

Caroline Zöhl. *Jean Pichore: Buchmaler, Graphiker und Verleger in Paris um 1500*.

Ars Nova 8. Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2004. vi + 346 pp. index. append. illus. tpls. bibl. €125. ISBN: 2-503-52194-0.

At the turn of the fifteenth century, Jean Pichore (active ca. 1501–20) was one of the most sought-after manuscript illuminators in Paris. The return of the French court to Paris after decades of absence contributed to an artistic and cultural revival that returned Paris to the position of preeminence in manuscript illumination that

it had held at the beginning of the century. As Paris also became the most important source in France for printed books, Jean Pichore deftly adapted to the new medium of metal cut illustration and his printed books of hours dominated the market until roughly 1520. Caroline Zöhl demonstrates how this enterprising artist was able to transform his skills as a miniature painter to exploit possibilities of the graphic medium. Through meticulous stylistic analysis, Zöhl traces his shift from one medium to another by carefully examining literally hundreds of examples, all amply illustrated with color and black-and-white plates.

A strong correlation between manuscript illumination and printmaking developed in the transitional period between 1470 and 1520. Zöhl's task consists of creating order in the confusion of mostly anonymous workshop production. With scant documentary evidence, she untangles a complicated web of influences, convincingly presenting the case that Pichore's graphic production bore the imprint of his early training as a painter. The classicizing motifs that he adopted would become the standard of Parisian book illustration in the first decades of the sixteenth century. Pichore emerges as an artist who was incredibly flexible and innovative in incorporating the innovations of Schongauer and Dürer as he adapted to the medium of the metal cut.

Zöhl approaches her subject with scrupulous care, devoting seven of her nine chapters to a comprehensive examination of Pichore's early development and influences, problems of attribution, Pichore's switch to printed books of hours, his brief stint as a publisher, his work with Remy de Laistre, and, finally, his metal cut series produced for other book publishers. While this study is directed at a specialist audience, she raises many questions that are of broader interest. For example, Pichore's most important early patron, Cardinal Georges d'Amboise, emerges as a major influence in the development of classicizing trends in late fifteenth-century French art. The cardinal created a humanist library along Italian models as he turned his family palace of Gaillon into the first Renaissance palace in France. No doubt his many commissions pushed Pichore toward the style of artists such as Jean Fouquet while exposing him to future sources of patronage in court circles.

Likewise, a much later commission by the city of Amiens for an unusually large manuscript, the *Chants royaux du Puy Notre Dame d'Amiens*, raises broader questions about issues of invention and originality in early modern France. Louise of Savoy, mother of François I, had requested copies of a series of Marian paintings that were displayed in the cathedral of Amiens. The paintings, today mostly lost, were commissioned to accompany a yearly poetic contest in honor of the Virgin sponsored by the *Confrérie du Puy Notre Dame d'Amiens*. Copies of forty-eight Marian paintings were delivered to Pichore's workshop in Paris, where they were used as models for full-page illuminations, bound, and presented to the queen mother. Zöhl wants to see the varying quality of the copies as the result of many different workshop hands. But another possibility is that Pichore intended to convey the different styles among the paintings, pointing to his awareness of artistic individuality.

This comprehensive and thorough book sets out to clarify the murky and complicated waters of printed book production during a time of tremendous innovation and change. The entrepreneurial spirit that moved many artists during this period to branch out into new fields opens up new avenues for investigating a novel aspect of the history of the print. Pichore not only acquired new skills as a designer of prints, he also briefly ventured into the risky business of publishing. Printmaking, usually connected in art historical studies to roots within the metalworking and textile trades, must also be considered as an offshoot of manuscript illumination. Zöhl contributes an important perspective on the intersection of these two worlds, at once fairly obvious yet curiously understudied.

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