interesting fourteenth-century cutting in the Royal Library.⁴⁶ The initial illustrates the opening words of the second response at matins for *Dominica III in Quadragesima* (the third Sunday in Lent). The scene inside the letter V (*identes Joseph a longe*) (Seeing Joseph in the distance), Genesis 37:18–19, shows the biblical episode of Joseph and his brethren (fig. 9 a/b).⁴⁷

A bearded man in front of beardless younger people points towards a boy coming down from a mountain. They are the brothers who see Joseph coming from afar. They plot against him, wishing to get rid of him. Joseph was the favourite among Jacob’s twelve sons and he had the gift of interpreting dreams. This aroused the envy of his brothers who threw him into a well and then sold him to merchants, who took him to Egypt.

On the back of the Danish cutting, which forms the verso in the original sequence, we can read part of the Saturday antiphon: *Dixit autem pater ad servos* (But the father said to his servants). The piece in Copenhagen is part of a large number of single leaves and cuttings, uniform in style, palette and decorative motifs that can be dated to c.1330–1335. Today they are scattered among European and American collections, but originally they were part of an Antiphonary for monastic use, divided into two or more volumes, with a *temporale* covering the movable feasts in the liturgical year and a *sanctorale* with the feasts of the saints.⁴⁸ The cutting in Copenhagen belongs to the liturgy of the *temporale*.

⁴⁵ On this subject, see the interesting article by Bryan C. Keene: Anonymity and Choir Book Illumination. The Case of the Master of The Antiphonary of San Giovanni Fuoricivitas. *Rivista di Storia della Miniatura*, 20, 2016, pp. 76–86. I would like to thank Ada Labriola for her generous suggestions concerning this miniature.

⁴⁶ The Royal Library, the Manuscript Department, Illuminerede fragmenter, kps 3, 1965/186. Historiated Initial, tempera and gold leaf on parchment, 145 × 145 mm. Gothic bookhand in dark brown ink. Squared notation in dark brown ink, on four-line, 34 mm high staves ruled in red ink. It was acquired from Branners Bibliophile Antikvariat in Copenhagen in 1965 according to the accession files of the library, together with an initial L cut out from a different Antifonary, kps. 1, no. 11 (1965/186).

⁴⁷ Hesbert: *Corpus Antiphonalium Officii*, 1963–1979, II, no. 62 and IV, no.7863.

⁴⁸ A reconstruction of the lost volumes was first conducted by Ada Labriola: *Aggiunte alla miniatura fiorentina del primo Trecento*. *Paragone*, 547, 1995, pp. 3–17; followed by Pia Palladino, New York 2003, entry 26. Other cuttings were added in A. Labriola: *Maestro dell’Antifonario di S. Giovanni Fuoricivitas*. M. Bollati (ed.) Milan 2004,



Fig. 9 a/b: Master of Montepulciano Gradual I, Initial V, *Joseph and his Brothers*, Copenhagen The Royal Library, Manuscript Department, Illuminerede fragmenter, kps. 3, 1965/ 186, v. and r.



As already mentioned, historical events have resulted in the dispersal of much of the Italian liturgical manuscripts kept in the churches and the libraries of the monasteries. Though it began during the period of the Napoleonic invasion, it continued afterwards with the suppressions of monastic orders until 1867. However, this phenomenon has even more ancient roots, as those manuscripts that were considered old or out of date were sent to peripheral and minor churches or monasteries, thereby losing the connection to their original contexts. This increases the difficulty of identifying the provenance of dispersed manuscripts and, even more so, of the cuttings from manuscripts. For this reason the tool of attribution, accompanied by all the other information that the remaining pieces can furnish, is fundamental to the reconstruction of their history.

The Danish fragment and the other cuttings and single leaves of this group are all characterized by a rich decoration indicating that the now dispersed two-volume Antiphonary must have been commissioned by an important monastic order. Ada Labriola has proposed a possible provenance from the Vallombrosan church of Santa Trinita in Florence, because of the identification in one of the miniatures of St Minias, a saint particularly linked to Florence and the Vallombrosans. Another fragment belonging to the group shows monks dressed in the brown habit typical of that monastic order.⁴⁹

