

# THE BOOK OF HOURS OF LOUIS DE ROUCY

a.k.a. THE COURTANVAUX-ELMHIRST HOURS,  
DIGITALLY RESTORED THROUGH THE  
WAYBACK RECOVERY METHOD





*HORÆHOURS 2*



**RECEPTIO ACADEMIC PRESS**



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**CARLA ROSSI**



**RECEPTIO ACADEMIC PRESS**



HORAEHOURS

*Cover*

The Book of Hours of Louis De Roucy, folio 191v. The young patron kneeling in prayer before the Virgin Mary.

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## HORÆHOURS 2

*Heures me fault de Nostre Dame / Si comme il appartient à fame / Venue de noble paraige, / Qui soient de sutil ouvraige / D'or et d'azur, riches et cointes / Bien ordonnées et bien pointes / De fin drap d'or très bien couvertes / Et quand elles seront ouvertes / Deux fermaulx d'or qui fermeront, / Qu'adoncques ceuls qui les verront/ Puissent partout dire et compter / Qu'on ne puet plus belles porter.*

I need Hours of Our Lady /as proper for a woman of noble standing, / which are of delicate workmanship / of gilt and blue, rich and elegant / well designed and painted / well covered in fine gold leaf/ and, when they are opened/ two gold clasps which will close, / so that then those who see them/ tell and relate/ that one cannot carry a finer one.

Eustache Deschamps, French poet (1346-1406)



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valuable editorial work*



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# Foreword

## The HORÆHOURS Series

Andrew Pritchard and Lucinia Speciale

The technique developed by Professor Carla Rossi, called WayBack Recovery Method (henceforth WBRM), is a highly effective scientific procedure, based on a philological approach to Fragmentology, enabling researchers to easily electronically reconstruct dismembered manuscripts. It allows not only to find a huge number of digital fragments from dismembered Books of Hours, and more generally from manuscripts that have been torn apart and sold on the antiquarian book market over the last two centuries, but also to digitally reassemble a truly impressive number of Books of Hours.

That is why our publishing house has decided to consecrate a series, called HORÆHOURS, to the editions of thus digital reconstructed manuscripts.

To inaugurate said series, we have selected the reconstructions of a lavishly illuminated Book of Hours, dismembered in Germany in 2009, whose single leaves have been sold from that year onwards.

In this edition, Carla Rossi, whose specialist handbook we issued in June this year, also briefly presents the WBRM that is currently enabling her and her team to digitally reassemble many dismembered manuscripts.

This publication will be followed by the reconstructions of other jewel-like Books of Hours.



*Colligite fragmenta ne pereant 2.0*

Carla Rossi's present edition is both the culmination of a long and passionate cycle of investigations and the starting point of a new season of research into the history of the manuscript book.

This work inaugurates a series of studies devoted to a very special genre of apparatus manuscripts, the Books of Hours.

In the history of book artefacts, these small-format codices in which the prayers of private devotion were collected form a true corpus, destined to know an extraordinary fortune in the late Middle Ages. For this reason they are often identified with the very form of the late medieval luxury book. It is certainly no coincidence that Christopher de Hamel has dedicated two of his twelve *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts* (New York 2017) to two magnificent examples of this type of illustrated manuscripts, the *Hours of Joan of Navarre* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, N. a. lat. 3145), and the *Spinola Hours* (Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, ms. Ludwig IX.18).

In studies on decorated manuscripts, the Books of Hours represent a chapter by itself, due to the quantity of witnesses that have been preserved and the vast collecting fortune that characterises their modern history.

A very negative consequence of this uninterrupted antiquarian interest is the splitting to which this typology of manuscripts has been subjected even in very recent times, in which one would expect respect for the integrity of an artistic artefact.

The Book of Hours of Louis de Roucy documents first of all the story of a recovery: that of the illuminated leaves of a manuscript known to scholars as the Courtanvaux-Elmhirst Book of Hours, from the name of the 18th-century collection in which the codex is first documented.

Carla Rossi's work has, among its many merits, the invaluable merit of having patiently reassembled the dispersed leaves of a codex that was irreparably destroyed. The precious sequence of textual sections and images that come to life in the final pages of this study offers an extraordinary example of virtual restitution of the work. In the digital reconstruction of the Hours of Louis de Roucy, the results of a very traditional, but very solid philological research and the use of an absolutely avant-garde method of investigation come together: the WayBack Recovery Method is destined to mark a new frontier in the history of humanistic studies.





The methodology, of which the author offers us the first evocative results, successfully harnesses the resources offered by the web for the study and preservation of ancient book heritage, recovering from the deep memory of the web the imprint that the *membra disiecta* of the de Roucy manuscript have left, passing through the sales catalogues. These are low-resolution images, often of poor quality, but invaluable for reconstructing not only the antiquarian history of individual folios, but the very structure of the manuscript from which they come.

The undoubted success of this first experiment leads one to hope that the WBRM will find a rapid diffusion and can help to counteract, and hopefully stop, a vandalistic commercial practice that Carla Rossi herself rightly defines as biblioclasm.

Finally, the electronic format of these critical editions will make their progressive updating easier.

The first volume of *Horae/Hours* paves the way for a new type of facsimile edition, digital and at the same time in progress. It is a good viaticum for the future of research.

Lucinia Speciale