Labriola gathered the different fragments that had emerged up until that point in a group, attributing them to one artist. She named him the Master of the Antiphonary of St John Fuoricivitas after his “name piece” in the church of San Giovanni Fuoricivitas in Pistoia, Tuscany, where another Antiphonary is preserved (Pistoia, Archivio Capitolare, inv. 488).⁵⁰ This illuminator had also been engaged in the production of an important series of choir books (dating to c.1340), for the church of Santa Maria in Impruneta close to Florence. Here he had worked in a

pp. 548–549; A. Labriola: Alcune proposte per la miniatura fiorentina del primo Trecento, *Arte Cristiana*, 93/826, 2005, pp. 14–26, note 21; Gaudens Freuler: Studi recenti sulla miniatura medievale: Emilia, Veneto e Toscana. Appunti su una mostra americana (Parte II). *Arte Cristiana*, 92, 2004, pp.162–63; Gaudens Freuler: Qualche riflessione sulla miniatura fiorentina della seconda metà del Trecento. A. Tartuferi (ed.): *L’eredità di Giotto. Arte a Firenze, 1340–1375*, Florence 2008, pp. 76–85, note 8; C. Sciacca (ed.): *Florence at the Dawn of the Renaissance: Painting and Illumination, 1300–1350*, Los Angeles 2012, entry 54 (Pia Palladino).

⁴⁹ Labriola 2005, pp. 19–20, fig. 12.

⁵⁰ Labriola 1995, pp. 3–17.

characteristic and independent style alongside more famous Florentine painter-illuminators such as Pacino di Bonaguida and the Master of the Dominican Effigies. The scholar highlighted the particular expressivity of the figures of the Master of the Antiphonary of St John Fuoricivitas, which she related to the figurative culture of Pisa, exemplified by Buonamico Buffalmacco's frescoes in the Camposanto from 1336. Though from Florence, the style of Buffalmacco is here singular and unconventional and deviates from the more classical Florentine painting of the period. Labriola's attributions have subsequently been accepted by other scholars and the oeuvre of the Master has been further enriched with two Graduals in Montepulciano Mus. Civ. Corali I and H/2, of c.1340.⁵¹ That they must have been commissioned by Augustinians can be deduced from the miniatures with monks wearing their habit.

Bryan C. Keene has most recently published a newly acquired cutting in the J. Paul Getty Museum Collection (Ms. 113), *Christ Wiping the Tears from the Eyes of the Saved*, identified other pieces and provided a detailed account of the Antiphonary that in all likelihood came originally from the church of Santa Trinita in Florence (fig. 10).⁵² Keene's research on the Master and his set of liturgical fragments is very valuable. Unaware of the Copenhagen *Joseph and his Brothers*, he numbers twenty six fragments, leaves and cuttings and also reconstructs their liturgical sequence in the *sanctorale* and the *temporale*.⁵³

The emergence in recent years of new pieces and the large number of leaves and cuttings now gathered around this artistic personality have required a reconsideration of the miniatures. Labriola, followed by all other scholars, now distinguishes two different personalities with collaborators, thus dividing the corpus so far attributed to the Master of the Antiphonary of St John Fuoricivitas into two distinct groups. The first consists of the Impruneta choir books and the original "name piece" of that master. The second includes the set of leaves and cuttings of the dismembered Antiphonary, the Graduals of Montepulciano, and two later secular manuscripts.⁵⁴ Compared to the first group with the "name

⁵¹ Palladino 2003; Labriola 2004.

⁵² Antiphonary cutting Initial A, Keene 2016, p. 84.

⁵³ Keene also remarks that the decoration of the borders and of the initials are comparable to those from neighbouring areas and not only from Tuscany.

⁵⁴ Labriola 2008, p. 69, note 8. To this artist are attributed the *Seneca's Epistles* in the British Library, Add. MS. 15434, as well as two miniatures in Manfredo di Monte Imperiale's *Liber Herbis et plantis* in the Bibliothèque National de France, ms. 6823, from between 1340 and 1350.



Fig. 10: Master of Montepulciano Gradual I, Initial A, *Christ Wiping the Tears from the Eyes of the Saved*, Los Angeles The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 113.

piece,” the decorative borders of the second group are distinguished by a more sober style, the figures are more powerful, the colours richer, and the narrative has a sense of drama. Labriola also highlights the very expressive language strongly influenced by the artistic vocabulary of the illuminators of Pisa, which is even more pronounced in the second group.

The division in two groups also conforms to the Danish cutting, where the marked, almost caricatural quality of the brothers’ facial features can be compared to the figures that appear in other miniatures, for

example in the former Breslauer cutting and to a saint in Montepulciano Gradual I, fol. 269.⁵⁵ Furthermore, Joseph's full, rounded face shaded under his chin, the elongated shape of his eye, the draperies with compact folds and the orange tonality are all traits found in the other cuttings as well as in the Graduals that belong to the second group.⁵⁶ In the Montepulciano Graduals and cuttings, Labriola recognises a style between Pisa and Florence. She identifies images of solid and compact volumetrics, physiognomies that recall figurative typologies of a master of Florentine illumination, the so-called Maestro Daddesco (active to c.1340), who is also attentive to the expressivity of his personages. In fact, in the figures of his *Two Holy Martyrs*, a cutting with the initial S in the Wildenstein collection of c.1315, one can recognise the relatives of the much more robust and sharp Copenhagen Joseph.⁵⁷ The expressive, Pisan language of the Copenhagen cutting, combined with the tracing of an influence from the Maestro Daddesco, suggests a dating in concordance with Labriola to c.1330–1335, which is slightly earlier than the activity of the same artist in the two Montepulciano Graduals of c.1340.

The stylistic components of this illuminator thus seem variegated. The discovery and publication of new pieces that could be added to the already known set of fragments may help to reconstruct more precisely the context in which this interesting artist worked and better identify the provenance of the two-volume Antiphonary.

Pia Palladino has recently named this new artistic personality according to his "name piece," the Master of Montepulciano Gradual I.⁵⁸

From our examination of the three miniatures considered here we have been able to note how other cuttings attributed to the same masters are to be found dispersed among the world's collections. Although not extremely large, the collection of miniatures, single leaves and cut

⁵⁵ The ex-Breslauer cutting is now in the Richard Deutsch collection in London. Sciacca (ed.) 2012, entry 54 (Pia Palladino), fig. 54.1. For the bust of a *Saint* on fol. 269 of the Montepulciano Graduale I, Labriola 2005, fig. 14.

⁵⁶ For example in the figures on the miniature of *Pentecost* on fol. 73 of Graduale I, Labriola 2005, fig. 18.

⁵⁷ Brayer [s.a.], cat. 7; M. Boskovits: *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting, III.9. The Fourteenth Century. The Painters of the Miniaturist Tendency*, Florence 1984, pp. 44–48, fig. 89a.

⁵⁸ Jeffrey F. Hamburger, William P. Stoneman, Anne-Marie Eze, Lisa Fagin Davis, Nancy Netzer (ed.) *Beyond Words, Illuminated Manuscripts in Boston Collections*, Boston 2016, entry 156 (Pia Palladino). The scholar suggests a dating to c.1350.

out initials in the Royal Library in Copenhagen includes exemplars attributed to the leading masters of Italian manuscript illumination. It is important for the Library that its interesting collection be made known. The miniatures that have hitherto remained unpublished, and therefore unavailable to international scholarship, await their introduction into the critical debate. Making these beautiful images available will no doubt stimulate further research and new discoveries. Having remained hidden for so long, the precious colours of the miniatures have retained their original brilliance and freshness. These cuttings constitute another small treasure to be added to the well-known ones of the Royal Danish Library.

SUMMARY

ELEONORA MATTIA: *Three Italian illuminated Cuttings in the Royal Library of Copenhagen*

Some observations on the history of collecting illuminated cuttings serve to introduce three unpublished Italian fragments that are part of a collection of illuminated fragments conserved in the Royal Danish Library. The miniatures are described from the point of view of their liturgical and art-historical content and are presented in the form of entries in a catalogue raisonné.

The Master B. F., who grew up under the shadow of Leonardo de Vinci, was among those miniaturists most sought-after by collectors in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century because of his evident stylistic debts to the great painter. The beautiful miniature in Copenhagen can now be added to the other known works of this Master and is critical not only to the reconstruction of his corpus, but also for the history of collecting, as it comes from the prestigious Holford Collection. It was already correctly attributed when it entered the collection of the Royal Library; it is here inserted into the activity of the artist, a dating is proposed, and a provenance is suggested from the series of choir books in the monastery of Santi Angelo e Nicolò a Villanova Sillaro in Lombardy, which were broken up around 1799.

The Danish cutting here attributed to Attavante has a specific iconography that demonstrates an originality and an independence from models followed by contemporary Florentine painting, qualities not always acknowledged to the well known miniaturist whose extensive figurative production has sometimes been considered repetitive.

A third fragment is here attributed to the Pisan Master of Montepulciano Gradual I. This anonymous miniaturist is at the centre of the most recent and innovative studies of fourteenth-century Tuscan painting: his activity belongs to the diversified texture of artistic production between Florence and its nearby cities, with expressive modalities independent of the tradition of the more strictly Giottesque masters. The miniature attributed to him here is to be added to the catalogue of his works, dispersed as they are in many European and American collections.

